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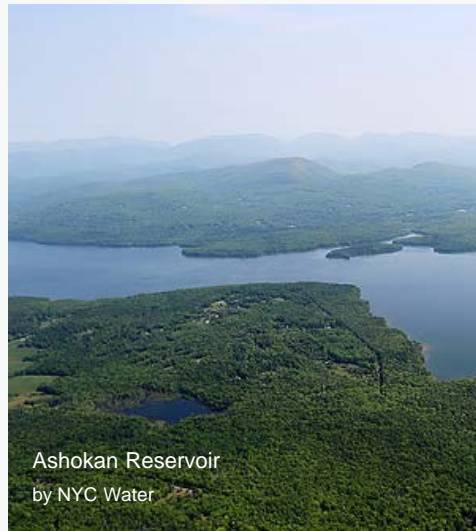
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## New York City DEP Announces \$750 Million Program to Upgrade Infrastructure at Ashokan Reservoir



**Ashokan Century Program will upgrade dam, dikes, intake structures and more**

**Projects comprise the largest public works program in Catskills in more than 50 years**

**Historic and current-day photos of Ashokan Reservoir can be found on [DEP's Flickr page](#)**

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today launched the Ashokan Century Program, a \$750 million plan to upgrade water supply infrastructure at Ashokan Reservoir. The comprehensive, multi-year capital program will include upgrades to the dam, dikes, chambers and other facilities at Ashokan Reservoir, which has provided clean drinking water to all five boroughs of New York City for exactly 100 years. The program—which comprises the largest public works project in the Catskills in more than 50 years—was officially funded this month in New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's capital budget.

"The Ashokan Century Program underscores New York City's commitment to keep its water supply infrastructure in a state of good repair for generations to come," **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza** said. "More than 100 years ago, a group of public servants and brilliant engineers set out with a clear goal—to build the greatest water supply in human history. When construction of the Catskill Water Supply System was completed, those same engineers recapped their work in a report that said the system could last for ages if its infrastructure was monitored and periodically upgraded. The Ashokan Century Program heeds the advice of those who built the water supply, and it makes

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good on our mission to protect public health and safety long into the future.”

The program will include upgrades to practically every piece of infrastructure that impounds or conveys water at Ashokan Reservoir, along with a bridge and a historic monument. Construction of the projects is expected to begin sometime around the year 2023. Engineers will begin to design the project next year. Later this summer, local residents and visitors should expect to see some preliminary construction and investigation work that will gather information needed for the design process. This will include soil and bedrock sampling, infrastructure inspections and other analyses. Exact details on each project will not be available until the design work is completed. Work on the myriad projects that comprise the Ashokan Century Program is expected to last approximately 10 years.

The Ashokan Century Program will include the following work:

- **Olive Bridge Dam and Ashokan Reservoir dikes:** DEP will perform a number of tasks at the Olive Bridge Dam and the many dikes that impound water at the reservoir. This will include structural upgrades, the installation of modern drainage and monitoring equipment, and the clearing of undesirable vegetation. The dam and dikes at Ashokan Reservoir total approximately 29,000 linear feet, more than the dams of all New York City’s other drinking water reservoirs combined.
- **Ashokan Reservoir spillway:** DEP will reconstruct the spillway and spillway channel.
- **Dividing Weir Bridge:** The bridge that carries Reservoir Road over Ashokan will be completely reconstructed. The new bridge will include two travel lanes, shoulders, and a pedestrian/bike lane that will connect DEP’s existing walkway on the south side of the reservoir with the future rail trail being developed by Ulster County.
- **Ashokan Reservoir headworks:** The headworks are three masonry buildings that contain valves, gates and tunnels that convey water from Ashokan Reservoir into the Catskill Aqueduct. Under this program the superstructures will be rehabilitated, and many of the gates and valves will be replaced with modern equipment.
- **J. Waldo Smith Monument:** The monument was used as a triangulation tower during construction of Ashokan Reservoir, allowing surveyors to take thousands of accurate measurements. The stone tower was later rededicated as a monument to J. Waldo Smith, the chief engineer who oversaw construction of the entire Catskill Water Supply System. The monument and its adjacent lands will be rehabilitated as a central location for public education and recreation.

The Ashokan Century Program is part of DEP’s continuing efforts to upgrade dams and other key facilities that provide 1.1 billion gallons of drinking water every day to 8.5 million people in New York City and another one million people in four counties north of the City. That effort began nearly three decades ago. Beginning in the 1990s DEP rehabilitated a number of dams that are part of its Croton Water Supply System in Putnam and Westchester counties. In 2014, DEP completed the \$138 million full-scale rehabilitation of Gilboa Dam at Schoharie Reservoir. DEP continues to work on other elements of the upgrade program at Schoharie Reservoir, including the construction of a new release works and a rehabilitation of the reservoir’s intake chamber.

Ashokan Reservoir provides about 40 percent of New York City’s drinking water each day. It impounds 128 billion gallons of water at full capacity. The reservoir collects rainwater and melting snow from a 255-square-mile watershed that includes part of 11 towns in Ulster, Greene and Delaware counties. The reservoir conveys that drinking water to New York City through the 92-mile Catskill Aqueduct.

In the late 1800s, New York City began to look far and wide for additional

sources of fresh water as the City's quickly growing population stressed the capacity of the Croton System, its original upland supply. Engineers researched water sources in the lower Hudson Valley, Long Island, the Adirondack Mountains, and the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts as they sought rivers to impound as reservoirs. Ultimately, surveys and scientific work pointed the City toward the Catskills, where experts found sources of water that were clean, abundant and particularly soft. After the state gave New York City the authority in 1905 to purchase or condemn lands for the construction of reservoirs, the City began work on its new Catskill Water Supply System in 1907. By the time it was completed in 1917, the original Catskill System included Ashokan Reservoir, Kensico Reservoir, Hillview Reservoir and Silver Lake Reservoir, the 92-mile Catskill Aqueduct and City Tunnel No. 1. The work was completed by 17,243 employees at a cost of \$177 million. Schoharie Reservoir was completed in 1926 to increase the yield of the system. The Catskill System was and continues to be celebrated as a marvel of modern engineering, largely because all its water is conveyed to New York City by gravity alone.

With the capacity to provide more than 600 million gallons per day, Ashokan Reservoir by itself doubled the City's access to clean drinking water. The first drop of drinking water from Ashokan Reservoir reached New York City—specifically the Bronx—on Dec. 27, 1915. All five boroughs of New York City first received water from the Catskills exactly 100 years ago, in 1917. New Yorkers celebrated that milestone by hosting three days of parades, concerts and other celebrations throughout the City.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of high-quality water each day to more than 9.5 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 \$20.7 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](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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