

# NYC Watershed Recreation

*A newsletter for the outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy the lands and waters of the New York City water supply*



*Spring 2015*



**Environmental  
Protection**

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*Cover photo: Family Fishing Day at  
Ashokan Reservoir, Ulster County, N.Y.*

# Watershed Recreation

## 2015 EVENTS



*In 2014, DEP land acquisition manager Dave Tobias (far right) led a public hike on a recently preserved parcel in the Delaware County town of Bovina. More hikes are planned for 2015.*

## Experience the Watershed

If you're looking to enjoy the great outdoors, DEP offers many organized opportunities to fish, hike and learn about the more than 125,000 acres in our watershed that are open for recreation. Previous events have included family fishing days, public hikes to scenic vistas in the watershed, and educational outings that focused on wetlands and invasive species. DEP is planning these and more in 2015, including our second Reservoir Cleanup Day and a winter outing to watch bald eagles soar over Cannonsville Reservoir.

In addition to the calendar on this page, we encourage you all to check our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/NYCWatershed](https://www.facebook.com/NYCWatershed) for exact times, locations, additional events and other updates.

**May 23 - Wetlands Walk:** Biologists will lead a tour of a wetland in Putnam County and share information about the unique plants and animals that call this habitat home.

**May 29 - Opening of the Rock Rift Trail:** Join DEP and the Finger Lakes Trail Conference to open a new hiking trail that leads to a fire tower high above Cannonsville Reservoir.

**June - Opening of Bramley Mountain Trail:** DEP and the Catskill Mountain Club will celebrate the opening of a new trail on Bramley Mountain in the Delaware County town of Delhi. The celebration will include a guided hike for the public.

**June 6 - Family Fishing Day at Lake Gleneida:** Experts will teach kids how to fish, and bait and a limited number of fishing poles will be provided. Bring your own if you have them! This annual event is co-sponsored by New York State DEC.

**Aug. 15 - Wetlands Walk at Yankeetown Pond:** Wetlands biologists will lead an educational tour of the circumneutral bog at this site in the Ulster County town of Woodstock, focusing on the unique plants and animals that live in the wetland habitat.

**September 19 - Family Fishing Day at Ashokan Reservoir:** One of our most popular events! Experts will teach kids how to fish, and bait and a limited number of fishing poles will be provided. Bring your own if you have them! This event is also co-sponsored by New York State DEC.

**Oct. 4 - Reservoir Cleanup Day:** Take pride in cleaning our natural resources! Join dozens of volunteers from across the Catskills and Hudson Valley for our annual cleanup around New York City's scenic reservoirs.

## Turning Driftwood into Art

**R**oughly 200 people participated in a driftwood giveaway at Ashokan Reservoir in January. The free driftwood attracted many artists from the Catskills and Hudson Valley, and some from as far away as Rockland County and Brooklyn.

Driftwood often piles up in coves throughout the reservoir system as fallen branches and trees are carried into the reservoirs from upstream tributaries. The driftwood at Ashokan Reservoir usually piles up in a portion of the reservoir's west basin known as "Driftwood Cove." DEP periodically removes the wood from that cove so it does not infringe on a nearby boat launch area used by fishermen or have negative impacts on water supply operations.

Driftwood is a popular raw material for artists and is often used for carvings, sculptures and even furniture. DEP encouraged artists to share their finished works made with Ashokan driftwood by using the hashtag "#AshokanDriftwood" when posting photos to social media outlets.



*Roughly 200 artists participated in a driftwood giveaway at Ashokan Reservoir.*

Photos can also be shared by emailing them to [Recreation@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:Recreation@dep.nyc.gov).

The wood was given away on a first come, first served basis. Removal of driftwood directly from the reservoirs is prohibited. The

popularity and success of the giveaway at Ashokan Reservoir will likely lead to similar opportunities at other locations throughout the watershed. Information about future giveaways will be posted to the NYC Watershed Facebook page.

## The Watershed Has Gone Social

DEP now has a Facebook page to share information and photos related to events, meetings and projects in the watershed. The page can be found by searching for "NYC Watershed" on Facebook.

The page is regularly updated with new photos from throughout the watershed, and it will also feature information on events such as Reservoir Cleanup Day, driftwood giveaways, organized hikes, paddles and more. The page will also include the latest news on DEP's construction projects in the watershed and other important work with our partners in watershed protection.

The Facebook page is also a great forum for us to hear from you. Catch an impressive fish on one of the

reservoirs? Capture a beautiful sunrise while kayaking? Hike to a summit that looks out across the watershed? We'd like to see your pictures! Post them to the NYC Watershed Facebook page and we'll share them with others.



