



Lakes Region BOATING



A customer drops off a 40-foot cruiser at Irwin Marine for winter storage. (Adam Drapcho/The Laconia Daily Sun photo)

Sign of season: Boat storage operations underway

BY RICK GREEN
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — It's that time of year again.

People are looking to store their boats for the winter, and that means Irwin Marine Service Manager Jason Marceau is busy.

On Thursday morning, he was standing near a boat slip and speaking to a man who had just brought in his 40-foot Sea Ray from Wolfeboro so it could be placed in winter storage. Boats this large typically stay on the water in a covered dock during the cold-weather months, although most vessels are placed in storage buildings or are shrink wrapped

and stay outside.

"We have outdoor space, but we try to get customers to go with indoor storage," Marceau said. "With the shrink wrapping, it's a lot of wear and tear on the vessel over time. It chafes on the hull."

"You have to climb all over the boat to perform the work and let's face it, when that work is being done, it is in the fall. It can be wet, rainy. Conditions aren't the best. You're more apt to have mildew if it's been raining and you have to shrink wrap it."

Major storage

He said Irwin Marine stores about 1,500 boats in the Laconia area, including 12 buildings for indoor

storage. Statewide, it has more than 2,200 storage spaces.

Paugus Bay Marina has more than 700 spots.

Marceau said boat storage is at a premium.

"Most of the places around here are probably going to be full," Marceau said. "That's why you see a lot of these self store places going up because a lot of these marinas are full to capacity."

"The only way we store a boat for a customer is if they were here the previous year or if you bought a new boat during the boating season, then we can

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Martha Cummings, executive director of the New Hampshire Boat Museum, shows off the museum's recent award. (Courtesy photo)

New Hampshire Boat Museum is voted the summer's best

WOLFEBORO — New Hampshire Boat Museum recently received recognition as Best Summer Museum by 'New Hampshire Magazine.'

According to NHBM Executive Director Martha Cummings, the

award showcases the positive changes the museum has accomplished this year. "We are so grateful for this award," she said. "It has been a busy summer, filled with lots of change and we are glad to see all of our efforts paying

off." This year, NHBM revamped its current building by replacing the roof, insulating, and freshening up several exhibits.

These changes, Cummings said, are just the beginning of NHBM's capital campaign, which includes repurposing its current structure into a boat restoration shop and constructing a new museum space. "The campaign is the biggest change for the museum in the last 27 years," she said. "We are proud of the progress we are making and looking forward to the finished product."

In addition to the campaign, Cummings said NHBM has continued to develop its learning opportunities and events, such as Lake Discovery Camp for kids and a boat restoration and building program for youth and adults.

To learn more about NHBM, visit nhbm.org.



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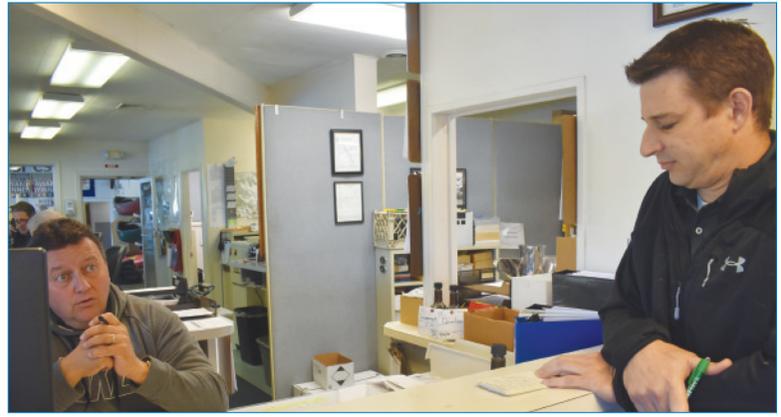
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Workers at Irwin Marine use a forklift to place a boat on a trailer, to be brought to an off-site location for winter storage. (Adam Drapcho/The Laconia Daily Sun photo)



The fall is a busy time for Irwin Marine Service Manager Jason Marceau, shown here at left. At right is Business Manager Scott Laurent. (Adam Drapcho/The Laconia Daily Sun photo)

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find a place for you.”

Sales strong

Scott Laurent, business manager at Irwin Marine, said strong boat sales increases demand for storage.

“We’ve sold so many boats in the last few years and those boats come with future responsibilities on our part,” he said. “We maintain space for those.

“The economy is doing well. People are spending their money on leisure activities. We’ve filled this lake up pretty well.”

Many buyers purchase their boats with cash instead of financing, he said.

According to the National Marine Manufacturers Association, total expenditures for new powerboats, outboard engines, boat trailers and aftermarket accessories in the U.S. in 2018 was \$22 billion, up 7.7 percent from 2017.

In New Hampshire, the total expenditure figure for last year was \$209.4 million, up 8.7 percent from 2017. Total boat registrations in the state last year was 95,444, up 0.7 percent from 2017.

Dual purpose

Extensive boat storage in the area is used during the summer season for valet services that use forklifts to put boats into racks when they are not on the water.

The boats are taken out of the racks and placed back in the water when they are needed again.

