

# Inland Buoy Operations

*WLIs—four total—service short-range to aids to navigation (ATON) along coastal and inland waterways. These vessels maintain buoys that are beyond the capabilities of the nearest aids to navigation team and that are located in areas either too shallow or otherwise too restricted for larger platforms to reach.*

The 100-foot WLIs operate in fast waters with heavy currents that cannot be serviced by larger tenders in the Coast Guard fleet. Coast Guard Cutter Bluebell operates in the Columbia and Snake rivers and has a crew of 16.



The 65-foot WLIs service areas that are restricted in width and depth. They service ATON that are smaller than those serviced by the 100-foot WLIs but which exceed the capacity of small boats. Coast Guard Cutter Elderberry services the inland waterways near St. Petersburg, Alaska, and has a crew of eight.



Coast Guard Cutter Buckthorn, a 100-foot WLI, works in the Great Lakes and can encounter waters subject to freezing.



The 100-foot WLI services large buoys near major harbors, such as this 6-foot by 20-foot buoy.



Crewmembers recover and deploy new buoys to best mark the navigable channel after shoaling.



A crewmember recovers a buoy to replace it with one better suited to ice conditions.



Crewmembers deploy a buoy using a team method.



The setting of buoys marks the navigable channel to ensure commerce moves freely.

