

DIVISION OF WATERCRAFT

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Figure 14.1. New Englanders in 1778 arrived in a flatboat similar to this one on display at Campus Martius Museum and established Marietta as the first permanent settlement in Ohio.

EARLY BOATING IN OHIO

On the morning of 7 April 1788, 48 men from New England on their flatboat *Adventure Galley* and three canoes landed at the point where the waters of the Muskingum River mingle with those of the broad Ohio River. There they established Marietta, the first permanent settlement in Ohio. By the middle of August 1788, these settlers had built a cluster of houses on the point and a few furnished dwellings within the log-walled fort, Campus Martius. That first autumn, the town numbered 232 people. They had a harvest of corn, potatoes, pumpkin, squash, and cabbage; and the hunters brought in deer, turkey, elk, and buffalo.

The flatboat was the least expensive of the many types of boats used at that time, and it became the standard conveyance for families moving west (Fig. 14.1). The flatboat was powered by hand using poles or oars for steering, and usually floated with the current. This form of transportation changed dramatically in 1807 when Robert Fulton invented the steamboat. In 1811, the *New Orleans* was the



Figure 14.2. After World War II, interest in sailing returned as demonstrated here on Lake Erie near Put-in-Bay. Photo by Keith D. Edwards, September 1989.

first steamboat launched on western waters. Steamboats made it possible to increase the speed of the trip not only upriver but also downriver as well. Commerce on the rivers increased, and by 1835, more than 650 steamboats had been built in the West.

As early as 1824, the United States Army Corps of Engineers was directed to improve the nation's rivers by removing snags. Removing the snags, however, was not enough to make the Ohio River a reliable and predictable mode of transport. During dry spells, the Ohio was so low that boats sat on their hulls in the mud until the water level rose. Recognizing a threat to the nation's growth, Congress authorized a series of locks and dams to provide year-round navigation. By 1929, the Ohio River had been channelized to a depth of nine feet and fitted with 46 locks and dams. Today, the Ohio is a series of stair-stepped lakes through which water flows slowly when the river is in pool stage.

Water provides the cheapest and most efficient mode of transport. From our country's origins, water transportation was used basically for moving people and goods, with special emphasis on economic development, territorial expansion, and defense. During the middle decades of the 19th Century, the Ohio Canal system and its horse-and-mule-powered canal boats furnished vital services to the state's commerce. By the early 1900's, however, a new use of watercraft entered the scene upon the production of the outboard motor by Ole Evinrude in 1909.

PLEASURE BOATING DEVELOPS AND EXPANDS

The outboard motor, sometimes referred to as "kicker," allowed for longer trips and exploration, which initiated the development of a new form of recreation,

pleasure boating. Following World War I, the recreational use of powered watercraft increased slowly because costs were still very high, and only the more affluent could afford this hobby. The economic depression of the 1930's greatly slowed the expansion, and World War II virtually stopped it. However, following World War II, the expertise for manufacturing pleasure boats and motors greatly increased, and the post-war development and expansion of recreation brought with it a sudden interest in pleasure boating. The great rush was on to develop facilities and to expand water sports in general. More people with more leisure time and greater affluence ignited an unprecedented demand for all kinds of watercraft. Watercraft suitable for hunting, fishing, canoeing, general recreation, and for racing competition were in demand. To meet the demand of the millions who desired to participate in water-related recreational activities, new bodies of water were created near population centers.

Access to water areas throughout Ohio was greatly enhanced by new and better roadways. The spectrum of boating industries expanded through a creative explosion concerning size, shape, and propulsion of watercraft, along with the means of transporting them. About 1945, the interest in watercraft popularized the return of sailing (Fig. 14.2) not only for individuals and groups, but also for nations engaging in international competition which symbolized a part of the national heritage.



Figure 14.3. The 55th Street Marina on Lake Erie in Cleveland is one of the facilities supported by the Waterways Safety Fund administered by the Division of Watercraft.

