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**Department of Environmental Protection to Remove Fallen and Damaged
Trees around Kensico Reservoir**

Project will improve public safety and diversify the forest with new plantings

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that it plans to remove trees that fell or suffered damage around the Kensico Reservoir during Hurricane Sandy. The forest management project will also remove standing trees that pose a threat to public safety because they are too close to highways and power lines.

The work, which is expected to begin this winter, comprises roughly 45 acres of City-owned land in the towns of Mount Pleasant and North Castle. After the trees are removed, DEP will replace them with a mix of native evergreens, hardwood trees, and shrubs that will diversify the forest and help it withstand extreme storm events in the future.

“Hurricane Sandy toppled countless trees throughout New York City’s watershed, including many at Kensico that were planted when the reservoir was built roughly a century ago,” DEP Commissioner Carter Strickland said. “Removing and replacing these trees will improve public safety and aesthetics, while also protecting the quality of the city’s drinking water.”

The forest management project will focus on four areas located off Nannyhagen Road, Route 120, and West Lake Drive. High winds and rain during Hurricane Sandy toppled or damaged as much as 90 percent of the trees in some of those areas. Many of the trees left standing are now more prone to wind damage and the weakening of their roots by groundwater, which can also cause them to fall.

The project has earned support from town officials because it will improve public safety, better ensure the roadways remain open during emergencies, and greatly reduce the chance of power outages in the area. In some areas around the Kensico Reservoir the average height of the Norway spruce trees is 100 feet, which is less than their distance from the roads. This has led to road closures and power outages in recent years. For instance, Hurricane Sandy marked at least the third time in seven years that Nannyhagen Road was closed, sometimes for multiple days, because of fallen trees. DEP will replace the trees with a younger, more diverse forest that is far enough from the road to significantly reduce future closures and power outages.

“It is very important to the Town of North Castle that DEP is taking the initiative to fully restore the forestlands around Kensico Reservoir, especially at Nannyhagen Road,” North Castle

Supervisor Howard Arden said. “I’m confident that the plans they have will improve public safety and greatly lessen the impacts from future storms.”

“Hurricane Sandy had a real impact in Mount Pleasant and some of the damage was quite extensive,” Mount Pleasant Town Supervisor Joan Maybury said. “DEP presented their plans to us recently and I am very supportive of their dedication to quickly improving the reservoir lands this winter.”

DEP has applied for permits that are required for the forest management project, and it has sent a bid announcement to dozens of qualified contractors. No new construction or change of land use is proposed in areas targeted by the forest management project.

The majority of the trees that are to be removed around Nannyhagen Road are spruce trees and have a market value as lumber. The limbs and branches will be chipped and spread on-site to provide temporary stabilization through the winter and early spring. DEP contractors will replant the sites in the spring. All work will be supervised by the regional DEP forester.

The new trees will improve aesthetics, reduce safety hazards, stabilize the soils and restore water quality protection. DEP expects the work to begin in January, and new plantings to be finished by the end of May.

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 over \$13 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 www.nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.

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