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**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ANNOUNCES
EXPANDED RECREATIONAL BOATING PROGRAMS LED TO MORE
THAN 1,000 VISITS TO CATSKILL RESERVOIRS IN 2013**

*More than 750 Boat Tags Issued in 2013 and New Rental Program Led to Hundreds of
Additional Visitors*

More than 20 Certified Outdoor Guides Participated in New Opportunity to Access City Lands

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced that more than 750 individual boat tags were issued in 2013 during another successful season of recreational boating on City-owned reservoirs in the Catskills. The popular boating program on Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton, and Schoharie reservoirs was supplemented this year by two new programs. A boat rental program, administered in partnership with the Catskill Watershed Corporation, allowed local businesses to store and rent recreational boats alongside the four reservoirs. The rentals attracted more than 300 additional boaters and supported local businesses with thousands of dollars of new revenue. The second program opened City-owned lands and waters for the first time to more than 20 state-certified outdoor guides who provided professional tours to dozens of visitors. These programs are in addition to the traditional use of metal rowboats for fishing, which has been permitted for decades.

“Our efforts to encourage boating and guided outdoor recreation underscore DEP’s commitment to support the Catskills’ tourism economy,” said Commissioner Strickland. “This year we’ve heard feedback from many boaters and vendors who said these programs offered a unique way to exercise, attract visitors, and enjoy the scenic beauty of the Catskills, and we look forward to finding new and responsible ways to expand recreational access in the years to come.”

DEP issued 757 tags to boaters, including 505 kayaks, 189 canoes, 33 rowboats, 25 sailboats, and five sculls. Pepacton Reservoir attracted 461 boaters, the most of any reservoir, followed by 126 tags issued at Neversink, 108 at Cannonsville, and 62 at Schoharie. Nearly 63 percent of recreational boating tags were issued to residents of the five watershed counties, including Delaware, Greene, Schoharie, Sullivan, and Ulster. About 14 percent of tags were issued to residents of New York City or Long Island. Visitors from six states also received tags, including Alabama, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

After a successful expansion of recreational boating last year, the program was further enhanced this year by a new initiative allowing local businesses to rent kayaks and canoes from

10 launch sites alongside the four reservoirs. The seven businesses that participated rented more than 300 boats. The program was administered with significant help from the Catskill Watershed Corporation, which funded the acquisition of 30 storage racks for the rental boats. The Catskill Watershed Corporation also administered the process to vet and approve businesses that applied to participate in the rental program.

"Installing racks to allow boat rental vendors to safely store canoes and kayaks has made it easier for them to do business, and to attract people without boats of their own to get out and have fun on the water," said Catskill Watershed Corporation Executive Director, Alan Rosa. "The CWC is happy to have played a part in assisting small business, and introducing new boaters to this great sport."

The program also served as a new source of revenue for the local companies who rented boats to residents, tourists, and summer camp groups.

"My business more than doubled in 2013 as more and more people learned about the recreational boating program," said Jim Rafferty, who owns Bradley Boat Rentals and participated in the rental program at Neversink Reservoir. "New York City and the Catskill Watershed Corporation have provided the public with a wonderful recreational opportunity and their efforts are appreciated."

2013 marked the second year of the expanded 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. That original program remains popular, with more than 12,212 tags currently issued to anglers who have rowboats at the reservoirs. While many residents enjoy this traditional program, there is a waiting list at many reservoirs and tourists and casual visitors to the Catskills could not get access to the reservoirs. Regular water-quality monitoring at each of these reservoirs has shown no impact from recreational boating and DEP's invasive species experts surveyed every boat launch site this summer 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.

This year, DEP also began a new program for New York state-certified outdoor guides to use City-owned lands and reservoirs in the watershed for the first time ever. In total, 21 certified guides received permits to offer fishing, hunting, and hiking tours that have long been a hallmark of the Catskills. Outdoor guides that offered services on City-owned properties required certification from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Among other guidelines, the state program requires all guides to be certified in first aid, CPR, and water safety. Guides also must pass a state exam.

"As a licensed guide in the Catskills since 1983, I was really happy to hear about the new program to allow guided tours on DEP land," said Charles "Sonny" Somelofski, who runs Catskills Outdoor Adventures in Margaretville. "My customers from downstate, New Jersey, and Connecticut were also very excited, and many of our tours on the reservoirs this year yielded world-class brown trout. We appreciate the City's efforts to work closely with us and help promote tourism in the Catskill and Delaware watershed."

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.3 million in New York City, and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam, and Westchester counties. 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 employs nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and others 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 \$1.5 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 www.nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.

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Contact: Adam Bosch (845) 334-7868
Chris Gilbride (718) 595-6600