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Operation Dry Water

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – Alaska Wildlife Troopers are gearing up for the sixth annual heightened awareness and educational campaign, Operation Dry Water. This weekend, from June 26 through June 28, Troopers will be out on the waterways specifically to contact boaters to make sure all vessel operators are not impaired.

Last year during Operation Dry Water, 38 Troopers across the state put 387 hours toward the heightened enforcement efforts. Troopers patrolled the lakes and rivers in the Mat-Su area, Kenai Peninsula, salt water areas of Southeast Alaska, Prince William Sound, and Kodiak. In addition, Troopers spent time on the Kuskokwim River from Bethel to Aniak and as well as the Chena and Tanana Rivers in the Fairbanks area.

From June 27 – 29, 2014, Troopers conducted the following:

- 686 vessels and 2211 boaters were contacted
- 33 citations were issued and 106 warnings were provided for recreational boating offenses
- Field sobriety tests were conducted on a number of boaters, the highest BAC recorded was .067, and no boaters were arrested for BUI
- In addition, 56 fishing offenses and 2 other offenses were identified.

“Statistics tell us that alcohol is the leading contributing factor across the nation in boating-related accidental deaths,” said Captain Steve Hall, commander of the Alaska Wildlife Troopers’ Southern Detachment. “However, we believe boating under the influence is a much bigger problem than we can quantify based on statistics.”

The focus of Operation Dry Water is to educate boaters about the dangers of boating under the influence. In Alaska, the standards for a DUI are the same for watercraft, motorized vehicles and aircraft, (AS 28.35.030). A person can get a DUI if they are impaired by alcohol, controlled substances or even prescription medication. Additionally, Troopers will promote safe recreating on the water encouraging all boaters to don a personal floatation device.

The heightened enforcement effort is organized nationally by the National Association of Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). In Alaska, AWT will participate statewide. The goal is to contact as many boaters as possible to ensure they are complying with boating safety laws and not boating under the influence.

NASBLA has a website with great resources about the program:

<http://www.operationdrywater.org/>