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THE WATERWAYS SAFETY FUND

In response to the dramatic increase in watercraft, the 101st General Assembly created the Waterways Safety Fund in 1955 (Ohio Revised Code, Section 1547.75). The fund was originally administered by the Division of Shore Erosion (see page 143) and was established to provide moneys for construction and improvement of public facilities for

recreational boating on the navigable waters within Ohio. The fund also enabled the State to obtain federal matching funds for the establishment of harbors of refuge.

The sources of funds for the Waterways Safety Fund are the Ohio Marine Fuel Tax (Ohio Revised Code, Section

5735.051), also created in 1955, and the fees collected by the Division of Watercraft for boat registrations and boat and motor titles. Currently, one-half of one percent of the total motor fuel tax is dedicated to providing services to the boating public in the form of facilities, education, enforcement, and administrative services. Since the inception of the Division of Watercraft in 1960, more than \$30 million has been provided for capital improvements statewide to develop and maintain boating facilities (Figs. 14.3 and 14.4). More than \$3.2 million of this has been spent to restore and maintain the lock system on the Muskingum River, thus making it possible (when the locks are operative)

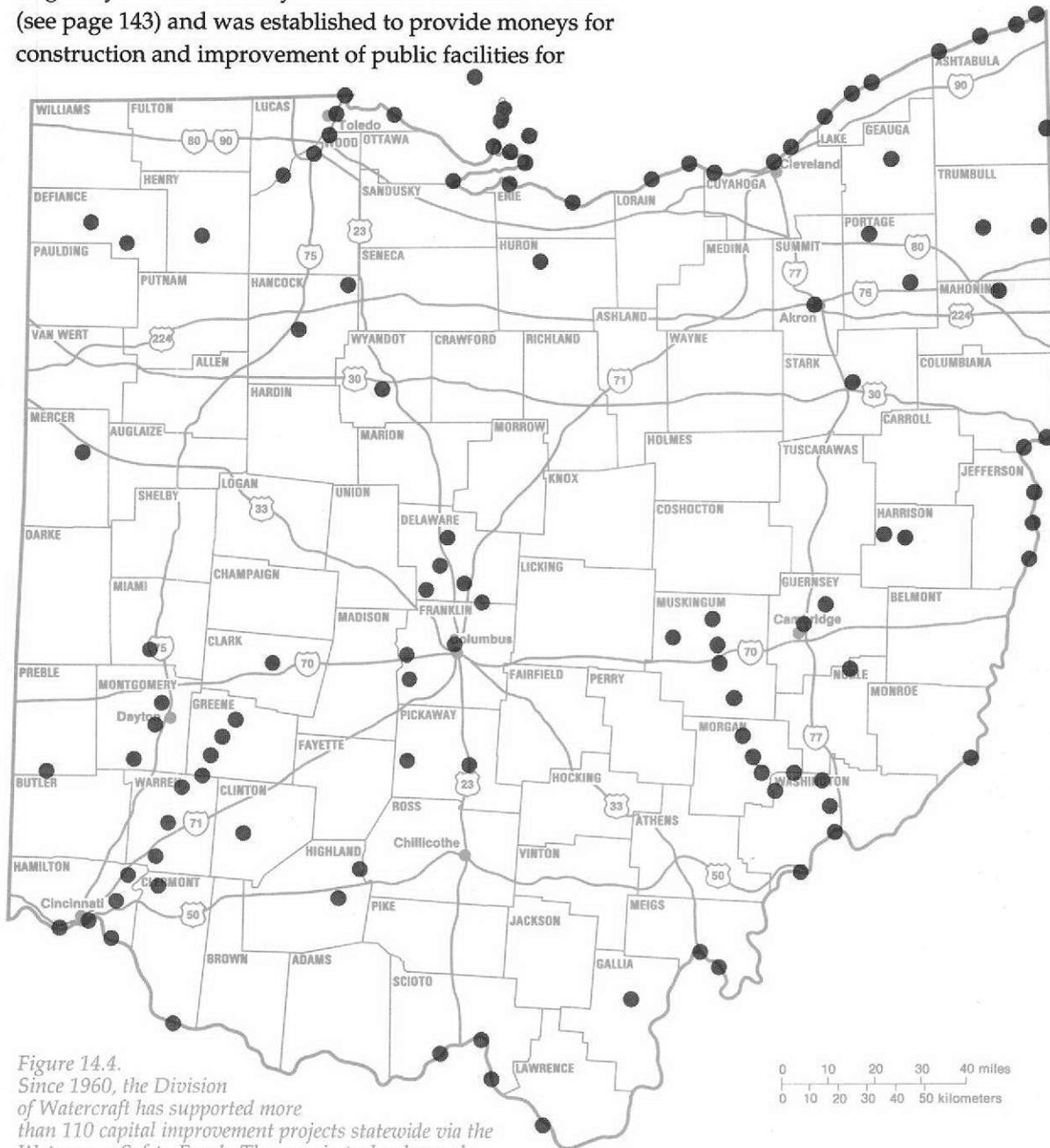


Figure 14.4. Since 1960, the Division of Watercraft has supported more than 110 capital improvement projects statewide via the Waterways Safety Fund. These projects develop and maintain a variety of boating facilities.

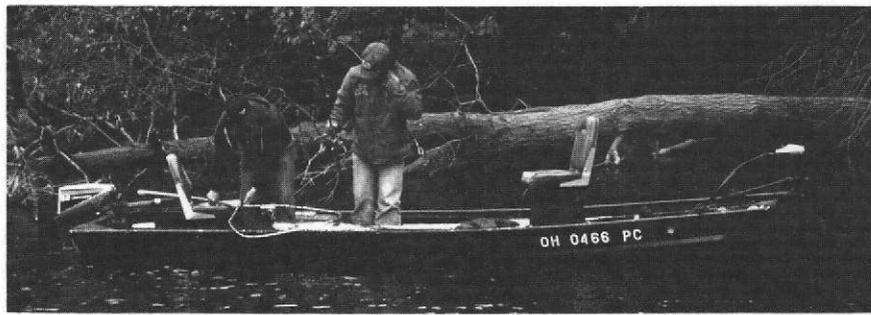


Figure 14.5. As a part of the registration process, "OH" numbers are assigned to a watercraft by the Division of Watercraft for the life of the boat. These numbers become the primary and permanent means of identification of the watercraft. Division of Watercraft file photo.

to launch a boat in Zanesville and travel all the way to New Orleans, Louisiana, and beyond.

CREATION OF THE DIVISION AND ITS FIRST DECADE

