

Fourth of July boat parade to continue on Otsego Lake

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- By: Greg Klein - Staff Writer Posted on Jun 25, 2020



A boat decorated with American flags sailed in the 2014 Otsego Lake Association's "We Love Our Lake, July 4th Boat Parade."

The coronavirus pandemic has canceled much of the summer season in Cooperstown, but the Otsego Lake boat parade will go on as planned on the Fourth of July.

The Otsego Lake Association will hold its annual "We Love Our Lake" decorated boat parade at 3 p.m. Saturday, July 4.

"Being out in the water, we can social distance," OLA Board member and parade chair Wayne Bunn told The Daily Star in a phone interview Thursday, June 25. "In the boats, we are asking the participants to self-regulate, to keep to their family units in the boat, and if they do, it is a great event that can still be done while everything else is canceled.

"That's one of the reasons why we decided to still do this," Bunn said.

Themed "Let's Celebrate, It's the 4th of July," the parade will form off Three Mile Point, then proceed slowly along the west side of the lake and end at Lakefront Park in Cooperstown, according to a media release.

"We've always been, no registration, no forms, just line up and take part," Bunn said. "You never know what you are going to get. One year we had 50 boats, some years we have 10. It seems like there are more people on the lake this year, so we're hoping for a good turnout."

According to the media release, the parade will be led by the SUNY Oneonta Biological Field Station's barge, the Anondontoides, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be no judging and no prizes or candy given out to the boaters this year.

OLA encourages all boaters, either in the parade or just observing, plus the spectators on shore to practice social distancing and wear face masks. Spectators may watch from shore at various points along the parade route including Three Mile Point, Brookwood Point, the Country Club (for members only), the Otesaga Hotel and Lakefront Park.

"We hope people can get together and keep proper safety in mind at the same time," Bunn said.

All boats are welcome. Organizers encourage participants to decorate boats using the theme, but owners may decorate boats any way they wish, or not at all. Boats may join the parade at any time or anywhere along the route, especially for non-motorized boaters who might not want to travel the full route, the release said. There are no fees, registration forms, rules or regulations except travel slowly, stay in line, be courteous to other boaters and practice social distancing, the release said.

Bunn said the parade has always been a fun event, so he hopes in a year where most other options are canceled, such as fireworks and the Springfield Parade and Concert, more people will turn out to see the boats.

"It is hard to predict anything right now, so predicting a crowd number is no different," Bunn said. "But we don't have the Springfield Parade or their concert this year. So we hope this is something where people will be able to get together this year."

For more information, go to www.OtsegoLakeAssociation.org or contact Bunn at bunnwayne@gmail.com or 518-542-6630.