

NYC Watershed Recreation

A newsletter for the outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy the lands and waters of the New York City water supply



**Environmental
Protection**

2019

Cover photo: Adventures for all seasons. The watershed has snowshoeing in winter, fishing in spring, walking in summer and boating in autumn - and much more to do outdoors throughout the entire year.

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Watershed Recreation



Hikers set out for a beautiful summer trek on the Palmer Hill Trail in Delaware County, one of 11 marked hiking trails that now traverse watershed lands.

Our employees at the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are proud to be the stewards of the largest municipal drinking water system in the United States, along with vast forests, streams, meadows and mountains that surround our reservoirs.

For more than a decade, DEP has worked diligently with its partners in the Catskills and Hudson Valley to expand recreational access to these scenic lands and waters. Our properties now offer some of the best fishing, hiking, hunting, and other outdoor sports anywhere in America. Here are a few ways to learn about DEP recreation events or plan your personal adventure in the watershed.

- The RecMapper - An interactive map of all 417 recreational units, reservoirs, boat launches, hiking trails and more: www.nyc.gov/dep/recmap.
- Sign up for our recreation e-newsletter by sending us a note at recreation@dep.nyc.gov.
- Follow us on Facebook @NYCWatershed.
- Learn more by visiting our watershed recreation website at www.nyc.gov/dep/recreation.

NYC Watershed Recreation By the Numbers...

- 136,000 acres of land and water open for low-impact recreation.
- 73,491 acres open for use without the need for a DEP Access Permit.
- 113,736 people who have a free DEP Access Permit for fishing, boating and more.
- 417 recreational units where outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy the scenic beauty of the Catskills and Hudson Valley.
- 13,236 boats registered for fishing and stored alongside water supply reservoirs.
- 11 marked hiking trails that traverse DEP lands in the watershed.
- 6 day-use areas where visitors can take a walk, have a picnic and enjoy the outdoors.

A guide to family-friendly walks around the water supply

One of the most popular outdoor activities in the watershed is also one of the least strenuous. Each year, thousands of visitors ask where they can take a walk, stretch their legs or have a stroll with their families.

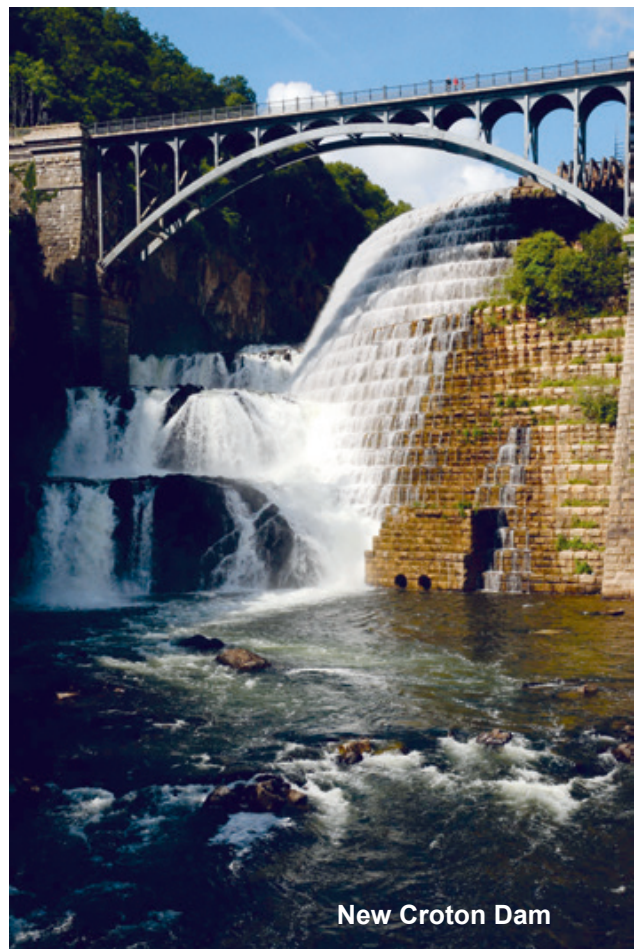
Several of our hiking trails and water supply dams include easy walks and beautiful views. Here are some of the best family-friendly walks in the watershed.