As the number of pleasure watercraft catapulted, it became evident that reasonable regulations were necessary for order and safety on the waterways. The establishment of jurisdictional boundaries and regulations to protect users' interest and safety was paramount. The United States Coast Guard had the authority to control boat traffic on federal navigable waters throughout the nation. It provided a uniform numbering system which was applicable only on federal navigable waters, and it became apparent that the Coast Guard could not administer the program within the states.

Each state and many communities created their own set of rules and regulations, as well as permits or registration procedures. Boating regulations on State-controlled bodies of water in Ohio were established and enforced by the Divisions of Wildlife and Parks. Other jurisdictional entities, such as cities and conservancy districts, established and enforced their own regulations and set their own registration fees. The boater was required to obtain many registrations just to boat within one state's borders. Ohio boaters who traveled around the state with their boat and trailer, conceivably needed to purchase as many as twelve different registrations.

In 1958, the Federal Boating Safety Act (the Bonner Bill) was passed by Congress. This Act enabled the Coast Guard to develop and administer a uniform numbering system for all of the states and allowed one registration be sold in each state. The 103rd General Assembly passed Amended Substitute House Bill 928 in 1959 conforming Ohio law to the concepts and objectives of the federal Act and creating the Division of Watercraft within the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The main functions of the Division, which became operative 1 January 1960, were to register boats and motors and to fund capital improvement projects such as launch ramps and marinas. The Ohio

law and administrative regulations were approved by the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard on 16 February 1960. Since no central agency existed prior to this time, the number of boats actually using State waters was unknown. There were general projections of approximately 300,000. However, after the first season, powerboat registrations with "OH numbers" (Fig. 14.5) totaled only 92,000. Pleasure boating has enjoyed a steady annual growth, and during the mid-1980's registrations in Ohio exceeded 360,000.

