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NEW NY BRIDGE PROJECT ENHANCES BOATER SAFETY; U.S. COAST GUARD EXPANDS REGULATED NAVIGATION AREA

Boater safety on the Hudson River in the area of the New NY Bridge project will be enhanced by new measures being instituted by the New York State Thruway Authority, Tappan Zee Constructors, LLC (TZC) and the United States Coast Guard.

The boater safety enhancements include:
- GPS tracking for TZC vessels and barges
- Extended U.S. Coast Guard Regulated Navigation Area (RNA)
- “Slow, No Wake Speed Zone” in RNA
- Proposed U.S. Coast Guard safety zone
- New safety buoys and markers in river
- Enhanced marine law enforcement patrols

Some four dozen Tappan Zee Constructors vessels are currently on the Hudson River in the project area and at the peak of the project this summer, 100 or more vessels could be in the active work zone. Crew boats, tug boats, barge mounted cranes and barges – as well as temporary fixed platforms – are in the area of the existing Tappan Zee Bridge and may be moved at any time. Boaters are advised to use extreme caution in the area.

Starting this spring, TZC vessels and barges on the site will be tracked by GPS technology, and boaters will be able to view vessel locations on the New NY Bridge website, www.NewNYBridge.com, where they can also find U.S. Coast Guard Notice to Mariners safety information, maps and more.

The U.S. Coast Guard announced this week that it is extending its Regulated Navigation Area (RNA) around the project site to 500 yards north and 500 yards south of the existing bridge. Boaters are advised to proceed with no wake at a maximum speed of five knots in this area, and to transit the main channel when traveling between the north and south sides of the bridge.

The RNA also allows the Coast Guard to limit or prohibit marine traffic in those areas if necessary. The RNA had already encompassed 200 yards south and 300 yards north of the bridge.

The Thruway Authority and Tappan Zee Constructors have also applied for a new safety zone around the 16 construction barge mooring locations at the site. No vessel traffic will be allowed in the safety zone (see attached map).

Special Advisor to the Governor for the New NY Bridge Project Brian Conybeare shared the safety enhancements with members of the Hudson River Boat & Yacht Club Association earlier this week, saying: “Our goal is to make the Hudson River as safe as possible for all boaters during this historic project. The area around the Tappan Zee Bridge is currently a very active construction zone and will
continue to be for the next four years. We have been meeting pro-actively with boating groups, the U.S. Coast Guard, marine law enforcement agencies and more to come up with this comprehensive package to be in place as boating season gets underway.”

Charles W. Rowe, U.S. Coast Guard Public Affairs, Sector New York, said: “The Coast Guard has two primary goals as regards the bridge construction project. First and foremost is the safety of the boating public. We want people to use the Hudson River in the coming months for recreation and to come back year after year and do the same, but to do it safely. Secondly, for the work on the bridge to be carried out safely and expeditiously, the waterborne work zone must be regulated and uncongested.”

Hudson River Boat and Yacht Club President Scott Croft said: “The Hudson River Boat and Yacht Club appreciates everything the Thruway Authority and Tappan Zee Constructors are doing now and in the future to help boaters stay safe during bridge construction. Safe access to river towns, as well as other measures for those simply transiting or enjoying the river, can go a long way to ensure that everyone has a great day on the water, but our 30 member clubs also know safety begins on our own boats, and it’s up to each one of us to ensure a safe summer boating season. Boaters need to go slow, stay out of the RNA and barge anchorages, and post extra lookouts anytime they are near the bridge.”

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