1) **The Ashokan Reservoir Promenade** - The south side of Ashokan Reservoir includes a paved walkway atop the dam and dikes that were built to create the reservoir. The paved path is approximately 2.7 miles long and includes some of the best views of the Burroughs Range in the Catskills. A favorite among local residents and visitors alike, the walkway is a great place to watch bald eagles soar or to teach a child to ride a bike. Two parking areas are located on Route 28A in the Town of Olive, Ulster County. No dogs, please.

2) **New Croton Dam** - The walkway atop the dam, which stretches about half a mile, was recently refurbished. The stone dam and decorative spillway make for an especially scenic walk in this portion of the Hudson Valley. Eagle watching is also great from this walkway. This particular walk comes with a bonus. Ambitious walkers can hook up with the Old Croton Aqueduct State Park, which begins at the southeastern side of the dam. This beautiful, woody trail follows the path of New York City's original aqueduct, stretching 26.2 miles from the dam to the Bronx. Parking for the walkway at New Croton Dam is located just off Route 129 or in Westchester County's Croton Gorge Park, both in the town of Cortlandt.

3) **Palmer Hill Trail** - Opened in 2014, this trail includes an easily walkable loop through an old farmstead, forest, and a beautiful wildflower meadow. Open areas provide great vistas of the surrounding mountains. Palmer Hill includes a total of 3.7 miles of trails. The trailhead is located on Finkle Road, just off Route 28, between Andes and Margaretville in Delaware County. (See photo on page 2.)

4) **Angle Fly Preserve** - This 654-acre preserve includes 10 miles of well-marked trails that guide you through the woods, past ponds, and down to the Angle Fly Brook. Visitors enjoy the many birds, butterflies and other wildlife that live in the preserve. The preserve was made possible through a partnership among New York City, Westchester County and the Town of Somers. The main entrance can be found on Primrose Street in Somers.



Volunteers help protect our waters and woods

Each year, hundreds of volunteers contribute their time and energy to help protect DEP’s reservoirs and lands. Their efforts help preserve the cleanliness of drinking water for 9.6 million New Yorkers, and it also helps to maintain the open spaces enjoyed by hikers, hunters, anglers and others. In fact, some of the most active partners in watershed protection are our recreational users. Below are some examples of how they get involved and how you can too.

Watershed Stewards: Our watershed stewards are volunteers who have gone one step further than enjoying recreation in the watershed – they have committed time to keep our natural resources clean and safe. Our stewards have been trained on issues such as watershed protection and invasive species. They submit regular reports on problems they encounter, conduct cleanups, and assist with projects such as planting trees on City property. DEP always appreciates more helping hands. If you would like to become a watershed steward, please contact Lydia Lewis at LLewis@dep.nyc.gov.

Reservoir Cleanup: DEP’s Reservoir Cleanup Day is our most popular volunteer event each year. Hundreds of volunteers gather at select reservoirs each fall for a cleanup blitz of reservoir shorelines and boat launch areas. In 2018, approximately 400 people collected more than 2 tons of garbage from the shorelines of nine reservoirs. Their haul included 4,702

beverage containers, 1,554 food wrappers, 5,041 small pieces of foam, glass or plastic, 1,117 cigarette butts, 489 yards of fishing line, 872 grocery bags, 1,079 disposable cups and plates, 1,302 bottle caps, 977 take-out food containers, and 16 tires. That’s a big haul! Keep an eye on DEP’s e-newsletters and our watershed Facebook page for information on this year’s cleanup.

Invasive Species: DEP is committed to protecting plant and animal species in our watershed. This goal includes working with partners to control the spread of invasive plants, animals and microorganisms. A great way to help out is to become an invasive species reporter. To learn more about what to look for and how to share that information, please visit the DEP invasive species information page at www.nyc.gov/dep/InvasiveSpecies, or email Meredith Taylor at MeTaylor@dep.nyc.gov.

Finally, we are always asking outdoor enthusiasts to report dangerous or suspicious activities, water quality threats, or fish kills on City reservoirs and lands. You can do this 24 hours a day by calling 1-888-H2O-SHED (426-7433).