Typical of new agencies, the Division focused on the basics of the law: boat numbering, registration fees for boats and motors, boat inventory, financial reciprocity with local jurisdictions, and the enforcement of the elements of the law. During the early years of the agency, patience was imperative as organizational structure and public understanding were developed. Lacking enforcement authority, the Division initiated interagency negotiations because enforcement had to be shared by authorized employees of the Divisions of Wildlife and Parks and local enforcement agencies. With enactment of House Bill 949 in 1960, Ohio became the first state in the nation to adopt a uniform system of buoy markers to designate controlled operation areas of waters used for recreational boating.

The Ohio law provided for an Administrator and a Waterways Safety Commission consisting of four members. The Commission members served without pay and acted in an advisory capacity to the Administrator. James D. Wells (Fig. 14.6), former Assistant Director of ODNR, was appointed the first Administrator in January 1960; and A.F. Wakefield of Vermilion, H.J. Watterson of Rocky River, Dr. Byron Johnson of Ashtabula, and K.D. Amsbary of Middleport were appointed to the first Commission. Upon enactment in September 1963, Amended Substitute House Bill No. 573 made several revisions, including changing the title of Administrator to Chief of the Division of Watercraft, and changing the name of the Waterways Safety Commission to the Waterways Safety Council. This legislation also expanded the number of Council members to five.

The issuance of Certificates of Titles and recording of liens (mortgages on watercraft and outboard motors) were

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initiated on 11 October 1963. With the enactment of Senate Bill 350 in 1971, boat and motor titling was transferred from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and became the responsibility of the Division of Watercraft on 21 December 1971. Paul Sarossy (Fig. 14.7) was appointed the second Chief of the Division in July 1964 and served until June 1971 when Rodney E. Cooper (Fig. 14.8) succeeded him.



Figure 14.6. James D. Wells, first Administrator and Chief of the Division of Watercraft, 1960-1963.



Figure 14.7. Paul Sarossy, second Chief of the Division of Watercraft, 1964-1971.

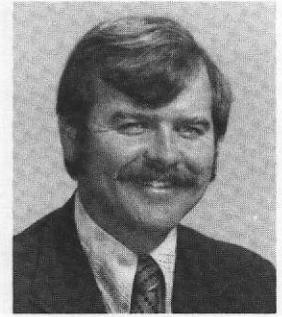


Figure 14.8. Rodney E. Cooper, third Chief of the Division of Watercraft, 1971-1973.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1970'S

Due to the popularity of recreational boating and the enactment in 1971 of the Federal Boat Safety Act, 1972 marked the beginning of the Division's education and enforcement programs. The first training academy for new officers was held at the Ohio State Highway Patrol Academy in 1972, and consisted of 16 officers. The first class of Watercraft Officers was commissioned in 1973. Originally, six district offices were established throughout the state to serve the boating communities, administer boating law, and provide education programs.

During the formative years, the field staff taught tens of thousands of school children water and boating safety. Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death to those under 44 years of age, and the field officers taught youngsters and adults ways to avoid danger on or in the water. As the expertise of the field staff grew and problems facing boaters were documented, Watercraft Officers began to customize training and education programs for adult boaters and professionals including members of police, fire, and rescue agencies.

Today, the Division's adult boating education programs include classroom and hands-on skill development. These include navigation, powerboat handling, required equipment, State laws, and general boating safety (Fig. 14.9). The Division of Watercraft uses a variety of boats in its

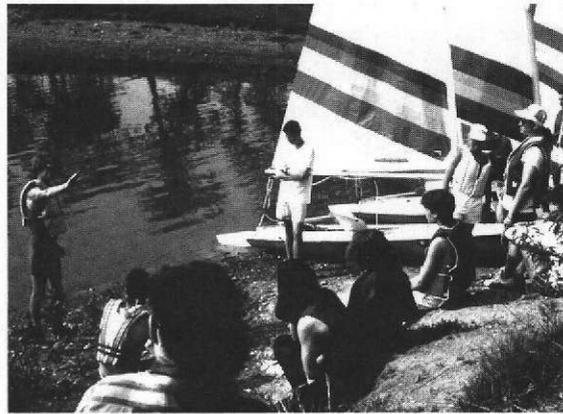


Figure 14.9. Safety education is a primary activity of the Division of Watercraft. Watercraft Officer Doug Golding is teaching a sailing class. Division of Watercraft file photo.

training courses. Stability, overboard procedures, and the movement of boaters in small boats are all demonstrated in detail. Boats used include sailboats (see Plate 14), johnboats, small inflatables, canoes, and kayaks. Additional topics include weather, personal protection, navigation, and use of safety equipment and marlinspike. A number of training videos and slide programs have been produced by the Division and are used across the state.

