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Whippoorwill Club Reaches Agreement with NYC Department of Environmental Protection to Place Conservation Easement on More than 100 Acres

Easement Will Protect Sensitive Land around Kensico Reservoir in Westchester County

ARMONK, N.Y. – A decade-long discussion between The Whippoorwill Club and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has culminated in a contract to place a permanent conservation easement on more than 100 acres of the Club's property that drains into the watershed surrounding the City-owned Kensico Reservoir. The easement precludes any future development but permits the Club to continue golf operations, under specific limitations, on the land within the easement. The agreement will also further protect water quality at Kensico Reservoir, which is crucial because the reservoir is the one of the final stops for much of the City's drinking water before it is delivered to customers in the five boroughs.

The transaction is expected to close early next year. Over the coming months environmental testing will be conducted and a baseline report that describes the condition of the property today will be compiled. The protected land will remain on the tax rolls, with the City of New York paying a pro-rated share of the annual tax levy.

The funds from the easement will enable the Club to undertake a series of environmentally sustaining improvements to its facilities, including upgrading the golf course drainage and irrigation systems, constructing a state-of-the-art turf management facility, improving its parking lots and modernizing Club infrastructure.

"We are very pleased to have reached an agreement with DEP that will preserve this environmentally valuable land from future development while helping protect the quality of the water that serves millions of people in the metropolitan area," said Club President Paul Atkinson. "This transaction is in the best interests of the DEP, our members, and the surrounding community."

He added: "This agreement, coupled with the certification of our land management by the Audubon Society, underscores how seriously we take our responsibility as stewards of an extraordinary piece of Westchester County property."

New York City has invested more than \$1.5 billion in its watershed protection programs, including an active land acquisition program that seeks to protect

More Information

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water quality by purchasing land and conservation easements within the watersheds of City-owned reservoirs. Currently, more than 37 percent of lands within the City's watersheds are protected. More than 43 percent of land within the Kensico Reservoir watershed will be protected with the addition of this easement.

"DEP is grateful that its ongoing negotiation with the Whippoorwill Club and its board of directors has yielded an agreement that is beneficial to both parties," DEP Commissioner Carter Strickland said. "This conservation easement will help DEP protect the water supply for more than 8 million New Yorkers, and it will provide the Club with the capital it needs to improve its facilities and continue its impressive record of environmental stewardship."

The Club is situated on Whippoorwill Road off of Route 120 in the North Castle hamlet of Armonk. It first opened for golf in 1928. After a hiatus occasioned by the Depression and World War II, the Club was reorganized in 1947 and has added new facilities and upgrades over the ensuing decades.

Whippoorwill is a private golf and tennis club with 300 members. The Club's commitment to the environment was previously recognized in 2009 by Audubon International, when it was awarded the status of Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, one of only 35 golf courses in New York State to hold that designation. The Club's 170 acres are evenly divided between the towns of New Castle and North Castle. The lands protected by the conservation easement are in both towns, and all drain south into the Kensico Reservoir watershed.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3 and the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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