A volunteer at New Croton Reservoir plucks a takeout-food container from the woods near a popular boat launch area. About 400 volunteers participated in the annual cleanup last year.

Issues reported by our East-of-Hudson Watershed Stewards in 2018

Observation	Total
Damaged boats	36
Improperly stored boats	88
Boats found in the water	17
Expired boat tags	50
Boats unsecured	3
Illegal dumping	1

Keeping your access permit and boat tags up to date

We know our watershed neighbors and visitors have lots of responsibilities. So it is no surprise that renewing your access permit or boat tags can sometimes slip to the bottom of to-do lists. DEP is here to help you remember these things, but there are a few simple ways you can help.

Remember your expiration dates: Access permits must be renewed every five years. Boat tags expiring in 2019 are being renewed for two or four years, depending on the reservoir. Starting in 2020, all boat tags will be renewed with a four-year tag. A tip: Take advantage of technology and set a reminder on your phone or in your calendar with your new renewal date.

Keep your contact information up to date: When your access permit or boat tag is about to expire, DEP will send out renewal information to you via email or regular mail. If you move, change email addresses, or get a new phone number, you may not receive this information. Be sure to contact DEP to update your information if anything changes.

Renew your access permit online: You can easily access, view and even print your access permit online at www.nyc.gov/dep/accesspermit.



If you don't remember your password, you can also log in with your driver's license or non-driver's ID number. You'll need to make sure that it is the same number you used when you signed up for your access permit.

Contact us: If you have any questions or need to make any changes to your information, you can always contact us at Recreation@dep.nyc.gov or call 1 (800) 575-5263.

Be on the lookout for Spotted Lanternfly

Each year, we encourage our neighbors and visitors to look out for invasive plants and animals that threaten water quality or native species in the watershed. This year we are urging everyone to be mindful of the Spotted Lanternfly, a bug that travels in swarms and has already spread across parts of Pennsylvania.

The pesky bug, native to eastern Asia, was first detected in the U.S. in 2014. The lanternfly feeds on plant sap. As it digests the sap, the insect excretes a substance known as honeydew that, along with sap oozing from the plant's wounds, can attract bees and other insects. The honeydew and leaking sap can also allow mold to grow, stunting a plant's growth.

Grapevines, apple trees, hops, and oak, walnut and pine trees are among its favorites.

The Spotted Lanternfly likes to lay its eggs on rusted metal, tree bark, or other vertical surfaces that have rough texture. Those who travel to Pennsylvania, especially near Philadelphia, should be mindful of the eggs and consider washing their cars to prevent spreading the bug. The Spotted Lanternfly also requires a deciduous tree known as "Tree of Heaven" to produce eggs and complete its lifecycle.

The lanternfly does not bite, but it pesters humans in other ways, mostly by swarming in large numbers and climbing into their clothes. Potential sightings should be reported to spottedlanternfly@dec.ny.gov.



Spotted Lanternfly

New recreation area at Bear Spring in Delaware County

One of DEP's newest recreation areas in the Catskills has a diversity of habitats, miles of woods roads, and affords all kinds of outdoor pursuits. It also comes with a name reflecting its hefty offerings: Bear Spring.

In late 2018, DEP staff finished posting signs on the 1,300-acre property that sits just south of the village of Walton in Delaware County, about five miles upstream from Cannonsville Reservoir.

The property takes its name from the fact that it spans the central area and summit of Bear Spring Mountain. The parcel includes forest, open meadows, and old quarries to explore. Woods roads weaving throughout the property make for ideal hiking. Plow Hollow, Notch Hollow and other small streams flow through a portion of the property.

Good access is found from South River Road and along Route 206.

Watershed residents and visitors who wish to use this property do not need a DEP Access Permit. The Bear Spring Recreation Unit is a public access area, which

also means it is open for all the City's allowable recreation uses, including fishing, hiking, hunting, snowshoeing, and trapping.



