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Putnam County Land Trust and New York City Department of Environmental Protection Announce Completion of the Diverting Reservoir Trail

New trail was built through partnership between Putnam County land stewards, citizens, volunteers and New York City DEP

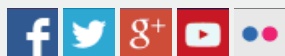
Recreation trail will open with community hike on Aug. 22

The Putnam County Land Trust (PCLT) and New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced the completion of a 1-mile-long recreation trail along the Diverting Reservoir in the Town of Southeast. All are invited to celebrate the opening of the trail with a community hike on Friday, Aug. 22 at 11:30 a.m. The trail – which was cleared and will be maintained by local land stewards and volunteers – follows an old roadway and a stretch of abandoned railroad bed along the northwest shore of the Diverting Reservoir. Limited parking is available on Railroad Avenue, and the trailhead is located opposite Morningthorpe Avenue, only a few hundred feet away from the Brewster Train Station.

The trail is located on water supply property owned by New York City. Over the past year, volunteers from the Putnam County Land Trust, Concerned Residents of Southeast (CRSE), the Southeast Highway Department and members of Boy Scout Troop 440 (one boy, Kenny Hauser, adopted the Diverting Reservoir Trail as his Eagle Scout Project) have cleaned and cleared the trail. The work included the removal of old tires and other debris, along with invasive plants

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such as barberry and knotweed. Concerned Residents of Southeast has agreed to maintain the trail in the future. Access to the trail will be free of charge.

The trail, which is flat and mostly shaded by a canopy of trees, will provide a new opportunity for outdoor recreation near the Village of Brewster and will soon be joined by others nearby. A bike path is under construction near the former Garden Street Elementary School, and a river walk is being planned off Marvin Avenue.

"The trustees of the Putnam County Land Trust are delighted to be working with the NYC DEP to open up this beautiful and accessible stretch of land so that the public will have another place to walk, enjoy and connect with nature," **PCLT President Judi Terlizzi** said.

"In recent years, DEP has partnered with several nonprofit groups to develop recreation trails on water supply lands that were once off limits to the public," **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd** said. "These trails allow people to learn about the incredible water supply that provides more than 1 billion gallons of high quality drinking water to 9.4 million people every day, and it allows local residents a safe place to run, walk, bike and maintain a healthy lifestyle. We applaud the volunteers in Putnam County who made the Diverting Reservoir Trail possible through their hard work and stewardship."

"This is the perfect example of what can be accomplished when public and private organizations work together," **Southeast Supervisor Tony Hay** said. "Thanks to the efforts of all involved, the residents of both Southeast and the Village of Brewster now have expanded recreational opportunities without spending public funds."

"Concerned Residents of Southeast would like to thank DEP, Putnam County Land Trust, the Boy Scouts and the Town of Southeast for their partnership in the opening of the Diverting Reservoir Trail," said **Ricky Feuerman, president of CRSE**. "A special thanks to all those who helped with the cleanup and continuing maintenance of the trail."

The Diverting Reservoir Trail is the eighth recreation trail opened on water supply lands owned by New York City. The five that preceded it were all located in the Catskills, including two hiking paths near Pepacton Reservoir in Delaware County, a nature trail alongside a school in Conesville in Schoharie County, and a walking and cross-country skiing trail near Windham in Greene County. All have been built through partnerships with local nonprofit groups that focus on land conservation, hiking and outdoor recreation.

Since 2003, DEP has significantly expanded the amount of City properties within the watersheds that are open for recreation. There are now more than 120,000 acres open for recreation, including more than 89,000 acres of land and nearly 34,000 acres of reservoirs. Of that, more than 60,000 acres of land are in public access areas that are open to hiking, fishing and other forms of low-impact recreation without a DEP access permit. More information about recreation in the watersheds can be found by clicking the "Watershed Recreation" link on the DEP website.

The Diverting Reservoir is one of 12 reservoirs in New York City's Croton Water Supply System. The Diverting Reservoir, which holds 900 million gallons at full capacity, is the smallest of the city's 19 reservoirs. It was built by impounding the East Branch of the Croton River, and it was placed into service in 1911. Its 8-square-mile watershed is located completely in the Town of Southeast.

Established in 1969, the Putnam County Land Trust is one of the oldest land trusts in New York State. Working with various governmental agencies, conservation organizations, and the public, PCLT has protected natural resources through ownership of sensitive lands, easements, planning strategies, and environmental education. To date, 1,044 acres of diverse habitat have been protected via 32 preserves, all within Putnam County. Many of the preserves have trails that are open to the public for passive recreational activities such as hiking, and bird watching. PCLT is an all-volunteer organization that relies on

membership dues, donations and grants. Anyone interested in finding out how to join, volunteer or donate should visit pclt.net or call (845) 278-2808.

PCLT's nearby preserves include Peach Lake Natural Area, Field Farmstead Preserve, Doansburg Preserve, and Glenda Farrell-Henry Ross Preserve, all within the town of Southeast. Ice Pond Conservation Area, Laurel Ledges Natural Area, Twin Hill Preserve and others are in surrounding communities.

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, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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