

# Clean Up Your Act: Boat Clean!

**SUGGESTIONS FOR PREVENTING GAS AND OIL SPILLS:** Never top off your fuel tank but instead fill it to 90% capacity to allow for gas expansion (U.S. Coast Guard recommendation). Fill tanks slowly to prevent overflows from the air vent. Never leave the fuel nozzle unattended during fueling. Purchase an overflow attachment for the air vent on your fuel tank to contain overflowing fuel. Use a bilge pillow (a specialized oil-absorbing sponge) to remove oil from your bilge water before it is discharged. Upgrade to a more efficient four-stroke or fuel-injected engine. Encourage your marina to set up a recycling program for used oil and filters.

**MAINTAIN YOUR ENGINE:** Get an annual tune up to keep your engine operating at peak efficiency. Routinely (every three years) replace fuel lines. Use Coast Guard-approved fuel lines that are resistant to alcohol degradation. Check engine seals every three years — if leaking, have them replaced.

**CLEANING PRODUCTS:** Use absorbents and enzyme-based cleaners to clean up oil and fuel spills. Use cleaning products with “phosphate free” or “biodegradable” on the label. Old-fashioned cleaners such as baking soda, vinegar, lemon juice, and “elbow grease” prevent harsh chemicals from entering the water. Do not scrub your boat bottom while it is in the water, since this can release a plume of paint. Frequently hosing off your hull when pulling your boat out at the launch site reduces the need for strong chemical cleaners.

**A WORD ON SOAP:** Never use soap to clean up oil and gas products. Soaps emulsify oil allowing it to disperse more easily into the water column and bottom sediment. Better that it floats on the surface where it will dissipate.

**TRASH:** Keep a covered garbage container on board. Never throw cigarette filters or plastic items overboard as these are non-degradable and harm wildlife. Fishing line can foul engine props and clog intakes. Bring back everything you take out plus one piece of someone else’s garbage.

**HUMAN AND ANIMAL WASTE:** Remember, people swim in and drink out of the lake. Always pump out your human waste into appropriate shoreside facilities. Use the bathroom on shore before heading out. Pumpout stations on the southern end of the lake are located at Johnson’s Boat Yard (Ithaca), Treman Marina (Ithaca), and Taughannock Falls State Park (Trumansburg).

**PAINTING YOUR HULL:** Don’t scrape paint from your boat while it is in or near the water; instead, do this on land where you can collect the scrapings in a tarp. Use a sander with a vacuum attachment to further collect dust. Hard non-ablative or contact leaching paints may be preferable to ablative or soft paints. Although more expensive, non-copper-based teflon and silicone paints may be most ecologically-friendly.

*For further information on ecological boating and source material for this brochure see: “Eco-Friendly Boating”, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality 2000; “Boating Clean and Green in California”, the California Commission; “Help Stop the Drops”, BoatU.S. Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water; “Good Mate Recreation Boating and Marina Manual”, The Ocean Conservancy.*

For Boating on Cayuga Lake in Tompkins County

## It’s the Law

### Maximum speeds:

5 MPH within 100 feet of shore.

10 MPH between 100 feet and 500 feet of shore.

During the daytime: 45 MPH\* maximum between 500 feet of shore and 1500 feet of shore. (Daytime is defined as one half hour after sunrise to one half hour before sunset.)

During the nighttime: 25 MPH\* maximum between 500 feet of shore and 1500 feet of shore. (Nighttime is defined as one half hour before sunset to one half hour after sunrise.)

### Hours of operation for jet skis:

9 AM to one half hour before sunset.

\* Remember, the south end of Cayuga Lake can get congested, not just with motorboats but with sailboats, canoes, and kayaks. New York State Navigation Law requiring prudence and caution applies in addition to local regulations. For more information about the differences between each municipal law, contact the Town of Lansing, the Town of Ithaca, the City of Ithaca and the Town of Ulysses.

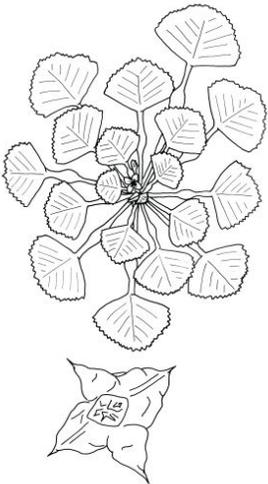
*These laws create a slow speed area along the shore — much like the shoulder on a highway — where people can safely swim, fish, canoe, kayak and moor out of faster traffic’s way. Noise and wave action are reduced for lakeshore residents, and wildlife habitat zones are better protected.*

## WE CAN ALL ENJOY THE LAKE TOGETHER

Noise travels a long distance on the water and can be irritating to those wanting quiet.  
Simple practices to reduce power-boating noise upon the water include:

- Accelerate slowly away from shore. Reduce your RPMs.
- Do not alter the stock exhaust that comes with your boat.
- Reduce the trim angle of an outboard engine, resulting in up to a 12 decibel (or 50%) noise reduction.
- When operating by motor, don't circle in one place but move in a straight line. Spread your noise out along the shoreline rather than concentrating in one place.
- When on your boat, especially in the evenings, curtail loud music and conversation.

**Even if New York State Law doesn't require it, consider taking a boater certification course. It may help you in your boat skills.**



**CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES:** Thoroughly wash boats before moving from one body of water to another to prevent the spread of unwanted plants and organisms. In 2004, free-floating water chestnuts were removed from the north end of Cayuga Lake by a boater trained to identify this non-native weed. Most likely the plants came from the Seneca River, which is already plagued with this invader. The shallow depths and soft sediments at both ends of Cayuga Lake are prime territory for the expansion of this exotic species. Water chestnuts form dense mats that disrupt boating, swimming and fishing; reduce property values; and out-compete native plants. If you think you see water chestnuts in Cayuga Lake remove it, and report the sighting to the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network at 607-532-4104 or [steward@cayugalake.org](mailto:steward@cayugalake.org). If possible take a photograph or save the plant so identification can be confirmed.

### WHY UPGRADE TO A NEW MORE EFFICIENT MARINE ENGINE?

Older two-stroke engines can emit up to 30% of their fuel uncombusted into the water. Not only is this environmentally unsound, but it is also smelly and expensive. Four-stroke and fuel-injected engines are more efficient and quieter. Although a more efficient motor is initially more expensive, the cost is offset over the lifetime of the engine by gas savings. Junk rather than resell your old gas-guzzling two-stroke outboard engine. Consider this your gift to the lake.

Other New York State

### Navigation Laws of Note:

- **When towing water-skiers or tubers, a spotter other than the driver is needed.** (New York State Boater's Guide, page 53)
- **Sailing vessels and non-motorized craft have right-of-way over motorized craft.** (NYS Nav. Law S-41-2f)
- **Reckless operation of personal watercraft (such as wake jumping, playing chicken, and weaving in and out of congested traffic) can result in a misdemeanor.** ([www.nysparks.com/boats/pwc](http://www.nysparks.com/boats/pwc))
- **"No person shall operate a vessel at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions and having regard to the actual and potential hazards then existing."** (NYS Nav. Law S-45-b)
- **Strong penalties can be received by those operating while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.** (NYS Nav. Law S-49)
- **Cutout, bypass, or altered mufflers are illegal.** (NYS Nav. Law S-44)
- **No matter your age, you need to take a boating safety course to operate a personal watercraft.** (NYS Nav. Law S-49)

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