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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

04-18

April 7, 2004

Contact: Ian Michaels (718) 595-6600

DEP Properties Open For Traditional Sugar Maple Tapping

DEP Commissioner Ward Tours 1200-Tap Operation in Roxbury

MORE INFORMATION

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Commissioner Christopher Ward inspects a Sugar Maple tap on City-owned watershed land in Roxbury in Delaware County. By next season there will be five sites where local residents tap Sugar Maple trees on DEP land as part of the Land Management Program, which encourages sustainable agriculture in the watershed. Deputy Commissioner Michael Principe is in the foreground.

Commissioner Christopher O. Ward of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will be in the Town of Roxbury, Delaware County, at 11:30 A.M. today to tour a sugar maple tapping operation on City-owned watershed property. This year the DEP has awarded contracts for sugar maple tapping at five locations on City-owned land. The five sites include about 2,770 taps in the watershed towns of Neversink, Conesville and Roxbury.

"The opportunities to tap trees have diminished as more properties are developed, sub-divided and posted," said Commissioner Ward. "Sugar maple tapping has traditionally taken place on these lands, and we are interested in preserving this great tradition for future generations. By keeping the minimum price for maple tapping on City land at a low level, we hope to maintain the financial incentive and encourage others to set up their own operations."

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Today's visit is to five acres of City-owned land in Roxbury, where retired school teacher Cliff Farnum has set up 1,200 sugar maple taps. Mr. Farnum collects sap from the DEP land and takes it back to his "sugar house" approximately two miles away to cook the sap into maple syrup and other maple products. In 2002, Mr. Farnum collected about 3,750 gallons of sap from his 1,200 taps, resulting in an output of around half a pint of syrup per tap.



Commissioner Ward joins Sean Farnum in showing off the final product, quarts of 100% pure maple syrup. Mr. Farnum and his father Cliff have 1,200 taps spread over five acres of DEP land. New York State is the second largest producer of pure maple products in the country, trailing only Vermont.

New York State ranks second behind only Vermont in maple syrup production in the United States. Producers of maple sugar products in the State, many of whom are dairy farmers who produce maple syrup as a sideline business, typically have more than \$6 million in combined revenues annually.

Sugar maple tapping began again on City-owned land last year with Mr. Farnum. This year there are two tapping sites set up, with contracts signed for three more. By next year all five sites should be working.

The five people currently with maple tapping contracts for City-owned land bid on their contracts after a proposal is submitted and the land management approves a maple tapping plan and have contracts to tap their sites for up to 5 years. Others interested in tapping opportunities should contact Paul Lenz at the DEP's Kingston offices at (845) 340-7545 to inquire about a specific site. If that site has previously been tapped, and the operation would not affect water quality in the City's reservoirs, the DEP will open the site to tapping and will take bids on a five-year tapping contract for the site, with tapping to begin the next year.

Directions from Route 28 West: Go right onto Route 38 in Arkville. Go to the end and take a right onto NYS Route 30. Proceed approximately 6 miles and bear left off NYS Route 30 onto Cold Springs Rd. Follow the road, which becomes West Settlement Rd., for approximately 3 miles. The site is on the left side of the road. Look for NYC DEP vehicles.