
OUR MARINE SQUAD - IT ENFORCES MARINE LAWS ON MIDLAND'S LAKE



SANFORD- Increased boat traffic on Sanford Lake, Midland County's most popular body of water for water sports, boating and fishing, not to mention the thousands of swimmers who flock to the sandy beaches each summer, has resulted in the need of a marine law enforcement program. **For several previous seasons, requests had been made by area residents, and the State Waterways Commission had recommended a law enforcement program for the busy lake.** In an effort to serve the county residents in any needed capacity, the Midland County Sheriff's Department petitioned the Midland County Board of Supervisors for an allocation of funds to organize a marine patrol.

FIRST GIVEN \$800 The department was allocated \$800 in the spring of 1960 for equipment and operation, and the marine squad was organized by John Smallwood (then chief deputy) under the direction of Sheriff Ira M. Smith. **Eight of the deputies served on the patrol, and all were graduated from the Marine Enforcement School, which is co-sponsored by the Michigan Sheriff's Association and the Michigan State Waterways Commission.** Four boats, privately owned by the deputies, were pressed into service and two of the four were equipped for routine patrol and rescue operations. Patrol was concentrated on holidays and weekends, and whenever boat traffic warranted. However, patrols were not regularly scheduled; two deputies served on each boat during their off duty hours. Though not operating on a law enforcement basis the first year, offenders were contacted and made acquainted with the regulations governing safe boating operation. Even this limited service was hailed by all concerned as "one of the best things that ever happened to Sanford Lake."

\$3,000 IN 1961 Due to the favorable response to the program, the allocation for operation in 1961 was approximately \$3,000, matching funds from the State Waterways Commission and the Midland County Board of Supervisors. The four boats were leased from the deputies on a seasonal basis and additional equipment was purchased. **At the beginning of the 1961 summer season, the marine squad, still under the leadership of Smallwood, placed channel marker buoys from the site of the Wolverine Power Company dam to Edenville, marking a safe boating course for fast boat traffic.** Hazard marker buoys were placed along the shorelines where underwater stumps were dangerously close to the water surface. At the Francis Grove public bathing beach, which attracts as many as 55,000 swimmers and bathers in a single season, they placed "no wake" boundary buoys as a protective measure for swimmers. The past year marked a giant step forward in the organization, now only three years old. The allocation from 1962 was increased to \$6,000, which permitted the department for the first time to own its own patrol boat and equipment.

HAVE OWN BOAT The 16-foot craft with a 75 horsepower motor, has full canvas, making it an all weather boat, and is equipped with first aid equipment, life-saving rings, fire extinguisher and grappling hooks for use in drownings. **Smallwood had been promoted to the office of undersheriff, and newly appointed Chief Deputy Robert Schlafley assumed leadership of the marine squad.** In addition to the new craft, the four boats previously in service were available and could be called into action on short notice. Although still concentrating the patrol on weekends, holidays and for heavy boat traffic, the services of the marine squad were available at any time needed. In addition to maintaining safe boating practices

on Sanford Lake and the section of Wixom Lake that is in Midland County, they also assisted in two drownings, recovered lost boats and carried emergency messages to boats on the lakes.

SERVICES PRAISED This past summer at the scene of the World Championship Boat Races on Sanford Lake, they placed safety boundary buoys to prevent spectator boats from getting too close to the racing course. Accompanied by local skin divers, they gave constant patrol throughout the five-day event. The courtesy service of the marine squad was lauded by officials of the National Outboard Racing Association.

Their launching site, being used through the courtesy of the Wolverine Power Company is located on Water road on the east shoreline of the lake in the Flanders Beach area. This past year the site was improved by stump removal, general cleanup and partial fencing by the deputies on their off duty hours. They also distributed gravel, made available by the Midland County Road Commission to improve the launching beach. In addition to Chief Deputy Schlafley, deputies serving on the marine squad included Richard Boyce, Mellis Streeter, Jack Warren, Rolland Stowits, William Dehn, Thomas Smith, Gordon Carr, James Joynt and Edward Miller.