

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Commissioner Strickland, County Executive Astorino Reopen  
Kensico Dam for Public Access to Cyclists, Joggers and Pedestrians  
Ahead of Memorial Day Following \$42 Million Rehabilitation**

*Reopening Allows Recreational Access to the Public for First Time Since 2005;*

*Opening Further Expands Recreational Access in New York City Watershed*

New York City Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland and Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino today reopened the Kensico Dam for recreational access for the first time since it was closed for rehabilitation work in 2005. Visitors to Kensico Dam Park can now access the roadway on the top of the dam for walking, jogging, in-line skating, and bicycling. The Kensico Dam stretches between West Westlake Drive and Route 22, measuring 1,843 feet in length and 307 feet in height. As a public access area, the walkway will not require a DEP Access Permit and will be open seven days a week from dawn to dusk. Commissioner Strickland and County Executive Astorino were joined by State Senator Suzi Oppenheimer, Assemblyman Robert Castelli, and other local officials.

“Reopening the Kensico Dam will give local residents and visitors a wonderful opportunity to spend time outdoors with family and friends, enjoy the spectacular views of the Kensico Reservoir and the surrounding area while taking a leisurely stroll or going for a jog or bike ride,” said Commissioner Strickland. “DEP continues to expand public access for recreational use to benefit our neighbors, while at the same time protecting the drinking water supply of over nine million New Yorkers. I thank County Executive Astorino for partnering with New York City to expand recreational access to residents in the community.”

“I know the public will enjoy having access once again to this beautiful landmark,” said County Executive Astorino. “Kensico Dam Park is a vital public space in Westchester, where each year tens of thousands of visitors enjoy exercising, gathering with friends on the great lawn, celebrating at heritage festivals, and much more. Reopening the roadway will further expand the recreational opportunities that make Westchester a great place to live and visit.”

The \$42 million rehabilitation work that began in 2005 included cleaning and repairing the spillway and waste weir, washing the facade and colonnades, replacing the colonnade roofs, the gate house, and valve chamber that controls the flow of water through the dam. There was also repair of pavilions, colonnades, terrace, and fountains as well as installation of new technology to remotely operate equipment. Drains and drainage systems were restored, electrical equipment was replaced, heating and ventilation systems were installed, ornamental fencing was replaced, and landscaping was done. The extensive rehabilitation work was completed in

December, 2011 and will help extend the life of the dam and ensure the delivery of water to more than nine million New Yorkers for generations.



The Kensico Reservoir was placed into service in 1915 and at full capacity can hold up to 30.6 billion gallons, serving as a terminal rather than a collecting reservoir. It receives most of its water from the city's west-of-Hudson reservoirs through the Catskill and Delaware aqueducts, and serves as the last stop for water before it flows into the Hillview Reservoir in Yonkers for distribution in New York City. The Kensico Dam is located in Westchester County, about 3 miles north of White Plains and 15 miles north of New York City.

Since 2003, DEP has significantly expanded the amount of city-owned water supply lands open for recreation to 108,000 acres — more than double the amount available in 2003. Of the 108,000 total acres open to recreation, 75,000 are land and 33,000 are water. In 2011, DEP opened approximately 6,600 acres of land for recreation over the course of the year. Expanding recreational opportunities in the watershed along with operating and maintaining New York City's network of dams are two of the operations goals outlined in *Strategy 2011-2014*, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to make DEP the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. The plan is available on DEP's website at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep).

DEP manages the 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, 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 \$49 million payroll and \$132 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 a planned \$13.2 billion in investments over the next 10 years that creates 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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