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CONTACT:

[depressoffice@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:depressoffice@dep.nyc.gov), (845) 334-7868

Ann Roberti (CMC) (845) 676-3643

## Department of Environmental Protection and Catskill Mountain Club to Open Hiking Trail at Palmer Hill

### New trail, built through partnership between City and local volunteers, will open with a community hike on National Trails Day

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Catskill Mountain Club today announced a community hike to celebrate the opening of a new trail on City-owned land in Delaware County. The trail – which was built and will be maintained by volunteers with the Catskill Mountain Club (CMC) – is located on a property known as Palmer Hill, with parking available at the existing scenic overlook site on Finkle Road in the Town of Andes. Avid hikers, community members and visitors are encouraged to celebrate the opening of the trail on Saturday, June 7, which is National Trails Day. A short ceremony and group hike will be held at 2 p.m.

The 3.7-mile trail at Palmer Hill represents the second collaboration between DEP, CMC and the Town of Andes. Last year, the three worked together to blaze a 5.3-mile hiking trail that begins just off Route 30, across the street from the Shavertown boat launch site at Pepacton Reservoir. In its first year, the Shavertown Trail attracted hundreds of hikers to its scenic outlook that offers spectacular views of Pepacton Reservoir. In fact, more than 150 people signed a register at the trailhead between March and May of this year alone.

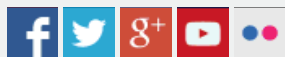
The Palmer Hill Trail is located on a portion of a 234-acre tract of land that DEP acquired in 2002 as part of its land acquisition program, which protects drinking

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NYC Department of Environmental Protection  
Public Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard  
19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Flushing, NY 11373  
(718) 595-6600

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water quality by preserving open space along streams, creeks and other water bodies that feed the City's reservoirs in the Catskills. The trail meanders through open meadows with beautiful views of forested lands, productive apple trees and historic stone walls. It passes over Bryant's Brook and also features excellent views of many of the Catskill High Peaks, including Graham, Doubletop, Balsam Lake, and Balsam and Dry Brook Ridge. Access to the trail will be free of charge and does not require a permit.

"The opening of the Palmer Hill trail reflects DEP's desire to collaborate with local groups on projects that will support the Catskills' economy by enhancing tourism and outdoor recreation," **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd said**. "I'd like to personally thank the Catskill Mountain Club and its volunteers, whose passion for sharing the scenic beauty of the region has helped make these trails possible. I'd also like to thank the Town of Andes Supervisor Martin Donnelly for his continued support of these trails and other projects related to the city's water supply."

"The CMC is thrilled to open this new hiking trail in partnership with DEP," **CMC Stewardship Chairman Wendell George said**. "Our ongoing efforts have resulted in new hiking opportunities near local communities that provide easy access for hikers of all abilities, and they bring much needed economic benefits to our communities. In addition to Palmer Hill, the DEP/CMC partnership plans to complete another trail in Delaware County, on Bramley Mountain in Delhi, later this year. We are pleased to have the opportunity to create new hiking options for residents and visitors to the Catskills, and we look forward to many future projects throughout the region."

The trail at Palmer Hill is the fifth hiking trail opened on City-owned land in the Catskills. The first four include the aforementioned Shavertown Trail, a nature trail alongside a school in Conesville in Schoharie County, a walking and cross-country skiing trail near Windham in Greene County, and trails in the Delaware County towns of Tompkins and Walton that were built by the Finger Lakes Trail Conference with help from Catskill Mountain Club.

The trail is also part of DEP's ongoing effort to support outdoor recreation and tourism in the Catskills by opening more of its land for low-impact recreation. Since 2003, DEP has significantly expanded the amount of City properties within the watersheds that are open for recreation. There are now 122,205 acres open for recreation, including 88,313 acres of land and 33,892 acres of reservoirs. Of that, 59,211 acres of land are in public access areas that are open to hiking, hunting and other forms of low-impact recreation without a DEP access permit. More information about recreation in the watersheds can be found [here](#).

Formed in 2003, The Catskill Mountain Club, Inc. is an all-volunteer group of outdoor enthusiasts interested in providing a wide variety of outdoor (non-motorized) recreational opportunities abundant in the Catskills. Its objective is to increase public awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of the region's natural resources, public lands, and outdoor activities and to promote responsible, safe, and sustainable outdoor recreation.

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 others 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 over \$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](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/nycwater](https://facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/nycwater](https://twitter.com/nycwater).

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