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[Account Information](#)

[Customer Assistance](#)

[Water Rates](#)

[Property Managers and Trade Professionals](#)

WATER UTILITIES

[Drinking Water](#)

[Wastewater](#)

[Stormwater](#)

[Harbor Water](#)

THE WATERSHED

[Watershed Protection](#)

[Watershed Recreation](#)

CITYWIDE INITIATIVES

[Regulatory Reform](#)

[Environmental Education](#)

[Conservation Programs](#)

[Air Pollution Control](#)

[Noise Codes & Complaints](#)

BUSINESSES & PROFESSIONALS

[Forms & Permits](#)

[Doing Business with DEP](#)

[Asbestos Abatement](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NYC to Acquire 1,323 Acres of Land for Watershed Protection

More than 111,000 Acres of Upstate Land Purchased Since 1997

Helps Maintain Exceptional Drinking Water Quality

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today announced the purchase of 1,323 acres of upstate land for \$7.8 million. This acquisition is the latest purchase as part of New York City's efforts to protect the upstate watershed and maintain the outstanding quality of New York City drinking water. A total of 12 parcels of land were acquired, ranging in size from a half acre to 266 acres. The properties are located in Ulster, Greene, Delaware, and Westchester counties. Since the inception of the Land Acquisition Program, New York City has protected over 111,000 acres of watershed land in the Catskill/Delaware and Croton reservoir systems, which provide drinking water to nine million New Yorkers every day. Most of these properties will be opened for public access, including hunting, hiking and fishing, as well as hay cropping that helps local community businesses.

"The Land Acquisition Program is central to preserving the high quality of NYC Water," said Commissioner Holloway. "Last year marked the second highest number of acres ever purchased by DEP in the watershed, and this latest investment means that we are not slowing that pace down one bit. Though we are preventing over-development in the watershed, we are not cutting off access to the land. Many of these new acres will be opened as hiking or fishing areas for local residents, and anyone else who visits this beautiful natural landscape. I look forward to continuing to work with our partners in the City's watershed to continue the land acquisition program, and at the same time facilitate sustainable economic development that maintains the high-quality water that nine million New Yorkers need and expect every day."

The 12 parcels acquired today are scattered throughout priority areas which were established in 1997 based on certain watershed and water quality features that help guide the City's solicitation of land in order to best protect

MORE INFORMATION

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[Testimony and Public Comments](#)

[Capital Projects](#)

[Job Opportunities](#)

[Environmental Reviews](#)

[A to Z Index](#)

[Contact Us](#)

upstate reservoirs from over development. The acquisition of 12 parcels includes five in Delaware County totaling 815 acres, four in Greene County totaling approximately 430 acres, two in Ulster County totaling nearly 74 acres, and one four-acre parcel in Westchester County.

Watershed protection is widely considered the best way of maintaining the quality of drinking water in the long term. New York City's program, one of the most comprehensive in the world, has been so successful at protecting the integrity of New York City's water supply that the United States Environmental Protection Agency awarded the City a 10-year Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD) in 2007. The success of New York City's Watershed Protection Program is one of the main reasons why New York City remains one of only five large cities in the United States that is not required to filter its drinking water. The other cities are Boston, Portland, San Francisco and Seattle. Since the beginning of the FAD, New York City has committed \$541 million to purchase land to protect our unfiltered drinking water which supplies roughly half the population of New York State. DEP has made unprecedented efforts to balance water quality preservation with the interests and economic vitality of watershed communities, and has agreed to avoid acquisitions in and around existing hamlets where towns have designated such properties.

The 2007 FAD requires the City to continue an active land acquisition program, focusing on properties selected for their water quality protection benefits. The City only acquires lands from willing sellers and pays fair market value based on independent appraisals. The City can acquire land outright, in which case the properties are usually opened for public access and recreational use. The City also protects land by purchasing conservation easements, and through initiatives like the Watershed Agricultural Council, which works with farmers to implement farming practices that are compatible with the City's watershed protection goals.

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 as scientists, engineers, surveyors, and administrative professionals, and perform other critical responsibilities. New York City's water is delivered from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and comprises 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes.

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