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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

03-78

December 12, 2003

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New DEP Police Precinct and Training Center Opens in Beerston in Town of Walton

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today marked the opening of the Department's new police precinct stationhouse and environmental police training center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Beerston, Town of Walton, Delaware County.

Continuing its partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers following security threats related to the September 11th attacks, the Corps performed the bulk of the design work for the new buildings and acted as construction manager for the project.

"The new facilities at Beerston will allow us to better serve the region and to react more quickly to any threats to the water supply," said Commissioner Ward. "We also work closely with local law enforcement agencies throughout the watershed to supplement the important work they do. We look forward to our continued cooperation with Delaware County officials to maintain a safe, secure and clean environment."

The Department of Environmental Protection will hold a Community Day at the new precinct on December 13 from 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Refreshments will be served as local residents get to meet officers and members of the DEP Division of Environmental Police. Representatives from the police canine unit, emergency services unit, scuba unit and detective bureau will be on hand to answer questions and provide information about the unique mission of "environmental policing."

The new \$2 million, one-story, brick precinct stationhouse will be near the Division of Environmental Police Stephen J. King Environmental Police Training Center. The Environmental Enforcement Division's 2nd Precinct, the Detective Bureau, the Intelligence Division and the Special Operations Division will also have offices located there. Fifteen environmental police officers and two civilian staff members will be permanently assigned to the new precinct.

The new Stephen J. King Environmental Police Training Facility will be the first of its kind in the nation to focus on the environmental policing and infrastructure protection issues which are unique to the New York City water supply.

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The center will include classrooms, a woodland studies area, an environmental investigations practical training field, environmental staging areas, wilderness trails, an off-road emergency vehicle operators course and police firing ranges. Designated areas will be developed for school and community educational activities. The facility will also be available for practical exercises for local, state and federal emergency first responders.

Stephen J. King is a former DEP Environmental Police Director, 1998-1999, who died while in office. The facility was named to honor his memory and carry on the tradition he inspired of environmental police training.

Beerston is one of five new police precinct stationhouses the DEP is dedicating. New precincts were recently dedicated in Grahamsville in Sullivan County and in Olive in Ulster County. Other facilities are scheduled to open soon in Gilboa and Downsville. The former precinct, across the street from the new facility, will become a police museum with historical artifacts, photographs and information about securing the water supply. The museum will be open to the public year round.

The DEP Police has over 200 environmental police officers serving in New York City and nine watershed counties. Charged primarily with protecting the water supply that nine million New Yorkers rely on every day, the DEP Police also supplement local police agencies in their day-to-day activities of community service and public protection.