

NYC Watershed Recreation

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



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**Environmental
Protection**

Spring 2017

Cover photo: Two paddlers set out in their canoe on Pepacton Reservoir.
Photo by DEP Photographer Kristen Artz

Watershed Recreation

2017 EVENTS



Two hikers enjoy the view from atop Bramley Mountain in Delaware County. In 2016, DEP worked with the Catskill Mountain Club to open a new trail to the peak of the mountain.

Explore the watershed

The reservoirs and lands that comprise New York City's water supply now include more than 133,000 acres that are open to the public for fishing, hiking, hunting and other types of outdoor recreation. DEP hosts a series of events each year to help watershed residents and visitors explore many of these scenic destinations. This year brings new events to go fishing with your family, learn hiking and survival tactics on a scenic trail in the heart of the Catskills, and other opportunities to explore the great outdoors. We hope you will join us!

The calendar on this page is only a small sample of the public events that DEP is planning for 2017. Visit our website at www.nyc.gov/DEP or follow us at [Facebook.com/NYCWatershed](https://www.facebook.com/NYCWatershed) for exact times, locations and additional events that we will add to the schedule throughout the year.



April 29 - Family Fishing Day at Kensico Reservoir:

This is a great family event only 15 miles north of NYC. Experts will be at the reservoir to teach kids how to fish. Bait and fishing poles will be provided for those who don't have their own. This event is co-sponsored by the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

May 6 - Boater Safety Event at Pepacton Reservoir:

Officers from the DEP Police will teach boater safety in the heart of the Catskills. This course is great for anyone who uses a boat for fishing or recreation on the reservoirs.

May 13 - Boater Safety Event at New Croton Reservoir:

Officers from the DEP Police will teach boater safety for those who fish on reservoirs east of the Hudson River.

May 27 - Family Fishing Day at Pepacton Reservoir:

Experts will teach kids how to fish at this family event in the Catskills. Bait and tackle will be provided for those who don't have their own. This event is co-sponsored by DEC.

June 3 - Safety and Survival Hike in Delaware County:

Join DEP Police at the Shavertown Trail in Andes, NY to learn navigation, safety and survival techniques that can be helpful on long treks into the wilderness.

June 24 - Family Fishing Day at Rondout Reservoir:

Families will love this fishing event along the border of Ulster and Sullivan counties. Bait and tackle will be provided for those who don't have their own. This event is co-sponsored by DEC.

Recreation possibilities abound at Day Use Areas

By Lydia Lewis, DEP Community Resource Manager

Four areas open to runners, walkers and boaters show how DEP sometimes repurposes properties for recreational use.

After the attacks of 9/11, New York City closed several roads to heighten security at some of its water supply dams. Three of these former roadways are now open as Day Use Areas, offering recreational opportunities like hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and in-line skating without the need of a DEP Access Permit.

- Cross River Dam Day Use Area is a 2-acre recreation unit in the Town of Bedford, Westchester County. It features excellent views and dogs are welcome.
- Kensico Dam Day Use Area is located in the towns of Mount Pleasant and North Castle, Westchester County. This pet-friendly, 2-acre area overlooks the Kensico Reservoir and the adjoining county-owned Kensico Dam Plaza. Enjoy beautiful views, a spectacular structure and maybe see an eagle soar.
- Ashokan Day Use Area consists of 55 acres in the Town of Olive in Ulster County and features walkways and picnic areas. The 2.7-mile-long promenade along the Ashokan Reservoir's southern shore affords unrivaled views of the reservoir and the Catskill Mountains. While dogs are not allowed on the walkway along the reservoir, they are welcome in the fountain area below the reservoir.



A couple strolls along the promenade at Ashokan Reservoir, which includes a beautiful view of the Catskill High Peaks.

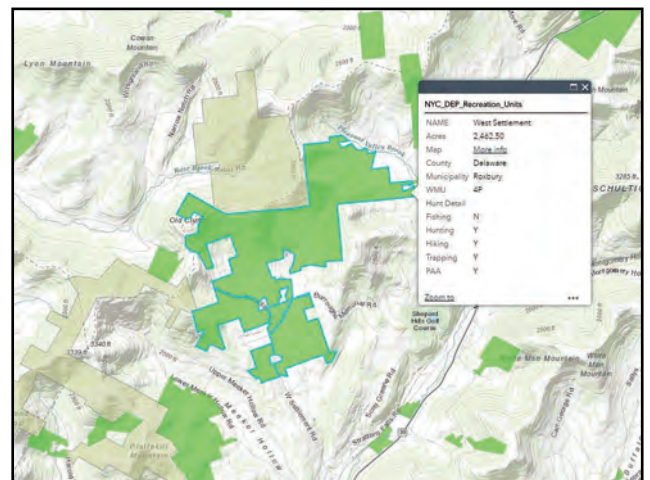
- In the Town of Prattsville, Greene County, flooding was the catalyst for the Devasego Park Day Use Area. The 53-acre park was once a staging area where DEP crews removed storm debris left behind by tropical storms Irene and Lee in 2011. But less than a year after the storms destroyed nearby homes and businesses, DEP officially opened the park where you can enjoy walking, fishing and picnicking. Bring your portable grill and your dog or launch your motor-less boat into Schoharie Creek. (Get your boat steam cleaned first!)

