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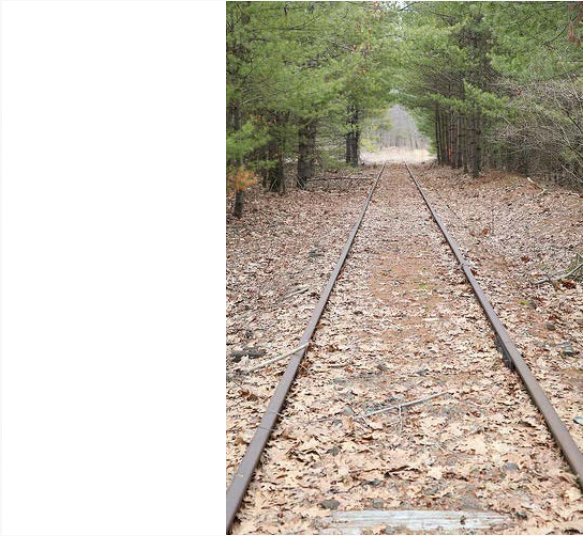
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Statement from Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Emily Lloyd on the Future Rail Trail Along Ashokan Reservoir in Ulster County

“This morning I joined Ulster County Executive Mike Hein to tour a section of the future rail trail along Ashokan Reservoir and to reiterate the Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) support for the project. The trail proposed by Ulster County is consistent with DEP’s goals of protecting water quality, enhancing outdoor recreation in the Catskills, and expanding free-of-charge access to public lands that surround New York City’s water supply.

“In 2013, DEP committed \$2.5 million toward developing the 11.5-mile trail along an easement owned by Ulster County on the north side of Ashokan Reservoir. Those funds, which can only be used for building the trail, are designated for projects that will meet or exceed watershed protection standards and address localized erosion issues, such as washouts along some stretches of the corridor. In addition, DEP will build, operate and maintain a number of access points along the trail. Our commitment came after Ulster County determined that a trail would be the highest and best use for that portion of the easement in the future.

“Over the past several years, DEP has worked with nonprofit groups and local governments to open eight recreation trails on city-owned land in the watershed. Two additional trails are scheduled to open in 2015. These trails provide safe and scenic opportunities for low-impact recreation such as hiking, jogging, cycling and snowshoeing. They also bolster public health by encouraging outdoor exercise, and they support the outdoor recreation and tourism economies that are vital to the Catskills. Importantly, the growing network of

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recreation trails help achieve these positive outcomes by offering free-of-charge access to public lands for the benefit of watershed residents and visitors.

“The proposed rail trail at Ashokan Reservoir offers a truly unique opportunity to expand this vision, as it is the city’s only reservoir in the Catskills that has an established corridor running through its border lands. In addition, the trail at Ashokan will fill an important gap in a regional trail network that stretches across parts of Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan and Ulster counties. DEP fully supports the plan outlined by Ulster County and we look forward to collaborating on this exciting trail project.”

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to more than 9 million New Yorkers. This includes more than 70 upstate communities and institutions in Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties who consume an average of 110 million total gallons of drinking water daily from New York City’s water supply system. 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 has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and other professionals in the upstate watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$157 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$1.7 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 nearly \$14 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 nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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