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Moscow River, the Butt of Jokes, Gets Huge Clean-Up

By The Moscow Times

April 22, 2013

A massive clean-up operation started Monday on the Moscow River — the butt of jokes for its filth — and workers will now regularly make an effort to clear it of rubbish and residual fuel.

The clean-up will cover more than 30 square kilometers of the Moscow River's main waterways and involves 16 motor boats, 10 regular boats, three floating cranes, two waste collectors and five oil spillage collectors, Interfax reported.

The fleet will clean up to 78.5 kilometers of river, including a 67-kilometer stretch between Lock No. 9 at Karamishevskaya Plotina in northwest Moscow to Besedinsky Bridge in the southeast, a seven-kilometer stretch of the Yauza River, and the 4.5-kilometer-long Vodootvodny Canal in the city center.

Forty-five cubic meters of waste has already been cleared from the Moscow River since the start of 2013, Interfax said, citing the Moscow city sewer company Mosvodostok.

"Based on these figures, the projected volume of waste to be cleared and recycled during the 2013 shipping season amounts to 2,000 to 3,000 cubic meters," Mosvodostok's press office said in a statement.

Although many Moscow residents love to swim in the Moscow River during the summer and to catch its fish year round, they also have made it the object of humor. Some jokes that have been circulating for years include:

According to environmentalists' estimates, the water from the Moscow River will soon be worth an average of $105 per barrel.

Another one goes:

"Have you heard that you can drink from the Dnieper River?"

"You think that's amazing? You can eat from the Moscow River!"

And a third:

The eight-meter carp caught in the Moscow River forced the fisherman to fulfill its three wishes.

Interfax said the Moscow River was cleared of 2,400 cubic meters of garbage, equivalent to 545 tons, and eight tons of spilled oil in 2012.

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