

[Home](#)
Customer Services

- › [Ways to Pay Your Bill](#)
- › [Account Information](#)
- › [Customer Assistance](#)
- › [Service Line Protection Program](#)
- › [Water Rates](#)
- › [Property Managers & Trade Professionals](#)

Water Utilities

- › [Drinking Water](#)
- › [Wastewater](#)
- › [Stormwater](#)
- › [Harbor Water](#)
- › [Long Term Control Plan](#)

The Watershed

- › [Watershed Protection](#)
- › [Watershed Recreation](#)

Citywide Initiatives

- › [Regulatory Reform](#)
- › [Environmental Education](#)
- › [Conservation Programs](#)
- › [Air Pollution Control](#)
- › [Noise Codes & Complaints](#)

Business and Professionals

- › [Forms & Permits](#)
- › [Economic Development Unit](#)
- › [Doing Business with DEP](#)
- › [Asbestos Abatement](#)
- › [Construction, Demolition & Abatement](#)

About DEP

- › [Inside DEP](#)
- › [News](#)
- DEP Featured In...
- Stories from DEP
- Press Releases
- Public Notices
- Testimony & Public Comments

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Department of Environmental Protection and Water Research Foundation Host Water Conservation Workshop for Dozens of Upstate Communities

Workshop Focuses on Conservation and Demand Management to Use Water More Efficiently

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and The Water Research Foundation (WRF) today hosted a water conservation workshop in Westchester County that was attended by dozens of officials from upstate communities that get their drinking water from the City's water supply system.

The free workshop, held at the Renaissance Westchester Hotel in West Harrison, N.Y., was attended by officials from communities in Orange, Putnam, Ulster and Westchester counties. More than 70 upstate communities and institutions use an average of 110 million total gallons of drinking water daily from New York City's water supply system.

Water experts from as far away as California and Canada presented strategies for short-term and long-term water conservation that have been successful in other parts of North America, along with public outreach tools that encourage homeowners and businesses to be more vigilant about reducing water consumption. The workshop was the first in a series of DEP programs that will promote water conservation and demand management among the upstate communities that tap the City's aqueducts for drinking water.

"We are lucky to live in a region that currently has plenty of clean drinking water, but you don't have to look far to see that not all regions of the country share in our good fortune," said DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd. "In addition, every drop of water we use must eventually be treated at a wastewater treatment plant, and that uses a lot of energy and accounts for more than 90 percent of DEP's greenhouse gas emissions. Conserving water can dramatically reduce emissions, save money, and help New Yorkers be better prepared to deal with the effects of a changing climate."

"The Water Research Foundation is a leader in funding critical research and providing information and resources that support utilities in providing adequate, safe and affordable drinking water to their communities," said WRF Executive Director Rob Renner. "Partnering with DEP on this workshop is a great opportunity to promote the value of conservation and further support the application of research that will have a long-term, positive impact on individuals, communities and businesses throughout the region."

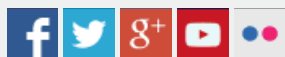
Information presented at the workshop included:

- The current state of water demand and future projections: Participants heard

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- › [Capital Projects](#)
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- › [Environmental Reviews](#)
- › [Interagency MOUs](#)
- › [A to Z Index](#)
- › [Contact Us](#)



about recently completed and ongoing research in the area of water demand. This body of work highlights the significant changes in residential water use patterns during the past 15 years, as well as recent advances in modeling and forecasting water use.

- Designing a successful conservation program: Local communities were advised on how to develop a tailored water efficiency program that addresses their unique circumstances and a variety of related goals.
- Tools and strategies to implement conservation programs: Presenters discussed tools and strategies that have successfully been implemented by other water utilities to achieve short-term and long-term reductions in water consumption.
- Encouraging public participation: Two utilities shared their experiences in successfully garnering support for water conservation programs in their communities, underscoring the importance of an effective communications plan as a key element of water conservation.

Water conservation can help homeowners and businesses save money, and it is also important for the long-term sustainability of the city's water supply system. Water utilities employ a set of strategies known as "demand management" that, in addition to focusing on water conservation, seek to better understand and control water use in transmission and distribution systems. Typical strategies of water demand management programs include system-wide audits of water use, metering with automated reading or advanced metering systems, and leak detection. Promoting more efficient use of water will allow DEP to make progress on key infrastructure projects now and in the future. It will also help the water supply withstand future droughts.

New York City's water consumption has steadily declined since it hit a peak of more than 1.5 billion gallons a day in the late 1970s, when the five boroughs were home to roughly 7 million people. Today, the city consumes an average of 1.1 billion gallons even though its population has grown to roughly 8.4 million people. The reduction in water use during that time is attributable to better metering and more efficient appliances and fixtures. In 2012, DEP began its Water Demand Management Program, with a goal of reducing citywide water use by 5 percent, or 50 million gallons per day. As part of the program, DEP has begun updating bathroom fixtures in 500 City schools, which will save an estimated 4 million gallons of water each day. It also partnered with the City Department of Parks and Recreation to install activation buttons on spray showers in 400 playgrounds around the city, which will save another 1.5 million gallons a day. Outreach programs that encourage residents to fix leaks, and a challenge among the city's largest hotels to reduce their water consumption by 5 percent are also part of the program.

Reducing system wide water use by 5 percent would also produce significant energy savings, reduce carbon emissions, and save money, since every gallon of water used must eventually be treated at a wastewater treatment plant. Wastewater treatment operations in New York City use an enormous amount of energy and account for more than 90 percent of DEP's carbon emissions. A 5 percent reduction in the volume of wastewater treated would cut emissions by 15,661 metric tons, the equivalent of removing 3,297 passenger vehicles from the road or planting 401,564 trees and having them grow for 10 years. It would also save DEP nearly \$9 million annually in electricity, natural gas, fuel, chemicals, and other costs.

Founded in 1966, the Water Research Foundation is an international, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that sponsors research to enable water utilities, public health agencies and other professionals to provide safe and affordable drinking water to the public. With more than 950 subscriber members who provide water to 80 percent of the United States' population, the Water Research Foundation has funded and managed more than 1,000 projects. For more information, go to www.WaterRF.org.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.4 million in New York City, and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam, and Westchester counties. 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 employs nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and others professionals in the upstate watershed. In addition to its \$68 million payroll and \$157 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$1.5 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 over \$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, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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