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# Catskill Interpretive Center Opens for First Time

Center Will Serve as a Gateway to the Many Recreational Experiences in the Catskills

## Photos are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today joined the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to officially open the Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center, which is located on Route 28 in the Town of Shandaken, Ulster County. The facility will serve as a gateway for visitors to the Catskills Forest Preserve where they can learn about the recreational opportunities in the area as well as the region's rich history and ecology. The \$1.3 million project was funded with approximately \$500,000 from New York Works, \$420,000 from the State's Environmental Protection Fund and a \$380,000 federal Housing and Urban Development grant. In addition, DEP has pledged \$100,000 towards operating expenses for the Center.

"The Catskill Forest Preserve is home to breathtaking mountains and pristine waterways that offer an abundance of recreational adventures," said **DEC Commissioner Joe Martens**. "Now, with the opening of the Catskill Interpretive Center, visitors will be welcomed to the region through a magnificent resource that showcases all the Catskills' has to offer - from hiking in serene mountain settings and fishing in legendary trout streams and reservoirs to awe-inspiring natural beauty and unique cultural attractions."

"Congratulations to the many volunteers and advocates who worked for decades to see the Catskill Interpretive Center built," said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**. "The Center will help thousands of annual visitors interpret the history of

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the Catskills, while also pointing them toward outdoor recreation access, farm-to-table food, local artisans and many other attractions that make the region scenic and vibrant. DEP has been a proud partner in this effort, and we will continue to work with our watershed neighbors to expand, improve and promote outdoor recreation and tourism in the Catskills."

The Center features a topographic floor map display with projected images from above that highlights the natural resources and other interesting assets in the region. Visitors will be able to explore the Catskill's extraordinary recreational, cultural and historic opportunities as well as a variety of tourist services through the Center's iPads and wall displays. The Center's displays, activities and staff will advance environmental education, cultural and natural resource stewardship and outdoor recreational opportunities that enhance the Catskill region and promote economic development opportunities.

The Friends of the Catskill Interpretive Center, working under the umbrella of the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, will operate the 1,700-square-foot Center seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Center is staffed through a partnership including the Catskill Center, the NY-NJ Trail Conference, Catskill Mountain Club, Ulster County Tourism and Catskill Mountainkeeper. The Catskill Watershed Corporation contributed \$40,000 for exhibits and \$10,000 per year for five years toward operating expenses, and donated \$38,000 for a replica observer's cabin to accompany an historic fire tower to be erected at the site.

The Center is named in honor of retired Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey, who championed the Center for decades. As a state Assemblyman, Congressman Hinchey led the charge for the Catskill Interpretive Center and secured the original funding to get the project started in the 1980s. Hinchey worked with then-Governor Mario Cuomo to obtain additional funding to advance the project, including securing property in Mount Tremper and initial site development. Congressman Hinchey most recently helped secure a \$380,000 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development grant toward building the facility.

DEC will build interpretive trails at the site with NY Works funding. The site is conveniently located on State Route 28 in the Hamlet of Mt. Tremper, Town of Shandaken, Ulster County. For more information on the CIC, visit <http://www.catskillinterpretivecenter.org/>.

"This glorious day is the fulfillment of a 30-year dream made possible by the passion and persistence of so many dedicated people, from hard-working public officials at every level of government to devoted community groups across the region," said **retired Congressman Maurice Hinchey**. "The NYS DEC and The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development have my heartfelt appreciation for bringing this marvelous center to completion. I am very honored to have it named for me, and delighted that it will introduce many thousands of people to the treasures of the Catskill Mountains."

**Senator James L. Seward** said, "The new Catskill Interpretive Center will help highlight all the Catskills has to offer - drawing new explorers to the region and offering area families and residents with yet another terrific resource. The center, together with other new initiatives, is part of a cohesive, locally developed strategy to boost our vibrant tourism industry, grow our small businesses, and showcase the grandeur of the Catskills for generations to come."

**Ulster County Executive Mike Hein** said, "The Shandaken area has continued to grow and develop, and the opening of the Catskill Interpretive Center will certainly be an important additional resource for the region. Visitors from all over the country are drawn to Ulster County to witness its pristine natural beauty and take advantage of the countless outdoor activities available. This center will allow residents and visitors alike, to realize a deep and meaningful bond with the area and have a greater appreciation for our rich and diverse history. The Interpretive Center will stand as a constant reminder of Congressman Maurice Hinchey's steadfast environmental commitment and he remains a visionary, role model and

mentor for us all; without his continued support, this new innovative Interpretive Center would not have become a reality."

**Shandaken Town Supervisor Robert Stanley** said, "The Town of Shandaken, the 'Heart of the Park,' extends its gratitude to all the organizations and individuals responsible for the Maurice Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center. We invite all visitors to our fair community as we embrace the honor of being the host community welcoming neighbors far and wide to the Catskill Mountains for generations to come."

"The Catskill Center takes great pride in the partnerships that allow us to take this step in branding the Catskills as a world-class destination," said **Alan White, Executive Director, Catskill Center**.

**Catskill Mountainkeeper Executive Director Ramsay Adams** said, "The Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center is a great example of how when dedicated folks share a vision and through perseverance can accomplish extraordinary things. Mountainkeeper is proud to be a partner and we look forward to working with the DEC and our partners in introducing this wonderful new facility to the millions of visitors that come to the Catskill Park."

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 other 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 nearly \$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](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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