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Schoharie Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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CONTACT:

Michael Saucier/Mercedes Padilla (718) 595-6600

MORE INFORMATION

NYC Department of Environmental Protection
Communications & Intergovernmental Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard
19th Floor
Flushing, NY 11373

(718) 595 - 6600

DEP Building New System to Improve Reservoir Management

Cutting Edge Water Supply Computer Modeling System Will Be First of its Kind in the World

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today announced that work has begun on the Operations Support Tool (OST), a cutting-edge, \$5.2 million computer system that will enable DEP's water supply operators to more accurately predict water storage levels in the City's reservoirs so that DEP can better manage the movement of water throughout the reservoir system, and ultimately, to the 9 million New Yorkers who rely on the City's drinking water every day. The initiative, the first of its kind in the world, will improve the City's water management systems by predicting events that could affect water quality much earlier than is possible now, and incorporating more data in the models used to determine water flows. Understanding the volume and quality of the reservoirs and their feeding waters (rivers, streams, etc.) is critical to isolating and addressing cloudy water that can affect overall quality. When completed, the Operations Support Tool will enable DEP to divert or release water from its reservoirs at the best times to guarantee the highest quality water is delivered to New Yorkers and to protect downstream habitat. The system is expected to be complete by 2013 and will be phased in on a rolling basis. The consultant for the initiative is Hazen and Sawyer.

"The Operations Support Tool will help us make earlier and better decisions about moving water between and out of our reservoirs to ensure the delivery of the highest quality water possible to the 9 million New Yorkers who rely on our water supply," said Commissioner Holloway. "Proactively moving water not needed for supply can help cushion storm impacts that can affect downstream communities and improve the aquatic habit below our reservoirs."

"We look forward to this collaboration with Commissioner Holloway and his team," said Jack Hayes, Ph.D., Director of the National Weather Service. "We help New York manage its regional water resources effectively by providing high-quality precipitation and stream flow forecasts."

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Implementation of the new Operations Support Tool holds great promise to strengthen this partnership."

The Operations Support Tool will link DEP's water quality and quantity models; assimilate near-real-time data on reservoir levels, stream flow into the reservoirs, snowpack and water quality in streams and reservoirs; and ingest National Weather Service forecasts. At the same time, it will apply the rules and laws that govern the water supply operations.

DEP manages the City's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8 million in New York City, and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties. Approximately 1,000 DEP employees live and work in the watershed communities.

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