

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Department of Environmental Protection Encourages New Yorkers to use  
City Lands that are Open to Recreation**

*Hunting season starts Saturday; 108,000 acres open for hunting, fishing, hiking and trapping*

*DEP has Doubled Recreational Access to City-Owned Land Since 2003*

As thousands of sportsmen and sportswomen across New York prepare for the start of hunting season on Saturday, the New York City Department of Environment Protection (DEP) is encouraging them to hunt on city-owned lands that are open for recreation.

“We are proud to support the region’s heritage of hunting, fishing and trapping that has been passed down from generation to generation,” said DEP Commissioner Carter Strickland. “The City has greatly expanded access to its watershed land in recent years, and we encourage our neighbors to safely enjoy that access as hunting season begins this weekend.”

DEP owns and manages 71,040 acres in the Catskills that are open to hunters, including 51,056 acres known as Public Access Areas where outdoor enthusiasts can hunt, fish, hike and trap without a DEP access permit. An additional 6,357 acres of watershed land east of the Hudson River are open for those activities. These tracts include land in Delaware, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester counties.

Hunters and others using land east of the Hudson River and immediately surrounding reservoirs must obtain a free DEP access permit. That permit application can be downloaded and printed from the DEP website at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/recreation/access.shtml>. Access permits can also be obtained by calling (800) 575-LAND.

This fall, DEP opened additional lands around the Ashokan Reservoir for bow hunting. The expanded access aims to reduce deer populations in that region and curb deer impacts on forest regeneration. DEP obtained Deer Management Assistance Permits – sometimes referred to as “doe permits” – from the state to help control the deer population around Ashokan. Permits can still be obtained by calling (800) 575-LAND.

Hunters can find a list and detailed maps of access areas on the DEP website by following this link: [http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/recreation/recreation\\_maps.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/recreation/recreation_maps.shtml)

All state hunting regulations – including antler restrictions throughout most of the watershed region – apply on city-owned lands. Also, those using city land for recreation and hunting should pay careful attention to posted signs that outline what uses are allowed. Access to several areas around reservoirs, especially east of the Hudson, remains restricted as DEP staff continues to assess damage following Hurricane Sandy. Those areas are marked by red and white signs. Entering areas marked as closed will be considered trespassing.

Since 2003, DEP has significantly expanded the amount of city-owned water supply lands open for recreation to 108,000 acres — more than double the amount available in 2003. Of those acres open to recreation, 75,000 are land and 33,000 are water. Last year, DEP opened approximately 6,600 additional acres of land in the watershed for recreation. DEP also expects to open an additional 7,500 acres of watershed land this year for recreation, including areas in Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster, Greene and Delaware counties.

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 approximately 750 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and other 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 a planned \$13.2 billion in investments over the next 10 years that creates up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](http://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/nycwater](http://www.twitter.com/nycwater).

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