**[Facebook.com/NYCWatershed](https://www.facebook.com/NYCWatershed)**

## RECREATION UPDATE

What's new since last year's newsletter? Here are some brief updates on recreation in the watershed:

### Blazing More Trails

DEP continues to work with local trail groups to enhance hiking access on watershed lands. In 2014, the Catskill Mountain Club completed its second trail on city lands. The Palmer Hill Trail in the Delaware County town of Andes provides a great hiking experience with two trail loops winding through old fields and woodland fringe areas. It boasts great views of the Catskills. Palmer Hill and the trail that preceded it, Shavertown Trail, are receiving a lot of use. Over 1,250 hikers signed in at Shavertown over the year, along with nearly 1,000 at Palmer Hill.

Our partners have also been active in the East-of-Hudson watershed where the Putnam County Land Trust recently completed the Diverting Reservoir Trail on the edge of the Village of Brewster. They also just installed a kiosk and a number of benches as part of a volunteer's Eagle Scout project to enhance the hiking experience.

### Triple the Access, Triple the Fun

In recent years, DEP has worked not only to expand recreational access but also to make that access easier. In 2008, we began by opening roughly 20,000 acres as Public Access Areas.

These are areas where hiking, hunting and other activities do not require a DEP Access Permit. Since then, DEP has tripled those areas to include more than 63,000 acres. A full list of public access areas can be found on the DEP website by clicking the "Watershed Recreation" link on the home page.

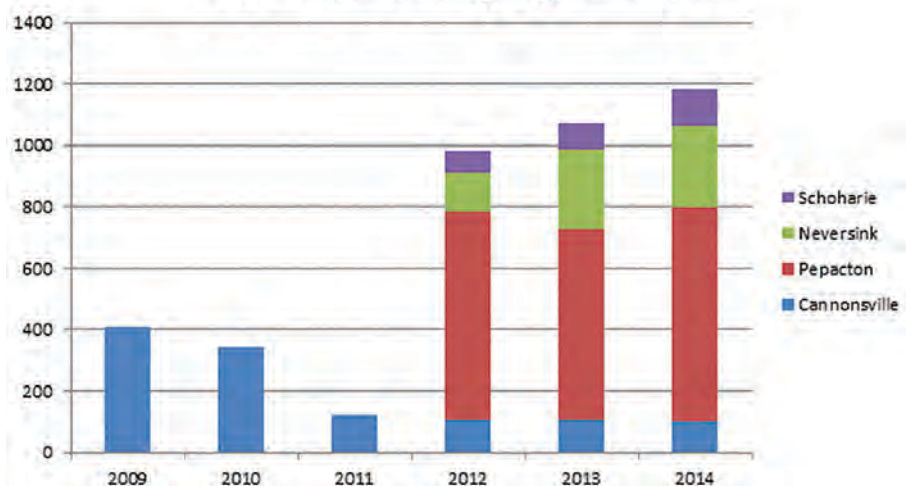
## RECREATION UPDATE

## Recreational Boating on the Rise

Since DEP first piloted its recreational boating program in 2009, the number of kayaks, canoes and sailboats on Cannonsville, Pepacton, Schoharie and Neversink reservoirs continues to grow. Boat rental businesses have expanded their use of the boat racks installed by DEP and the Catskill Watershed Corporation in 2013, which makes it easier to get out on the water even if you don't own a boat. For more information about boat rentals check out: [www.thecatskillregion.com](http://www.thecatskillregion.com)

This year DEP plans to install additional canoe/kayak racks to better manage boat storage at the launch sites. These racks will be exclusively for individual users on a first come, first served basis. They will be labeled accordingly.

Recreational Boating Tags & Rentals



## Supporting Community Events

DEP supports recreation activities on water supply lands each year by issuing land-use permits to not-for-profit organizations and local governments. Here are some of the events we supported in 2014:

- Fishing at Brown's Pond in the Town of New Windsor by permitting access over City land.
- The Putnam County Cycling Classic, which is organized by Putnam County Tourism and includes a ride over Croton Falls Dam.
- The Mid-Hudson Bicycle Club included a route over lands adjacent to Ashokan Reservoir as part of its Century Event.
- The Boy Scout's Rip Van Winkle Council hosted a 4-mile running race that utilized public areas alongside Ashokan Reservoir.

Those seeking to use City lands for events such as these can inquire by emailing [Recreation@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:Recreation@dep.nyc.gov).

## Managing the Deer Population

In 2014, DEP expanded its deer management program to include 12,000 acres around Ashokan, Cannonsville and Neversink reservoirs. By expanding access for hunters, DEP sought to promote forest regeneration and protect water quality by controlling the size of the deer population on lands immediately adjacent to the reservoirs.

Since 2012, DEP has received Deer Management Assistance Permits (DMAPs) from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for Ashokan Reservoir. DMAPs can only be used on specific DEP lands. The permits allow licensed hunters to harvest an antlerless deer. Reducing deer populations in these areas can support forest regeneration, which is stifled when large herds of deer browse on immature trees and seedlings. Trees in the watershed

are especially important because they act as a natural filter for the drinking water that collects in New York City's reservoirs and supports half the population of New York State.

