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Cannonsville Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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CONTACT:

Farrell Sklerov / Michael Saucier (718) 595-6600

MORE INFORMATION

NYC Department of
Environmental Protection
Communications &
Intergovernmental Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard
19th Floor
Flushing, NY 11373

(718) 595 - 6600

DEP Completes Ashland Wastewater Treatment Plant

Project Will Help Protect Water Quality in Catskill Watershed

Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced the completion of a new wastewater treatment plant and sewer and stormwater system for the hamlet of Ashland in Greene County that will help protect water quality in the Catskill watershed. The newly constructed wastewater treatment plant will treat septic tank effluent after it is conveyed by small-diameter pipes to the plant. Construction of the 14,642-square-foot wastewater treatment plant, eight new pumping stations and approximately 2.4 miles of sewer mains will serve 90 residential and commercial properties in Ashland. The plant can treat up to 26,000 gallons of wastewater a day. DEP funded the \$7.7 million project, which was managed by the Catskill Watershed Corporation—a regional not-for-profit established in 1997 to administer water quality protection and economic development programs in the Catskill and Delaware watersheds. DEP will also fund the majority of the operating costs of the new plant, though customers in the sewer district are responsible for a percentage of the costs. Residents and businesses are expected to begin hooking up to the new sewer system this summer.

“Through our partnership with the Catskill Watershed Corporation, we have funded the extension of sewers, rehabilitated more than 3,500 septic systems and funded the construction of wastewater treatment plants, all which helps prevent contaminants from reaching our source waters,” said Commissioner Strickland. “Ashland’s new wastewater treatment plant, pumping station and sewer system not only benefit the nine million New Yorkers who depend on us to provide clean water every day but also local residents by protecting both surface and groundwater from contamination. Programs like this, along with our efforts to open city-owned upstate areas for recreational purposes, show that our work protecting our source waters can also improve the quality of life for local neighborhoods.”

“The construction of the treatment plant and the installation of the collection system is good for water quality, and it has already benefitted the area economically,” said Alan Rosa,

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Executive Director of the Catskill Watershed Corporation.

"When all 90 residences and businesses are hooked up, and the new and separate federally-funded water system is in place, Ashland will be able to point to reliable infrastructure that will make it attractive to entrepreneurs and home buyers."

"The project in Ashland has been an effective partnership between the Town, CWC and the City of New York," said Town of Ashland Supervisor Richard Tompkins. "The collection and treatment of wastewater will help maintain Ashland's community character and result in improved water quality in the watershed."

The new wastewater treatment plant—located on Route 23, just west of the hamlet of Ashland—will help protect water quality in the Catskill watershed, especially the Batavia Kill. The Catskill system provides, on average, 40% of the approximately one billion gallons of drinking water that are delivered to the city each day. The Catskill system consists of two reservoirs—Schoharie and Ashokan—located west of the Hudson River in Ulster, Schoharie, Delaware and Greene Counties. Water leaves the Schoharie Reservoir via the 18-mile Shandaken Tunnel, which empties into the Esopus Creek and then travels 22 miles through the Esopus to the Ashokan Reservoir before entering the 92-mile-long Catskill Aqueduct, delivering the water to the Hillview Reservoir in Westchester County before it enters City Tunnels Number 1, 2 and 3.

The project is part of DEP's watershed protection program to ensure that the Catskill/Delaware system remains unfiltered. Failing septic systems are potential sources of pathogens that can enter the city's water supply.

Rehabilitation and repair of failing septic systems, or the replacement of septic systems with modern wastewater treatment plants, reduces or eliminates the levels of contaminants and pathogens discharged in the watershed.

Watershed protection is considered the best way of maintaining drinking water quality over the long term. New York City's program, one of the most comprehensive in the world, has been so successful at protecting the integrity of its water supply that the Environmental Protection Agency awarded the City a 10-year Filtration Avoidance Determination in 2007. Since 1997, the City has invested more than \$1.5 billion in watershed protection programs, including nearly \$55 million to help homeowners repair or replace failing septic systems, and nearly \$125 million to construct new wastewater infrastructure in communities with concentrated areas of substandard septic systems.

The success of these programs is a main reason why New York City remains one of only five large cities in the country that is not required to filter the majority of its drinking water.

DEP manages the 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, and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties. Approximately 1,000 DEP employees live and work in the watershed communities. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

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