



**For immediate release
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DCR REOPENING QUABBIN RESERVOIR TO PRIVATE RECREATIONAL BOATS

Successful pilot program allows for the boat ramp's early opening

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is reopening the Quabbin Reservoir to properly inspected private recreational boats after a successful pilot program at the Special Olympics fishing competition held at the Reservoir last weekend.

DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Board of Directors have agreed to reopen all three Quabbin Reservoir fishing areas on Monday, August 17, at 6 a.m. for private boats that have gone through the approved decontamination process and have intact seals. Boats without intact seals will not be allowed to launch.

“We appreciate the cooperation and patience shown by the Quabbin’s boaters and fishermen as this protocol was developed,” said Commissioner Sullivan. “DCR has always respected the public’s right to access while recognizing the importance of protecting the public water supply. This new process is a good first step in developing a long-term plan to allow the continued use of private boats on the Quabbin.”

Since mid-July, the Quabbin Reservoir has been closed to private boats, which are thought to be possible carriers of invasive zebra mussels. During the closure, DCR used dive teams to inspect and test the water and the MWRA infrastructure for the mussels.

The discovery of zebra mussels in the Quabbin had previously been deemed unlikely due to the water quality, particularly its low calcium levels. However, the closure and testing were undertaken as an extreme, precautionary measure. As expected, no zebra mussels have been found.

The boat decontamination program will take place in Belchertown and in Orange.

To schedule a boat for decontamination:

- Boat owners should call the Quabbin Visitors Center toll-free number (888-550-0048, ext.102) or local number (413-323-6921, ext. 102) starting Saturday, August 15, between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. daily.

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- Boat owners must make the reservation by phone and should have their boat registration available.
- Walk-in appointments for cleaning will not be available.
- Reservations will be taken for August 17 through August 29.
- The program will be free until opening day of the season in April 2010.

Excessively dirty boats, with gas or oil leaks or evidence of aquatic invasive species, will not pass inspection.

Created in the 1930s as the municipal water system for the Greater Boston area, the Quabbin Reservoir holds 412 billion gallons of water and, through the MWRA, supplies water to more than 2.5 million people. Additionally, the reservoir is a popular boating and fishing area. Each year, about 9,000 boat launchings are recorded at the Quabbin.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and parkways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.