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Department of Environmental Protection Joins Trout Unlimited and Students from the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens to Release Trout Into Watershed Streams

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This Year, More Than 3,000 Students from New York City and the Upstate Watersheds Will Participate in the Environmental Education Program

Students Will Also Plant 30 New Trees Along the Banks of the River

Photos of the Event are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today joined Trout Unlimited and students groups from across New York City to release juvenile trout that the students have raised in their classrooms into streams in Westchester County. The student groups included pre-Kindergarteners from both BronxWorks and the South Bronx Head Start Center, 5th grade students from P.S. 84 in Brooklyn, and students from John Bowne High School in Queens. Since 2002, DEP and Trout Unlimited have worked together to educate students in New York City and watershed communities about the importance of protecting our shared water resources through the Trout in the Classroom program. As an aquatic indicator species, trout provide students the chance to learn about water quality and the ecological importance of the streams that feed New York City's water supply reservoirs. The approximately 300 juvenile trout were released into the Cross River where it passes through the Wards Pound Ridge Reservation in Westchester County. The students also planted 30 new trees along the banks of the river. Trout Unlimited is a national grassroots non-profit organization whose mission is to conserve, protect, and restore North America's cold-water fisheries and their watersheds.

"The Trout in the Classroom program provides a tangible and practical way to educate young New Yorkers about the importance of preserving the rivers, streams, reservoirs, and lakes that supply the world class drinking water we enjoy every day," said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**. "Since our partnership with

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Trout Unlimited began, tens of thousands of students from New York City and the watershed have had a chance to gain an appreciation for our shared water resources and visit the streams that supply their drinking water.”

“Trout in the Classroom in NYC is designed to connect students to their environment by providing daily hands-on interaction in the classroom,” said **Trout Unlimited’s Youth Education Director Franklin Tate**. “Students engage in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) learning while developing a deeper awareness and appreciation for the earth’s natural resources. Our longstanding collaboration with DEP helps us to inspire thousands of students throughout the southern New York area to become stewards of the environment.”

The conservation-oriented environmental education program teaches young New Yorkers, ranging from pre-K to grade 12, about the connections between trout, water quality, the environment and steps they can take to improve the ecological health of the New York City watershed, which supplies over 9 million people with a reliable source of high quality drinking water every day. This year, more than 3,000 students from schools in New York City and the upstate watersheds incubated trout eggs in their classrooms and raised them into juvenile trout, which are also called fingerlings. The 6-month long program culminates with students taking part in a field day, where they release the fingerlings into New York City watershed streams in April and May. After releasing their trout, students participated in studying water quality by observing stream macroinvertebrates which were collected by volunteers from the Croton Watershed Chapter of Trout Unlimited, removing invasive plants along the riparian stream corridor in order to replace them with native species, planting new trees and identifying wildlife during a walk in the woods. Partners such as the Bronx Children’s Museum, the Watershed Agricultural Council, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation helped to support today’s program.

The Trout in the Classroom Program in southern New York began in 2002 as a partnership between DEP and Trout Unlimited and has become a prototype for similar programs across the country. The program is flexibly designed to be age appropriate as well as adaptable to individual classroom needs, enabling teachers to cultivate a wide range of skills in their students, ranging from reading and creative writing to scientific observation. Participating classrooms receive trout eggs in October, giving students the opportunity to monitor water temperature, clarity, dissolved oxygen, ammonia, and PH as the eggs develop and grow into fingerlings over the course of the school year. As an aquatic indicator species, the trout also provide students the chance to learn about water quality and the ecological importance of the streams that feed New York City’s water supply and the nearby forest habitat. To learn more about Trout in the Classroom in New York City and the New York City Watersheds, sponsor a school, get a school involved, or volunteer at the next Trout Release Field Day, visit the [DEP website](#) or contact Lilli Genovesi at lgenovesi@tu.org.

The New York State Department of Conservation (DEC) supports the program and sets guidelines for raising trout in the classroom and releasing them into the New York City watershed. Last fall, DEC provided approximately 20,000 trout eggs that were distributed for free to nearly 200 classrooms. It is estimated that over 3,000 students from more than 150 schools in the southern New York area will directly participate in trout releases this year.

DEP manages New York 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. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city’s Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city’s reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to

potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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