

Marine Police to increase "3 Lakes" enforcement



By **Alan Clemons**

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Alabama Marine Police officials will increase enforcement efforts of the "3 Lakes Law" - the Alabama statute restricting the maximum length and speed of certain vessels using Lake Martin, Lake Harris (Wedowee) and Weiss Lake.

"We're going to start actively identifying those vessels in violation, give them a warning and tell them to remove their boats from the lake," said Captain Matt Brooks, the District Supervisor for the Marine Police Division in District 3, which includes Lake Martin. "Officers will maintain a log of those vessels warned and any future violation would result in a citation."

The "3 Lakes Law" prohibits the following vessels, unless such vessels are grandfathered in by the law, from being used on the three lakes mentioned:

1. Any vessel exceeding 26 feet, 11 inches in length capable of exceeding 60 miles per hour
2. Any vessel exceeding 30 feet, 6 inches in length
3. All houseboats or any recreational vessel that constitute a fully equipped dwelling similar in content to a mobile home, with a marine sanitation device, galley and sleeping quarters.

Houseboats and boats in excess of 30 feet, 6 inches in length that are not capable of exceeding 60 miles per hour, and were registered and in use on or before July 1, 2006, will be grandfathered and allowed to continue using those lakes once a permit is issued.

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"There are several ways for our officers to tell whether a boat may meet the grandfathering requirements," Brooks said. "Once we've determined that then we'll give them the necessary information to begin the permitting process."

Additionally, Marine Police is in the process of finalizing the requirements for the permitting process of grandfathered boats. As soon as the permitting requirements are fully developed, implementation of the permitting process will begin. Once grandfathered boats are permitted, Marine Police Officers can be more effective in enforcing the law and removing illegal boats from the water.

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