The Division also offers programs in river safety, flatwater and moving-water paddling. The Division of Watercraft teamed with the American Canoe Association and the American Red Cross in 1976 to cosponsor the first Ashtabula Canoe School. This annual canoe school continues today and is one of the largest in the United States. At the April school, river paddling has been taught to hun-

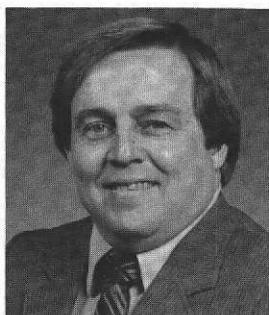


Figure 14.10. Thomas A. Smith, Jr., fourth Chief of the Division of Watercraft, 1973-1975.

dreds of river and flatwater canoeists and kayakers. Thomas A. Smith, Jr. (Fig. 14.10) replaced Rodney Cooper as Chief in September 1973 and served until January 1975. Norville L. Hall (Fig. 14.11) was appointed Chief in April 1975 and served until May 1983.

In 1978, Jim French of the Division pioneered the development of the first river rescue program in the United States and Canada. In years prior to 1978, nine firemen and policemen in Ohio lost their lives during fast water rescue attempts. In 1978, the deaths of ten boaters and two firefighters emphasized the need of "river rescue." An ad hoc committee on fast water rescue was formed by canoeists, emergency medical technicians, and park rangers to develop safe, simple, and practical rescue techniques.

The Division of Watercraft's River Rescue Program emphasizes the ultimate safety of the rescuer, simple techniques, and the use of practical equipment. Training administered by the Division includes experiences of basic boat handling on fast water, rescue techniques, medical considerations, accident-scene preplanning, rescue team development, self-rescue, and training/equipment recommendations. Rescue personnel from across the country and Canada attend the Division's River Rescue Program training sessions. Using materials furnished by the Division of Watercraft, trainees return to their respective agencies to develop and maintain their own river rescue programs.

Due to the success of the River Rescue Program Course, rescue personnel nationwide have asked the Division of Watercraft for additional training courses in Ice Rescue, Water Rescue, Vertical Rescue, Hypothermia, and Cold Water Near Drowning. These courses are being taught, and manuals are being developed

to correspond to the training. Many requests for information are received daily concerning training courses. The National Association of Search and Rescue has asked the Division of Watercraft to help develop a training course for their membership and they are in the process of endorsing our training programs. The Ohio State University has requested the Division's participation on its rescue unit, and is in the process of developing a comprehensive manual on all types of rescue work with the staff of the Division contributing information concerning water, ice, and river rescue.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1980'S

In 1980, boat registrations were changed from annual to triennial renewal, and a renewal-by-mail system was provided. The Division also stopped licensing outboard motors separately, and fees were established by length classifications of the watercraft providing added convenience to the boaters, as well as being a very cost-effective procedure. As an additional service, more than 260 statewide registration agents are currently available for local convenience.

Paul Gregory (Fig. 14.12) was named Chief in June 1983 and continues to serve in that capacity. In 1983, the Division started awarding grants for boater safety education to political subdivisions, and tens of thousands of dollars have thus far been awarded to community recreation departments, State universities, cities, counties, and townships. Through the grants, boating safety programs are available to the communities and students.

The Ohio Historical Canoe Route Association was born in 1983. The group's mission was to canoe across Ohio in an effort to pro-



Figure 14.11. Norville L. Hall, fifth Chief of the Division of Watercraft, 1975-1983.



Figure 14.12. Paul Gregory, sixth Chief of the Division of Watercraft, 1983 to the present.

