

# Press-Republican

*July 18, 2013*

## Saranac River to be diverted

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**Press-Republican**

---- — PLATTSBURGH — Area residents are being warned to stay out of a certain section of the Saranac River as cleanup efforts intensify.

A dam to divert the water near the Plattsburgh Police Department on Pine Street will be placed in the middle of the river this week, which will allow crews to perform their cleanup duties.

That portion of the river was affected by an old coal-tar pit from a 20th-century manufactured-gas plant off Saranac Street.

New York State Electric & Gas has been handling the cleanup efforts since 2006.

The diverting dam will be made of steel sheeting and concrete blocks placed in the middle of the river, which could be hazardous to anyone in the water.

Signs have been placed warning people they must exit the waterway in an area across from 90 Pine St.

All tubers, boaters, kayakers, canoers, anglers and others are prohibited from trespassing within the river construction zone, according to City Police.

“The water is really high and moving fast this year, and it is popular with a lot of tubers, Police Chief Desmond Racicot said, “but this is dangerous, so people need to stay out of there.”

A set of temporary stairs has been installed from the river’s edge up the bank to a spot near 90 Pine St. to aid river users in exiting the water.

From there, people may walk down Pine Street to the Kennedy Bridge on Broad Street and re-enter the water.

Anyone violating the no-trespassing provisions will be subject to arrest, police said.

Third-degree criminal trespass carries a misdemeanor charge.

“This ongoing river cleanup project by NYSEG continues to improve the Saranac River water quality,” Mayor Donald Kasprzak said in a statement.

“This commitment, however, involves public-safety priorities, and I urge the public to follow the directives by NYSEG.

“Because of public safety, the City Police Department will be monitoring the area daily to ensure safety precautions are followed.”

Racicot said the section of the river near the diverting dam will be off limits for the rest of the summer.

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