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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Charles G. Sturcken (718) 595-6600

Nearly 37,000 Acres of City Water Supply Lands to Be Open for Deer Hunting Season

Commissioner Emily Lloyd of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that 36,600 acres of City water supply lands will be available in 2005 for bow, gun and muzzleloader hunting for deer. This includes over 4,100 acres of land opened to the public for the first time this season.

This year early bow hunting season will run from October 15 to November 18; regular gun from November 19 to December 11; muzzleloader from December 12 to December 20; and late bow from December 12 through December 20. In Westchester County, an archery-only area, the season will run from October 15 to December 31. These dates are concurrent with the New York State deer hunting seasons for the watershed region. Consistent with recent revisions to New York State hunting regulations, opening day of regular gun season will be on a Saturday this year.

"Since 1999, the first year of widespread deer hunting on DEP lands, the number of acres available has grown more than two-fold" said Commissioner Lloyd. "We now have 86 hunting areas in eight counties, including two new reservoir hunting areas in Westchester and the first ever DEP hunting area in Dutchess County. This season 21 hunting areas were added or expanded," she said. "The number of hunters has increased remarkably, also, from less than 2,300 in the beginning to nearly 10,000 last season. We've been making it as straightforward and enjoyable for hunters as we can, and the hunters' appreciation has been great," said the Commissioner.

Peakes Brook, Town of Delhi:

The Peakes Brook Unit is DEP's first hunting area in the Town of Delhi. The 194 acres of fields and young (successional) woods provide good deer habitat as well as scenic views down the Peakes Brook valley towards the West Branch of the Delaware River. The area was purchased by the City in April 2005 and first opened for public deer hunting, fishing, and hiking by permit in August 2005. The property contains part of Peakes Brook, extends up both sides of the Peakes Brook drainage, and is crossed by old farm and woods roads. It is accessed from Peakes Brook Road approximately 3/4 of a mile north of the intersection

MORE INFORMATION

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with Route 10.

Big Peninsula, Kensico Reservoir, Town of North Castle: With nearly 330 acres of prime deer habitat on the Kensico Reservoir in Westchester County, NYC DEP's new Big Peninsula hunting area is expected to be popular. The Big Peninsula Unit will open for the first time this season for deer hunting. Big Peninsula is available for bow hunting only, with no guns permitted, consistent with New York State regulations for Westchester County. The area is accessed from the west side of Route 122 in the town of North Castle, just north of the Route 22 intersection. The nearly-flat topography of the peninsula, which extends into the Kensico Reservoir almost as far south as the Rye Lake Bridge, makes for easy travel. In case of wet weather, the property is best reached from Route 22 over a land bridge toward the north of the peninsula.

This season DEP will continue it's doe harvest incentive to help control overbrowsing. Overbrowsing by deer can greatly affect forest health by removing seedling trees and other low-growing vegetation, and eventually leads to reduced water quality. Details of the harvest incentive are contained in the *Guide to Deer Hunting* that is sent to each hunter with their DEP Hunting Tag. Last year five hunters who harvested does on water supply lands were selected through a lottery drawing to receive prizes from DEP. The prizes were venison cookbooks and headlamps. This year eight successful hunters will be drawn, one for each watershed county, and new prizes awarded.

Over 14,000 hunters are expected to enjoy City lands this year. Applicants for a free DEP Hunting Tag must also have a valid DEP Access Permit . Access Permits are good for 5 years, allow the holders to hike and fish on open City lands, and are also free. All New York State laws and additional DEP conditions apply while on City-owned land. This includes State deer hunting license requirements and the new antler restrictions in place for Wildlife Management Units 3C and 3J in Ulster County.

To apply for a DEP Hunting Tag, hunters should send their name, Access Permit number, whether they had and used a 2004 DEP Hunting Tag with their hunting tag request via e-mail to permits@dep.nyc.gov. Applications can also be submitted by regular mail. Hunters who returned their completed 2004 Deer Hunt Surveys by the due date were sent their 2005 Hunting Tags in early September, provided their Access Permits are valid. Those who do not yet have Access Permits can send in their Hunt Tag and Access Permit applications together to save time. Hunting Tag applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications that were received after September 30 may not be fulfilled in time for opening day of early bow season. Applications for DEP Access Permits and Hunting Tags are available at DEP Land Management Offices throughout the watershed, DEP offices in Kingston, Queens and Manhattan, at watershed bait and tackle shops and town halls, and on DEP's Web site at www.nyc.gov/watershedrecreation. The Web site also has the most up-to-date information on hunting and other water supply recreation opportunities, including hunting conditions and maps of hunting areas.

Almost 30% percent of hunters returned completed deer hunting surveys in 2004, making them eligible to automatically receive DEP Hunting Tags this year. These surveys provide useful feedback and information that DEP uses to improve hunting opportunities from year to year. Hunters are encouraged to complete and submit hunt

surveys by the January 22, 2006 due date this season. The survey is included in the *Guide to Hunting* and will be posted on the DEP website.

DEP also supports the non-profit Venison Donation Coalition (VDC) for their work in the watershed region. Hunters may donate a deer to the VDC which pays for meat processing and distribution to food banks, soup kitchens, and needy families. For further information see the VDC Coalition website:

<http://www.venisondonation.com>