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**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION TO
BEGIN REMOVING FALLEN AND WEAKENED TREES
AROUND KENSICO RESERVOIR**

Project will improve public safety by removing trees too close to streets and power lines

DEP will plant new trees and shrubs to diversify the forest around Kensico Reservoir

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced that next week it will begin removing trees that fell or suffered damage around Kensico Reservoir during Hurricane Sandy. The forest management project will also remove some standing trees that pose a threat to public safety because they are too close to highways and power lines. After the compromised trees are removed, DEP will plant new trees and shrubs around the reservoir to improve the resiliency and diversity of the forest.

Trees will be removed from four areas around the reservoir comprising roughly 45 acres. They include sections of forest off Nanny Hagen Road, Route 120, and West Lake Drive in the towns of Mount Pleasant and North Castle. High winds and rain during Hurricane Sandy toppled or damaged as much as 90 percent of the trees in some of those areas. Many of the trees left standing are now more prone to wind damage and the weakening of their roots by groundwater, which can also cause them to fall. Removing the trees before they fall is important because fallen trees can destabilize soils and cause turbidity in local water bodies.

"Removing these fallen and weakened trees around Kensico Reservoir is good for the City and our neighbors in the watershed," DEP Commissioner Carter Strickland said. "The project will protect the quality of drinking water for New York City and Westchester County by limiting erosion, while at the same time improving public safety, and enhancing resiliency and aesthetics by diversifying the forest."

Trees suitable for timber will first be removed from the largest area of damage comprising roughly 27 acres off Nanny Hagen Road. Work there will likely continue through May. Work crews will then move to the three smaller sites where they will remove timber and chip other trees. DEP expects to spread most or all of the wood chips on site to help with erosion control and soil stabilization. The removal and chipping of trees is expected to be finished by the end of July. Weekday work at the sites will begin no earlier than 8 a.m. and end by 6 p.m. On Saturdays work will begin no earlier than 8 a.m. and end no later than 5 p.m. There will be no harvesting or chipping on Sunday, but trees may be transported between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

The work will cause intermittent traffic stoppages while trucks enter and exit the work sites. Traffic will also be stopped for brief periods of time when crews are working on trees near the highways. DEP has committed to minimizing such stops during rush hours. Motorists should pay careful attention to flagmen in the corridors where trees are being removed. Those areas generally open for recreation will also be closed while the work is happening nearby. That includes boat areas No. 2 and 11 along the Kensico Reservoir.

DEP will also plant new trees and shrubs to increase the diversity and resilience of the forest around the Kensico Reservoir. The vast majority of trees currently surrounding the reservoir are Norway spruce, most of which were planted when the reservoir was built roughly a century ago. Many of them will be replaced by a variety of conifers, hardwood trees and shrubs. The new plantings, which will begin in early fall and continue into next spring, will be temporarily surrounded by a deer fence to protect them from the native white-tail deer population.

The forest management project has earned support from town officials because it will improve public safety, better ensure the roadways remain open during emergencies, and greatly reduce the chance of power outages in the area. In some areas around the Kensico Reservoir the average height of the Norway spruce trees is 100 feet, which is less than their distance from the roads. This had led to road closures and power outages in recent years. For instance, Hurricane Sandy marked at least the third time in seven years that Nanny Hagen Road was closed, sometimes for multiple days, because of fallen trees. New trees will be planted far enough from the road to significantly reduce future closures and power outages.

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 \$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, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.

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Contact:	Adam Bosch (DEP)	(845) 334-7868
	Chris Gilbride (DEP)	(718) 595-6600