These areas are open from dawn to dusk. In places where dogs are allowed, please keep them leashed and clean up after them. Help us keep these areas beautiful by carrying out your garbage. More information on these properties can be found at www.nyc.gov/dep/recreation.

RecMapper utility makes it easier to explore watershed

DEP has released an interactive mapping tool that helps outdoor enthusiasts find more than 400 locations open for recreation on water supply lands and reservoirs. The RecMapper utility allows users to zoom in to any part of the watershed to find recreation areas easily. Detailed property maps can be printed and users can sort areas by county, parcel size and recreational activities. Aerial imagery is available for users to see conditions on the ground before they head out. The mapper also includes links to angler maps, hiking trails, boat launch sites and more. The Mapper can also provide driving directions to get you there!

See the RecMapper in action at www.nyc.gov/dep/recmap.



Volunteers help to leave no trace at NYC Reservoir Cleanup

By Ira Stern, Chief of DEP Natural Resources Division

It's happened to all of us: You're driving down the road and - WHOOSH! - a napkin or plastic bag flies out the window. Despite your commitment to the environment, you have just littered and the item joins the copious amount of trash on our landscape.

Whether it is accidental litter, intentional dumping, roadside trash or detritus left behind by hikers or anglers, the 2016 NYC Reservoir Cleanup dealt with it all. On Oct. 2, 264 volunteers joined forces with DEP staff to conduct a clean sweep of nine reservoirs. The total haul averaged one large trash bag per person; great work for three hours!

This clean-up event is part of the International Coastal Cleanup sponsored by the Ocean Conservancy, Inc. and organized in New York State by the American Littoral Society. Part of the focus is to collect data about the types of trash at each cleanup to develop strategies to combat this worldwide problem. As they collected trash, reservoir volunteers also recorded their findings just like the 800,000 other Americans who participated in cleanups.

Volunteers at the NYC Reservoir Cleanup gathered 13,055 pieces of trash and recyclables, including:

- 40** - Balloons picked up.
- 630** - Grocery and other plastic bags collected.
- 1,022** - Cigarette butts removed.
- 3,001** - Food wrappers collected.
- 3,647** - Bottles and cans collected.

Since 2016 did not bring large storms, volunteers found less debris that had been washed in by streams. Instead, they found a lot on shorelines near major roads. Also, sadly, so many cigarette butts go



Volunteers at NYC Reservoir Cleanup often worked in tandem, one picking up trash while the other recorded the items collected.

flying from cars, especially in areas where people slow down to take in reservoir views.

What can we all do?

- Carry In/Carry Out!
- Use extreme care when opening items in windy conditions and in the car.
- Buy recyclable products that don't have excess packaging.
- Involve your children in cleanup events.
- Work with community organizations to organize your own roadside clean-ups.
- Pick up trash near waterways whenever you see it, especially plastics.

DEP to expand its Watershed Land Steward Program

In 2017, DEP hopes to expand its Watershed Land Steward Program by enlisting more volunteers.

The program was launched in 2016. Volunteers at Kensico and Pepacton reservoirs helped by picking up trash, making sure boats were stored properly and talking with their fellow anglers and boaters. The participants functioned as ambassadors for their respective reservoirs. DEP hopes to assign additional stewards to more reservoirs in 2017.

Stewards learned about the City's recreation rules and invasive species that could threaten the City's water supply. The stewards kept in touch with DEP

staff, reporting problems and sharing interesting stories from the watershed. Two common observations serve as good reminders for those who recreate on City property. Remember to store your boat with the hull up to prevent mosquito breeding, and please pick up your trash and take it with you!

If you would like to volunteer for the Watershed Land Steward Program, please contact DEP at 1-800-575-LAND (5263).

Conservation collaboration in the Catskills

Guest column by Jeff Senterman, Executive Director of the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development

A region as large and diverse as the Catskills can only thrive when organizations collaborate toward common goals. Since 1969, the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development has worked with many partners to preserve scenic lands that sustain our vibrant communities. We understand that people in the Catskills prosper within natural environments that attract visitors and outdoor enthusiasts to drive the economy.

I have been lucky enough to spend the last several years working in the Catskills, first at the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference (NYNJTC) and now at the Catskill Center. The importance of dialogue among stakeholders in the Catskills has been underscored at every turn. By listening and understanding each other, those who love the Catskills have found new opportunities to engage, new projects to pursue, and new ways to support the region we love.