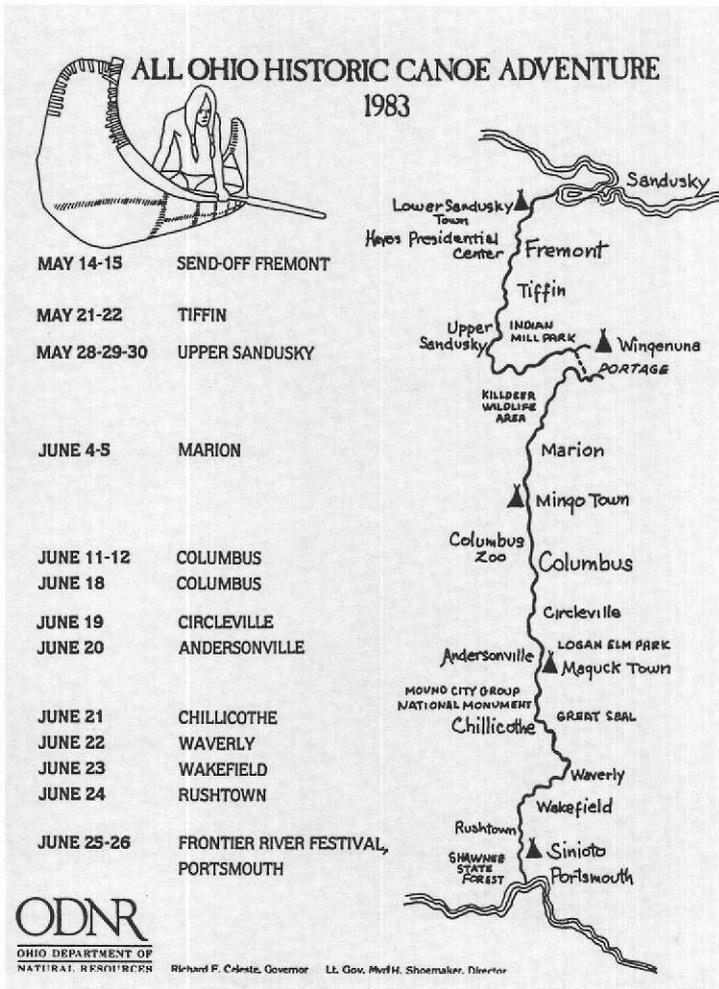


Figure 14.13. A portion of the printed program of the first canoe adventure of the Ohio Historical Canoe Route Association featuring the route from Sandusky Bay on Lake Erie south to the Ohio River at Portsmouth.

corps of volunteers, the Division has been able to provide many additional hours of programming to help meet the ever-increasing needs of the boaters of Ohio.

In 1985, the Division of Watercraft applied for and received a State Agency Grant from the Division of Litter Prevention and Recycling. With the funding, the Division of Watercraft implemented a comprehensive litter prevention and recycling education/awareness and litter collection program targeted at Ohio's waterways and waterway users. Between 1985 and 1989, more than 30,000 30-gallon bags of litter and additional debris were removed from Ohio's waterways (Fig. 14.14). Approximately 15,000 volunteers have participated in cleanup events statewide. Major projects of note are the Lake Erie Waterways Cleanup, the Little Miami River Cleanup, and the Ohio River Sweep. These projects exhibit qualities of wise stewardship practices and foster cooperation between governmental agencies, private industry, and the general public.

Major strides have been made in the Division's enforcement program during the past decade and a half. Prior to 1972, the concept of a State Watercraft Officer did not exist. The first class of Watercraft Officers provided a strong base for the solid staff of commissioned Watercraft Officers currently enforcing Ohio's boating laws (Fig. 14.15) and educating Ohio's boaters. In 1985, a seventh district office was added in order to service the Ohio River boating community. There are currently 68 commissioned Watercraft Officers statewide.

