

Keep Lake County quagga-free: Clean lakes start with clean boats

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LAKE COUNTY – Every summer, boaters from across Northern California and beyond enjoy fishing, waterskiing, wakeboarding, and swimming at Lake County's prized lakes and stay in rustic cabins, comfortable beds and breakfasts, full-service lakefront resorts, or at lakeside campsites.

This year, drought conditions have contributed to significantly lower water levels at many reservoirs throughout California, but the water levels at Clear Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake in the state, Blue Lakes, and Lake Pillsbury, are only slightly below average.

The upcoming Independence Day weekend offers boaters an opportunity to enjoy fireworks over the lake. Some displays will be held on Friday, some will be held on Saturday. A complete list of fireworks displays is available on the events calendar at www.lakecounty.com.

Boaters visiting Lake County should be aware that boat inspection stickers are required prior to launching any vessel on any Lake County water body.

The Lake County Sheriff's Office and its Marine Patrol unit will be strictly enforcing the ordinance. Violators will be cited for an infraction or misdemeanor, which could result in fines from \$100 to \$1,000 and/or up to six months in jail.

Boaters are encouraged to plan ahead to get their stickers. For convenience, boaters arriving for the Independence Day weekend can choose from many inspection locations around the lake. Locations and hours of operation over the holiday weekend are listed below.

PROGRAM DETAILS, COSTS

The Lake County Invasive Species Inspection Program, established by ordinance in March 2008, requires boat screenings and inspections as a means to protect Lake County's water bodies from the threat of infestation by quagga and zebra mussels.

As part of this inspection process, an inspection application form and affidavit must be completed, signed, and submitted, along with payment for initial screening fee. Application forms with instructions may be downloaded in advance from the Lake County Mussel Web Site at www.co.lake.ca.us/mussels.

The fee for initial screening performed by the County is \$10. If a water vessel passes initial screening, an inspection sticker will be issued; if a water vessel does not pass initial screening, further inspection by a certified inspector will be required.

Clean, drained, and dry boats are ideal; wet boats are at risk of not passing inspection.

Since the program's inception last year, only a minimal number of boats have required any inspection beyond the initial screening.

For those vessels that do require further inspection, the fee for a certified inspection by county personnel is based on the vessel length and type. For vessels up to 12 feet in length, the fee is \$15. For vessels from 12 to 18 feet, the fee is \$25. For vessels 18 feet and longer, the fee is \$40. Any vessel with ballast tanks and/or bladders will be charged an additional \$20 per inspection.

If a vessel passes certified inspection, an inspection sticker will be issued; if it does not pass certified inspection, the vessel may a) require decontamination and re-inspection, or b) require quarantine and will not be allowed to launch.

For non-local water vessels, the stickers will be valid through the end of the calendar year in which they are issued. For local water vessels, stickers are not subject to an expiration date. Local vessels include any vessel registered in Lake County and any non-registered vessel owned by a resident of Lake County (proof must be provided: a valid driver's license with Lake County address; vessel registration certificate with a Lake County address; utility bill showing a Lake County residence; and/or a boat-slip lease agreement with a local marina).

In addition to establishing the inspection program, the ordinance also bans the disposal of live bait and any liquid that contains or has contained live bait into Lake County water bodies.

For information about this program or to locate the most convenient inspection location, go online to the Lake County Mussel Web Site at www.co.lake.ca.us/mussels, or call the Lake County Mussel Hotline at 707-263-2556.

INSPECTION LOCATIONS OVER HOLIDAY WEEKEND

Clearlake

Clearlake Bait and Tackle, 14699 Lakeshore Dr., 707-994-4399 Friday, July 3: 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: 6 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Sunday, July 5, 6 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Lakeshore Bait and Tackle, 14913 D Lakeshore Dr., 707-994-3474 Friday, July 3: 5 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: 5 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, July 5: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Clearlake Oaks

Limit Out, 12607 East Highway 20, 707-998-1006 Friday, July 3: 5 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: morning only; Sunday, July 5: 6 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Kelseyville

Brait's Marina, 1555 East Lake Dr., 707-279-4868 Friday, July 3: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, July 5: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Clearlake State Park, 5300 Soda Bay Road, 707-279-4293 Friday, July 3: 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Sunday, July 5: 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Edgewater Resort, 6420 Soda Bay Road, 707-279-0208 Friday, July 3: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, July 5: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Ferndale Resort & Marina, 6190 Soda Bay Road, 707-279-4866 Friday, July 3: 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Saturday, July 4:

8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Sunday, July 5: 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Konocti Harbor Resort & Spa, 8727 Soda Bay Road, 707-279-6628 Friday, July 3: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday, July 5: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Lake Pillsbury

Soda Creek Store, 26873 Elk Mountain Road, 707-743-2148 Friday, July 3: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, July 5: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Lakeport

Clearlake Outdoors, 96 Soda Bay Road, 707-262-5852 Friday, July 3: 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Hillside Honda, 460 S Main St., 707-263-9000 Friday, July 3: 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Konocti Vista Casino, 2755 Mission Rancheria Road, 707-262-1900 x7001 Guests Only

Lake Vacation Rentals, 601 N Main St., 707-263-7188 Friday, July 3: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tackle It, 1050 N Main St., 707-262-1233 Friday, July 3: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Lakeport Regional Chamber, 875 Lakeport Blvd., 707-263-5092 Friday, July 3: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Lucerne

Lake County Visitor Center, 6110 East Hwy 20, 707-274-5652 Friday, July 3: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Saturday, July 4: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, July 5: 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.