Expansion to Boyds Corner North area in Putnam County

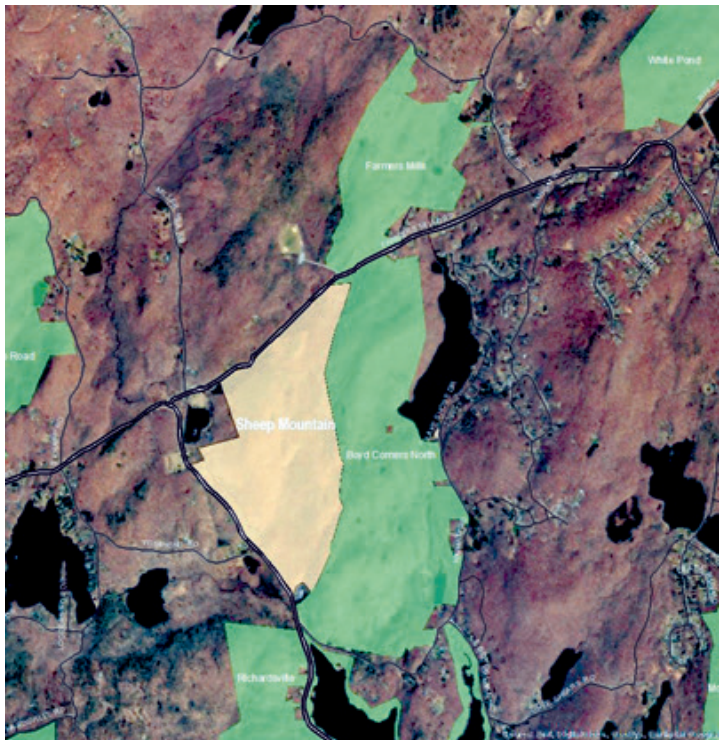
DEP is expanding the land available for recreation in Putnam County by adding more than 240 acres to the Boyds Corner North unit.

Known as Sheep Mountain, the new addition rises to about 900 feet at the top of Boyds Corner Reservoir. The land sits in the Town of Kent, sometimes known as Kent Cliffs. This parcel, with its steep slopes and rocky outcroppings, lives up to that craggy name.

Old woods roads meander along some gentler slopes, tracing the routes followed by earlier hunters, hikers, and others. Two streams flow south across the land, joining up with the west branch of the Croton River and feeding Boyds Corner Reservoir.

More than 80 acres of wetlands sprawl across its north side. With this new addition, the Boyds Corner North Recreation Unit is now almost 600 acres in size.

Hikers on the Sheep Mountain portion will enjoy a vista-filled ramble through a hardwood forest dotted with mountain laurel. The land is also open to hunting. Small parking areas off Route 301, Nimham Road, and Farmers Mills Road have room for about three cars each.



Interactive maps of these recreation units and others can be found at www.nyc.gov/dep/recmap.

New signs help visitors find outdoor destinations

By Peter Manning

Traveling the highways of the Catskill Region, you have likely noticed new signs that guide visitors to many of our recreational destinations. Featuring universal icons for outdoor activities, the signs connect main highways with trailheads, boat launches, campgrounds, fishing spots, and local parks. These new wayfinding signs were installed after the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) received and matched a state grant that aimed to promote smart growth throughout the Catskill Park. Their installation is one of many efforts undertaken by groups throughout the Catskills that have partnered to protect our natural resources while attracting visitors to support our local economy.

Once visitors arrive in our beautiful region, helping them find destinations is essential. That is why a system of wayfinding signs for recreational destinations in the region was originally envisioned in the 1999 Catskill Forest Preserve Public Access Plan. The signs are meant to enhance the experience of travelers and increase understanding and appreciation of the region's recreational opportunities. This appreciation goes hand in hand with protection of the Catskills' place-defining resources, especially the Catskill Park and Forest Preserve and the Catskill-Delaware watershed. Consistent with the scenic qualities of the highway corridors, the signs promote recreation and tourism that support the vitality of our communities.

Many of the signs help visitors and residents locate the five boat launches on Pepacton Reservoir, which is one of four reservoirs in the DEP recreational boating program. Because they are so expansive, these reservoirs offer unique paddling opportunities in the Catskills. Signs are also in the works for Schoharie and Neversink reservoirs. The boating program finished its seventh year in 2018 and has brought direct benefits to local boat-rental businesses, as well as complementary economic activity in the region.

