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Fall Foliage

Cannonsville Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE11-88

September 12, 2011

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Statement from Deputy Commissioner Paul Rush On the Activation of the Ashokan Release Channel

"Because of the unprecedented rainfall the past two weeks, water levels in the Ashokan Reservoir are above capacity. As a result, DEP today took the preventative step to activate the Ashokan Reservoir Release Channel, done in close consultation with the Town of Ulster and the State Department of Environmental Conservation. This will not only serve as a precautionary step to help capture rainfall in case of future storms, but it will also benefit the water quality of more than nine million New Yorkers."

Activating the release channel is being undertaken as a preventative step in response to the after effects of Hurricane Irene and subsequent storms on the reservoir system. The releases—which will ramp up to 600 million gallons a day—will reduce the elevation of the Ashokan Reservoir since it is currently above capacity, increasing the reservoir's ability to capture runoff by creating a void in the west basin. This step will provide enhanced flood protection for communities south of the reservoir along the lower Esopus Creek. This will also provide an additional benefit of protecting water quality by reducing the amount of spillage from the more turbid west basin into the higher quality east basin, thereby protecting the drinking water of approximately 8.4 million New York City residents and the roughly 160,000 residents of towns that rely on the Catskill Aqueduct such as New Paltz and High Falls in Ulster County, and New Windsor and Cornwall in Orange County.

The Ashokan Release Channel is a concrete canal used to convey water released in a controlled manner from the reservoir through the upper and lower gate chambers to the Little Beaverkill Stream and the lower Esopus Creek. Located in Ulster County, the Ashokan Reservoir is approximately 13 miles west of Kingston and 73 miles north of New York City. It was formed by the damming of the Esopus Creek at Olivebridge, which eventually flows northeast and drains into the Hudson River. The reservoir holds 127.9 billion gallons at full capacity and was opened in 1915. It has a west and east basin on either side of the Dividing Weir and has a spillway for reservoir overflow.

MORE INFORMATION

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Construction, Demolition & Abatement

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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. New York City's water is delivered from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and comprises 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes. The DEP police protect the watershed and its facilities, including seven wastewater treatment plants. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

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