Looking back, the 1997 Watershed Memorandum of Agreement between the City, New York State, watershed communities and environmental groups was a landmark moment that enshrined a shared sense of collaborative work across the watershed.

As then-Gov. George Pataki said, “This historic agreement is the product of hard work, determination and a deep commitment by all sides to protect the drinking water for millions of New Yorkers and the economic vitality of the watershed communities.”

The programs to protect drinking water and support communities have evolved over the past 20 years. While not perfect, this system has allowed stakeholders with different interests, backgrounds and goals to collaborate and make progress.

Recreation within the watershed and the Catskill Park has certainly benefitted. Opportunities on watershed and state lands have expanded and access to existing recreational assets has improved because of cooperation between the City and state. New hiking trails were built on City-owned lands through partnerships between DEP and nonprofit groups like the Catskill Mountain Club and the NYNJTC. Canoers and kayakers can now enjoy paddling on four of the region’s reservoirs thanks to a DEP program that has been collaborative from the start.

Another product of the cooperation among the region’s stakeholders was the 2016 opening of the Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center in Mount Tremper. New partnerships pushed the project ahead and today the center is a great example



of working together to ensure the Catskill Park and region has the visitor center it deserves.

The state built the interpretive center, which is managed by the Catskills Center. It’s financially supported by DEP, the Catskill Watershed Corporation and many invaluable donors and organizations. We have coordinated with local nonprofits who donate their staff and volunteers to ensure the Interpretive Center remains open seven days a week. Those partners include the Catskill 3500 Club, Catskill Mountainkeeper, Catskill Mountain Club and the NYNJTC.

Plus, a dedicated group of more than 30 volunteers makes sure there’s always a friendly, helpful face welcoming visitors to our region. Volunteers at the center educate visitors and residents about our unique natural areas, the work to protect them and our diverse communities. It has become a shining example of what partnerships can do for our region.

The fruitful partnerships don’t end there. The Catskill Park Advisory Committee has brought together many government and nonprofit agencies to pursue projects and funding that support the unique opportunities within the Catskill Park. Many have joined hands on the Catskill Center’s new Streamside Acquisition Program, which aims to preserve vegetated stream buffers that are critical for water quality, wildlife habitat and recreation.

I am excited for the future of the Catskills. We know that challenges abound, but so do the partnerships to tackle them with a smart, respectful and united approach. We are truly stronger together.

Angle Fly Unit is a recreation gem in Westchester County

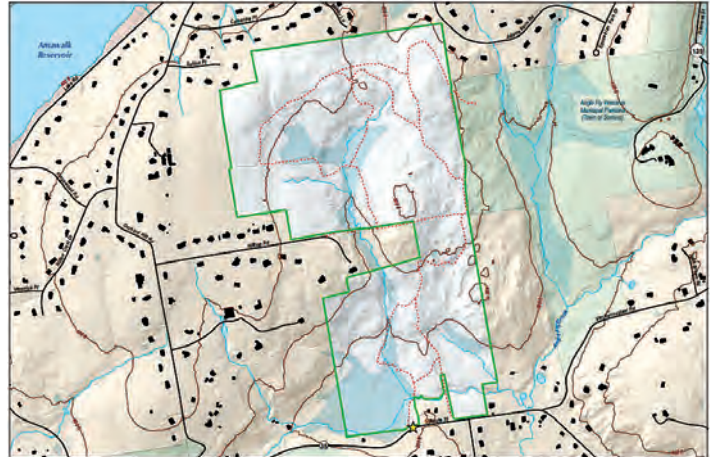
By Tom Davidock, DEP Recreation Supervisor

The Angle Fly Recreation Unit, the namesake of the last natural brook trout spawning stream in Westchester County, demonstrates how partnerships can create recreational opportunities for the public. In 2011, DEP entered into an agreement with the Town of Somers to connect 269 acres of water supply property with 654 acres at the adjacent Angle Fly Preserve.

Nestled between Muscoot and Amawalk Reservoirs and less than an hour's drive from the City, this area provides a host of recreational activities. Through a series of trail networks, visitors can explore more than 10 miles of combined hiking trails.

In addition, outdoor enthusiasts can hunt (bow and shotgun only), fish, cross-country ski, snowshoe, or simply enjoy nature and wildlife. The nearby reservoirs allow fishing from shore and boat for those with a DEP Access Permit.

The Angle Fly Recreation Unit is truly a gem of the Hudson Valley. When visiting, please stay on the trails to prevent erosion. Hikers do not need a permit but



This map of DEP property and the adjacent preserve shows a vast network of trails that are great for recreation.

hunters and anglers should have a DEP Access Permit as well as valid state licenses.

