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Tuesday, May 21, 2002

Police make move to end island party

By **DAN HOCKENSMITH**

Times Herald

CLAY TWP. -- The annual "Jobbie Nooner" beer blasts on Gull Island have grown too large to be safe, St. Clair County's top marine law enforcement official told the township board Monday.

Lt. William Krul of the county Sheriff Department Marine Division said police and U.S. Coast Guard units were unable to approach the four-acre island to stop fights and prevent underage drinking during the two largest parties in the summer -- because thousands of boaters and hundreds of boats blocked their way.

Krul, who said he was appearing before the board as a spokesman for the Preventive Coalition of Southeast Michigan, wants to have the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which owns Gull Island, declare it off-limits during the first weekend of summer and the Labor Day weekend.

"We can't do our job because it's so overpopulated those two weekends a year," he said.

Krul failed Monday in his bid to receive a letter of support from the township board after several members said declaring the island off-limits only would result in parties being moved to different weekends.

Last year's 26th annual Jobbie Nooner -- named in honor of automobile industry "jobbies" who began the festivities as a noontime escape from work -- on June 22 drew about 5,000 partiers, police said.

Several participants in the June party reported being injured in fights.

Eight people were ticketed for being drunk and disorderly,

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PRESENCE FELT: Lt. William Krul of the St. Clair County Sheriff Department Marine Division watches over Gull Island partiers on Labor Day. He is seeking to close off the island to the annual "jobbie nooner" party.

and a dozen teen-agers were cited for possessing alcohol.

A second party on the Labor Day weekend brought about 4,000 people to Gull Island.

Krul ticketed two people for not wearing life jackets on personal watercraft.

Both parties left the island strewn with garbage, police said.

Crowd control and revelers' safety are the primary concerns of authorities, township Police Chief Thomas Eder said.

"If something happens -- if there's a mini-riot out there -- who are (partiers) supposed to go to?" he said.

Eder and Krul said they would continue to press the Corps of Engineers to crack down on the island bashes.

m You can call reporter Dan Hockensmith at (810) 989-6275.



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