“That’s the way all these marinas have been able to put so many

boats in the water,” Laurent said.

“There’s only so much shore space to put marinas and getting approvals nowadays is so onerous that it is a lot easier and cheaper to put it on a rack and place it in the water with a forklift.”

Winterizing expense

At Irwin Marine, the average cost of winterizing a 27-foot boat, storing it for the winter and getting it ready for use next boating season is about \$1,700.

Pickup and delivery service is also available.

“Not every boat we sell has a trailer,” Laurent said. “We’ll go wherever the boat is, pick up the boat, drive it here, either on the water, or pull it out and put it on a trailer if it is feasible, and we’ll put the boat away.”

Holding tanks are pumped out, fuel conditioner is added and winterizing is done on the engine, the head and water system. In the spring, all systems are de-winterized, the boat is cleaned and it is checked out with a run on the lake.

Labor issues

Getting boats ready for winter can be a labor-intensive process.

“It’s a good problem to have — we’re too busy,” Laurent said.

“But part of the challenge is workforce.

“You’ve heard it from every employer around town, I’m sure. There aren’t enough people to do the work. It’s mechanics. It’s drivers. It’s yard help.”

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TWO YEARS AND COUNTING: No new aquatic invasive plants

CONCORD — As the 2019 boating season winds down, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services recognizes the tremendous efforts that have gone into prevention, early detection, and rapid response efforts statewide to curb the spread of aquatic invasive plant species. The efforts are obvious, in that no new infestations of aquatic invasive plants have been listed in two years.

Aquatic invasive plant species are not naturally found in New Hampshire's lakes, ponds, and rivers. Because they are not native, they have few predators or diseases, allowing them to grow quickly and dominate the freshwater systems and impact the native plants, fish, and aquatic insects already present. Aquatic invasive species can lead to reduced shorefront property values, water

quality impairments, and problems with the aesthetic and recreational values of waterbodies. These species are spread primarily by transient boaters who move from waterbody to waterbody. Aquatic invasive plants can hitch a ride to new waterbodies on propellers, fishing gear, trailers, as well as in live wells and bait buckets. In many cases, these introductions can occur by a single fragment that goes unnoticed.

According to Amy Smagula, the NHDES Exotic Species Program Coordinator, "New Hampshire now has a total of 76 infested lakes and 11 infested rivers, most containing variable milfoil as the primary invasive plant, while others have fanwort, Eurasian water milfoil and water chestnut. A new infestation is quite

See next page



Flower stalk of Exotic Variable Milfoil, an invasive plant species found in some New Hampshire bodies of water. (Courtesy photo)



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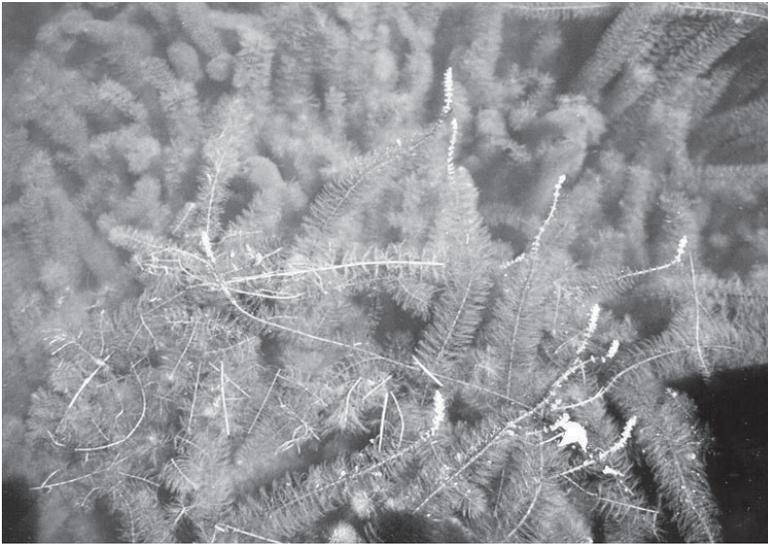


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Exotic Variable Milfoil in flower. The invasive plant species is one of several that has infested 76 New Hampshire lakes and 11 rivers. (Courtesy photo)

from preceding page

literally a boat ride away”.

Legislative initiatives in recent years are paying off. Most notably, requirements for boaters to clean and drain their vessels and gear, as well as pulling drain plugs in transit and emptying water containers have contributed hugely to this success through these prevention activities.

The Lake Host Program, implemented by New Hampshire Lakes through a grant from NHDES, has contributed significantly to prevention efforts statewide, thanks to courtesy boat inspectors stationed at 100 of the state’s busiest public access sites each summer.

“Since 2002, the Lake Host Program has conducted over one-million courtesy boat inspections and has made nearly 1,600 ‘saves’ of invasive species that had just hitchhiked out of a lake,

or were about to be launched into a lake,” said Andrea LaMoreaux, NH LAKES vice president. “The number of additional ‘saves’ Lake Hosts have contributed to by teaching boaters to always clean, drain, and dry their boat, trailer, and gear whenever they boat is immeasurable! We are grateful for all the boaters who are taking action to protect the lakes they visit.”

