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News

DEP to Celebrate American Wetlands Month With Special Discovery Event at Ashokan Reservoir

May 20, 2019

DEP scientists will display wetland plants and wildlife at public walkway May 24

For high-resolution photos of our work on wetlands in the watershed visit DEP's Flickr Page

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that it will celebrate American Wetlands Month by hosting a wetlands discovery event May 24 at Ashokan Reservoir. The event will be located at the Olivebridge Dam parking area on Route 28A from 1:30-6pm. DEP wetlands scientists will display living samples of plants and wildlife found in nearby wetlands, and answer questions about these unique habitats.

The month of May is designated each year to recognize the vital role that wetlands play in our nation's ecological, economic and social health. American Wetlands Month has been celebrated each May since 1991. Wetlands are transitional lands between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Wetlands include many varieties such as forested swamps, vernal pools, wet meadows, marshes, bogs, and fens. These ecosystems cover a relatively small portion of the landscape—approximately 7 percent on average in New York State—but they provide a wide variety of benefits. Wetlands reduce flooding, absorb excess nutrients and pollutants to improve water quality, provide fish, wildlife, and plant habitat, and offer recreational opportunities for hunters, fishermen and outdoor enthusiasts. Nearly half the

nation's endangered species rely on wetlands to survive, as do 80 percent of breeding birds, half of protected migratory bird species, and nearly all fish and shellfish harvested both commercially and recreationally. Globally, wetlands have significant potential to mitigate climate change. They cover up to 8 percent of the earth's surface, yet they store 30 percent of the world's soil carbon, making them an important sink for greenhouse gases.

Wetlands help to maintain the high quality of New York City's drinking water supply. Approximately 35,000 acres of wetlands are located within the watersheds that surround New York City's reservoirs. More than 5,000 acres of wetlands are protected on City-owned lands, 59 percent of which have been acquired through watershed protection programs initiated in the 1990s. As part of a robust wetland mapping and monitoring program, DEP scientists collect long-term data to understand the condition and functions of watershed wetlands. Visit the National Wetlands Inventory for maps and more information about these important ecosystems.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of high-quality water each day to more than 9.6 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 \$168.9 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 \$19.7 billion in investments planned over the next decade that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dep/), like us on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter.