

Boating Safety Initiatives from New York State Parks



Alan Mapes kayaking on the Hudson River.

Photo Courtesy of Michael Kalin.

New York State Parks has rolled out new initiatives to encourage greater safety (and fun!) out on the water.

Free stickers and decals are being given out to paddlesport enthusiasts. The "If Found" Stickers are for identification of owners of non-powered watercraft such as kayaks, canoes, rowboats, standup paddleboards, and sailboats. They help search and rescue personnel to quickly determine if an emergency response is needed when a boat is found on the water without an operator or if a boat is just accidentally drift and can be returned to the owner. "Safe 'n Sight" decals are reflective and meant to go on each of the four sides of a kayak paddle blade. As the kayak paddle moves through the water, the sun will reflect off the decal, making kayakers easier to spot by other passing boaters.

To receive these free stickers and decals, send a self-addressed business-size envelope to: **NYS Parks, Marine Services Bureau, Safety Stickers, Albany, N.Y., 12238.**



"If Found" sticker.



Safe 'n Sight decal on paddle.

Coming up in March is Spring Aboard, a week that encourages boaters to enroll in a boating education course. NYS Parks is expanding upon this event through a "Super Spring Aboard" week, occurring from March 18 to 26, so that boaters have two full weekends on each end of Spring Aboard week in order to complete their course. Boaters can check the NYS Parks website (www.nysparks.com) for a list of boating education courses across the state.

With the waning days of winter comes the desire to experience warmer temperatures and get on the water. Even when the weather on land is warm, the water temperature can still be at levels that make exposure dangerous. Exposure to the water as the result of capsizing, swamping or falling out of your boat will be immediately dangerous. Between November 1 and May 1, anyone on vessels less than 21 feet, regardless of age, are required to wear a lifejacket. This includes kayaks, canoes, rowboats, stand up paddleboards, sailboats and motorboats. Although State Parks recommends that boaters and paddlers wear a lifejacket at all times of the year, it is especially recommended when the water temperature is below 70°F.

For more boating safety tips and information on boater education classes, please visit www.nysparks.com/recreation/boating/.

State Parks hopes everyone stays safe and has fun on the water this year!



Schodack Island State Park.