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**DEP Launches New Initiative To Help Streamside Landowners**

**Streams Buffer Initiative Will Improve Water Quality by Targeting Non-Agricultural Properties**

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection today launched the Catskill Streams Buffer Initiative (CSBI) to help residential landowners protect their property and preserve natural habitats along stream banks in the Catskill/Delaware watershed areas. DEP is providing \$3.6 million in funding and partnering with county Soil and Water Conservation Districts for the Initiative.

"The Catskill Streams Buffer Initiative is one of the first programs in the nation that targets non-agricultural streamside properties," said Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway. "When we help landowners manage their streamside property it has the twin benefits of reducing erosion and helping keep our water clean and pure for New York City, the Catskill communities, and Catskill habitat."

"Healthy streamside buffers not only help us maintain the purity of our region's waters and protect sensitive stream banks, but also play an important role in attenuating flood waters," said Executive Director of the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District, Rick Weidenbach. "This new program will be a real boost to streamside landowners who steward the stream resources we all enjoy."

DEP and county Soil and Water Conservation Districts will help landowners obtain permits for a project or provide access to financial support, labor, and materials as part of the Catskill Streams Buffer Initiative grant program. The Initiative also offers free planning assistance and educational seminars to help landowners understand how best to protect property from damage and keep a stable streamside area. Landowners can find out if a stream buffer project is eligible for funding and find their local CSBI coordinator by visiting the website at [www.catskillstreams.org/CSBI](http://www.catskillstreams.org/CSBI). Applications are due February 1.

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DEP manages the City's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8 million in New York City, and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties. Approximately 1,000 DEP employees live and work in the watershed communities as scientists, engineers, surveyors, and administrative professionals, and perform other critical responsibilities. DEP has invested over \$1.5 billion in watershed protection programs that support sustainable farming practices, environmentally sensitive economic development, and local economic opportunity.

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