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**LAKE GEORGE PARK COMMISSION**

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**Lake George Park Commission Approves  
Draft Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan**

***Public Comment Period on Draft Plan Runs Through June 25, 2013***

The NYS Lake George Park Commission (LGPC) today approved a Draft Invasive Species Prevention Plan and Environmental Impact Statement to evaluate the efficacy and feasibility of aquatic invasive species spread prevention measures that may be employed in the Lake George Park. The Draft Plan is now available for public review and comment through June 25, 2013.

“Keeping new invasive species out of Lake George is a top priority action for the Commission,” states LGPC Chairman Bruce Young. “There is tremendous consensus among the State, Lake George’s surrounding communities, Chambers of Commerce and many other groups that the lake needs strong and comprehensive protection from new invasive species. This draft Plan identifies potential options to protect the Lake and now we want to hear from the public.”

Invasive species are non-native plants and animals that, when introduced in an ecosystem, can rapidly reproduce and overwhelm their environment. Eurasian watermilfoil was the first invasive species to reach Lake George in 1986, and millions of dollars have been spent to keep this plant in check. Since that time, four other invaders have been introduced to Lake George, each of which has its own impact on Lake George’s pristine environment, including Asian clam and Spiny Waterflea which were discovered in Lake George since 2010.

Asian clam eradication efforts by both the State and local governments have topped \$1.5 million dollars in only two years time. These species can have significant environmental

impacts, and also considerable economic consequences for the Lake George Region.

This Plan results from almost two years of research, public outreach and planning. More than 50 public meetings and presentations have been held throughout the basin over this timeframe to gather public input on this initiative. The results of these efforts have been coalesced into the Draft Lake George Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan and draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS). The DGEIS evaluates alternatives for aquatic invasive species spread prevention including mandatory inspections of all trailered boats prior to launch, a boater self-certification program, as well as public outreach and voluntary compliance. No decisions will be made by the LGPC or other involved agencies until the public has an opportunity to comment and LGPC prepares a final Environmental Impact Statement.

The “Preferred Alternative” identified by The LA Group, the contractor that completed the Plan, is a mandatory inspection program for all trailered boats entering Lake George, and decontamination (hot water power washing) of boats that don’t pass inspection. To implement such a program, the Commission would need regulatory action and funding, which would likely include an increase to the LGPC Boat Registration fees. The Commission will not render any decisions on this issue until such time as it has had an opportunity to listen and consider public comments.

The Draft Plan / GEIS is available at the LGPC website, [www.lgpc.state.ny.us](http://www.lgpc.state.ny.us). The public is encouraged to review the Plan and to attend a public hearing to offer their thoughts and suggestions on this issue. The hearing date is scheduled for May 21 with the location to be decided.

Earlier this year, LGPC and the state Department of Environmental Conservation announced actions they will take this summer to prevent the spread and threat of invasive species. These included:

1. **Expand the Lake George Association’s boat steward program** from May to September. The season previously ran from June to August. This will provide additional protection during months when boat traffic is relatively high but stewards are not currently funded.
2. **Develop and implement a more comprehensive outreach program** to local and regional boaters who boat on Lake George on how they can reduce the risk of spreading and introducing invasive species.
3. **Increase patrols by DEC Environmental Conservation Officers and LGPC officers** trained in aquatic invasive species spread prevention. These officers will work the launches on a regular required basis.
4. **Additional voluntary boat wash stations** will be sited at boat launches around Lake George. This will provide boaters easy opportunity to remove aquatic invasive species from their boats and trailers before and after boating on the lake.

In addition, the state Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) provided \$50,000 to fund this year’s lengthened boat steward program and additional outreach efforts. The LGPC also received

\$200,000 from the EPF to help contain and prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species including Asian clams. Earlier this year the state provided LGPC with \$100,000 from the Aid to Localities fund and \$100,000 from the EPF to help combat invasive species .

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