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Ashokan Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City Plans to Reopen Reservoirs for Fishing

No Boats at Kensico or New Croton Reservoirs

Commissioner Joel A. Miele Sr., P.E., of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that the agency will reopen the New York City reservoirs to fishing on April 1 under its new Public Access Permit system. In response to the terrorist attacks of September 11th, all City-owned watershed properties were closed to the public and individual recreational permits suspended as a security precaution.

In January, the City introduced a new system of Public Access Permits that replaced previously issued fishing, hiking and hunting permits. Under the new system, all current permit holders – anglers, rowboaters, hikers and hunters alike – must acquire the new permit that will allow for access to designated, City-owned properties in the watershed when they are reopened.

"While we are planning to reopen the reservoirs on April 1," said Commissioner Miele, "we continue to have security concerns. Accordingly, the use of boats will continue to be prohibited at the Kensico and New Croton Reservoirs, for the foreseeable future, although fishing from the shorelines will be permitted. This recent decision was made as part of an ongoing security review with federal and State authorities. It is part of a comprehensive security program for the water supply that will continue to be developed and refined in the months to come."

Regarding the issuance of the new Public Access Permits, Commissioner Miele said, "We have received a flood of permit applications, which tells us how important fishing at the City-owned reservoirs is to so many people. We are processing and reviewing the applications as quickly as possible and we expect that at least the first 10,000 will be available for pickup by March 23. Permits will continue to be processed and delivered on a regular basis thereafter."

Applicants for Public Access Permits will be notified by post card when their permits are ready for pickup at specified locations and hours. To pick up permits, applicants must appear in person and bring the post card and a government-issued photo identification to the location specified on the card. For more information and the most recent updates, please refer to the City's web site

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www.nyc.gov/watershedrecreation.

Regarding boat permits, all currently valid five-year boating permits will remain valid, but each permittee must also have the new Public Access Permit. All applicants for new boat permits or renewals must have the Public Access Permit before a boat permit can be provided.

"We are processing the applications and permits as fast as possible in the order in which they were received," said Commissioner Miele, "and although we have hired extra staff to help, it will not be possible to process all of the applications by April 1. We are committed to completing the job as quickly as we can, and I ask applicants to be patient, and remind them that they must wait for notification before they can obtain their permits. The Police Precincts designated as pickup locations do not process the permits and cannot issue them until they are received."

The City will continue to review its water supply security program in consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Office of Homeland Security and State agencies. "We have increased our ability to both detect and respond to threats," said Commissioner Miele. "While the built-in redundancy in the NYC water supply makes it a less than attractive target, we take our responsibility for protection very seriously. We are confident that our regular anglers, hikers, and hunters will play an important role in detecting and helping us respond to any threats to the water supply."