

Fraternal Order of Police

Maryland Natural Resources Police Force (MNRP) Lodge 8

Talking points in support of the MNRP:

“The Natural Resources Police is specifically charged with enforcing the natural resources laws of the state.” NR article 1-204a

The responsibility for natural resources enforcement on Maryland land and water, including the tidal waters of the Bay and Atlantic Ocean, falls on 136 officers working shift patrols.

The Maryland Natural Resources Police are losing about 18% of its officers annually due to attrition, retirement, and disability. There are no new recruit classes expected in the near future.

DNR is proposing a substantial change in oyster management, providing leasing oyster bars to interested people to “plant.” Who will be there to protect these oyster bars?

If MNRP were to staff all 23 counties with only 3 officers per shift for 24 hour coverage as the state police has 24 hour coverage, it would require 207 officers just to cover the time. All 207 officers would have no leave and work every day. This coverage is woefully insufficient. When you recall that NRP must provide Homeland Security patrols, State Park enforcement requiring more than one officer, and enforcement on all bay and its tributaries, the short fall is even more obvious.

January 21, 2009 Report from the Task Force on Fishery Management (created by Chapter 217, Acts of 2007) per the section entitled, *Enforcement of Fisheries Laws*. The following findings/recommendations were noted before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Environmental Matters Committee:

- The Maryland Natural Resources Police are understaffed at almost half the recommended positions;
- Set a minimum threshold of Law Enforcement Officer positions at 400, with a target of 435 positions;
- Adjust boating fees to provide the needed funding for NRP equipment
- Improve prosecution of natural resources violations, with special training for judges and prosecutors; and;
- Provide more training for MNRP officers in fisheries laws and regulations.

It is important for everyone to realize that Maryland has over 3,000 miles of shoreline and its forests encompass 2.6 million acres, equivalent to 44% of Maryland’s total land base. Maryland Book of Lobbyists • 2009 The Daily Record.

“In order to successfully meet current and future fisheries management challenges, stronger enforcement on the ground, in the water, and in the courts, is desperately needed. Without enforcement even the best fisheries management plans are doomed to fail.” Source: Thomas Lewis, Chairman of Fisheries Management Task Force.