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## Department of Environmental Protection Announces Start of 2015 Recreational Boating Season at Four Reservoirs in the Catskills

**Thousands of boaters from the watershed, New York City and beyond have paddled or sailed on reservoirs since the program began in 2012**

**Rental boats, incentive patch encourage more people to participate in unique outdoor experience**

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that the 2015 recreational boating program will begin Friday at sunrise on four water supply reservoirs in the Catskills. The popular outdoor program, now in its fourth year, has attracted thousands of boaters to paddle or sail on the Cannonsville, Pepacton, Neversink and Schoharie reservoirs. 2015 will also mark an expansion of the popular rental program to include rental boats at Cannonsville Reservoir for the first time. The rental program, administered by the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC), allows local businesses to store and rent recreational boats alongside the reservoirs. The convenience of rentals attracted more than 350 boaters last year, supported local businesses with thousands of dollars in revenue, and significantly improved access for visitors to the Catskills. DEP and CWC are also improving popular launch sites this year by providing storage racks for those avid boaters who keep their kayaks or canoes at the reservoirs throughout the season.

“I encourage all our neighbors in the watershed and in New York City to take advantage of this unique opportunity to connect with our water supply and

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experience the scenic beauty of the Catskill Mountains,” **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd** said. “Since DEP began the recreational boating program the City has continued to work with our partners at CWC to expand and improve access, and with the county tourism agencies to encourage more visitors to paddle or sail on the reservoirs. These efforts have resulted in more boaters each year.”

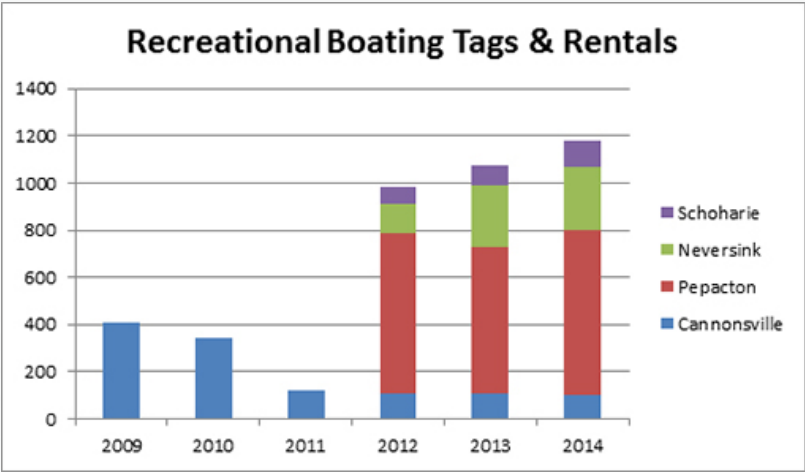
“We’re happy once again to support and encourage outdoor fun and exercise through the boating program, and we hope visitors will stay awhile to enjoy the other great activities the Catskills have to offer,” **CWC Executive Director Alan Rosa** said.

“The Sullivan County Catskills applauds the DEP for this tremendously successful partnership program,” **Sullivan County Visitors Association President Roberta Byron-Lockwood** said. “The recreational opportunities on these reservoirs and the lands that surround them provide us with an exceptional quality of life for our residents and unique outdoor recreational experiences for our visitors. The recreational boating program has given visitors another good reason to come to the Catskill Region.”

“As Memorial Day arrives, so does the opening of the Cannonsville and Pepacton Reservoirs to recreational boating,” **Delaware County Tourism Director Sonia Janiszewski** said. “It is the signaling of summer and the kick-off to Catskills getaways. Here in Delaware County, travelers experience these reservoirs while afloat, surrounded by towering mountains and stunning views. It is our hope that travelers will come for the water and stay for historical and cultural activities, a growing culinary and agricultural scene and the many other outdoors activities, from hiking and biking to birding and golfing, here in the Catskills.”

The 1,182 boating trips in 2014 marked another record year for boating on the four reservoirs. It was a 108-visit increase from the previous year. DEP issued 827 temporary or seasonal tags to boaters, including 535 kayaks, 236 canoes, 43 rowboats, and 13 sailboats. Including boat rentals, Pepacton Reservoir attracted 701 boating visits, the most of any reservoir, followed by 266 at Neversink, 116 at Schoharie, and 99 at Cannonsville. More than 59 percent of the recreational boating tags issued by DEP went to residents of the five watershed counties, including Delaware, Greene, Schoharie, Sullivan, and Ulster. About 15 percent of the tags were issued to residents of New York City or Long Island. Visitors from nine states also received tags, including Arizona, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin.

In 2014, rental boats were available from 10 launch sites alongside the four reservoirs and the businesses that participated rented 355 boats. The rental program is administered with significant help from the CWC, which funded the acquisition of 30 storage racks for the rental boats. CWC also administers the process to vet and approve businesses that applied to participate in the rental program.



**Above: After a three-year pilot at Cannonsville Reservoir, recreational boating has continued to grow.**

- DEP and CWC provided the following enhancements to the program for 2015:
- A rental vendor will be offering rental boats at Cannonsville Reservoir for the first time since the program began. Eight businesses total are now renting boats from alongside the four reservoirs.
  - DEP will install boat racks for public use at a number of the most popular launch sites. These racks will be for members of the public who store their personal boats alongside the reservoirs, and the racks will be clearly labeled to distinguish them from those used for the rental boats.
  - Before the season opened, DEP visited each steam cleaning business to provide on-site training that included checking the steam-cleaning equipment, demonstrating how to properly steam clean the boats, and updating each vendor with the latest rules, outreach materials and forms.

In 2015, CWC will continue to offer a “Catskill Reservoir Paddler Patch” to those who boat on at least one of the reservoirs during the season. The patch was designed by Nicole Pajor Moore and produced by Stucki Embroidery of Boiceville. The patches will help spread the word about recreational boating and encourage more people to participate. To receive the patch, paddle or sail any of the four reservoirs at any time this season, and provide proof of your outing. Proof can be in the form of a date-stamped photo from your boat looking back at the launch site; a photo of your DEP access permit; or a photo of your boat rental/steam-cleaning receipt. Email your proof, along with an address where the badge should be mailed, to Diane Galusha of the Catskill Watershed Corporation at [galusha@cwconline.org](mailto:galusha@cwconline.org). The promotion offers one patch per paddler, per season.

Recreational boating season in the Catskills begins the Friday before Memorial Day and lasts until Columbus Day, from dawn till dusk. Boaters must have a DEP access permit that is available free of charge on [DEP's website](#). All boats used on the reservoirs must also be steam cleaned by one of the 13 DEP-certified steam cleaning vendors conveniently located across the watershed. A list of those vendors is available on the DEP website. Steam cleaning helps protect against invasive plants, animals, and microorganisms that can harm water quality and fisheries. If a recreational boat is taken off reservoir property, it must be steam cleaned again before it can reenter the reservoir. 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 watershed that are open for recreation. There are now more than 126,000 acres of land and water open for fishing, hiking and other low-impact recreation. Of that, more than 63,000 acres of land are in public access areas that are open to recreation without the need for a DEP access permit. More information about recreation in the watersheds can be found by clicking the “Watershed Recreation” link on the DEP homepage.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to more than 9 million New Yorkers. This includes more than 70 upstate communities and institutions in Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties who consume an average of 110 million total gallons of drinking water daily from New York City's water supply system. 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 has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and other 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 \$1.7 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 [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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