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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: June 14, 2022

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**SARATOGA COUNTY SHERIFF, COUNTY, STATE, AND LOCAL OFFICIALS ENCOURAGE BOATING
SAFETY AHEAD OF SUMMER SEASON**

Law Enforcement Agencies Crackdown on Reckless & Impaired Boating in Saratoga County

STILLWATER, NY – Saratoga County Sheriff Michael Zurlo today announced Sheriff's Deputies, New York State Police, New York Park Police, New York Environmental Conservation Police and Town of Stillwater Police together will step up enforcement on waterways in Saratoga County this summer.

He was joined by State and local law enforcement agencies, Saratoga County District Attorney Karen Heggen, Town of Stillwater Supervisor Edward Kinowski, Town of Malta Supervisor Mark Hammond, and local leaders in a show of unity to reinforce the importance of boating safety as the weather warms and more people take to the water.

Officials urged boaters to choose a designated operator when out on the water, just as they would a designated driver when going out on the town.

Boaters are reminded that when on the water, even small amounts of alcohol may greatly impair one's balance, coordination, and judgement. Adding environmental stressors such as glare, heat, vibration, and engine noise, boaters may become quickly fatigued, greatly slowing reaction time. Together, this limits the ability to judge speed and distance, which is necessary for tracking moving objects on the water.

"There is absolutely no reason for anyone to operate a motorized vessel under the influence of alcohol or drugs. My marine patrol, along with our law enforcement partners, will be out in full force this summer to ensure those who decide to operate recklessly or under the influence are held accountable and, most importantly, the safety of all who enjoy the lake is protected," said Saratoga County Sheriff Michael Zurlo.

Saratoga County District Attorney, Karen Heggen said, "I join today with Sheriff Zurlo in shining a light on the importance of boater awareness and safety in the upcoming months. Enjoying the many waterways in Saratoga County is a wonderful pastime. When you choose to pilot a watercraft, it is vital to everyone's safety that you do not operate under the influence of drugs or alcohol."

(more)

Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Chairman and Town of Moreau Supervisor, Theodore T. Kusnierz, Jr. said, "Saratoga County is home to an abundance of scenic recreational areas, such as Saratoga Lake, and we urge residents and visitors alike to always enjoy these sites safely and responsibly. I would like to thank Sheriff Zurlo and our law enforcement partners for their coordinated efforts to help ensure the safety of all who use the waterways in Saratoga County this summer."

State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos said, "DEC's Division of Law Enforcement will be out on New York waters throughout the summer boating season to ensure everyone is being safe. Our Environmental Conservation Police Officers also encourage the public to call law enforcement if they observe any unsafe incidents. We want all boaters to get out on our waterways and enjoy themselves this summer, but it's critical that everyone observes the proper safety guidelines so that everyone makes it home safely. DEC is proud to partner with the Saratoga County Sheriff, State Police, State Park Police, and other local first responders on boater safety, this and every year."

New York State Police Superintendent Kevin P. Bruen said, "With the summer quickly approaching, boating activity will soon be ramping up. By making responsible choices, New Yorkers can do their part to keep our waterways safe and enjoyable for all. We urge all boaters to use good judgment, wear a life jacket, follow speed regulations, and drive sober. There is no excuse for operating any motorized vehicle or device while drunk or impaired. We want to thank our law enforcement partners for their collaboration and commitment in this operation."

Major Michael Pavelock, Acting Assistant Director of Law Enforcement, New York State Park Police said, "New York State Park Police are pleased to participate in the national Operation Dry Water campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of boating under the influence (BUI). The New York State Park Police ask boat operators and passengers to think about the dangers and ramifications with boating under the influence. Boating while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is equally dangerous for the boat operator and for the boat passenger. As part of the upcoming holiday weekend and throughout the boating season, we and our law enforcement partners will head to the water in a combined effort to provide a safe and enjoyable boating experience through education and enforcement."

Stillwater Police Chief Paul Pecor said, "Year after year we see an increase in the recreational use of Saratoga Lake. As the lake continues to grow in popularity, we also see an increase in the number of calls for emergency assistance on the lake. We urge all boater to follow the rules of the water, adhere to all safety regulations, and boat sober. I'd like to thank Sheriff Zurlo and the members of the Saratoga County Sheriff's Office Navigation Unit for their continued efforts in keeping Saratoga Lake a safe and enjoyable destination."

"Getting out on the water is an enjoyable and relaxing activity for many. We have partnered with Operation Dry Water this summer to help keep boaters safe by educating operators and passengers on the dangers of boating under the influence," said Janine Stuchin, Executive Director of the Prevention Council. "Staying sober while boating is a critical part of boating safely."

New York State law stipulates no one may operate a vessel on the state's waterways while impaired or intoxicated through the consumption of either alcohol or drugs. New York law prescribes heavy fines, imprisonment, and the suspension of operator privileges for violators.

In addition to enforcing boating while under the influence laws, Saratoga County Sheriff's Office Marine Patrol and law enforcement partners will step up efforts to enforce other laws pertaining to the operation of a boat including speeding, reckless operation, proper registration and required equipment, such as personal flotation devices.

For more information about the Saratoga County Sheriff's Office, please visit. www.saratogacountysheriff.org.