

NEWS



Gaylesha Simmons / The Detroit News

Gull Island party policing promised

Various authorities to keep order at bash that draws thousands

By Edward L. Cardenas / *The Detroit News*

GULL ISLAND -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is working with local law enforcement to insure safety at this weekend's Jobbie Nooner party on small Gull Island in Lake St. Clair.

The nearly four-acre, man-made island has been the site of a large summer party for 27 years. The bash has grown from four boats and 17 people to a wild gathering with more than 500 boats and upwards of 7,000 people. The island is about five miles east of Metro Beach Metropark.

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"People need to take care of themselves and act like adults," said Lynn Duerod of the Army Corps, which oversees Gull Island. "It is not considered a recreation area. It is open public land."

There are no plans to shut down the party or restrict access, but revelers definitely will see a police presence, law enforcers said Wednesday,

Members of the Macomb and St. Clair counties sheriff's departments, U.S. Coast Guard and Border Patrol, Harsens Island Fire Department and Ontario Provincial Police will be on hand to enforce laws and provide emergency services.

"There are safety factors, as well as health concerns" said Macomb Sheriff Mark Hackel, who will help patrol around the island on a personal watercraft this weekend. "We are trying not to dampen spirits or be the bad guys. We just want to make sure people are safe and have a good time."

Once partygoers drop anchor, they can relax on their boats or wade to the island to dance to recorded and live music, trade beads in Mardi Gras fashion or play volleyball.

"It takes extra work on our part to provide security for that event," said Lt. William Krul, commander of St. Clair County's marine patrol. "But it's no different than what we provide for the Port Huron-to-Mackinac Race."

His deputies made 10 arrests last year for drunken boating, and "quite a few citations for minors consuming alcohol," Krul said.

There also were a couple of fights, he added, "but for the number of people out there, it was fairly good. We will also have some of the firefighters with us, in case paramedics are needed."

Members of the We are Here Foundation, which sponsors an annual Nautical Coast Clean-up on Lake St. Clair, will place garbage cans on the island.

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