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## Department of Environmental Protection Announces Proposed Update to Watershed Recreation Rules



### DEP invites public to share thoughts during two public hearings in July

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced its proposal to update rules that govern access and activities on more than 135,000 acres of water supply property that are open for recreation in the watershed. The proposed rules will be the subject of two public hearings in the watershed, scheduled to be held at the following dates, times and locations:

- July 24—Putnam County Bureau of Emergency Services, 112 Old Route 6, Carmel, NY 10512. The hearing will begin at 6 p.m.
- July 26—Margaretville Telephone Company, 61 Academy Street, Margaretville, NY 12455. The hearing will begin at 6 p.m.

DEP currently allows a wide range of low-impact recreational activities at 19 reservoirs, three lakes and thousands of acres of watershed land. These scenic areas in the Catskills and Hudson Valley include access for fishing, boating, hiking, hunting and more. To protect the water supply and promote outdoor recreation, the City governs recreational activities through a set of rules that outline requirements for permitting, the types of activities that are allowed, and the kinds of equipment that can be used on water supply property. The watershed recreation rules were last updated in 2010. Since then, DEP has expanded access to additional lands, started a successful recreational boating program on four reservoirs in the Catskills, hosted dozens of recreational events, and met with thousands of watershed residents and visitors who regularly use water supply properties for outdoor recreation. Those developments and discussions helped to

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inform a number of updates that are included in the proposed revisions to the rules. A full copy of the revisions can be found by [clicking here](#).

Some of the most significant changes proposed by DEP include the following:

- The season for recreational boating will be expanded by approximately six weeks, running from May 1 to Oct. 31. The season currently begins on Memorial Day weekend and ends on Columbus Day each year.
- The use of sailboats will no longer be permitted on reservoirs that allow recreational boating.
- The term for fishing boat tags will be extended to four years. They are currently valid for two years.
- DEP has always recommended that fishing boats should not be stored within 10 feet of the high water mark at any reservoir or lake. This will now be a requirement.
- Rules related to the transfer of fishing boats will be updated.
- The proposed rules will also allow DEP to set limits on the number of fishing boats that one person can store alongside the reservoirs. While the vast majority of anglers own one or two boats for reservoir fishing, about 1 percent own eight or more boats that are stored alongside the reservoirs. The rules contain a grandfather provision for existing owners of multiple boats. Nobody will be asked to remove their boats as part of this particular rule. This change is meant to improve access for more visitors, as some of the most popular boat storage areas currently have a waiting list of nearly 500 people.
- Hunters will now be allowed to use trail cameras for scouting game.
- DEP will require that hunters wear blaze or safety orange for both big and small game hunting, with limited exceptions.
- Anglers who use some east-of-Hudson reservoirs for ice fishing would be allowed to use electric augers. Previously only hand augers were permitted.
- Service dogs will be permitted on recreational lands.
- School-issued identification, IDNYC, and a passport will now be accepted as forms of identification to receive a DEP Access Permit.
- Prohibits the launching and landing of drones from City property.
- Prohibits target shooting on City property.
- Prohibits horses on City property.
- Prohibits smoking, including electronic cigarettes, on City property to promote public health, public safety and cleanliness of our natural resources.

The City's watershed recreation rules apply to water supply properties in Delaware, Dutchess, Green, Putnam, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester counties. Over the past decade, DEP has worked in partnership with local government officials, nonprofits and outdoor recreation groups to improve and expand access for recreation. DEP currently owns more than 135,583 acres of land and water that are open for recreation in more than 400 locations throughout the watershed. A DEP Access Permit is required for recreation on the reservoirs and their immediate buffer lands. That permit can be obtained and printed from home by using DEP's online system at [nyc.gov/dep/accesspermit](http://nyc.gov/dep/accesspermit). Thousands of acres are also open for recreation without a DEP permit. In 2008, DEP first established Public Access Areas to allow recreation without a permit on certain watershed lands. Since then, the number of acres open for recreation without a permit has more than tripled from 20,009 to 71,532.

In 2016, DEP also released an interactive recreation mapping tool to help outdoor enthusiasts find accessible lands and waters more easily. The RecMapper utility combines maps of recreation areas with data related to parcel size, location, uses allowed on each parcel, and other helpful information. It allows users to

interactively explore recreation areas by zooming in to any portion of the Croton, Catskill or Delaware watersheds. The map includes City recreation areas, and those owned and managed by the State of New York. All the recreation parcels are highlighted on the map and users can get helpful information by clicking on them. The RecMapper also includes street maps, topographic maps and satellite imagery to help users find each site and understand its steepness, forest cover and other conditions. The tool was designed to work on computers, cell phones and tablets. It is regularly updated as new recreation areas are opened. The RecMapper can be found by visiting [nyc.gov/dep/recmap](http://nyc.gov/dep/recmap). Other information about recreation in the watershed can be found at [nyc.gov/dep/recreation](http://nyc.gov/dep/recreation).

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of high-quality water each day to more than 9.6 million New Yorkers. This includes more than 70 upstate communities and institutions in Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties who consume an average of 110 million total gallons of drinking water daily from New York City's water supply system. 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 other professionals in the watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$166 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$1.7 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 \$19.1 billion in investments planned over the next decade that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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