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NEWS from the CWC

Reservoir boating extends through Columbus Day

MARGARETVILE, August 23, 2013 – Summer may be coming to an end, but recreational boating on four of New York City’s vast reservoirs continues through mid-October.

Early autumn is arguably the best time to enjoy the solitude of the reservoirs, as temperatures are still mild, and bright fall foliage adds color to the landscape.

Kayaks, canoes, sailboats, sculls and rowboats are welcome on the Neversink, Pepacton, Cannonsville and Schoharie Reservoirs from dawn to dusk every day through Columbus Day, as long as they have been steam cleaned to prevent introduction of invasive aquatic plants and animals.

Invasive species can hitchhike into new waterbodies on boats and gear. Tiny fragments of aquatic plants like Eurasian water milfoil and hydrilla reproduce rapidly to create harmful, dense mats. The spiny water flea, a small crustacean with eggs that can survive long periods of dryness, competes with young fish for food and chokes larger fish with its long barbed spines.

Mollusks like zebra and quagga mussels and Asian clam are nearly microscopic in their early life stages and can be transported in mud or small amounts of water trapped in boats. Large numbers of these species can accumulate in pipes and other structures making expensive repairs and upgrades necessary.

That is why boats are not allowed on the reservoirs without a tag which confirms they have been steam cleaned by a specially trained agent. To find steam cleaning locations, boat rental liveries and launch sites, visit www.thecatskillregion.com. Be sure to call ahead to determine cleaning vendors’ hours of operation.

Also at that website is a link to secure the required (but free) access permit from the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). It only takes a few minutes to get the permit online.

Hundreds of boating enthusiasts have enjoyed the wide waters of the Catskill Region reservoirs since they were opened to non-mechanized vessels in 2012. (The reservoirs have long been available for fishing; Cannonsville was also opened to other boaters in 2009.)

The Recreational Boating Program is a cooperative effort between the DEP, the region’s business and tourism promotion entities, and the Catskill Watershed Corp., which this year provided racks for storage of rental boats at several launch sites.