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depressoffice@dep.nyc.gov, (845) 334-7868

Department of Environmental Protection Announces Start of 2017 Recreational Boating Season in the Catskills

Thousands of boaters from the watershed, New York City and beyond have paddled or sailed on reservoirs since the program began in 2012

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that the 2017 recreational boating program will begin Friday at sunrise on four water supply reservoirs in the Catskills. The popular outdoor program, now in its sixth year, has attracted thousands of boaters to paddle or sail on Cannonsville, Pepacton, Neversink and Schoharie reservoirs.

"We encourage all our watershed neighbors and visitors to enjoy the scenic beauty of the Catskills by boating this year on one of New York City's reservoirs," **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza** said. "As DEP expands recreational access to our water supply properties, the boating program stands out as a particularly unique and successful effort to support tourism and outdoor recreation in the watershed. Participation in the program has nearly doubled since it began, and we expect that growth to continue because of expanded access, consistent marketing, and steadfast help from our partners at the Catskill Watershed Corporation."

"We're looking forward to seeing paddlers and sailors on the reservoirs for the sixth straight season," **Catskill Watershed Corporation Executive Director Alan Rosa** said. "It's a great way to get a feel for the Catskills, learn about the water supply, get some exercise and enjoy the peace and quiet."

A total of 1,668 boats were used through the program in 2016, an all-time record since it began in 2012. That increase was largely driven by the success of the rental program, which allows visitors to rent pre-cleaned and registered kayaks and canoes from 10 launch sites along the reservoirs. The rental program, administered by the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC), attracted 912 boaters in 2016, an increase of 34 percent over the previous year. Rental boats are stored on 30 racks alongside the reservoirs to promote easier access for visitors to the region and those who don't own a boat. CWC funded the storage racks, along with annual brochures to market the program and sanitary facilities at the launch sites.

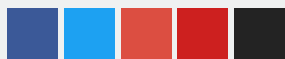
During the 2016 recreational boating season DEP issued 756 tags to those who own a boat, including 543 kayaks, 164 canoes, 40 rowboats, and nine sailboats. Including boat rentals, Pepacton Reservoir attracted 856 tags and rentals, the most of any reservoir, followed by 550 at Neversink, 191 at Schoharie, 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.

More Information

NYC Department of
Environmental Protection
Public Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard
19th Floor
Flushing, NY 11373
(718) 595-6600

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Recreational Boating Program Visits

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

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

Recreational boating season in the Catskills begins the Friday before Memorial Day and lasts until Columbus Day, from dawn till dusk. Boaters must have a DEP access permit that is available free of charge on DEP's website by visiting nyc.gov/dep/accesspermit. All boats used on the reservoirs must also be steam cleaned by one of the 13 DEP-certified steam cleaning vendors conveniently located across the watershed. A list of those vendors is available on the DEP website at nyc.gov/dep/recreation. Additional information about the recreational boating program can also be found at visitthecatskills.com/paddling. Steam cleaning helps protect against invasive plants, animals, and microorganisms that can harm water quality and fisheries. If a recreational boat is taken off reservoir property, it must be steam cleaned again before it can reenter the reservoir. Throughout the course of the recreational boating program, DEP has continuously tested water quality to ensure that none of the recreational activities has an adverse effect on New York City's drinking water supply.

Since 2003, DEP has significantly expanded the amount of city properties within the watershed that are open for recreation. There are now more than 133,000 acres of land and water open for fishing, hiking and other low-impact recreation. Of that, more than half of the land is located in public access areas that are open to recreation without the need for a DEP access permit.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of high-quality water each day to more than 9.5 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 watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$166 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 \$20.7 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](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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