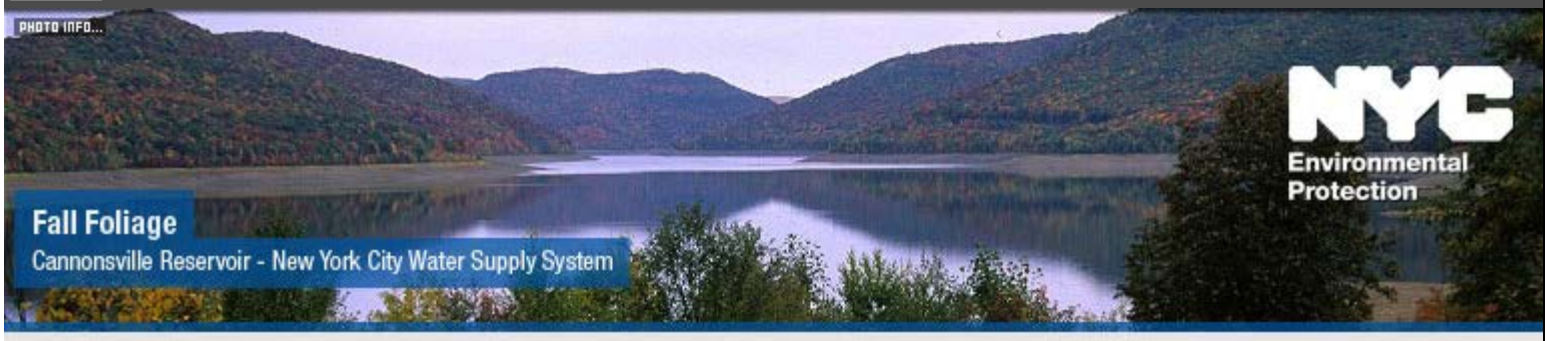

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DEP and the U.S. Forest Service Launch Three Forest Management Projects in Upstate Watershed Lands to Protect Water Quality

Projects Improve Forest Health and Help Support Local Economy

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today announced the launch of three new forest management projects to help protect water quality in the Catskill and Delaware watersheds. The projects, which cull trees that are in poor condition to improve conditions for the remaining trees, will protect the health of the forests and protect water quality by promoting rapid growth of the remaining trees, improving their ability to use and retain more nutrients from the soil. Healthy, vigorous and rapidly growing trees use more nutrients from the soil, which diverts them from running into streams and reservoirs. A healthy and diverse forest also helps reduce impacts of disturbances such as fire or pest outbreaks. The three sites selected, part of an ongoing strategy of active forest management in the watershed, are: Ol' McCune, 50 acres located in Andes on the Pepacton Reservoir; Davis Bend, 45 acres located in Boiceville on the Ashokan Reservoir; and South Rondout, 60 acres located in Wawarsing on the Rondout Reservoir. The work at Davis Bend and at Ol' McCune started this month; and the South Rondout work is scheduled to begin next week.

"The quality of our source waters in the Catskill and Delaware watersheds depends on the health and vitality of upstate forests," said Commissioner Holloway. "Because forests cover more than 75% of the 1.2 million acres in the New York City watershed area, poorly managed forests can increase the amount of nutrients, like nitrogen and phosphorous, that enter our water supply and degrade overall water quality. Programs like this are central to maintaining long term water quality — a signature component of Mayor Bloomberg's efforts to create a greener, greater city that will be prepared for one million additional residents by 2030."

"The Forest Service is excited to be working in partnership with New York City to develop a forest management plan that will provide overall management direction to maintain

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and enhance the existing high quality water that the City residents enjoy," said Forest Services Project Leader Bruce Higgins, who belongs to a special unit of the U.S. Forest Service known as TEAMS Enterprise Unit.

Forests in the watershed provide important ecological functions such as forest regeneration, protection of soil, filtration of water, attenuation of runoff and nutrient buffering. Lands protected as forests also prevent major land conversion such as development and land clearing, which can have significant impacts on water quality. Carefully planned forest management helps DEP maintain and improve the watershed forest's ability to use and retain more nutrients from the soil, resist and recover from catastrophic events, improve ecological integrity, create and maintain recreational opportunities, reduce liability exposure from forest safety hazards and provide economic benefit to the city and watershed communities.

In addition to water quality benefits, the program reduces impacts from severe weather events or damage from insects. The Ol' McCune and South Rondout sites have recently been subjected to insect outbreaks that have killed or severely damaged many trees. In Ol' McCune, forest tent caterpillars, a forest defoliator, are responsible for the decline in various hardwood species, most notably sugar maple, while South Rondout has been subject to a hemlock woolly adelgid outbreak, a non-native invasive, that has changed the look of the entire Rondout Reservoir area.

Watershed protection is widely considered the best way of maintaining the quality of drinking water in the long term. New York City's program, one of the most comprehensive in the world, has been so successful at protecting the integrity of New York City's water supply that the United States Environmental Protection Agency awarded the City a 10-year Filtration Avoidance Determination in 2007. The success of New York City's Watershed Protection Program is one of the main reasons why New York City remains one of only five large cities in the United States that is not required to filter its drinking water. As part of the Filtration Avoidance Determination, DEP is developing a $2.6 million comprehensive forest management plan with the United States Forest Service. The plan has three components:

- Forest stand delineation: A forest stand is a group of trees in one area and mostly uniform in species composition, age and structure so as to be distinguishable from other stands. Approximately 80,000 acres of city land was delineated in 2003. The Forest Service has identified the forest stands on those properties acquired since then.
- Forest inventory data collection and analysis: The forest inventory data collection uses science-based forest inventory parameters to accurately assess forest conditions. During the summers of 2009 and 2010, the Forest Service conducted inventory on approximately 9,400 plots on city land throughout the watershed. The inventory data will allow DEP to characterize and assess specific site conditions which will be analyzed to assess the current characteristics and health of the forest.
- Plan development: The forest management plan will be based on the city's goals for the forest based on the forest inventory data analysis, and other data. The management

plan will provide the guiding principles and serve as the guiding document for managing the city's forest resources.

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. DEP has made unprecedented efforts to balance water quality preservation with the interests and economic vitality of watershed communities, and has agreed to avoid acquisitions in and around existing hamlets where towns have designated such properties. Since the inception of the Land Acquisition Program, New York City has protected over 116,000 acres of watershed land—including more than 78,000 since 2002 — in the Catskill/Delaware and Croton reservoir systems. Most of these properties will be opened for public access, including hunting, hiking and fishing, as well as hay cropping that helps local community businesses. Approximately 90,000 acres of the land is forested.

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8 million in New York City, and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties. Approximately 1,000 DEP employees live and work in the watershed communities. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

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