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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Ian Michaels (718) 595-6600

New York City Department of Environmental Protection Acquires Conservation Easements In Kensico Basin

Commissioner Christopher O. Ward of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that earlier this month the DEP Land Acquisition Program acquired conservation easements on two properties totaling 100 acres in the Town of New Castle in Westchester County. The land was known locally as the Chiselhurst property, and had been part of a water supply decades ago but has since been held privately.

One parcel protected by easement is 87 acres in size and straddles the Kensico Reservoir basin (60 acres) and the New Croton basin (27 acres), and is now restricted to one single-family residence. The second property totals 13 acres, entirely in the Kensico basin, and is also restricted to one residence. The properties remain in private ownership and will not be opened to the public, while the conservation easements will be monitored by the DEP to prevent adverse impacts to water quality.

"The acquisition of the easements are the result of close to five years of negotiations involving the City, corporate and private landowners, and the Town of New Castle," DEP Commissioner Ward said. "This transaction demonstrates the effectiveness of the City's efforts to work with landowners who seek to continue owning, enjoying and managing their vacant land.

"These landowners have committed their land to protective covenants that will benefit the public by protecting reservoirs that serve half the population of the state," Commissioner Ward continued. "The town will benefit in that there will be additional protected open space with no additional need for municipal services. Furthermore, the City has committed to pay a proportional burden of the landowners' property taxes in perpetuity."

The two landowners join over 600 people who have agreed to sell watershed land to the City, allowing the City to protect more than 45,000 acres of sensitive watershed lands from development and to do so without loss of property taxes to local communities.

Town of New Castle Supervisor Marion Sinek said, "The

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Town is pleased to have been a catalyst in this transaction, which protects a significant property from over-development. The City has proved itself to be an important partner with respect to protection of our Town's natural resources, and we encourage other local owners of vacant land to consider working with the City."

The 45,000 acres of land and easements acquired or under contract throughout the watershed (in Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess and five counties west of the Hudson River) involve hundreds of parcels, including about 3,500 acres of farm easements that are being acquired by the Watershed Agricultural Council. The City's acquisitions in the Croton system (primarily in Yorktown, in the New Croton Reservoir Basin), along with several purchases by New York State, total about 1,000 acres. A total of roughly 150 acres have been acquired by the City in fee simple or under conservation easement in the Kensico basin, to date.

The Land Acquisition Program acquires land or conservation easements at fair market value from willing sellers only, and pays property taxes in proportion to the property rights acquired.

For more information, landowners can contact the Land Acquisition Program at (800) 575-LAND.