

News Release

Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP)

For Immediate Release: June 29, 2016

For more information contact:

Brendan Quirion (518) 576-2082 ext. 118

Eric Holmlund (518) 327-6341

Fred Monroe (518) 796-2415

Eric Siy (518) 668-9700 ext. 304

Adirondack Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program Intercepts 284 Invasives During First Month

Keene Valley, N.Y., June 29, 2016 – In its first month of operation, the 2016 Adirondack Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Program intercepted 284 invasives while inspecting nearly 8,450 trailered boats at over 50 locations throughout the Adirondack region. Some of these “close calls” took place on lakes that are not currently invaded by the species found. For example, zebra mussels and curly-leaf pondweed were found on boats attempting to launch into Long Lake and Upper Saranac Lake. Both Long Lake and Upper Saranac Lake have existing infestations of other AIS which lake associations and partner organizations have been spending millions of dollars to try and manage.

Adirondack Watershed Institute (AWI) Stewardship Program Director, Eric Holmlund, responded to these high numbers of species interceptions, “We are seeing high visitation and finding comparatively high levels of materials on boats we’ve inspected. This AIS transport rate is higher than usual for this early in the growing season. We request that boat operators do the right thing and inspect and clean their own watercraft before and after each and every use.”

AIS are aquatic organisms that invade lakes and rivers beyond their native range; proliferating to levels that cause significant, often irreversible harm to native ecosystems, commerce and recreational opportunities. Examples include Eurasian watermilfoil, zebra mussels and hydrilla. Most commonly, these species are unintentionally transported between waters on recreational equipment such as boats and their trailers.

Established in 2015, the Adirondack AIS Prevention Program is the first of its kind east of the Mississippi River. It expands on the successful boat inspection and washing program instituted on Lake George in 2014 as well as a regional boat launch steward program advanced by AWI since 2000. Inspections and, when necessary, washing are mandatory for boats

launching into Lake George while the Adirondack program's services are free, voluntary and rely on effective outreach and convenient opportunities for boaters to have their watercraft inspected and/or washed. However, a new [statewide AIS transport regulation](#) that took effect this spring requires all boaters to take "*Reasonable Precaution*" to prevent the spread of AIS before launching into any New York water.

Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program Coordinator, Brendan Quirion, emphasized how simple it is for boaters to comply with these new regulations, "With numerous voluntary boat inspection and wash stations positioned throughout the region, it has never been easier for Adirondack boaters to comply with New York State's AIS transport regulation. Before getting on the water, boaters can visit one of the program's free wash stations. In 15 minutes or less staff will have your boat clean, drained, and treated; preventing any chance of accidentally introducing an AIS into your favorite lake or river."

This year, thanks to additional state, federal and private funding, the Adirondack AIS Prevention Program has expanded to include nearly 25 boat wash stations and 55 boat launch steward locations. The majority of these locations are already up and running with additional inspection and wash stations coming online throughout the month of July. At each location, program staff provide courtesy boat/trailer inspections for AIS and when one is found, free removal and/or boat washes to anyone willing to help prevent the spread and comply with the new regulation.

An enhanced website, adkcleanboats.com, provides necessary information on AIS prevention and where to find the location of your nearest boat wash station. In addition to its website, the Program has leased a [promotional billboard](#) just south of exit 18 along the northbound lane of the I-87 Northway. "Only you can prevent aquatic invasive species" [public service announcements](#) began airing on radio stations throughout the region earlier this week.

The Adirondack AIS Prevention Program is a partnership of the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, Paul Smith's College Adirondack Watershed Institute, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, S.A.V.E. Lake George Partnership, and numerous other public and private sector organizations working together to better protect the Adirondack region from the mounting threat of AIS. The Adirondack Park possesses 3,000 lakes and ponds and 30,000 miles of rivers and streams, arguably one of the nation's largest assemblages of natural waterways. New York State is the primary point of entry for AIS into the United States, due primarily to its close proximity to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, making Adirondack waters especially vulnerable. Effective prevention is essential to protecting these waters before the opportunity to do so is lost.

Eric Siy, Executive Director of The FUND for Lake George and founding member of the S.A.V.E. Lake George Partnership reiterated this vulnerability, “Ultimately, aquatic invasive species are ecological terrorists. Stopping them from destroying our priceless natural heritage requires an all-out commitment across sectors and levels of government. We will not get a second chance to save our waters.”

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