

Discover Clean & Safe Boating Campaign a Hit with Industry



Slowing the spread of aquatic invasive species is an added focus of the 2011 *Discover Clean & Safe Boating* campaign developed by New York Sea Grant in partnership with the Boating Industries Association of Upstate NY and Marathon Boat Group. For more, click on "Topics" at www.nyseagrant.org/marina

Photo by Dave White

Helping boaters and watercraft users learn what they need to legally, safely and cleanly boat on New York waters is the mission of the *Discover Clean & Safe Boating* campaign. Providing information on how they can prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species is an added focus for 2011.

The campaign, created in 2008 by New York Sea Grant Coastal Recreation and Tourism Specialist **Dave White**, is a collaboration of New York Sea Grant, the Boating Industry Association of Upstate New York, Yamaha/Clayton Marina, and Marathon Boat Group.

Marathon Boat Group has donated the use of a 16-foot "made in New York" Grumman Oneida fishing boat and a 12'9" canoe for the 2011 campaign; it provided a pontoon boat for the 2010 tour.

Morgan Recreational Supply and Taylor Made Products, both headquartered in New York State, have equipped the boat with the gear required and recommended for clean and safe boating on NY waters.

Event organizers are specially requesting the exhibit. By September 2011 the *Discover Clean & Safe Boating* exhibit will have engaged New Yorkers at all but one



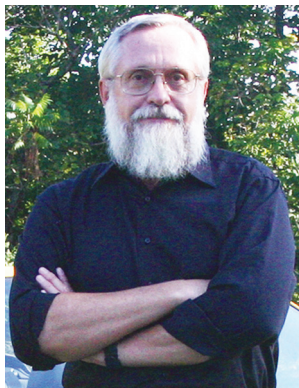
of the major marine trade association boat shows in upstate and at a variety of waterfront events along New York's freshwater shoreline.

Information from the national Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers project will be available at the exhibit, which encourages diverse types of groups and individuals to use easy-to-implement practices to make a positive impact on slowing the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Aquatic invasive species can damage boat engines and steering equipment, reduce native game fish populations, degrade ecosystems, make lakes and rivers unusable by boaters and swimmers, and impact the economies of waterfront communities. White recently received a BoatUS Foundation commendation recognizing the creation of this consumer education campaign.

—Kara Lynn Dunn

A New Role for 30-Year Veteran O'Neill



As New York Sea Grant celebrates its 40 years, we say good luck to NYSG's longtime invasive species "guru" **Chuck O'Neill** as he transitions from New York Sea Grant to Cornell Cooperative

Extension. Says O'Neill, "It's been an interesting 30 years with NYSG. Although, I've seen a lot of changes, we've not changed our extension philosophy, only the way we deliver information. We still go to our audiences with solid, science-based information to help them make their own informed decisions, not make decisions for them."

In his new role as Coordinator of Extension Invasive Species Programs, O'Neill directs the New York Invasive Species Clearinghouse (NYIS.INFO) and coordinates the Cornell Cooperative Extension Statewide Invasive Species Extension Program, which includes supervising county-based regional invasive species educators as well ensuring that aquatic invasive species outreach remains an integral part of New York Sea Grant Extension's overall programming.

O'Neill, a geologist by training, started with New York Sea Grant working on shoreline erosion and lake level

education programs in the western counties bordering Lake Ontario. "But then in the 1980s came a paradigm shift in our extension program. We began to see thematic specialists in the Great Lakes—extension educators working specifically with researchers in their areas of study. This focus helped our extension program to shine with expertise."

The rapid succession of aquatic invasive species into the Great Lakes provided O'Neill with the opportunity to refocus and evolve into an internationally known invasive species "expert." As a coastal geologist, O'Neill had worked closely with coastal engineers on the siting of bridges and dwellings as well as with the operators of drinking water and power plants on water intake issues. Then in 1989 along came a new invasive—zebra mussels—which foul intake pipes and cause millions in damage. O'Neill had the background and could talk the "lingo" of plant managers about the mitigation of problems caused by what the *New York Times* called "those pesky mussels."

He and NYSG's fisheries specialist **Dave MacNeill** knew that the zebra mussel invasion was going to be the next big issue in the Great Lakes. They got squarely in front of it, brought in researchers and traveled throughout New York making facility operators aware of the impending problem; they soon carried that message nationally. O'Neill became the director of The Zebra Mussel Clearinghouse, a repository for research on this issue originally funded by utilities, then expanded it to all aquatic invasive species when it became Sea Grant's National Aquatic Invasive Species Clearinghouse. When O'Neill received queries about plants growing along streams, too, he expanded

the site to terrestrial as well as aquatic invasives. Thus began the NY Invasive Species Clearinghouse and its Web site NYIS.INFO.

"These invasive species outreach projects have been a long time in the making," says O'Neill. "You can count on NYSG Extension and Cornell Cooperative Extension becoming the portals through which the public can find what they need to know about invasive species."

—Barbara A. Branca

Invasives to Watch

Back in 2001 for New York Sea Grant's 30th anniversary, we asked **Chuck O'Neill** to compile a list of "30 Invasive Species to Watch." Now, ten years later, we asked him what new invasive species are the ones to watch now? O'Neill put three at the top of his list: a big fish, a shrimp and a single-celled algae. The Asian carp, long a food staple in China, with its great size and jumping ability is a threat to the Great Lakes ecosystem. The diatom *Didymosphenia geminata* creates dense mats that cover the bottoms of streams and rivers and is nicknamed "rock snot" for its gooey appearance. Then there is the bloody red shrimp, *Hemimysis anomala*. With NYSG funding, **Drs. Lars Rudstam and Brent Boscarino** (see photo right) of Cornell University have investigated the behavior, physiology, and population dynamics of *Hemimysis*, to see if this invasive is disrupting the Lake Ontario food web by competing with native invertebrates known as mysids. Their research findings are helping to inform management decisions in the Great Lakes.