Boating Safety Committee Report

The Boating Safety Committee met on November 20th, 2024.Chief Paula Schwan of the Issaquah Police Department will be co-chairing this committee with Sheriff Tom Croskrey of the Benton County Sheriff’s Office.

The members were presented budget updates by Bryan Alexander with the Washington State Parks. Mr. Alexander also gave updates on upcoming Marine Law Enforcement Classes.

The committee was given a presentation of compiled data from the United States Coast Guard, B.A.R.D. (Boating Accident Reporting Database), The Washington State Parks and Recreation, and the Washington State Department of Health.

The compiled data showed an alarming public safety issue related to boating safety. At a minimum there is a 95 percent discrepancy between what was reported and what was not reported or known by law enforcement. The data for this came from a pilot program with the Washington State Department of Health. One example provided showed there were 52 incidents reported in Washington state which came from the United States Coast Guard annual report. The 52 incidents were comprised of all accidents, injuries, and deaths related to recreational boating. The Washington State Department of Health reported 848 incidents that required EMS response, emergency room visits, or hospitalization. One of the discrepancy examples showed out of the 848 incidents there were 65 people seen or hospitalized for traumatic brain injuries related to recreational boating.

The Committee agreed more research is needed to identify recommendations to the Legislative Committee and the Executive board. To identify the problems and make recommendations, the committee will be having workshops to compile a more comprehensive report for submission.

Thank you,

Committee Staff Member

Lt. Erik Magnuson

Benton County Sheriff’s Office