Early detection is also critical. Many lake residents and volunteers take time to survey their waterbodies, and report any suspicious species. If something is found, rapid response initiatives can be implemented to manage the new infestation.

NHDES encourages all boater to:

- Clean off any plants, animals and algae found during your inspection and dispose of it away from a waterbody, and use any cleaning tech-

see **PLANT** page 22

Lakes Region

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LAKES REGION BOATING



Just one of many boat storage facilities maintained by Irwin Marine. (Adam Drapcho/The Laconia Daily Sun photo)

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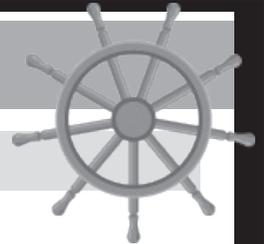
nologies at launch sites before entering, and after leaving a waterbody.

- Drain your boat, bait buckets, bilges and other equipment away from the waterbody, leaving your boat's drain in the open position during transport.
- Dry anything that comes into contact with the water.

NH LAKES will be showcasing a new boat decontamination unit on Tuesday, Sept. 24 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Department of Environmental Services, 29 Hazen Drive in Concord. The demonstration unit has been traveling the state this summer to promote prevention activities. Boaters are encouraged to stop by and check it out.

NHDES urges lake and river residents and visitors to routinely monitor for aquatic invasive species and report new infestations of anything suspicious. Look for plants or animals that appear to be growing or increasing in number quickly, and that do not appear to be part of the native aquatic community. For more information or to report a potential new infestation, contact the Exotic Species Program Coordinator at Amy.Smagula@des.nh.gov or 603-271-2248.

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LAKES REGION BOATING

Surprise rescue of Jamaica coral reefs shows nature can heal

By CHRISTINA LARSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

OCHO RIOS, Jamaica (AP) — Everton Simpson squints at the Caribbean from his motorboat, scanning the dazzling bands of color for hints of what lies beneath. Emerald green indicates sandy bottoms. Sapphire blue lies above seagrass meadows. And deep indigo marks coral reefs. That's where he's headed.

He steers the boat to an unmarked spot he knows as the "coral nursery." "It's like a forest under the sea," he says, fastening his oxygen tank before tipping backward into the azure waters. He swims straight down 25 feet carrying a pair of metal shears, fishing line and a plastic crate.

On the ocean floor, small coral fragments dangle from suspended ropes, like socks hung on a laundry line. Simpson and other divers tend to this underwater nursery as gardeners mind a flower bed — slowly and painstakingly plucking off snails and fireworms that feast on immature coral.

When each stub grows to about the size of a human hand, Simpson collects them in his crate to individually "transplant" onto a reef, a process akin to individually planting each blade of grass in a lawn.

Even fast-growing coral species add just a few inches a year. And it's not possible to simply scatter seeds.

A few hours later, at an underwater site called Dickie's Reef, Simpson uses fishing line to tie clusters of staghorn coral onto rocky outcroppings — a temporary binding until the coral's limestone skeleton grows and fixes itself onto the rock. The goal is to jumpstart the natural growth of a coral reef. And so far, it's working.

Almost everyone in Jamaica depends on the sea, including the energetic 68-year-old Simpson.

Once a spear fisherman and later a scuba-diving instructor, he started working as a "coral gardener" two years ago — part of grassroots efforts to bring Jamaica's coral reefs back from the brink.

Coral reefs are often called "rainforests of the sea" for the astonishing diversity of life they shelter.

Just 2 percent of the ocean floor is filled with coral, but the branching structures sustain a quarter of all marine species. Clown fish, parrotfish, groupers and snappers lay eggs and hide from predators in the reef's nooks and crannies, and their presence draws eels, sea snakes, octopuses and even sharks. In healthy reefs, jellyfish and sea turtles are regular visitors.

With fish and coral, it's a codependent relationship — the fish rely on the reef to evade danger and lay eggs, and they also eat up the coral's rivals.

After a series of natural and man-made disasters in the 1980s and 1990s, Jamaica lost 85 percent of its once-bountiful reefs. Meanwhile, fish catches declined to a sixth of what they had been in the 1950s, pushing families depending on seafood closer to poverty.

Many scientists thought most of Jamaica's coral reef had been permanently replaced by seaweed, like jungle overtaking a ruined cathedral.

But today, the corals and tropical fish are slowly reappearing, thanks in part to a series of careful interventions.

The delicate labor of the coral gardener is only one part of restoring a reef. Convincing lifelong fishermen to curtail when and where they fish and controlling the surging waste dumped into the ocean are even trickier endeavors.

Still, slowly, the comeback effort is gaining momentum.

"When you give nature a chance, she can repair herself," says Stuart Sandin, a marine biologist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California. "It's not too late."

Nautical Names

Does your boat have a clever, funny or meaningful name? Share a photo of your boat with the name clearly shown and we'll print it in our boating pages. Please include your name and hometown, and a short explanation of the name if you like. Email your photo to news@laconiadaily-sun.com, and put "Nautical Names" in the subject line.



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