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Fall Foliage

Cannonsville Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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DEP, Trout Unlimited Help Restore Trout Habitat

Plantings Along Banks of Horton Brook to Improve Ecology at Key Spawning Area

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway and Trout Unlimited Director of Land Protection Nat Gillespie today announced the restoration of a key section of Horton Brook which is a known critical spawning area for trout. Representatives from DEP, Theodore Gordon Flyfishers and the Beamoc Chapter of Trout Unlimited planted willow stakes at the water's edge along an area that was made into a floodplain last year. The plantings will stabilize the banks of the brook and help protect a trout spawning area by preventing sediment from entering the water.

"This is great day for local anglers. Stabilizing this critical section of Horton Brook will benefit the trout population for years to come. I would like to thank Trout Unlimited, Theodore Gordon Flyfishers and the DEP staff who worked on this vital project that will protect one of the best trout fishing areas in the country," said Environmental Protection Commissioner Holloway. "The important work performed at Horton Brook is yet another example of our efforts to improve the use of New York's waterways for recreational use."

"Trout Unlimited proposed this project in 2000 to reduce flooding and to benefit habitat in Horton Brook and downstream, on the Beaver Kill," said Director Gillespie. "Even though the property is outside the drinking water supply watershed, New York City remained committed to making this project happen. The partnership will have long-lasting tangible benefits to the trout and wildlife habitat here."

During construction of the West Delaware Tunnel in the 1950s and 1960s, excavated soil was stockpiled along Horton Brook, which runs along the length of Horton Brook Road and feeds into the Beaver Kill in the Town of Colchester. The West Delaware Tunnel transports water from the Cannonsville Reservoir to the Rondout Reservoir on its way to New York City.

MORE INFORMATION

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Over time, the brook meandered toward the stockpiled material, causing sediment to enter the brook as it eroded the bottom of the slope. Trout Unlimited targeted the project because Horton Brook provides the largest cold water refuge for trout in the Beaver Kill Watershed during summer months, when water temperatures can exceed 78 degrees, which means dissolved oxygen levels in stream water are reduced and trout can suffocate.

The floodplain restoration project will reduce erosion of sediments into Horton Brook,

reduce sedimentation on trout spawning areas downstream, slow the velocity of the brook when it floods, and reduce the size of the delta at the brook's mouth which, when too large, can prevent trout from reaching the cold brook waters needed for summer survival.

For the first part of the project last year, approximately 16,000 cubic yards of soil was removed. The excavated section is approximately 450 feet long. DEP provided two dump trucks, a bulldozer, and a Gradall for last year's project. Trout Unlimited provided the excavator, silt fence and grass seed. Delaware County donated the use of a mulcher and Greene County donated the use of a hydro seeder. The Town of Colchester provided two dump trucks to help move the excavated soil. After the earth removal was completed, a group of 32 volunteers and staff from Trout Unlimited, Theodore Gordon Flyfishers, New Jersey Conservation Foundation and DEP planted 600 native trees and shrubs.

Earlier today, Trout Unlimited, Theodore Gordon Flyfishers and DEP strengthened the streamside buffer by harvesting native willow stakes from mature willows upstream of the project and installing them at the water's edge.

Trout Unlimited, www.tu.org, is North America's leading coldwater fisheries conservation organization, with more than 140,000 members dedicated to conserving, protecting, and restoring North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

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 as scientists, engineers, surveyors, and administrative professionals, and perform other critical responsibilities. DEP has invested over \$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.

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