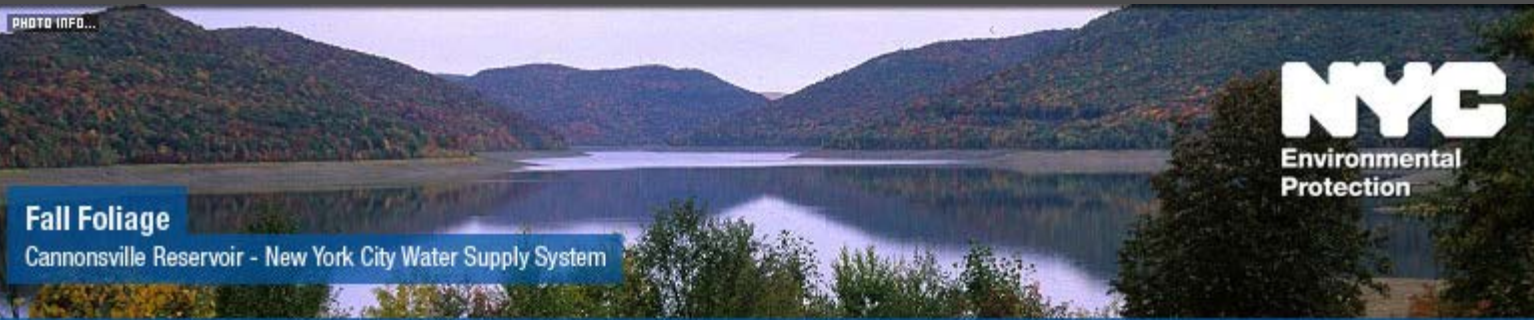




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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Spill Reduction Program At City's Pepacton Reservoir

DEC and DEP Work Together to Prevent Area Flooding

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Erin M. Crotty and New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Acting Commissioner David B. Tweedy today announced implementation of a new spill reduction program of controlled releases from the City's Pepacton Reservoir in Delaware County.

"This unique, joint project will help protect the people and properties along the flood-prone portions of the Delaware River during the winter and spring months when snow causes water levels to rise sharply," Commissioner Crotty said. "Through work with DEP, local municipalities, and the federal government, we have been able to create a unique controlled release program that will alleviate the pressure of snowfall and melt. This will help protect the residences along this portion of the River while also ensuring that water supply remains at desired levels to serve the millions of New Yorkers that rely on this important resource."

"This agreement balances the interests of areas downstream of Pepacton with the concerns of the nine million people who depend on the reservoir as a critical part of their drinking water supply," said Tweedy. "While this will help absorb much of the anticipated spring run-off, residents must remember that Pepacton was not designed as a flood control reservoir. Controlled releases will help decrease the risk, but communities downstream should still take steps to improve their flood preparedness and to closely examine their uses of the downstream flood plain."

Under the program, controlled releases will be made from Pepacton in order to maintain a void in the reservoir equal to one-half of the water equivalent of any existing snow pack, meaning that the void will vary as the snow pack increases or decreases. The program will continue until March 31.

The new program is the result of an agreement reached after months of discussion by a committee seeking ways to help alleviate flooding concerns along the East Branch of the Delaware River. Members of the committee include DEP,

MORE INFORMATION

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DEC, Delaware County , the Town of Colchester , and the federal government. The terms of the agreement were approved by the four Delaware Basin States, as is required for any controlled releases from the City's Delaware River reservoirs. , , a

Supplemental releases will not be made when the river stage at Fishs Eddy is above 13.0 ft., or is projected to be above 13 feet within 48 hours. Releases may also be suspended if ice threatens flood-prone areas. The flood stage for the East Branch of the Delaware River is 13 feet as measured by the gauging station at Fishs Eddy.

The Pepacton Reservoir is the largest of the four reservoirs that make up New York City 's Delaware Water System, which provides about 50 percent of the City's daily supply of about 1.1 billion gallons. It was put into service in 1954 and has a capacity of 143.7 billion gallons. As of January 25, because of extremely high precipitation in the watershed, the reservoir was filled to 100.3 percent of capacity. Average levels at Pepacton for the month of January have historically been 71.7 percent.

"Normal reservoir levels are based on averages from previous years," said Tweedy. "Some years are higher and some years will be lower. That is why the system has experienced six droughts since 1980. Above average water levels are an important hedge against the possibility of future droughts, which are impossible to predict."

Releases and river levels are directed by Delaware River Master or the DRBC according to a 1954 Supreme Court consent decree between the City and the Delaware River basin states of New York , New Jersey , Pennsylvania and Delaware . Releases can also be dictated by the DEC in accordance with the DRBC experimental fisheries program. Changes to the release program require the approval of all four states. The DEP cannot take unilateral action to increase or decrease the downstream releases from the City's three Delaware River reservoirs.

Similar spill reduction releases were made last year, when a five billion gallon void was created in Pepacton in anticipation of runoff from a melting snow pack.

Snow pack estimates are issued daily by the National Weather Service. The DEP also takes snow pack measurements and recently upgraded its system for Pepacton Reservoir to achieve more accurate results.