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Ashokan Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New York City DEP Acquires Conservation Easement on 880-Acre Watershed Parcel

Commissioner Emily Lloyd of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that as part of its continuing watershed protection program the DEP has acquired a conservation easement on 880 acres in an area that includes the towns of Woodstock, Hurley and Olive in Ulster County.

The easement, from a single family trust, covers a substantial part of Tonshi and Little Tonshi Mountains, and abuts several other properties purchased by the City, including a 20-acre tract acquired in November. The easement will help to protect important tributaries to the Ashokan Reservoir, the major component of the City's Catskill water supply system.

"This conservation easement represents a major step forward in the City's ongoing watershed protection program," said Commissioner Lloyd. "The City has now protected over 55,000 acres of watershed land under its Land Acquisition Program, and has provided the funding to the Watershed Agricultural Council to protect another 12,000 acres. We will continue to solicit landowners in environmentally sensitive parts of the watershed so that we can provide long-term protection to the water supply that more than nine million people use every day."

The Ashokan Reservoir sits within a watershed that is 155,340 acres in size and includes parts of seven towns in Ulster and Greene Counties. Since 1997, the City has acquired almost 10,000 acres in this basin alone, including 1,116 acres on Tonshi Mountain.

"Conservation easements have become an increasingly important tool for the City, and landowners are increasingly aware of the benefits they offer," said Commissioner Lloyd. "Landowners are paid fair market value for their development rights and the City assumes responsibility for part of their property taxes. Yet they continue to own the land and in most cases can continue to use it as they had before."

Easements are associated with the land in perpetuity and are monitored by the City to prevent adverse effects on drinking water quality and to assist landowners wherever

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possible in protecting their natural resources. For more information on conservation easements or sales of watershed land to the City, landowners can contact the DEP's Land Acquisition Program at (800) 575-LAND.

The Land Acquisition Program began in 1997, at a time when the City owned about 36,000 acres in the West of Hudson Catskill/Delaware watershed. Since that time the City has more than doubled its holdings by purchasing over 45,000 acres. Another 10,000 acres has been protected through conservation easements. An additional 12,000 acres of land has been protected through farm easements acquired by the City's partner, the Watershed Agricultural Council, principally in Delaware County.

The City has opened over 46,000 acres of its watershed land to public recreation, including over 27,000 acres of the land purchased under the Land Acquisition Program. The DEP has issued over 96,000 public access permits to people wanting to use City-owned watershed land for recreation. There were also almost 12,000 boat tags issued in 2005 for people to use boats on City reservoirs, and around 11,000 hunting tags for deer hunting on City property.