



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Float and Learn on Lake Hopatcong Floating Classroom

LAKE HOPATCONG, NJ, April 11, 2018 – The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is proud to announce that the floating classroom has arrived at Lake Hopatcong. The forty-foot covered catamaran pontoon boat with seating for 40 passengers plus crew was launched today at Hopatcong State Park in Landing, NJ. The vessel was built by Sightseer Marine based in Hudson, Florida.

“We are so excited to bring the floating classroom experience to Lake Hopatcong for students and the public. It will provide an interactive, hands-on educational experience to study the lake ecology, to understand why improving water quality is so important and to learn what can be done to protect the lake,” said Lake Hopatcong Foundation acting executive director Donna Macalle-Holly.

The purchase of the floating classroom was made possible thanks to support from the Gannett Foundation/USA TODAY Network’s “A Community Thrives” program, the James P. Verhalen Family Foundation and the Szigethy Family. Macalle-Holly said she received the news about winning the Gannett Foundation \$50,000 grant early on a Saturday morning last spring which set the wheels in motion for foundation to move forward with the acquisition of the vessel.

The Lake Hopatcong Foundation found inspiration for the floating classroom from other on-the-water educational programs. The foundation staff and volunteers previously visited the Lake George Association Floating Classroom in New York, the Hackensack Riverkeeper Eco-Cruise and the SPLASH Steamboat Floating Classroom on the Delaware River.

The Lake Hopatcong Foundation will christen the vessel and reveal the vessel name at its annual meeting on Friday, May 4, beginning at 6:30 pm at the Garden State Yacht Club. The meeting is open to the public. Come celebrate with us!

Currently, 800 fourth and fifth grade students are scheduled to participate in foundation’s educational field trip program. There is limited availability this May and June for additional schools to participate in this fee-based field trip which includes the floating classroom,

macro-invertebrate sampling in the Musconetcong River, a discovery hike and a watershed model to demonstrate water pollution concepts and their prevention. For more information on the field trips program for fourth and fifth grade students, contact the foundation at 973-663-2500.

The floating classroom will also be open to the public in July and August operating on a limited schedule from Hopatcong State Park. More details on the public schedule and cost will be announced by the foundation in the coming weeks.

The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission of “improving Lake Hopatcong for all, now and in the years to come.” Launched in 2012, the Lake Hopatcong Foundation aims to improve and enhance the lake experience and environment. Initiatives range from invasive species prevention to lake education to improved safety, and more. To learn more, visit www.lakehopatcongfoundation.org.