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# Department of Environmental Protection Joins Trout Unlimited and New York City Students to Release Trout into Watershed Streams



**This Year, More Than 3,000 Students from New York City and the Upstate Watersheds Will Participate in the Environmental Education Program**

**Photos of Trout Releases Can be Viewed on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)**

**Video of Trout in the Classroom Can be Viewed on [DEP's YouTube Page](#)**

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) joined Trout Unlimited on April 25, a national grassroots non-profit organization whose mission is to conserve, protect, and restore North America's cold-water fisheries and their watersheds, and 30 pre-K students from South Bronx Head Start Center, to release juvenile trout that the students have raised in their classrooms since October of last year. Since 2002, DEP and Trout Unlimited have worked together to educate students in New York City and watershed communities about the importance of protecting our shared water resources through the Trout in the Classroom program. The conservation-oriented environmental education program teaches young New Yorkers, ranging from pre-K to grade 12, about the connections between trout, the New York City water supply system, water quality, and students from both sides of the water tunnel. This year, more than 3,000 students from schools in New York City and the upstate watersheds incubated trout eggs in their classrooms and raised them into juvenile trout, which are also called fingerlings. The 8-month long program culminates with students taking part in a field day, where they release the fingerlings into New York City watershed

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streams April through June. Nearly 50 fingerlings were released into the Cross River this week where it passes through the Ward Pound Ridge Reservation in Westchester County on its way to the Cross River Reservoir and then to NYC.

“The Trout in the Classroom program provides a tangible and practical way to educate elementary, middle and high school students about the source of their drinking water and the importance of protecting our rivers, streams, reservoirs, lakes, and watershed lands that supply the world class drinking water we enjoy every day,” said **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. “Since our partnership with Trout Unlimited began 15 years ago, thousands of students from New York City and the watershed have had a chance to gain an appreciation for our shared water resources and visit the watershed, streams and reservoirs that supply their drinking water.”

“Trout Unlimited is proud to be able to partner with DEP to bring this amazing program to the students of NYC and the NYC watersheds. Through TIC students have the opportunity to learn about NYC’s unique watersheds, study wildlife in the classroom, and give back to nature by releasing their trout into the streams. TIC develops in students a connection to nature and leads them on the path to becoming lifelong stewards of the environment,” said **Lilli Genovesi, Trout Unlimited’s Trout in the Classroom Coordinator**.

The Trout in the Classroom Program in southern New York began in 2002 as a partnership between DEP and Trout Unlimited and has become a prototype for similar programs across the country. The program is multidisciplinary and adaptable for students of all ages, enabling teachers to cultivate a wide range of humanities and STEM knowledge and skills in their students, ranging from reading and creative writing to scientific observation. Participating classrooms receive trout eggs in October, giving students the opportunity to monitor water temperature, clarity, dissolved oxygen, ammonia, and pH as the eggs develop and grow into fingerlings over the course of the school year. As an aquatic indicator species, the trout also provide students the chance to learn about water quality and the ecological importance of the streams that feed New York City’s water supply and the nearby forest habitat. To learn more about Trout in the Classroom in New York City and the New York City Watersheds, sponsor a school, get a school involved, or volunteer at the next Trout Release Field Day, visit the [DEP website](#) or contact Lilli Genovesi at [lgenovesi@tu.org](mailto:lgenovesi@tu.org).

The New York State Department of Conservation (DEC) supports the program and sets guidelines for raising trout in the classroom and releasing them into the New York City watershed. Last fall, the DEC provided approximately 20,000 trout eggs that were distributed for free to nearly 200 classrooms. It is estimated that over 3,000 students from more than 150 schools in the southern New York area will directly participate in trout releases this year.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city’s Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city’s reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).