

NEWS RELEASE



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**ADIRONDACK COUNCIL CALLS FOR STATE TO PROTECT ADIRONDACKS FROM
INVASIVE SPECIES WITH NEW REGULATIONS, PERSONNEL
*Boat Washing Stations and State Stewards Needed to Prevent Spread of Spiny Water Flea, Other Non-
Native Plants & Animals to State's Most Remote, Pristine Waters***

ALBANY, N.Y. -- In light of the recent discovery of the invasive spiny water flea in Lake George and the Champlain Canal, the Adirondack Park's largest environmental organization today called on Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the Legislature to reverse cuts in environmental spending and establish boat-washing and inspection stations at all state boat launches in the park.

"The spiny water flea has now moved from Lake Ontario into the Great Sacandaga Lake, Lake George and the Champlain Canal, and we just don't know how many more places," said Adirondack Council Executive Director Brian L. Houseal. "It is only a matter of time before it is discovered in other waters. Because most of our state boat launches are wide open, with no one present to warn recreational boaters about the dangers of transporting invasive plants and animals from one lake to another, every lake and river in the Adirondack Park is vulnerable to invasion.

"The spiny water flea is a particularly troublesome invader, but it is just the latest in a wave of aggressive, exotic species infesting our otherwise pristine environment," Houseal said. "We need an aggressive public education campaign aimed at boaters and anglers and we need additional state personnel staffing the launches to inspect boats and trailers and advise boaters.

"Recreational boaters and anglers, especially those who live in the Adirondacks, want to be part of the solution, not part of the problem," Houseal said. "But we have to give them the information and equipment they need to prevent the introduction of destructive, non-native species to the lakes and rivers we all enjoy."

He added that some local governments and lake associations in the park have been more progressive than the state in combating invasive species. Many, however, will need some state assistance to fully protect the park's vulnerable waters. The state must lead by example, he explained.

Houseal noted that recent surveys of Adirondack residents and visitors indicate that there is broad public support for additional regulation and spending on invasive species, especially among local boaters and anglers.

"We who live in the Adirondack Park know how precious our waters are to everything we love about this place," Houseal said. "Water is our most valuable asset."

Houseal noted that spiny water flea will out-compete native zooplankton, which will harm local fisheries. Because the non-native crustacean is hard to digest, fish that consume it instead of native zooplankton will not get the nutrition they need to survive and grow.

The “fleas” found in Lake George this week were discovered by a fisherman, whose line was fouled by a build-up of the ‘fleas’ in the top eyelet of his fishing pole,” Houseal said. Fishing charter captains on Lake Ontario use leather gloves to remove them from their lines because of a series of barbs on its the sharp points on their shells. More troubling for local anglers is the fact that most charters now use copper wire for trolling line because the eyelet clogs caused by spiny water flea, combined with the barbs, break the clear monofilament line used by most people, explained.

Add this to the high costs of curbing Eurasian water milfoil, zebra mussels, Asian clams, Japanese knotweed, garlic mustard, rock snot, and a host of others, and it becomes clear that prevention is the better alternative, he said.

Houseal said the Council stands ready to work with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Adirondack Park Agency and other interested parties to develop a plan for better protection of Adirondack waters that the state can implement before the end of this boating season.

The Adirondack Council is a privately funded not-for-profit organization whose mission is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of New York’s 9,300-square-mile Adirondack Park. The Council carries out its mission through research, education, advocacy and legal action. Adirondack Council members live in all 50 United States.

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