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## **DEP Hosts United States Adventure Racing Association National Championship on Pepacton Reservoir**

*Race Marks First Time Reservoir Opened for Adventure Racing Competition*

*Nearly 1,000 Recreational Permits Issued During Record Boating Season*

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection this past weekend hosted the 2012 United States Adventure Racing Association (USARA) National Championships on the Pepacton Reservoir, in Delaware County. More than 165 competitors from around the nation kicked off the 30-hour, 100 mile race with a 12-mile canoe paddle during which racers navigated a series of checkpoints on the reservoir. Competitors then raced along an obstacle-course-like route hiking, cycling, navigating by compass, and rappelling down rock faces over the 100-mile course. The race ended at the Hudson Valley Resort in Kerhonkson, Ulster County. The event marks the first time the Reservoir has been opened for an adventure racing competition. In 2009, DEP launched a recreational boating pilot program on the Cannonsville Reservoir. This year, DEP expanded the program to the Neversink, Pepacton and, Schoharie reservoirs. Prior to 2009, only metal rowboats with DEP issued tags were allowed on the reservoirs and only for fishing. The 2012 boating season was the most successful to date. This year, DEP issued nearly 1,000 boat tags, of which 45 percent went to individuals from outside of the watershed and 10 percent went to individuals from outside of New York State. The strong boating season was a boon to local businesses that steam clean the boats and to those that provide tourism related services.

“The expanded recreational boating program has opened the doors for opportunities like the USARA National Championship in which hundreds of participants and observers got the chance to enjoy the scenic Pepacton Reservoir as backdrop for adventure racing,” said Commissioner Strickland. “We look forward to more events like this and to working with local communities to promote recreational opportunities that help bring people to the watershed and support local businesses.”

“We are very fortunate to have been granted permission to use the Pepacton Reservoir for the paddling leg of our race,” said USARA Race Director, Rodney Villella. “The reservoir set the stage for the event and the fall colors added to the beauty of this great resource. The racers loved the paddling section and didn't let the cold and rainy weather at the start dampen their spirits. We are also very thankful that we had two DEP police boats on the water during the event making sure everyone was safe and sound.”

Expanding recreational opportunities in the watershed is one of the goals outlined in *Strategy 2011-2014*, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives that will

ensure DEP is the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. The plan is available on DEP's website at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep).

This year, 983 recreational boating tags were issued and included 697 kayaks, 241 canoes, 31 rowboats, two sculls, and 12 small sailboats. Permits were available free of charge at DEP's website and required a certification that the boat had been steam cleaned by a certified vendor. Tags were issued to 70 individuals from New York City as well as boaters hailing from Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, North Carolina, Georgia, Kansas and Florida. The Pepacton Reservoir was the most popular launch site with over 650 permits issued, followed by the Neversink, Cannonsville and Schoharie.

Since 2003, DEP has significantly expanded the amount of City-owned land within the watershed that is open for recreation. Currently, approximately 108,000 acres — more than double the amount available in 2003 — is open to the public. This comprises more than two-thirds of City-owned property in the watershed. Of the 108,000 total acres open for recreation, 75,000 are land areas and 33,000 are on water. Most of the City's newly acquired property is open to the public for activities such as hunting, hiking and fishing, as well as economic activities like hay cropping.

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City, and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties. 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 employs nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and others professionals in the upstate watershed. In addition to its \$68 million payroll and \$153 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$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. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program with a planned \$13.2 billion in investments over the next 10 years that creates up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](https://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/nycwater](https://www.twitter.com/nycwater).