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Department of Environmental Protection Announces Additional \$9 Million in new Projects to Improve Catskill Streams and Creeks Damaged by Tropical Storms Irene and Lee

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and its county partners in the stream management program today announced the start of several important stream-restoration projects across the Catskills, focusing specifically on streams that suffered damage two years ago during tropical storms Irene and Lee. The more than \$9 million in work will improve water quality and protect communities by stabilizing stream banks, reconnecting streams to their floodplains, and installing other upgrades related to infrastructure protection, and drainage. The work will also reduce erosion that can introduce fine sediments into the City’s reservoirs. Since 1997, DEP has committed more than \$58 million toward improving local streams and creeks through planning and restoration projects. DEP completes these projects through partnerships with the soil and water conservation districts in Delaware, Greene, Sullivan, and Ulster counties, along with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County, which create stream management plans that identify priority projects in their communities and oversee the contracting and management of those projects.

For the upcoming projects, DEP and its county partners committed \$3.4 million in stream management funds which helped to leverage the remaining funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Emergency Watershed Program. The federal program acknowledges that these waterways require upgrades because they currently pose a threat to public and private infrastructure, and

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water quality during large storms. In addition to the \$9 million in projects that are starting now, DEP and its partners have already completed \$4.3 million in similar stream projects that used federal money from the Emergency Watershed Program. The federal funding for these projects will help money allocated through DEP programs to stretch further and help additional streams and creeks across the Catskill and Delaware watersheds. The upcoming projects include:

- **West Kill at County Route 6 – Lexington, Greene County** – The 2,000-foot-long project includes channel relocation and grading; stream bank armoring; road reconstruction; and modifications to the storm drainage system along County Road 6 to address a segment of eroding bank. The estimated cost for this project is \$2.4 million.
- **West Kill at State Route 42 – Lexington, Greene County** – Project includes roughly 1,200 feet of bank stabilization; widening the overly narrow floodplain; vegetating areas of failed slope and other measures to prevent future erosion of the stream channel's right bank. The estimated cost for this project is \$1.7 million.
- **Stony Clove Creek at Chichester – Shandaken, Ulster County** – Construction at this site aims to stop the chronic stream bank failure and reduce turbidity by stabilizing the stream channel. This will be done by reshaping the stream channel; creating a wider floodplain; installation of stream bank walls; installation of drainage; and reshaping and planting on the eroding hill slopes. The estimated cost for this project is \$1.25 million.
- **Stony Clove Creek at Warner Creek Confluence – Shandaken, Ulster County** – Project is aimed at stopping stream bank failures and stream bed erosion. Construction will include installation of rip-rap bank armoring; installation of boulder walls to protect banks; reshaping and planting the eroding hillside and more. The estimated cost for this project is \$1.5 million.
- **Vly Creek at Fleischmanns – Middletown, Delaware County** – Eroded streambanks will be stabilized and damaged retaining walls will be repaired at multiple sites. Retaining walls are key to this area because of the general lack of available floodplains. Available floodplains will be graded at three sites to reduce water velocity and flood stage. The estimated cost for these projects is \$1.3 million.
- **Dry Brook at Arkville Trailer Park – Middletown, Delaware County** – Existing areas of erosion will be stabilized by installing rock and rip rap; and the stream bank and flood plain will be reconstructed to their approximate pre-flood locations. The estimated cost for this project is \$400,000.
- **Warner Creek – Shandaken, Ulster County** – This project, which began in July, involves stabilizing an eroded hillside and stream bank that has exposed clay, as well as stabilizing an actively eroding bank that is threatening Silver Hollow Road. The 800-foot-long project also includes improvements to the stream channel that are aimed at reducing further erosion. The estimated cost for this project is \$500,000.

These projects underscore the ongoing implementation of similar stream plans across the Catskills, including sixteen such projects that were completed recently, and 11 others that are in progress. Such projects have wide-ranging benefits to local communities and water quality. They help protect infrastructure such as roads and bridges by restoring floodplains that spread out and slow water from large storms, improve habitat for fish by ensuring unimpeded waterways, protect public and private properties, and help prevent erosion and the suspension of sediments that can harm water quality.

Since the mid-1990s, DEP has contracted with the county soil and water districts in Delaware, Greene, Sullivan, and Ulster counties, and Cornell Cooperative Extension to work with towns to identify priority projects that were outlined in their respective local stream management plans. Their plans are shaped by advisory committees that include local officials from the town, county and state

levels. With funding provided by New York City, the local groups and towns then hire contractors to perform the work. This collaborative effort continues today and has resulted in significant improvements to streams, creeks and other water bodies across the Catskill and Delaware watersheds. The stream management plans, past projects, and stream management guides are available at www.catskillstreams.org. This website will also have information about the Delaware, Schoharie, Rondout-Neversink, and Ashokan Stream Management Programs located throughout the watershed.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city’s Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city’s reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.