The Division's program dealing with the operation of watercraft while under the influence of alcohol (OUI) serves as the best example of progress in boating law enforcement. The legislation prohibiting OUI was enacted in 1970. The law was amended in 1976 and 1982 to ensure that it was enforceable, and to keep current with similar laws dealing with operators of automobiles. In 1983, the Division issued its first OUI citation, the first of four for that year. After the 1983 boating season, the Division recognized the need for further training and education for both the public and Watercraft Officers to emphasize the importance of enforcing Ohio's OUI law. To accomplish this goal, the Division conducted controlled field tests using its own Watercraft

mote the preservation of historical canoe routes in the state. The association reestablished the Trans-Ohio Canoe Route of the Indians and pioneers beginning on Lake Erie in Sandusky and ending at the Ohio River in Portsmouth (Fig. 14.13). In 1984, a second route was traveled from Akron to the Ohio River in Marietta. The third route, established in 1985, began on Lake Erie in Toledo and wound southward to the Ohio River in Cincinnati. These three watery trails are designated as the Trans-Ohio Canoe Routes. The enactment of House Bill 514 in 1988 gave the ODNR Director authority to designate historic or scenic rivers and to award grants to erect and maintain markers that designate public facilities, points of interest, and portages. Markers also designate dams, rapids, waterfalls, whirlpools, and other hazards to canoeists and boaters.

With the desire to expand services available to the boating public, the Division of Watercraft's Volunteer Program was established in 1983. Efforts were made to recruit qualified individuals who had an interest in assisting paid staff in the areas of boating safety programs, river and water rescue, ice rescue and cold water survival, skill development in sailing and canoeing, enforcement, and administrative support. Through the efforts of a dedicated

Officers to determine how alcohol affects a person's ability to operate a boat. In 1984, the Division sponsored a conference in Cleveland entitled, "Alcohol Use and Recreational Boating Safety." The results of the field tests aided the Division in using the conference to educate further many agencies concerning the effect

of alcohol on boating safety. The Division also enlisted the help of the Ohio State Highway Patrol in training its officers to detect persons who are under the influence of alcohol. As a result of the increased awareness and training, the Division marked a fourfold increase in OUI cases during 1984. In order to update information and provide additional data to law enforcement agencies throughout the country for OUI cases, all seven district offices are connected by computer. The Division's computer system also allows for better statewide record keeping service to the boating public, especially useful in theft investigations.

As the Division's OUI enforcement efforts advanced, a major weakness in the OUI law became very obvious. The enactment of Ohio's "Implied Consent" statute for boating abated this weakness in 1986. The Implied Consent law requires boat operators to submit to chemical tests when requested by law enforcement officers. The strengthened law also enabled the Division to purchase and use portable breath-testing equipment. The increased alcohol awareness training, improved OUI legislation, and new high-tech detection equipment resulted in the Division of Watercraft, and other agencies, arresting more than 100 persons for boating under the influence of alcohol in 1987. The Division feels confident that improved OUI enforcement and increased alcohol and boating education contributed greatly to



Figure 14.14. The Division of Watercraft in cooperation with many volunteers and other agencies is actively involved with litter cleanup activities on Ohio's waterways. Division of Watercraft file photo.

the State's record low number of boating-related fatalities during 1987.

The Division solicits information, advice, and comments from Ohio's boaters. In 1988, the Division hosted the first All-Ohio Boating Conference to generate information and advice and to prioritize needs for boating in the 1990's. More than 200 boating professionals, instructors, and industry representatives met to discuss and prioritize needs facing Ohio's boaters. The Division continues to use this information to develop plans and programs to assure continuation of high quality boating on Ohio's waters.

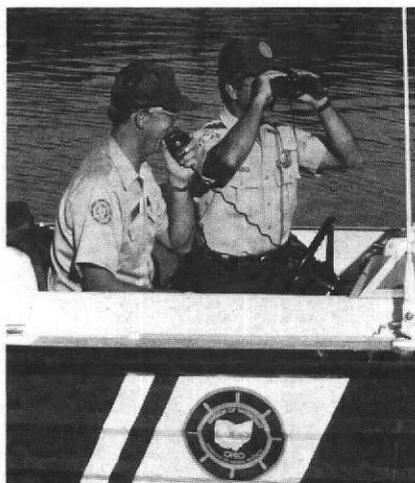


Figure 14.15. An unidentified Watercraft Officer looking for an "OH number" and Officer Mike Westrick (left) contacting headquarters for a verification of registration. Division of Watercraft file photo, 1988.