

Lake Hopatcong Foundation Enhances Safety on Lake with Added 2013 Patrols

LAKE HOPATCONG, N.J. (December 2, 2013)—New Jersey State Police, the Morris County Sheriff's Office, and the Lake Hopatcong Foundation created a 2013 partnership to improve the safety and security of those who live and use Lake Hopatcong, adding police patrols to the lake in the summer of 2013.

Through the program, 18 additional patrols were conducted—with a State Trooper and Sheriff's Officer on each shift—adding 108 hours of coverage on the lake during what were deemed to be key times of need, on summer weekend evenings. These extra patrols and police presence likely contributed to the fact that zero accidents took place during the time of the additional patrols. The LHF funded the cost of the Troopers and vessels used on each shift. The Morris County Sheriff's Office supplied Marine-trained Officers for each shift.

Sheriff Edward V. Rochford stated, "It is so important for us all to work together to serve the public. This Partnership has an extremely positive effect on safety at Lake Hopatcong and has definitely served the public well."

Sixty-nine violations did occur during those shifts, with warnings generally issued for those violations. Hundreds of property checks also took place during the added patrols, which were focused on improving public safety.

"Based on our recent discussions with the state police, there is little doubt these additional patrols improved the level of safety this past boating season," said David Rubenstein of Mt. Arlington, who leads the public safety volunteer team at the Lake Hopatcong Foundation. "The state police informed us that there was not a single accident during foundation funded night patrols, and clearly that was a result of the enhanced presence on the lake."

In a meeting to recap the program, the N.J. State Police indicated that none of the night shifts would have occurred during the 2013 boating season if not for the LHF funding those patrols.

In a survey of local residents, safety on Lake Hopatcong was one of the top concerns, so the Lake Hopatcong Foundation aims to continue this and other efforts to improve safety and emergency communication and coordination on Lake Hopatcong.

"We're hoping to continue and even improve upon the success of this year's program if we can support it," said Thomas D. Flinn, Lake Hopatcong Foundation trustee and one of the members of the foundation's public safety team. "One of the things we are looking to do is to reduce the cost of the program by asking the State Police to contribute the use of the vessels, since they are on the lake anyway. We would then be in a position to increase the amount of patrols by 50 percent."

Jessica K. Murphy, president of the Lake Hopatcong Foundation, said, "It's important that people feel safe when they travel with their family on Lake Hopatcong, whether by boat, kayak, swimming, sailing, or any other mode of transportation or recreation. Anything we can do to encourage safe boating and make people feel more secure while they're out there improves the quality of life for all who use Lake Hopatcong."

The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is a 501c3 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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