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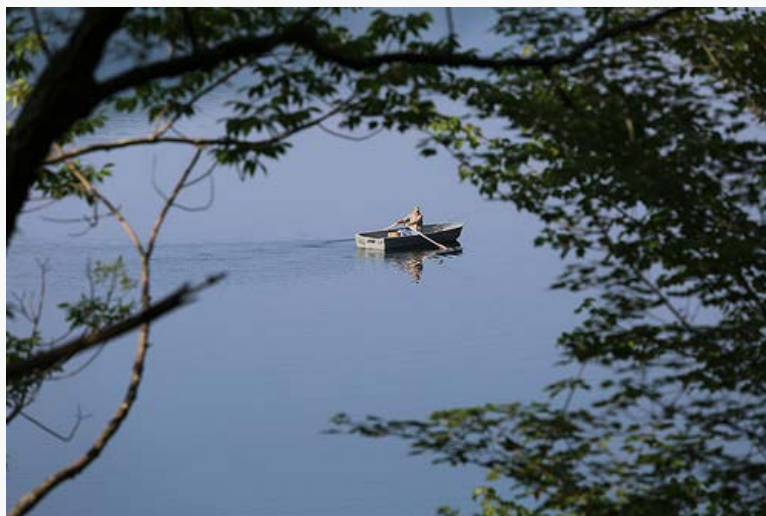
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## NYC DEP Announces Record Year for Kayak and Canoe Rentals as Recreational Boating Grows



### Businesses in Catskills rented 6 percent more boats for 2017 recreational season

### DEP to make changes for 2018, including longer season and restrictions for some vessels

### High resolution photos of recreational boating can be found on DEP's Flickr Page

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that a total of 1,646 boats were used in 2017 through its recreational boating program in the Catskills, including 968 canoes and kayaks that were rented from local businesses—the most of any year since rentals began in 2014. Rental boats made up the majority of boats used on the four reservoirs for the second consecutive year, underscoring the program's support of local tourism and outdoor recreation businesses.

Overall participation in the recreational boating program remained steady in 2017. While fewer participants used their personally owned boats, more chose to rent boats from six businesses in the Catskills that store pre-cleaned canoes and kayaks alongside the reservoirs. Local businesses rented 6 percent more boats than in 2016, when they rented a total of 912. The rental program, administered in partnership with the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC), began in 2013 to provide easier boating access for visitors to the Catskills and for local residents who don't own a boat. It has also helped support local businesses by providing a new source of revenue. The recreational boating program at Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie reservoirs complements the traditional use of metal rowboats for fishing, which has been permitted for decades on all New York City reservoirs.

"The recreational boating program is a great way for watershed residents and visitors to enjoy the scenic beauty of the Catskills," **DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza** said.

**More Information**

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“We are particularly happy that more people are supporting local businesses by renting canoes and kayaks that are stored at the reservoirs. The rental program supports the local economy, protects water quality, and provides easy access for those who do not own a boat.”

“We are more than happy to continue supporting this program which combines fitness, family time and enjoyment of the outdoors,” commented Alan Rosa, **Executive Director of the Catskill Watershed Corporation**.

“Thousands of people visit Delaware County each year to enjoy the great outdoors, and paddling on the reservoirs is among our most unique attractions,” said **Ray Pucci, president of the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce**. “We are pleased that businesses in our county are offering more rental boats to more families each year, improving access to the reservoirs and making their trips more simple and fun.”

Data from the past four years of recreational boating can be found below:

Reservoir	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Tags	Rentals	Tags	Rentals	Tags	Rentals	Tags	Rentals
Cannonsville	99	0	84	0	71	0	87	0
Pepacton	555	136	538	302	510	346	461	192
Neversink	107	159	99	260	113	437	77	575
Schoharie	65	51	59	121	62	129	53	201
	826	346	780	683	756	912	678	968
	1,172		1,463		1,668		1,646	

During this recreational boating season DEP issued 678 tags to those who own a boat, including 481 kayaks, 167 canoes, 27 rowboats, and three sailboats. Pepacton and Neversink reservoirs were the most popular, attracting 653 and 652 visits respectively. They were followed by 254 visits at Schoharie Reservoir and 87 at Cannonsville. Nearly 41 percent of tags issued to boat owners went to residents of the five watershed counties, including Delaware, Greene, Schoharie, Sullivan, and Ulster. About 23 percent of the tags were issued to residents of New York City or Long Island. Visitors from nine states also received tags, including California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

For the fourth year, rental boats were available from 10 launch sites alongside the four reservoirs. Local businesses this year again reported that more visitors were adding a boat rental on the reservoirs as part of their stay at local campsites, lodges or other overnight facilities, which had included boating on the reservoirs as part of their marketing. 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.

2017 marked the sixth year of the recreational boating program, which followed a three-year pilot that began in 2009 at Cannonsville Reservoir. Prior to 2009, DEP only issued tags for metal rowboats that were used and stored at the reservoirs for the purpose of fishing. More than 12,000 tags are currently issued to anglers who have rowboats at the reservoirs. Regular water-quality monitoring at each of these reservoirs has shown no impact from recreational boating. DEP’s invasive species experts have surveyed every boat launch site and found no sign of aquatic plants or animals that can harm drinking water quality. Every boat that is used on the reservoirs is required to be inspected and steam cleaned to avoid the spread of invasive species.

The City will make one change to its boating programs in 2018 to further protect the reservoirs from invasive plants, animals and microorganisms. DEP will suspend the pilot program that permitted the use of electric trolling motors for fishing at Cannonsville Reservoir. DEP determined that the pilot program represented a greater risk for the introduction of invasive species into the water supply than other recreational activities on the reservoirs. Since the pilot program began in 2013, DEP found several instances in

which trolling motors were used on the reservoir, removed from City property, and then brought back to the reservoir without being steam cleaned. This was particularly troublesome because other nearby waters are known to have invasive species that affect water quality and could interfere with water supply operations. Experts also found that plant matter can get trapped within parts of the propeller assembly, making the fragments hard to see, remove or clean.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of high-quality water each day to more than 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 watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$166 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 a planned \$20.7 billion in investments planned for 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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