

Tip of the Mitt offering mobile boat washing

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Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council has announced the second season of the Mobile Boat Washing Station Program in Northern Michigan.

The station, which uses high-pressure, heated water to wash invasive plants and animals off boats and trailers, will be visiting various Northern Michigan lake landings this spring and washing boats for free. Visit www.watershedcouncil.org/mobo for more information on dates and locations of boat washing events.

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Boat washing

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Aquatic invasive species in lakes come from outside Northern Michigan or the United States and harm or have the potential to harm human, environmental, and-or economic health. Species such as Eurasian watermilfoil, zebra and quagga mussels, and curly leaf pondweed are a few common examples. They compete with native species, encourage the growth of harmful algal blooms, clog intake pipes, and cause many other problems for people and wildlife.

According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, as of 2017 the Great Lakes Region annually lost \$200 million dollars due to the effects of ship-borne in-

vasive species.

Aquatic invasive species can spread from one water body to the next by hitching a ride on boat hulls and trailers. That's why the Watershed Council has invested in a mobile boat washing station to wash water craft as they leave the lake. The station is easy and quick to use. Station staff spray hot water to kill and wash off the invasive species. The spray water is collected in a large containment mat and later discharged into designated containment facilities at parks or campgrounds or into drains where water treatment facilities will prevent invasive species from reentering water bodies.

"We are excited to share our mobile boat washing program with boaters all across our service area because, in addition to being an effective way to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, it also allows us to connect with boaters and share how important it is to work to-



Baker

gether to protect the waters that we love," said Eli Baker, the Watershed Council's water resources education coordinator.

From Memorial Day through Labor Day, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council will be educating boaters and washing boats throughout its Northern Michigan service area with the help of dedicated

volunteers.

A schedule of events will be available at www.watershedcouncil.org/mobo.

If you'd like to volunteer at a boat washing event in your area this summer, contact Baker at (231) 347-1181 or info@watershedcouncil.org.

The Mobile Boat Washing Station Program is funded by the United States Forest Service and the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program.