



July 23, 2020

Dear Shenipsit Lake Shoreline Property Owner:

Connecticut Water has proudly offered a recreation program at the Shenipsit Lake Reservoir for 26 years, allowing for recreational activities at the reservoir with conditions to safeguard the purity of this critical public water supply source.

As you are aware, in view of COVID-19, the program opened with modifications this year, allowing hiking and shoreline fishing but temporarily suspending boat use. We know this has impacted you as a shoreline property owner and want to update you on our efforts to reinstate the boating portion of the 2020 recreation program and our decision to apply for a permit to *allow for use of boats by lakeside property owners only*.

Efforts to Resume Boating Program

On July 1, Connecticut Water shared with the town leaders of Ellington, Tolland and Vernon and the Shenipsit Lake Association (SLA) a thoughtful, planned and phased approach to resume boating on Shenipsit Lake Reservoir which was proposed to start on July 17. It has not been possible, however, for us to finalize and file the permit application, largely due to the Shenipsit Lake Association's (SLA) objections to precautions in the application designed to protect public health and safety. We met again on Friday, July 17 to again discuss the phased opening of boating and SLA leaders said they would need more time to think about and get back to us.

The SLA has since responded with a 'demand' for the program "to return to the way it was for the last 26 years". The company simply cannot agree to their demands or accommodate their continued objections efforts to reasonable, common-sense protections in light of the extraordinary circumstances and significant uncertainty we are facing in Connecticut and across the country during this pandemic.

We shared our proposed plan with the towns and the SLA in the spirit of cooperation, and our preference is to have their support to maintain our longstanding cooperative effort. However, the statute is clear that the water company is ultimately responsible for the quality of the water delivered to customers, and must be the applicant to the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) for any recreation permit on this public water supply source that is critical to serve more than 35,000 customers in north-central Connecticut.

Measures to Protect Public Health During COVID-19

Our number one priority is to protect the health and safety of our communities. Over the past few weeks, the State of Connecticut has been recognized for how well it has handled its COVID-19 response, and it is our responsibility to all do our part to make sure we continue to keep up the good work. We have seen the devastating setbacks in other states across the country – in terms of the number of new COVID-19 cases and the increasing number of deaths associated with the virus – and we cannot let that happen here. We have already lost nearly 4,500 Connecticut residents to COVID-19.

(more)

The decisions we make as a company – including the phased approach to resume boating on Shenipsit Lake Reservoir – are to ensure we protect our communities now and in the future. We just cannot compromise on that priority or undermine the success of the shoreline fishing and hiking program to accommodate the interests of a few who are not willing to make changes in these extraordinary times.

Our plan was to phase in the program with limited days and hours with a goal to resume normal days and hours if the COVID-19 protective measures are proven effective and if such expansion is consistent state reopening guidelines in effect at that time. Among the common-sense provision that the SLA has objected to are measures to:

- Move to electronic record keeping to reduce the sharing of paperwork, clipboards, pens and pencils and streamline reporting.
- Ensure that any lake activity monitors who are hired support the permit conditions and are prepared to enforce these precautionary measures, whether they be former monitors or new monitors.

The SLA continues to view these precautionary measures as an attempt by Connecticut Water to undermine the program. Nothing could be further from the truth. We value the program and have been committed to it for 26 years. We continued the program after 9/11, and have assumed the responsibility for funding 100% of the program since the early 2000's when the towns ceased their funding. We are committed to the program's future with a continuation of successful, responsible shoreline fishing, hiking, and fishing from boats, including shoreline property owners, as allowed by the permit.

Boating for Shoreline Property Owners

Given the continued objections of SLA to key provisions in the application to resume the broader boating program, the Company has instead filed a separate limited permit application with DPH to allow for the resumption of boating for just shoreline property owners and expect approval of that permit this week. Further, Connecticut Water will have an expanded presence at the lake to provide additional supervision and protection of the lake, starting this week.

We are asking that if you as a shoreline property owner want to obtain your boating sticker for the remainder of this season that you complete an application, which is available online at [ctwater.com/community/serving-communities](https://www.ctwater.com/community/serving-communities). You can return your completed application by email to LakeShenipsit@ctwater.com. As required by the DPH permit, boats that have been used in other bodies of water must be dry docked or quarantined for 48 hours prior to being placed in the reservoir to protect against zebra mussel contamination.

We will provide status updates on the phased opening of boating on our website at <https://www.ctwater.com/community/serving-communities>. If you would like to be on the email list for future updates, please send us an email at publicaffairs@ctwater.com and include the "Shenipsit" in the subject line.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we suspended the boating portion of the program early this season. It was a necessary step so we could thoroughly review the tasks and implement changes in procedures and protocols related to administering the program to mitigate risks and protect the health and safety of participants, lake monitors, Connecticut Water employees and the public.

If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Demar at jdemar@ctwater.com or 860.664.6190.



