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Home

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- Ways to Pay Your Bill
- Account Information
- Customer Assistance
- Water Rates
- Property Managers and Trade Professionals

WATER UTILITIES

- Drinking Water
- Wastewater
- Stormwater
- Harbor Water

THE WATERSHED

- Watershed Protection
- Watershed Recreation

CITYWIDE INITIATIVES

- Regulatory Reform
- Environmental Education
- Conservation Programs
- Air Pollution Control
- Noise Codes & Complaints

BUSINESSES & PROFESSIONALS

- Forms & Permits
- Doing Business with DEP
- Asbestos Abatement

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New York City Partners with New York State and Westchester County to Preserve Open Space and Protect Drinking Water in Upstate Croton Watershed



From left to right, DEP First Deputy Commissioner David Tweedy, Governor George Pataki, State Senator Vincent Leibell, and Town of Somers Supervisor Mary Beth Murphy.

Commissioner Emily Lloyd of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that an agreement has been signed among New York State, Westchester County, the Town of Somers, and the Westchester Land Trust to dedicate a 650-acre parcel in Somers as Open Space that will protect and preserve a vast portion of undeveloped property in the Croton watershed. The City's contribution is \$9.4 million for 270 acres of the parcel. The Town of Somers and Westchester County are expected to contribute about \$4 million and the State is dedicating \$3.2 million to acquire a conservation easement on 382 acres.

In December 2003, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg allocated \$25 million for land acquisition as a further commitment to protect the Croton watershed. These funds complement the land acquisition program that had been in place in the West-of-Hudson watersheds, since the signing of a 1997 agreement between the City and State that called for acquisition of land in order to maintain the pristine water

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[Testimony and Public Comments](#)

[Capital Projects](#)

[Job Opportunities](#)

[Environmental Reviews](#)

[A to Z Index](#)

[Contact Us](#)

bodies located in the Catskill and Delaware watersheds.

Commissioner Lloyd said "DEP's land acquisition program has allowed us to protect thousands of acres of critical watershed lands from degradation and development and also to offer recreational opportunities to community members and visitors to these picturesque locations. The City's water supply is its most precious natural resource and we must continue to make every effort to ensure its continuing high quality."



First Deputy Commissioner David Tweedy addresses the audience at the dedication of the Angle Fly Preserve.

The acreage is currently known as the Angle Fly Preserve. It was formerly owned by a Queen's developer who planned to erect housing. He accepted a buyout from the partnership, thereby allowing the City to preserve the property's natural characteristic as an unspoiled landscape, less than an hour from New York City, and as noted by Commissioner Lloyd "most importantly, continuing to offer unparalleled natural protection to the Croton water supply system."

New York City has been engaged in a comprehensive effort to protect water quality throughout its 2,000 square-mile system of reservoirs and watersheds. It has dedicated over \$1 billion to various protection programs, of which almost \$300 million alone has gone to acquisition of sensitive land from willing sellers at fair market value.

The land acquisition program announced today will protect the largest privately held property in Westchester County. The Croton system water supply, the oldest serving New York City, extends across Westchester, Putnam and southern Dutchess Counties and provides the City with up to 10% of its daily water supply.