At Ashokan Reservoir, signs guide walkers, runners, and cyclists to the walkways that run along the edge of the water and afford exceptional views. It is hoped the program can be expanded beyond the Catskill Park to include more recreational opportunities, such as those found at Cannonsville Reservoir.

Each of the signs within or near the park boundary includes the Catskill Park logo (pictured above),



which is distinctive to the park and is the result of agreement among the state Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the state Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This 2011 agreement discontinued the use of yellow lettering on a brown background for certain highway signs, replacing it with white lettering on a brown background – and the new logo. This scheme creates a consistent visual language and supports the identity of the park, and it may be used by local governments for street signs.

Reinforcing the sense of place in the Catskills will continue to require regional cooperation and collective commitment to implement the objectives we set forth in our planning initiatives. The wayfinding sign project is successful because of the exemplary teamwork of numerous agencies and local governments that are participating in the installation of the signs. In addition to the leadership of the CWC, special thanks go to the NYSDOT and NYSDEC; the NYCDEP; the Delaware, Greene, Sullivan, Ulster highway departments; and towns and villages in the Catskill Park.

(Peter Manning is a regional planner with Genius Loci Planning and coordinator of the Catskill Park Wayfinding Sign Project.)



The wayfinding signs above help visitors find places to hike, fish, boat and camp near Pepacton Reservoir in Delaware County. Similar signs are posted throughout the Catskills to help visitors find destinations.

Contact Us

To get a free DEP Access Permit online, visit www.nyc.gov/dep/accesspermit.

For immediate help with access permits, maps of recreation areas, recreation rules, up-to-date recreation area lists and other information about outdoor recreation on city lands and waters, visit DEP website at www.nyc.gov/dep and click on the “Watershed Recreation” link on the home page.

For permit inquiries:

Email: Recreation@dep.nyc.gov
Call: 1-800-575-LAND

DEP Access Permits
71 Smith Avenue
Kingston, NY 12401

For information about specific recreation areas, reservoirs, boat storage and programs, call the DEP regional office for that area:

Ashokan (Ashokan Reservoir)
(845) 657-5073

Carmel (East-of-Hudson Lands)
(845) 808-1770

Downsville (Pepacton and Cannonsville Reservoirs)
(607) 363-7009

Gilboa (Schoharie Reservoir)
(607) 588-6231

Grahamsville (Neversink and Rondout Reservoirs)
(845) 334-7152

Mahopac (East-of-Hudson Reservoirs)
(914) 232-1309

To report dangerous or suspicious activity, water quality threats, or fish kills on city-owned reservoirs and lands call the DEP Police at 888-H2O-SHED (426-7433).

Float-away boats require police action

After you hook a few fish and row to the shore of a New York City reservoir, don't just leave your boat at the edge of the water. Anglers are reminded to drag their boats above the high-water mark and secure them. This will prevent boats from floating away and reduce the number of false alarms DEP Police have to investigate.

Reservoir levels can fluctuate drastically during the year, sometimes rising feet in just hours or days. As the water rises, vessels left unsecured at the water's edge can float away.

A floating boat with no visible angler – whether right-side up or upside down – requires DEP Police to investigate whether someone has fallen into the water and needs help. Police must mobilize officers, launch their own boats, and try to contact the floating boat's owner. Officers scan the water for debris, such as fishing tackle or flotation devices, and check nearby cars for access permit tags.

These investigations, which happen at least a few times each year, are time consuming. That

was especially true in 2018, which set records as the second wettest year in watershed history. During the fall alone, DEP Police responded to about 20 float-away boats. Many were upside down in the water, just as they were left at the water's edge before reservoir levels rose. Each of these situations was treated as if an angler was in the boat and might need help.

As a boater you are responsible to make sure your boat is properly stored. DEP can confiscate floaters and assess removal and storage fees.

Remember to drag your boat away from the water's edge and secure it to a tree or another permanent point at your assigned storage area. Don't secure it to a dead tree or a tree marked for removal with blue paint.

Moving your boat back from the water makes sure it will be there for your next outing, keeps the shoreline uncluttered for your fellow anglers, and it ensures DEP Police are not deployed to the reservoirs for unnecessary investigations.