Shenipsit Lake Reservoir Recreation Program Guidelines & FAQ

Connecticut Water fully funds the operating costs for the program, and we rely on participants to follow the provisions of the program that protect the quality of the public water supply reservoir, which is critical in meeting the region's drinking water needs. To our knowledge this is the only public drinking water supply reservoir in Connecticut that is open to the public without a fee-based permit.

As a shoreline property owner abutting the Shenipsit Lake Reservoir, you are eligible to fish from your own boat as long as it complies with recreation program requirements designed to protect water quality, and you have a valid recreation program sticker.

Eligible Boats and Requirements:

- Only boats powered by oars or electric motor are allowed.
- Sculls, kayaks, paddle boats and sailboats are not eligible because they are more susceptible to tipping over.
- As required by the DPH permit, boats that have been used in other bodies of water must be dry docked/quarantined for 48 hours prior to being placed in the reservoir to protect against zebra mussel contamination.

Obtaining a sticker for your boat:

- Verify that your boat meets the requirements above.
- Visit ctwater.com/community/serving-communities and download the fillable pdf Shoreline Property Owner Boat Sticker Registration Form and email it to LakeShenipsit@ctwater.com.
- If you own more than one boat, and would like an additional sticker, please contact Jessica Demar at jdemar@ctwater.com or 860.664.6190.
- We would greatly appreciate it if you would please secure your boat (i.e. lock and chained to a tree) once you receive a sticker to prevent unauthorized use.

Recreation Program Requirements:

- Fishing from boats on the reservoir is limited to shoreline property owners and those who store their own boats at the boat storage area.
- Shoreline fishing from designated areas is open to all participants.
- No cooler or other containers will be allowed in boats on the reservoir, except for a bucket to keep fish.

Boating Safety:

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection requires all persons in a manually propelled boat to wear life jackets between October 1st and May 31st. Required personal flotation devices must be in the boat at all other times.

Restrictions to Protect the Water Supply:

Connecticut Water may suspend or curtail the recreation program if it is necessary to protect the water supply. If the program is suspended, anyone fishing from boats on the reservoir, fishing from the shoreline, or hiking on the trail will be asked to leave. Shoreline property owners would be notified directly in the unlikely event that should be necessary.

If you See Something, Say Something:

All shoreline property owners and recreation program participants are asked to report any suspicious activity they may observe around the reservoir by calling us at 800.286.5700, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Partnering to Provide Recreation and Protect Your Drinking Water Supply

Lake Shenipsit Reservoir is a critical water supply source for north central Connecticut and combined with our ground water sources (wells) meets the daily water supply needs of families and communities for drinking, cooking, hygiene, sanitation, economic development, and public fire protection. Our Rockville Drinking Water Treatment Facility, completed in 2017, treats and filters all water withdrawn from the reservoir. The combination of high-quality source water and state-of-art treatment allows us to deliver a reliable supply of safe drinking water day-in and day-out.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us to protect the high quality of the water in the reservoir and in making this a successful recreation program. A copy of our Shenipsit Lake Reservoir Recreation Program brochure is enclosed for additional details about the program, including hiking and designated shoreline fishing areas. If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Demar at jdemar@ctwater.com or 860.664.6190.



In the interest of maintaining the quality of the Shenipsit Lake Reservoir as a public drinking water supply, The Connecticut Water Company is providing this information on zebra mussels. Not only do zebra mussels pose a potential threat to fresh waters throughout the United States, they may also cause damage to boats used in infested waters.

Remember, Shenipsit Lake Reservoir is a public drinking water supply. Your cooperation is appreciated in taking these precautionary measures to ensure the continuous protection and quality of this drinking water supply source.

Beware of Zebra Mussels

- ❖ Zebra mussels are fingernail-size clams with yellowish or brownish shells marked with wavy bands. Their larvae are too small to be seen, but they live for weeks in any water left in your boat. As zebra mussels grow, they form clumps that damage your boat, kill native clams, foul beaches with stinky razor-sharp shells and clog water intake pipes.
- ❖ Zebra mussels are found only in fresh or brackish water, and are the only fresh water mollusk that firmly attaches itself to solid objects, including rocks, boat hulls or anything else.
- ❖ Zebra mussels can spread to inland waters as adults attached to boat hulls, engines, fish cages or any number of items. Waterfowl and other wildlife may also transport zebra mussels in wet fur or feathers. Adult zebra mussels are very hardy and with their shells closed can survive drying for several days. In moist environments they can survive out of the water even longer.

To minimize the threat of zebra mussels follow these precautionary measures:

- ❖ Remove any visible aquatic vegetation from boat, paddles propeller, or anchor lines and discard in trash.
- ❖ Do not release aquatic bait into the water. Empty bait water on land before leaving the site. Empty and flush live wells with tap water on land.
- ❖ When moving your boat from lake to lake, dry it out for at least two days.