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**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ANNOUNCES
RECREATIONAL BOATING SEASON BEGINS FRIDAY ON FOUR CITY
RESERVOIRS IN THE CATSKILLS**

2012 Recreational Boating Season Attracted Nearly 1,000 Boaters from 12 States

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced that the 2013 Catskill recreational boating program will begin Friday on four City reservoirs. Following a three year pilot program at Cannonsville Reservoir, last year, DEP significantly expanded the program, allowing kayaking, canoeing, and sailing on the Cannonsville, Pepacton, Neversink, and Schoharie reservoirs. The expanded recreational boating program resulted in a record number of visitors to City reservoirs, with nearly 1,000 DEP recreational boating permits issued last summer. This year, two new programs will further expand boating opportunities as part of DEP's effort to make the reservoirs more accessible and encourage tourism in the Catskills. April 1 marked the beginning of a pilot program that, for the first time, permits the use of electric trolling motors for fishing on Cannonsville Reservoir. DEP has also partnered with the Catskill Watershed Corporation to purchase 30 boat storage racks that will be installed at the four reservoirs to allow businesses that rent recreational boats to store them on shore, making it easier for residents and vacationers to rent kayaks and canoes.

“By partnering with local nonprofits, businesses, and residents to think of new ways to improve the already popular Catskill recreational boating program, we are confident that this year's season will be a huge success,” said Commissioner Strickland. “By providing ready access to rental boats, these programs will make it easier for residents and visitors to enjoy some of New York's most scenic waterways, and the expanded recreational boating program will provide another boost to the Catskill tourism economy.”

Last year saw a record number of boaters on New York City's Catskill reservoirs. Nearly 1,000 recreational boat tags were issued to visitors from 12 different states. About 45 percent of those tags were issued to people who live outside the watershed, and 10 percent went to people from outside New York State. A total of 983 tags were issued for recreational boating last year, including 697 kayaks, 241 canoes, 31 rowboats, two sculls, and 12 small sailboats. The program attracted 71 boaters from New York City, as well as vacationers hailing from Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, North Carolina, Georgia, Kansas, and Florida.

“Boating on the City-owned reservoirs is a unique experience that simply cannot be duplicated,” said James Thomson, Delaware County's tourism director. “The crystal clear

waters provide an unmatched view of fish and other wildlife in their natural habitat. This is an opportunity to be as close as possible to nature that is not available anywhere else.”

“The opening of New York City reservoirs for recreational boating offers an ultimate experience for visitors and residents in the Catskill Region,” said Roberta Byron-Lockwood, president of the Sullivan County Visitors Association. “This unique asset provides an unspoiled look at the natural beauty and adds yet another opportunity for water recreation. We applaud New York City DEP for its continued efforts to stimulate and enhance the quality of life for generations in the Catskills and New York State.”

Recreational boating season in the Catskills begins the Friday before Memorial Day and lasts until Columbus Day. Boaters must have a permit that is available free of charge on DEP’s website, www.nyc.gov/dep. Boats in the recreational program not stored at the reservoirs must be steam cleaned at a local vendor each time before launching on the reservoirs. A list of DEP-certified steam cleaning vendors is also available on DEP’s website. Steam cleaning helps protect against invasive plants, animals, and microorganisms that can harm water quality and fisheries. Throughout the course of the recreational boating program, DEP has continuously tested water quality to ensure that none of the recreational activities has an adverse effect on New York City’s drinking water supply.

Since 2003, DEP has significantly expanded the amount of City properties within the watersheds that are open for recreation. There are now 114,833 acres open for recreation, including 80,941 acres of land and 33,892 acres of reservoirs. Of that, 52,198 acres of land are in public access areas that are open to recreation without a DEP permit.

Expanding recreational opportunities in the watershed is one of the goals outlined in *Strategy 2011-2014*, a comprehensive strategic plan that outlines 100 distinct initiatives to help ensure DEP is the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation.

For more information about recreational opportunities on New York City lands and waters, download or view, DEP’s 2013 [Watershed Recreation Newsletter](#). A copy has also been posted to the department’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.3 million in New York City, and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam, and Westchester counties. This water comes from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and the system comprises 19 reservoirs, three controlled lakes, and numerous tunnels and aqueducts. DEP employs nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and others professionals in the upstate watershed. In addition to its \$68 million payroll and \$157 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$1.5 billion in watershed protection programs—including partnership organizations such as the Catskill Watershed Corporation and the Watershed Agricultural Council—that support sustainable farming practices, environmentally sensitive economic development, and local economic opportunity. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program with over \$14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.

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