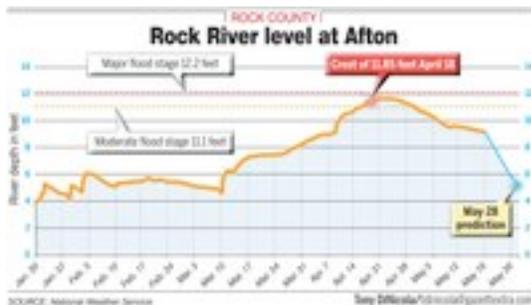


High water means slow weekend for Rock County boaters

By SHELLY BIRKELO

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Photo 



SANDBAG DISPOSAL

As floodwaters recede along the Rock River, people might begin to tire of looking at unneeded sandbags that have become unsightly lawn ornaments.

For anyone looking to get rid of sandbags used during the flood, the Rock County Sheriff's Office provides the following guidelines:

-- Rock County residents can dispose of empty or filled sandbags at the Janesville landfill, 525 Black Bridge Road. The city charges Rock County residents \$4 to \$12 per load based on the size and amount of sandbags. For more information, call the Janesville Service Center, 608-755-3110. If

you plan to take your sandbags to another, nonmunicipal landfill or disposal site, call the landfill to make sure it will accept your used bags.

-- Residents who need help removing sandbags may contact the Rock County Sheriff's Office Emergency Management Division at 608-758-8440.

-- State law prohibits dumping sandbag sand in floodplains or wetlands. Dumping sandbag sand along Rock River shoreline also is prohibited. The sand can contain invasive species or microbes that could transfer and spread fish diseases.

-- If you're handling sandbags that have been in floodwater, make sure you have been recently vaccinated for tetanus. Flood-drenched sandbags can have higher levels of bacteria than regular soil. Avoid reusing sand from the bags in children's sandboxes, playgrounds or other areas where people could come in contact with the sand.

Bacteria in the sand eventually will dissipate, and the sand can be used later as concrete aggregate or for other home construction projects that are away from bodies of water.

JANESVILLE — Memorial Day weekend marks the unofficial start to summer, when it's time to head to the park for a picnic, take a bike ride on the trails or get out on the water.

But if your plans include recreation on the Rock River, you're out of luck.

Due to high water levels caused by spring flooding, a slow, no-wake order is in effect on the waterway from Lake Koshkonong to the state line.

"They can go out there (on the Rock River), but they can't make a wake. Everything is going to be pretty slow this weekend," said Cmdr. Troy Knudson of the Rock County Sheriff's Office.

"To produce no wake, you're just barely moving," he said. "Pulling somebody on a tube behind a boat, water skiing and jet skiing probably is

not feasible under a slow, no-wake. You could get a boat and go out and fish, but you're really going to have to keep the speed down."

One exception, however, has been made for the Rock Aqua Jays, who have been practicing on the Rock River at Preservation Park in the town of Beloit.

The local water ski team will know Friday if it can perform this weekend at its home site on the Rock River in Traxler Park, 600 N. Main St., Janesville.

"This is the first year that the county has jurisdiction to grant use of the river. They've instructed us to go back to the city, so once the city gives us permission, then the county will rubber stamp it. It's a judgment call," said Dave Rezin, show director for the Rock Aqua Jays. "We want 12 inches of clearance from the top of the dock to the water line to make sure it's safe for our boats and skiers."

Skiers from the team also have been traveling to Lauderdale Lakes in Walworth County to practice, Rezin said.

The Aqua Jays are scheduled to open their 2013 season at 7 p.m. Sunday. They also have a Memorial Day show scheduled for 1 p.m. Monday.

Though the majority of waterways that come to Lake Koshkonong have slow, no-wake orders in effect, no such ordinance governs that body of water, said Ryan Ellifson, Jefferson County Department of Natural Resources warden.

"People can still launch their boats (from the Rock, Bark or Crawfish rivers)," Ellifson said. "However, it is no-wake until you reach Lake Koshkonong."

Along with understanding area water restrictions, keeping track of the weather also is a good idea this weekend. According to the National Weather Service in Sullivan, the weekend forecast calls for daytime high temperatures in the lower 60s with a 20 percent chance of light rain Saturday, highs in the mid 60s with a 30 percent chance of rain Sunday, and highs around 70 with a 30 percent chance of rain showers and thunderstorms Monday.