

[Home](#)
**Customer Services**

- › [Pay Online](#)
- › [Ways to Pay Your Bill](#)
- › [eBilling](#)
- › [Account Information](#)
- › [Customer Assistance](#)
- › [Service Line Protection Program](#)
- › [Water Rates](#)
- › [Property Managers & Trade Professionals](#)

**Water Utilities**

- › [Drinking Water](#)
- › [Wastewater](#)
- › [Stormwater](#)
- › [Harbor Water](#)
- › [Long Term Control Plan](#)

**The Watershed**

- › [Watershed Protection](#)
- › [Watershed Recreation](#)

**Citywide Initiatives**

- › [Regulatory Reform](#)
- › [Environmental Education](#)
- › [Conservation Programs](#)
- › [Air Pollution Control](#)
- › [Noise Codes & Complaints](#)

**Business and Professionals**

- › [Forms & Permits](#)
- › [Support for Businesses](#)
- › [Doing Business with DEP](#)
- › [Asbestos Abatement](#)
- › [Construction, Demolition & Abatement](#)

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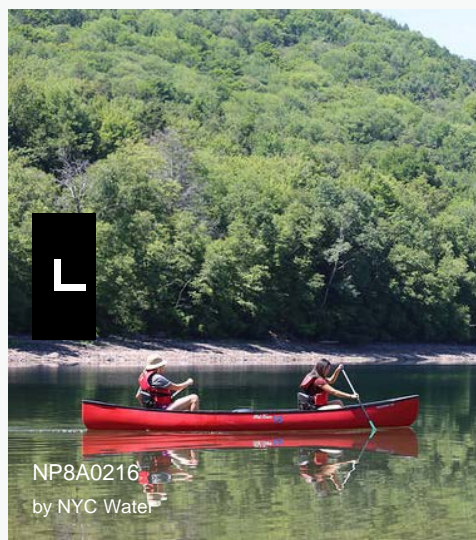
- › [Inside DEP](#)
- › [News](#)
- DEP Featured In...
- Press Releases
- Public Notices

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## Department of Environmental Protection Announces Another Record Season for Recreational Boating



**For the first time, majority of 1,668 boats used were rentals from locally owned businesses**

**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 1,668 boats were used in 2016 through its recreational boating program in the Catskills, another all-time high for the program since it began in 2012. This year also marked the first time that kayaks and canoes rented from local businesses in the Catskills accounted for the majority of boats used on the four reservoirs—a trend that underscores the program's support of local tourism and outdoor recreation economies.

Overall participation in the recreational boating program represented a 14 percent increase from the previous year, during which 1,463 boats were used. That increase was driven by the success of the rental program, which allows visitors to rent a kayak or canoe from one of six businesses in the Catskills that store pre-cleaned rental boats alongside the reservoirs. Local businesses rented a total of 912 boats in 2016, an increase of 34 percent from the previous year. 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

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## Testimony &amp; Public Comments

- › [Capital Projects](#)
- › [Careers at DEP](#)
- › [Environmental Reviews](#)
- › [Interagency MOUs](#)
- › [A to Z Index](#)
- › [Contact Us](#)



permitted for decades on all New York City reservoirs.

“This year’s results show that our recreational boating program in the Catskills is hitting two important marks,” **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza** said. “The program is providing more revenue to local tourism businesses and outdoor equipment shops, and it is making this type of recreation more accessible and affordable for those who don’t own a boat. Paddling or sailing on New York City’s reservoirs in the Catskills continues to attract people who want to explore the scenic beauty of the region.”

“Our intent from the beginning of this program was to help the regional economy by promoting a unique form of outdoor recreation—paddling on New York City reservoirs,” **CWC Executive Director Alan Rosa** said. “It is gratifying to see that happening.”

“The increase in boating use is one more indication of the popularity of the Catskill Mountains and the importance of the reservoirs in our regional economic development efforts,” said **Ray Pucci, president of the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce**. “The partnership between New York City Department of Environmental Protection, the Catskill Watershed Corporation, and local businesses is showing results that will continue to help grow and sustain our local economy.”

“DEP’s recreational boating program plays an important role in promoting tourism to our area and we continue to highlight and encourage use of this outdoor opportunity,” said **Roberta Byron-Lockwood, president and CEO of the Sullivan County Visitors Association**. “Hundreds of visitors rented boats at the Neversink Reservoir this year, and there has been an uptick of visitors to the Roscoe-Livingston Manor area in connection to boating at Pepacton Reservoir. The opportunity to utilize the reservoirs for recreational purposes affords visitors further outdoor adventure opportunities when travelling to the Sullivan County Catskills.”

“Through the Catskill Mountain Club, I have led many reservoir paddles that attracted people from all over the watershed and the tri-state area,” said **Ann Roberti, an avid paddler and board member at the nonprofit Catskill Mountain Club**. “We’ve had many wonderful sightings from the water: countless adult and immature bald eagles, many types of waterfowl, beavers, deer and bears. I’ve been so happy to share this experience of paddling with so many people, and in several cases people have gone out to buy their own boats after touring the reservoir with us.”

Rec Boating Statistics: Number of Tags Issued and Boats Rented			2014		2015		2016	
	2012	2013	Tags	Rentals	Tags	Rentals	Tags	Rentals
<b>Cannonsville</b>	108	108	99	0	84	0	71	0
<b>Pepacton</b>	676	620	555	136	538	302	510	346
<b>Neversink</b>	125	260	107	159	99	260	113	437
<b>Schoharie</b>	74	86	65	51	59	121	62	129
<b>Total</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>1074</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>912</b>
	<b>Combined Total</b>		<b>1172</b>		<b>1463</b>		<b>1668</b>	

Note: The rental boat program began in 2014. Data from prior years reflects tags for personally owned boats only.

During this recreational boating season DEP issued 756 tags to those who own a boat, including 543 kayaks, 164 canoes, 40 rowboats, and nine sailboats. Including boat rentals, Pepacton Reservoir attracted 856 tags and rentals, the most of any reservoir, followed by 550 at Neversink, 191 at Schoharie, and 71 at Cannonsville. Nearly 40 percent of tags issued to boat owners went to residents of the five watershed counties, including Delaware, Greene, Schoharie, Sullivan, and Ulster. About 24 percent of the tags were issued to residents of New York City or Long Island. Visitors from 11 states also received tags, including Arizona,

Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Texas.

For the third year, rental boats were available from 10 launch sites alongside the four reservoirs. Local businesses this year again reported that more 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.

marked the fifth 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 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 others 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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