With active forest management projects happening near other reservoirs, the DMAP program was expanded in 2014 to include Cannonsville and Neversink reservoirs.

DEP issued 280 DMAPs through a lottery. Every tag available was issued to a hunter in 2014.

Also new in 2014, DEP piloted an "Earn a Buck" program at Ashokan Reservoir. Hunters who fulfilled their DMAP and certified their harvest to DEP then earned a chance to harvest a buck using their regular state tag on city lands open to antlerless deer hunting only. Participation in the DMAP program was strong. Results



included 15 antlerless deer harvested on Ashokan lands, 36 harvested on Neversink lands, and 12 harvested near Cannonsville.

Hunters were asked to send DEP a post-season survey with comments and suggestions for improvement.

Hunter input will help guide DEP's planning for future programs.

## Keeping Your Boats Reservoir-worthy

Did you know there are over 12,000 fishing boats stored alongside New York City's upstate reservoirs, and that more than half of these are at the city's reservoirs in Putnam and Westchester counties? All these boats are steam cleaned before being used on the reservoirs, and they are issued a two-year boat tag that expires on Sept. 30 of a given year.

With that many boats out there, DEP makes a considerable effort to remind boat owners to renew their boat tags. DEP sends renewal letters between February and June to remind boaters to affix their new tag to their boats. If we don't hear back from you, we make courtesy phone calls in September.



*Boats at Lake Gilead.*

Our success in reaching you depends on the accuracy of mailing and telephone information you have on file with our office! So be sure to call our Access Permit Office at 1-800-575-5263, or email [Recreation@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:Recreation@dep.nyc.gov) to update your information!

From October through December, DEP will begin removing non-compliant boats and call their owners. Owners can then reclaim their boats for a \$120 removal fee, and a storage fee of \$1 per day.

## Look Out for Pesky, Invasive Vines

Invasive, herbaceous (non-woody) vines are among the most audacious competitors of the plant kingdom, particularly in regenerating forests. A young tree is no match for the wily mile-a-minute vine, guileful swallow-worts, or kudzu, which is known as “the vine that ate the south.” These invasive vines can pop up in new locations, spread by seeds or root fragments, and create a crushing wave of plant material.

### Mile-a-Minute Vine, *Persicaria perfoliata*



#### How do I identify it?

Mile-a-minute has symmetrical, triangular leaves and small round leaves that surround the stem, bright blue berries, and downward pointing barbs.

#### Where is it now?

Over the past 10 years it has quickly become widespread in the Hudson Valley. In 2013 it was confirmed for the first time in Sullivan County and in 2014 it was found in Ulster County.

### Pale and Black Swallow-wort, *Cynanchum louiseae* and *nigrum*



#### How do I identify it?

Both swallow-worts have twinning, smooth stems, oval shaped leaves that grow in pairs along the stem, and long bean-shaped seed pods. Pale swallow-wort has dime-sized, pale pink flowers (pictured above) while black swallow-wort has deep purple flowers.

#### Where is it now?

Swallow-wort is becoming common in Ulster County, especially along Route 28 into Delaware County. It is becoming widespread in the Hudson Valley.

### Kudzu, *Pueraria lobata*



How do I identify it? Kudzu can be identified by its leaves which include three hairy, large (up to 4 inches), lobed leaflets. It has showy purple flowers that hang in clusters.

#### Where is it now?

Populations have been identified from Westchester to Long Island, and it was first confirmed in Ulster County in 2011.

#### What can I do?

Invasive species can increase the cost of things you buy and limit the diversity of our natural environment. These simple steps can make a huge difference in controlling their spread:

- 1) Be Plantwise: purchase native plants for your yard.
- 2) Watch out for hitchhikers: clean seeds off of boots before hiking in a new area.
- 3) Be on the lookout: report any sightings of these vines on watershed lands by emailing [invasivespecies@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:invasivespecies@dep.nyc.gov) or by calling 1-800-575-LAND.



A kudzu infestation in the South (above) has completely blanketed the forest. This kind of infestation can kill trees by covering them and preventing sun from reaching them.

# Volunteers Make the Difference at Reservoir Cleanup Day

A football helmet, part of a child's play castle, and a New York Mets commemorative beer can were among the most interesting debris removed from the shorelines of reservoirs last year during DEP's first-annual Reservoir Cleanup Day.

More than 170 volunteers from across the watershed collected an estimated 2,500 pounds of trash and recyclables during the event on Oct. 5, 2014. The effort to remove debris from 14 miles of reservoir shorelines and recreation areas was led by school groups, business leaders, local nonprofits, avid fishermen and watershed citizens who served as co-captains at each site. The cleanup was organized by DEP and co-sponsored by the Catskill Watershed Corporation, which provided gloves and bags for the volunteers.

