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ST. JOSEPH COUNTY

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Boaters Advised to Refrain from Causing Wakes

With the recent significant rain and high water levels, Undersheriff Jason Bingaman is asking St. Joseph County boaters asked to refrain from causing wakes until water levels recede.

Many St. Joseph County lakes and streams are at extremely high levels following the heavy rain received in the past week. High lake levels will make boating more hazardous, and boaters and anglers should prepare for these conditions by using extra caution.

- With extremely high lake levels, wakes may cause shoreline damage, docks and boats to come unattached, and dangerous floating obstacles.
- Use caution when launching because high water can make ramps tricky. Be patient if others take a little longer than normal.
- When boating near the shore or in coves, go slow to avoid underwater obstacles such as signposts, trees, stumps and other obstructions that are normally on dry ground.

Undersheriff Bingaman also reminds all boaters of Michigan Compiled Laws 324.80158, Responsibility of vessel owner for damage caused by vessel wake.

The owner of any vessel operated upon the waters of this state is personally responsible for any damage to life or property resulting from a wake or swell created by the negligent operation or propulsion of the vessel, if the vessel is being operated with his or her consent.

The Sheriff's Office Marine Patrol Division deputies are on the water in many locations and available for assistance. The Marine Patrol Division investigates accidents that occur on the water, provide no-cost boater safety courses, and conduct inspections of watercraft.

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