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Lake Hopatcong Foundation Improves Public Safety on Lake with Summer Police Patrols

LAKE HOPATCONG, N.J. (October 17, 2014)—For the second year, the Lake Hopatcong Foundation partnered with the Morris County Sheriff's Office and New Jersey State Police to boost on-the-water police patrols in an effort to improve the safety and security of those who live on and use Lake Hopatcong.

Through the program, 45 additional six-hour shifts were conducted that otherwise wouldn't have taken place, adding 270 hours of coverage on Lake Hopatcong by pairings of State Troopers and Sheriff's Officers. The shifts took place at times that were deemed to be key hours of need, primarily on weekend evenings from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The Lake Hopatcong Foundation funded the cost of the troopers and gasoline used on each shift. The Morris County Sheriff's Office supplied marine-trained officers for each shift, and the State Police provided the marine vessels. Because of added contributions from the state and efforts to make the shifts more efficient, 2014 saw a more than twice as many added shifts compared to the partnership last year, when only 18 additional shifts were funded.

During the 2014 shifts, there were 221 boardings (up from 69 last year) with 225 warnings issued, 8 summonses, and one BUI (boating under the influence) violation. There were 500 "property checks" conducted as well. The State Police report that there were zero accidents on the lake this summer during the shifts the foundation funded, and there were five accidents during other times.

The foundation is hopeful that these results can be replicated in 2015 with the ongoing support of the State and Morris County, which plan to continue to work together to efficiently protect the boaters, users, and residents of Lake Hopatcong.

According to Sheriff Edward V. Rochford of the Morris County Sheriff's Office (MCSO), "Lake Hopatcong is the largest freshwater lake in New Jersey and tourism is a strong source of revenue for the area. There are numerous instances of reckless boating and it is important to keep the lake safe. The MCSO is proud to be able to partner with the State Police and the Lake Hopatcong Foundation to make visiting Lake Hopatcong a safe and pleasurable experience."

Jessica K. Murphy, president of the Lake Hopatcong Foundation, said that safety is consistently brought up among members as one of residents' and visitors' top concerns on the lake, particular at times of heavy boat usage. "It is so essential for anyone on Lake Hopatcong to feel that they are in a safe place while they enjoy this beautiful lake with their family and friends," Murphy said. "These shifts help encourage safe boating and result in people feeling more secure while they're on the water. At the LHF we are constantly trying to improve both the lake environment and experience, and these added patrols certainly help us work toward that effort."

The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that aims to improve Lake Hopatcong for everyone, now and in the years to come. To learn more about the organization, go to www.LakeHopatcongFoundation.org.

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