

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**STATEMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
COMMISSIONER CARTER STRICKLAND ON THE ECONOMIC  
IMPACT STUDY OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE  
CATSKILLS**

*Study Released Thursday says DEP Contributes to Catskills Economy through Direct  
Employment and Recreational Tourism on Protected Land*

*“DEP employs almost 1,000 professionals in the watershed that help ensure that nearly nine million New Yorkers have a reliable supply of high quality tap water. In addition, we have a robust capital construction program that creates good local jobs.*

*We are also proud that our efforts to encourage recreation throughout the watershed have strengthened the tourism economy that has been a hallmark of the Catskills for decades. New York City currently owns 114,833 acres in the Catskills that are open for fishing, hiking, boating and other forms of low impact recreation that attract people from other regions of the state and country. In the past five years alone, we have removed the permit requirements from 52,198 acres of that recreation land, making it even easier for our neighbors and visitors to enjoy.*

*To further enhance the recreational value of City land in the watershed, we have issued land-use permits to local groups to build and maintain trails for hiking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. We’ve also established a successful recreational boating program on four of our reservoirs – Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie – which attracted 983 boaters last year, including some from as far away as Florida and Kansas. And this year, DEP will begin a pilot program that will allow electric trolling motors for fishing at Cannonsville Reservoir.*

*As a diligent steward of protected land in the watershed, we will continue to work with our local partners to explore additional opportunities to share the scenic beauty of the Catskills and strengthen the regional economy, while protecting the vital high quality water supply that nearly half the state’s population depends on every day.”*

For more information on the study go to: <http://www.catskillheritage.org/images/EconomicImpact.pdf>

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City, as well as 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 has 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 \$153 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 \$13 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 [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](https://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/nycwater](https://www.twitter.com/nycwater).

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