



SHERIFF KOOTENAI COUNTY



SHERIFF **ROBERT B. NORRIS**

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Recreation Safety Deputies gear up for the Memorial Day Weekend

Kootenai County: This year so far has been un-seasonably dry and warm and as a result recreation enthusiasts will be out enjoying the beauty that Kootenai County has to offer. It is anticipated that more boaters will be on the water and more people will be enjoying the national forest this upcoming weekend. As a result the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office has started its marine patrols on the waterways and the Backcountry Deputies will be working in the National Forest.

The Kootenai County Sheriff's Office will have marine patrols on the waterways in the county, promoting boating safety, educating the boaters and conducting enforcement when necessary. Since it is the beginning of the boating season the focus for the Marine Deputies will be education, but there will be zero tolerance for Boating Under the Influence and reckless boating activity. The goal of the Marine Patrols is to ensure that everyone has a safe and enjoyable experience on the water.

Some things to be aware of on the water this time of year. Even though it has been warm and is expected to be warm this weekend, the water is still very cold. Extended exposure to the water can cause hypothermia. Additionally, there are still hazards on and below the surface due to the spring run-off. Please use caution as you are traveling across the waterways. The Post Falls Dam is still open and the current flow through the dam is causing a dangerous current both above and below the dam. Boats and anyone in or near the water on the Spokane River should use caution as the current can pull you under the surface. It is recommended that life jackets be worn while on or near these waterways.

While in the backcountry there are some steps you can take to keep yourself safe. First make sure you have a plan and let someone know what your plan is. Ensure your cell phones are charged and on. Most areas you will not have cell service, but if you become lost or missing this device may assist us with locating you. Make sure you have food and water with you. Most of the roadways are open and clear of snow, but there are still areas that may not be passable. If you come upon these areas, please turn around. The snow is very soft which may cause you to become stuck and stranded.

If you have any questions about rules or regulations or have questions about the backcountry or the waterways you can contact the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office at 208-446-1300 and ask for one of the Recreational Safety Deputies.

We hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable Memorial Day Weekend.

Sheriff Robert B. Norris