

PRESS RELEASE

## **Adirondack and Regional Groups Call upon Governor Cuomo and Department of Environmental Conservation to Support and Assist Creation of Mandatory Boat Inspection and Decontamination Program to Protect Lake George**

*Groups support calls from local governments, businesses, and organizations  
around Lake George for speedy state action*

*New program needs to be in place for 2013 boating season*

January 7, 2013 Albany, NY. A coalition of Adirondack Park and regional environmental and conservation organizations is calling upon Governor Andrew Cuomo and Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens to support and assist in the creation of a new mandatory boat inspection and decontamination program for Lake George to help protect the lake from further infestations of aquatic invasive species (AIS).

A mandatory control program has broad support from local governments, businesses and organizations around Lake George. The Governor's Office and DEC have thus far prevented actions.

The NYS Lake George Park Commission (LGPC) has statutory authority over boat use on Lake George. The LGPC has broad responsibility for the ecological health of Lake George. LGPC Commissioners would like to move ahead at their meeting at the end of January with forming a mandatory AIS boat inspection and decontamination program modeled after the highly successful program for Lake Tahoe. The LGPC has been studying and developing this program for more than two years and managed a PILOT program this past summer. This program would be funded from higher boat and dock fees on Lake George and would not require any state General Fund support.

“A new mandatory boat inspection and decontamination program for Lake George has broad support from local governments and businesses around Lake George. It's critical for the economy and environment of Lake George that this new control program is created. It's time for DEC and the Governor to heed the calls for help from around the lake and stop blocking this important new program” said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

AIS infestation is one of the major threats facing the ecological health and economy of Lake George and the Adirondack Park. AIS can rapidly change the ecology of a lake, wetland, stream or river as well as significantly impair and diminish recreational enjoyment.

“One principle of AIS management is that prevention is a more successful long-term strategy than direct management. It’s very difficult to eradicate AIS once established in a water body. It’s far cheaper to focus efforts on interdiction and prevention than direct management” said Neil Woodworth, Executive Director of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

Since 2010, the Lake George community has recently spent over \$2 million to try and control the Asian clam (*Corbicula fluminea*), a rapidly growing and reproducing invasive clam. Two of the most damaging AIS are in close proximity to Lake George and Adirondack Park in the Great Lakes and Finger Lakes, including quagga mussels (*Dreissena bugensis*) and hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) and a new control program is needed to prevent the spread of these invasives to Lake George.

“Hydrilla is in the Finger Lakes and quagga mussels have spread throughout the Great Lakes and many other waterbodies in New York. Introduction of either of these species to Lake George would be devastating to the lake. We need a comprehensive boat management program to protect Lake George, which is one of the busiest lakes in the Adirondacks” said Diane Fish, Acting Executive Director of the Adirondack Council.

“Over 15,000 boats use Lake George each year and over 5,000 transitory boats purchase 1-day or 1-week permits” said David Gibson. “AIS are principally spread by motor boats. AIS can attached to boat hulls and trailers, but many species are transported in microscopic juvenile phases in engine water, ballast water, and live wells on boats. A comprehensive control program would dramatically reduce the risk of further detrimental infestations on Lake George.”

“The only true way to protect Lake George from AIS is through a comprehensive inspection program. This program needs to be backed up by state law that makes it illegal for a boat owner or launch operator to launch an uninspected boat on Lake George” said Roger Downs, Conservation Director of the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter.

The five organizations listed on this letter will actively work to encourage speedy action by the Governor and Legislature to provide statutory changes for the LGPC to create and financially support this new program. The goal is to have a new program in place for the 2013 boating season.

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