



For immediate release:

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WHITEFISH AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAM REMINDER OF OFF-SEASON RULES

WHITEFISH, MT – The Whitefish Lake Institute, City of Whitefish and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks asks watercraft users to comply with off-season rules on Whitefish Lake.

The City Beach Watercraft Inspection Station, Whitefish Lake State Park Watercraft Inspection Station, and the Whitefish Decontamination Station all close for the off-season on Monday, September 30th. The following rules go into effect from October 1st through April 30th:

CITY BEACH AND STATE PARK BOAT RAMPS

The **City Beach and Whitefish Lake State Park** boat ramps will be locked in the off season. All motorized and non-motorized watercraft users may launch in the off season by demonstrating via the *Off-Season Online AIS Self-Certification Program* they have acquired sufficient knowledge of AIS risks and self-inspection techniques. Users who successfully pass the program test will be issued a **certificate** and **lock code** to enter and exit the boat ramp at City Beach and Whitefish Lake State Park. Find the *Off-Season Online AIS Certification Program* at www.cityofwhitefish.org or www.whitefishlake.org. Please note that users who passed the *Off-Season Online AIS Self-Certification Program* or the *Early Morning Anglers AIS Self-Certification Program* and received a code after April 1, 2019 will not need to take the test again as the code has not changed.

HIGH RISK WATERCRAFT

Because decontamination is not available during the off-season, we ask *high-risk watercraft to abstain from launching in Whitefish Lake during this time*. Your cooperation will help protect our waterways and is greatly appreciated. This includes boats:

- with ballast tanks or bags that have not been out of the water for 30 days,
- with standing water that have not been out of the water for 30 days,
- that have been in mussel infested waterways in the last 30 days,
- that have dirt, mud, vegetation or animal life on any internal or external surface.

“We are once again asking high risk watercraft users to show care and abide by these rules during the off-season,” noted Carla Belski, Community Services Coordinator for City of Whitefish Parks and Recreation. “We appreciate all watercraft users continuing to respectfully access the lake during these months while our facilities are closed for the season.”

Montana’s fight to protect state waters against AIS increased throughout the state in 2019, with collaborative efforts focused on Montana’s borders, the Continental Divide, and the Upper Columbia Basin. In a continued effort to increase protection of Whitefish Lake, the City of Whitefish, Montana State Parks, and the Whitefish Lake Institute continued to fund and manage inspection stations at City Beach and Whitefish Lake State Park as well as a Prevention & Decontamination station.

“We appreciate the participation and patience of watercraft users throughout the 2019 season,” said Mike Koopal of the Whitefish Lake Institute. “Boaters and anglers at City Beach, Whitefish Lake State Park, and the Prevention & Decontamination Station demonstrated they recognize the importance of preventing AIS from entering our waterways,” noted Koopal.

Full program details are available at: http://whitefishlake.org/AIS_Mgmt_Pgm.php.

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