## DEC AND AGRICULTURE & MARKETS ANNOUNCE STATE'S SIXTH ANNUAL INVASIVE SPECIES AWARENESS WEEK, JULY 7-13



*DEC and Local Partners Launch New Pilot to Reduce Potential for Aquatic Invasive Species to Enter Lake George*

**Public Events Scheduled across the State**

The New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Agriculture and Markets (DAM) today announced the state's sixth annual Invasive Species Awareness Week (ISAW) runs through July 13. Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued a State Proclamation (attached) supporting the annual campaign to encourage the public to learn more and participate in the fight against the negative impacts of invasive species.

In addition, DEC announced a new pilot program in cooperation with the Lake George Park Commission and the Fund for Lake George at the Mossy Point and Rogers Rock boat launch sites to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species. This pilot program complements the state's existing boat inspection policy to specifically protect Lake George's unique ecosystem by installing new gates this summer and providing staff to check boats for invasives before entering the lake. Through October 31, 2019, the gates will open before sunrise and remain open until 10 p.m., enabling boaters to head out early enough to go fishing while ensuring the boats are not carrying invasive species.

"New York State has made significant investments to combat the threat posed by invasive species," said DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos. "Once established, species like hydrilla, emerald ash borer, and spotted lanternfly can spread rapidly, causing harm to the environment, the economy, and human health. During Invasive Species Awareness Week, New Yorkers have ample opportunities to attend events and learn how to identify, survey, manage, and map invasive species to help protect our valuable natural resources."

State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball said, "Invasive species also pose a significant threat to our agricultural crops, affecting the viability and profitability of our farms. We are glad to partner with DEC to help raise awareness about this important issue, and we urge our farmers and all members of our agricultural community, in addition to the public, to be vigilant in watching for and reporting signs of these destructive pests."

The theme of ISAW 2019 is "Early Detection: Explore, Observe, Report!" and highlights the importance of detecting infestations of invasive species early, which increases the success of response efforts. Invasive species are non-native plants, animals, insects, and pathogens that harm the environment, agriculture, the economy, and human health. ISAW was initiated by the Invasive Species Council, the Invasive Species Advisory

Committee, the eight [Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMs)](#) and partners to provide a variety of educational events across New York ranging from guided hikes and paddling events, to invasive species removal projects, film screenings, and much more.

Rapid response and control are critical in minimizing the establishment, and ultimately eradicating, an invasive population. To support this effort, the 2019 State Budget included a total of $13.3 million in the Environmental Protection Fund targeted specifically to prevent and control invasive species. Governor Cuomo also just recently awarded more than $2.8 million in grant funding to various organizations to support invasive species rapid response and control, research, lake management planning, and aquatic invasive species spread prevention programs. For a list of grant recipients, please visit https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/115742.html.

In the Lake George area alone, New York has committed more than $4.3 million to the Lake George Park Commission, including $900,000 for invasive species management in the last two years. These investments are fighting the spread of invasive species, and bolstered by DEC's extensive prevention and outreach, form a comprehensive plan of attack. DEC also funded an innovative aquatic invasive species pilot program in the park recognizing the Adirondacks' ecological and recreational importance.

In 2014, new DEC regulations prohibited boats and equipment from entering or leaving DEC launch sites without first being drained and cleaned. In 2016, additional regulations directed boaters to take precautions prior to launching a watercraft or floating dock into public waters-"Clean, Drain and Dry." In 2018, DEC's Adirondack Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program conducted nearly 100,000 boat inspections to intercept more than 4,600 invasive species incidents. With local partners, DEC initiated a campaign to raise public awareness of the need to prevent the spread of invasives at Lake George, Lake Champlain, and statewide. New York boaters have been-and continue to be-critical partners in these efforts.

The State also works to control and eradicate various invasive species, such as spotted lanternfly, European cherry fruit fly, and plum pox virus, which can harm the New York's agricultural crops, particularly grapes, hops and fruit trees. DAM conducts annual surveys for each of these pests, and inspects the State's nearly 9,000 greenhouses, retail markets, and nursery growers and dealers for compliance with invasive plant regulations. Horticultural inspectors also monitor for invasive pests and diseases, such as European pepper moth, boxwood blight, and others that are harmful to plants in New York's landscapes.

The public is encouraged to report invasive species to iMapInvasives, New York's invasive species database. A new version of the database, iMapInvasives 3.0, was recently launched and has a more user-friendly, mobile-responsive map display. For more information, please visit www.nyimapinvasives.org (leaves DEC website).

DEC and DAM encourage all New Yorkers to attend an ISAW event. For a complete list of events, please visit the ISAW webpage (link leaves DEC's webpage).