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Department of Environmental Protection Celebrates American Wetlands Month by Hosting Educational Walk in the Watershed



Walk to include a tour of a wetland in Westchester County with DEP wetland scientist

Photos of watershed wetlands are available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that it will host a wetlands educational walk in Westchester County on May 15 to celebrate American Wetlands Month. The walk will take place at a 4-acre created wetland in the Town of North Castle at 10:30 a.m.

DEP completed construction of the wetland in 2010 to meet the requirements of a permit issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the construction of the Catskill/Delaware Ultraviolet Light Disinfection Facility in Mount Pleasant. DEP created shallow pond and emergent marsh habitats surrounded by shrub and tree plantings. More than 100 plant species have been observed on site along with a diverse array of animals such as muskrats, ducks, songbirds, turtles and numerous amphibians.

The walk through the city-owned wetland will include wet and dry conditions. Participants are encouraged to bring waterproof boots. Parking is available in the parking lot of the former Armonk Bowling Alley on Old Route 22, across from the Beehive Restaurant. The walk will be led by DEP wetland scientist Frank Parisio, who will explain the importance of the wetland to the surrounding area, and provide hands-on opportunities to examine some of the animals and plants that live in the wetland.

In 1991 the U.S Environmental Protection Agency designated May as American Wetlands Month to celebrate their vital importance to the nation's ecological, economic and social health. Wetlands, which are transitional lands between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, provide a wide variety of beneficial functions. They attenuate flooding, help maintain stream flow, improve water quality, absorb

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nutrients and carbon, and provide plant and wildlife habitat. Nearly half of the nation's threatened and endangered species rely on wetlands to survive.

Approximately 35,000 acres of wetlands are located within the watersheds that surround New York City's reservoirs. This includes 23,000 acres of wetlands in the portion of the watershed located east of the Hudson River, and 12,000 acres in the west-of-Hudson portion of the watershed. Nearly 5,000 acres of these wetlands are protected on City-owned lands in the watershed. These wetlands protected by DEP comprise 10 percent of wetlands in the east-of-Hudson portion of the watershed, and 22 percent of wetlands in the west-of-Hudson watershed. Approximately 57 percent of City-owned wetlands were purchased by the City since 1997, as part of its watershed protection programs. DEP actively monitors over 120 acres of wetlands on water supply lands to better understand their characteristics and functions.

Wetlands come in many varieties, including forested swamps, vernal pools, wet meadows, marshes, bogs, and fens. Forested wetlands are the most common type in the City's east-of-Hudson watershed, comprising 70 percent of the wetland acreage, with red maple swamps being most common. Red maple swamps often include yellow birch, green ash, and hemlocks along with an understory of shrubs and herbaceous plants such as tussock sedge and skunk cabbage. Emergent wetlands are the most common wetland type found in the west-of-Hudson watershed, comprising 31 percent of the wetland acreage, followed by forested wetlands. Emergent wetlands include types such as cattail marshes and wet meadows which are typically drier than marshes and comprised of sedges, grasses, and wildflowers. Less common, but present, are bogs and fens that typically have unique plant species due to the chemistry of their water sources.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to roughly 9.5 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 \$70 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 nearly \$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, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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