The event included cleanups at six water supply reservoirs, including Cannonsville, Kensico, Lake Gleneida, Neversink, Pepacton and Rondout. Volunteers at these locations collected 114 bags of debris and recyclables with a combined weight of more than a ton. In total, the volunteers collected more than 6,000 items.

Reservoir Cleanup Day was among hundreds of similar events that happened as part of International Beach Cleanup Day. The efforts in New York, sponsored by the American Littoral Society, included 7,000 volunteers who worked at dozens of beaches, lakes and other water bodies across the state, collecting more than 80 tons of debris.



*A father-son duo picks up debris at Neversink Reservoir.*



*Avid fishermen helped clean up at Kensico Reservoir.*

## Reservoir Cleanup Day by the numbers...

- 6 – reservoirs cleaned
- 14 – miles of shoreline cleaned
- 32 – tires collected
- 114 – bags of debris collected
- 162 – pieces of fishing line collected
- 171 – volunteers who helped
- 235 – grocery bags collected
- 315 – food wrappers collected
- 387 – takeout food containers collected
- 906 – small pieces of glass, plastic and foam collected

At the reservoir sites, each piece of debris collected was tracked using a data card that included a checklist of items and categories. (See the results in the chart to the left.) In many cases, the debris had blown onto the reservoir property from nearby roadsides, or had washed up along the shores after recent storms. Some was also left behind at access areas used by the public for fishing and boating.

What does this tell us? Roadside trash was a big culprit. Our fishermen, hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts can play a huge role in keeping our reservoir shorelines and forest lands clean. Remember not to leave coffee cups, food wrappers and other items behind. And if you see debris left by others, take a moment and pick it up. These small but important efforts can go a long way toward protecting wildlife, aquatic life and the natural beauty of the Catskills and Hudson Valley.

## Contact Us

To get a free DEP Access Permit online, visit [www.nyc.gov/dep/accesspermit](http://www.nyc.gov/dep/accesspermit).

For immediate help with access permits, maps of recreation areas, recreation rules, up-to-date recreation area lists and other information about outdoor recreation on city lands and waters, visit DEP website at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep) and click on the “Watershed Recreation” link on the home page.

### For permit inquiries:

Email: [recreation@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:recreation@dep.nyc.gov)

Call: 1-800-575-LAND

### DEP Access Permits

71 Smith Avenue

Kingston, NY 12401

For information about specific recreation areas, reservoirs, boat storage and programs such as interpretive hikes, call the DEP regional office for that area:

#### Ashokan (Ashokan Reservoir)

(845) 657-2663

#### Carmel (East-of-Hudson Lands)

(845) 808-1750

#### Downsville (Pepacton and Cannonsville Reservoirs)

(607) 363-7009

#### Gilboa (Schoharie Reservoir)

(607) 588-6231

#### Grahamsville (Neversink and Rondout Reservoirs)

(845) 334-7152

#### Mahopac (East-of-Hudson Reservoirs)

(914) 232-1309

To report dangerous or suspicious activity, water quality threats, or fish kills on city-owned reservoirs and lands call the DEP Police at 888-H2O-SHED (426-7433).

## No Matter the Activity, Safety First

More than 112,000 people have a valid DEP Access Permit, and new permits are issued every day. Unfortunately, some permits are also suspended or revoked for violating environmental rules, laws and regulations. The city’s recreational rules require all users of City land and water to comply with the New York State Environmental Conservation law and other statutes, rules or ordinances.



In 2014, some mishaps on city property reminded us of the need to stay safe and follow these rules carefully.

A tragic drowning occurred on the Croton Falls Reservoir in 2014 that resulted in one man’s death despite the heroic efforts of responders. Two fishermen in the boat were not

wearing personal flotation devices but did have them in the boat when it overturned. The second fisherman was taken to a local hospital for care and survived.

A hunting related shooting incident on a City recreational property in Dutchess County left one man injured after he was mistaken for a deer and shot by another hunter during rifle season. The hunter that fired his gun at the victim had his DEP Access Permit revoked for life.

There were also incidents of illegal hunting over bait, hunting on lands not open for hunting, cutting trees for shooting lanes, and ATV trespass. DEP Access Permits were suspended for fishing in areas closed to the public, usually around dams, intakes or other water supply structures.

Each year in the heat of summer a few decide to take a quick dip in the reservoir, but things heat up when their Access Permits are confiscated by DEP Police. Remember that NYC reservoirs are not open for bathing or swimming of any kind.

DEP currently has more than a dozen suspended access permits. This may seem like a short list, but DEP would like to prevent it from growing, by advocating safety and compliance with all the rules and regulations that apply. Our recreation rules are available on the DEP website, and we can also be reached by email or telephone at the contact information on this page.

