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Date: 5/14/2013

NDOW to Host 'Ready, Set, Wear it!' Event at Las Vegas Boat Harbor

The Nevada Department of Wildlife, in partnership with the National Park Service, local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Southern Nevada SEA Partners and the City of Henderson Aquatics Department will participate in the national "Ready, Set, Wear It!" life jacket campaign hosting an event scheduled for Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Las Vegas Boat Harbor, within the Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

The annual event was created by the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) in partnership with the Canadian Safe Boating Council (CSBC). The day kicks-off National Safe Boating Week, May 18-24, the official launch of the 2013 North American Safe Boating Campaign. Last year, 3,993 people gathered at more than 145 events held around the world to set a new record for the number of participants who wore an inherently buoyant life jacket and inflated their inflatable life jacket, according the National Safe Boating Council.

"This national event is a great opportunity to talk about life jackets in our local area," said Game Warden Captain David Pfiffner, NDOW's boating law administrator. "On average, five people a year die in Nevada from boating accidents, and the vast majority of those people would have lived if they had only worn a life jacket. There simply is no better way to stay safe on the water."

The Las Vegas Boat Harbor, local city and county leaders will issue proclamations recognizing Safe Boating Week in Southern Nevada at 10 a.m. Afterwards, at 11 a.m., visitors

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will gather in the parking lot and put on their life jackets to demonstrate their commitment to wearing a life jacket. Each participant will be recorded and counted toward the new world record.

U.S. Coast Guard statistics show that drowning was the reported cause of death in 70% of recreational boating fatalities in 2011, and that 84 percent of those who drowned were not wearing life jackets. Mark Hnat, supervisory park ranger, Lake Mead National Recreation Area states, "We're encouraging people to come out to the park before Memorial Day to make sure their life jackets are as ready for the season as they are."

NDOW will sponsor a life jacket exchange during the event. Boaters can bring in old, worn life jackets that are no longer safe to use and receive a properly fitted, new life jacket for free. Information booths, displays and Coastie the talking robot boat will also be set up at the marina until 1 p.m. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary will be conducting free vessel examinations at the launch ramp.

"Our flotilla teams will check your registration, personal flotation devices, visual distress signals, ventilation and more. Boats that pass the examination are awarded a distinctive Vessel Safety Check Decal," said Mark Himes, public affairs officer for District 11SR, Division 9, Flotilla 96.

As a precursor to the event, Friday is national "Wear a Life Jacket to Work Day." The National Safe Boating Council encourages businesses of all kinds to wear a comfortable, inflatable life jacket to work to raise awareness of safety. The National Safe Boating Council is asking all participants to take a picture of themselves in their life jacket while at work and post it to

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the “Ready, Set, Wear It!” Facebook page (www.Facebook.com/ReadySetWearIt) or submit directly to the NSBC at outreach@safeboatingcouncil.org.

Members of the boating public as well as those interested in showing the wearability of life jackets are encouraged to participate. More information about the event and safe boating is available at www.Facebook.com/ReadySetWearIt.

Boaters can learn more about Nevada’s specific safe boating programs or take a boating education course online at the NDOW website www.ndow.org.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) protects, restores and manages fish and wildlife, and promotes fishing, hunting, and boating safety. NDOW’s wildlife and habitat conservation efforts are primarily funded by sportsmen’s license and conservation fees and a federal surcharge on hunting and fishing gear. Support wildlife and habitat conservation in Nevada by purchasing a hunting, fishing, or combination license. Find us on Facebook, Twitter or visit us at www.ndow.org.

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