As with all DEP properties, we promote a carry-in, carry-out philosophy. Please take any trash with you and if you notice any lying around, consider picking it up and help us keep this area enjoyable for everyone.

Exploring the Catskills around Neversink Reservoir

By Tom Davidock, DEP Recreation Supervisor

More than 3,000 acres of forests, fields, streams and bogs surrounding Neversink Reservoir are open for hunting and fishing with a DEP Access Permit.

From the highlands rising more than 500 feet above the reservoir in the East Neversink Unit to remote stands of pine and hemlocks in the West Neversink Unit, the two parcels provide numerous opportunities for the hunter and angler.

The nearly 2,000-acre East unit can be found off a gravel road extending from Shields Road, just outside the town of Neversink. On the other side of the reservoir, the West Neversink property offers 1,200 acres for trekking or backcountry hunting. This unit can be found off of Aden Hill Road, a little more than five miles from state Route 17. An easy hike down a dirt road will bring you closer to the water and into the woods for some prime hunting.

Deer, bear, turkey and even the occasional snowshoe hare thrive in these woods. Small headwater streams lace through these forests on their way to feeding Neversink Reservoir, a premier fishing location from either boat or shore. Since 2014, DEP has

issued hundreds of antlerless deer tags to allow a hunter to harvest an additional antlerless deer as a part of the DEP Deer management Program at the Neversink.

The Neversink Recreation units are surely a destination for the outdoor enthusiast. We encourage you to come visit, tread lightly, and enjoy all this area has to offer.



This aerial image of Neversink Reservoir shows many of the big, wooded areas that offer great recreation in the Catskills.

City and State collaborating on plans to fight hydrilla

By Meredith Taylor, DEP Invasive Species Biologist

DEP and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) continue to collaborate on plans to combat the spread of an invasive plant that can choke out native species and physically alter water bodies.

What is it?

A long-stemmed plant known as hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*).

Where was it found?

The Croton River in Westchester County in 2013. Surveys in 2015 showed the infestation extended from the New Croton Reservoir downstream to where the Croton River empties into the Hudson River.

Why is it a concern for New York City's Croton Water Supply System and beyond?

Hydrilla can thrive in low light and low nutrient conditions not suitable for other plants and is one of the fastest growing and most aggressive aquatic plants in the world. Hydrilla can choke out huge areas up to 30 feet deep, preventing native species from growing and impeding boat traffic.

What is being done to stop its spread?

Mats have been installed at DEP boat launches on the reservoir to inhibit the plant's growth.

DEP and NYSDEC are currently working on a strategy to further address the infestation in the reservoir and in the river below the dam. We expect to take additional steps this summer.

What can you do?

If you encounter a plant bed on New Croton Reservoir, avoid boating through it since tiny hydrilla fragments that break off can create a new plant elsewhere. Make sure your fishing equipment is clean and plant-free before fishing somewhere else. If you spot hydrilla somewhere else, please report it to 1-800-575-LAND.



Dense mats of hydrilla, such as those shown in the left photo above, have been found in the Croton River and New Croton Reservoir. State and city experts are currently working on mitigation strategies. The spillway at the reservoir is seen in the photo above at right.

Contact Us

To get a free DEP Access Permit online, visit 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 the DEP website at www.nyc.gov/dep/recreation.

To find recreational access using DEP's new RecMapper tool, visit us on the web at www.nyc.gov/dep/recmap.

For permit inquiries:

Email: 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, 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).

Revisions coming for watershed recreation rules in 2017

By Paul Lenz, Deputy Chief of DEP Natural Resources Division

Some changes and revisions are coming to DEP Recreation Rules to make life better for the boaters, anglers, hikers and others who enjoy the scenic waters and lands of New York City's water supply.

The Recreation Rules were last updated in 2010. Many of the proposed changes are designed to make the rules easier to read and quicker to find. We are reviewing sections related to boating, ice fishing and inappropriate activities on City land.

Several changes will help DEP better manage more than 12,000 boats stored around the reservoirs. We're seeking to better organize the boats, reduce overcrowding, improve access to the water, and increase opportunities to access deep water.

Other proposed changes and improvements include:

- Reclassifying many recreation units in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess as public access areas that do not require a DEP Access Permit.
- Improving access for visitors with disabilities.
- Allowing anglers to use electric ice augers for ice fishing.
- Expanding the recreational boating season, which now runs from Memorial Day weekend through Columbus Day.

There are also several clarifications of improper uses for City land including horseback riding, target shooting, and the launching and landing of drones.

DEP will hold informational meetings in the spring to talk about these proposed changes in advance of public hearings and the comment period. We will be sure to announce those events as soon as possible and we welcome your input and comments!



DEP staff conducting boat inventory at the Pepacton Reservoir