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Department of Environmental Protection Plans Test of Upgraded Release Works at New Croton Dam

Valve testing will happen at the dam from May 15-18

DEP recently completed \$13.4 million project to upgrade century-old release works

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that it will test the upgraded release works at New Croton Dam during four days from May 15–18. While the new release works are tested, the flow of water within the Croton River will increase and fluctuate throughout the day. To ensure public safety, DEP has shared information about the test with local elected officials, police and emergency responders, local journalists, angling and boating groups, and members of the public through social media and other outlets. DEP will also post signs at parks, beaches and other points of public access along the Croton River before the valve testing begins.

The test of release valves and gates will mark the final phase of a \$13.4 million project to upgrade the release works at New Croton Dam. The project, which began in 2013, included the replacement of hand-operated gates and valves that were installed at the dam when it was constructed in the late 1890s and early 1900s. The dam was completed in 1905.

The new release works include three steel gates that can be lifted and lowered by new operators to release water into the river below the dam. Each of the gates is 6 feet tall. The flow of water through those gates is further controlled by nine new valves—ranging in size from 12 inches to 48 inches—that were installed within the dam. The new release works and their operators are situated in a chamber that now has electrical lighting for the first time. Prior to the upgrade the chambers had no light or very little natural light that filtered into the stone structure through tiny stained-glass windows. The original steel-riveted doors on the gatehouses were also removed and rehabilitated.

During the construction project, DEP maintained public access to the walkway that runs atop the dam. The walkway and Westchester County’s Croton Gorge Park below the dam attract thousands of local residents and visitors each year. DEP installed fencing, used flag men, set a 5 mph speed limit for construction vehicles, and took other steps to ensure public safety on the walkway while construction was ongoing.

More information about DEP’s testing of the release works—including a notice once the work is completed—will be posted to the our watershed Facebook page at facebook.com/nycwatershed.

The 297-foot-tall New Croton Dam (also known as Cornell Dam) was the tallest dam in the world when it was completed in 1905. It is 2,188 feet long. The dam impounds water from the Croton River to form New Croton Reservoir, which stores 19 billion gallons of water at full capacity. The 9-mile-long New Croton Reservoir is the final collection reservoir in New York City’s Croton System, which

More Information

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supplies about 10 percent of the City’s water on a typical day. Water from the reservoir travels about 24 miles through the New Croton Aqueduct to Jerome Park Reservoir in the Bronx. The water is then treated and filtered at the Croton Water Filtration Plant before it enters the City’s distribution system.

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 \$20.7 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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