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## DEP's Paul Lenz Recognized as "Conservationist of the Year" by the New York State Conservation Council

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today congratulated one of its watershed employees, Paul Lenz, for being honored as "Conservationist of the Year" by the New York State Conservation Council (NYSCC). Lenz has worked at DEP since 2002, and currently serves as deputy chief of the Natural Resources Division in its Bureau of Water Supply. Lenz was recognized by the council for guiding the City's efforts to open more water supply lands for recreation, organizing fishing clinics for families, sharpening the City's focus on invasive species prevention, and demonstrating that hunting programs could compliment forest management projects in the watershed.

"I want to thank the New York State Conservation Council for this tremendous honor," **Paul Lenz** said. "We are very fortunate to have a team at DEP that understands the importance of recreation to local communities, and that low-impact recreation can be compatible with water quality protection. Everyone has been very supportive of these efforts, and we look forward to working with our partners on new and exciting programs in the future."

"In part, Paul Lenz has helped guide a culture shift within DEP by helping the sporting community show City officials that we can be additional eyes and ears on the watershed lands," said **Bill Conners, NYSCC Region 3 Director**. "Paul has helped us demonstrate that hunting can be and is an important part of forestry management efforts. It is through his efforts that DEP continues to open more lands for recreation."

"DEP would like to thank the New York State Conservation Council for recognizing our colleague Paul Lenz with this well-deserved honor," said **Paul Rush, deputy commissioner for DEP's Bureau of Water Supply**. "Paul Lenz has brought his personal love of outdoor recreation to his work at DEP. He values the preservation and management of our natural resources, and he is always thinking of ways to spread enjoyment of the great outdoors to young people, families and other seasoned sportsmen. We are very proud of his work, and the work of his colleagues who oversee the City's watershed recreation and land management programs."

Lenz was recognized, along with other sportsmen and professional conservationists, at the council's fall convention in Utica. His duties at DEP include overseeing the department's watershed recreation programs, management of City-owned properties, conservation easement stewardship, and land-use permits. Currently, the City has more than 180,000 acres of land and water that are open for fishing, hunting, hiking and other forms of low-impact recreation in the watershed. NYSCC also lauded Lenz for his efforts to reach out to anglers, sportsmen and women, and other outdoor enthusiasts through fishing clinics, hunting programs and other organized recreational opportunities.

Lenz earned his bachelor's degree in forestry and water resources, and his

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master's degree in forest hydrology and watershed management, from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Before joining DEP in 2002, Lenz worked as a hydrologist for the Massachusetts Watershed Initiative, and as a water conservationist for the Missouri Department of Conservation.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to more than 9.5 million New Yorkers. This includes more than 70 upstate communities and institutions in Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties who consume an average of 110 million total gallons of drinking water daily from New York City's water supply system. This water comes from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and the system comprises 19 reservoirs, three controlled lakes, and numerous tunnels and aqueducts. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and other professionals in the upstate watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$157 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$1.7 billion in watershed protection programs—including partnership organizations such as the Catskill Watershed Corporation and the Watershed Agricultural Council—that support sustainable farming practices, environmentally sensitive economic development, and local economic opportunity. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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