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NYC DEP Announces Results from 2018 Recreational Boating Season in the Catskills



A total of 1,660 boats were used through the popular recreational boating program this year

Participation included visitors from 14 states outside New York

Photos of recreational boating can be found on [DEP's Flickr page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that a total of 1,660 boats were used in 2018 through its recreational boating program in the Catskills, including 935 canoes and kayaks that were rented to visitors by local businesses. Rental boats made up the majority of boats used on the four reservoirs for the third consecutive year, underscoring the program's support of local tourism and outdoor recreation businesses.

Overall participation in the recreational boating program remained steady in 2018, despite record rainfall that drenched the watershed for much of the summer and early fall. The 1,660 boats that were used throughout the season reflected a slight increase from the 1,646 boats that were used in 2017. Rentals continued to lead the way as 56 percent of all visitors chose to rent a boat from one of seven businesses in the Catskills that store pre-cleaned canoes and kayaks alongside the reservoirs. The rental program, administered in partnership with the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC), began in 2013 to provide easier boating access for visitors to the Catskills and for local residents who don't own a boat. It has also helped support local businesses by providing a new source of revenue. The recreational boating program at Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie reservoirs complements the traditional use of metal rowboats for fishing, which has been permitted for decades on all New York City reservoirs.

"The recreational boating program continues to be one of the most popular outdoor experiences that DEP offers on its reservoirs and watershed lands," **DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza** said. "We are happy to see that visitors are providing a boost to the local economy by renting boats from local vendors, and that

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interest in recreational boating remained strong during one of the wettest summers of the last century. We look forward to collaborating with our partners in the Catskills to reach a new record for boating in the watershed next season.”

Data from Recreational Boating for the Past Five Years

Reservoir	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	Tags	Rentals	Tags	Rentals	Tags	Rentals	Tags	Rentals	Tags	Rentals
Cannonsville	99	0	84	0	71	0	87	0	77	0
Pepacton	555	136	538	302	510	346	461	192	454	261
Neversink	107	159	99	260	113	437	77	575	103	550
Schoharie	65	51	59	121	62	129	53	201	91	124
	826	346	780	683	756	912	678	968	725	935
	1,172		1,463		1,668		1,646		1,660	

During this recreational boating season DEP issued 725 tags to those who own a boat, including 573 kayaks, 127 canoes, 24 rowboats, and one scull. Pepacton and Neversink reservoirs were the most popular, attracting 715 and 653 visits respectively. They were followed by 215 visits at Schoharie Reservoir and 77 at Cannonsville. While most boat owners were from watershed counties and the New York City metropolitan area, 2018 also saw a record number of participants from other states. Boating tags were issued to participants from 14 other states including Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia and Vermont.

For the fourth year, rental boats were available from eight launch sites alongside the reservoirs. Local businesses this year again reported that visitors were adding a boat rental on the reservoirs as part of their stay at local campsites, lodges or other overnight facilities, which had included boating on the reservoirs as part of their marketing. The rental program is administered with significant help from the CWC, which funded the acquisition of 30 storage racks for the rental boats. CWC also administers the process to vet and approve businesses that applied to participate in the rental program.

2018 marked the seventh year of the recreational boating program, which followed a three-year pilot that began in 2009 at Cannonsville Reservoir. Prior to 2009, DEP only issued tags for metal rowboats that were used and stored at the reservoirs for the purpose of fishing. More than 12,000 tags are currently issued to anglers who have rowboats at the reservoirs. Regular water-quality monitoring at each of these reservoirs has shown no impact from recreational boating. DEP’s invasive species experts have surveyed every boat launch site and found no sign of aquatic plants or animals that can harm drinking water quality. Every boat that is used on the reservoirs is required to be inspected and steam cleaned to avoid the spread of invasive species.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of high-quality water each day to more than 9.6 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 watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$168.9 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 \$19.1 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, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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