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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OPENED MORE THAN 6,100 ACRES OF WATERSHED LAND FOR RECREATION IN 2012

Access to Public Lands and Reservoirs Expanded and Partnerships with Local Organizations Creates Network of New Trails

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced that more than 6,100 acres of City-owned land across the watershed were opened for public recreation in 2012. In addition, DEP expanded the recreational boating program on its reservoirs and formed partnerships with local organizations to create networks of new trails and other opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts in 2012.

“By working with our local partners we have been able to expand and improve recreational access to some of New York’s most scenic land and waterways,” DEP Commissioner Carter Strickland said. “We will continue to focus on creating new opportunities for hiking, boating, fishing and other outdoor activities in order to attract even more visitors and help contribute to a stronger economy in our watershed communities.”

DEP opened 6,184 acres of land for recreational use in 2012, of which 5,554 are public access areas and can be used without a permit. Entry on the remaining 630 newly opened acres requires a DEP permit. In addition, 1,521 acres of watershed land that previously required a permit were converted to public access areas. The City first established public access areas in 2008 to allow recreation without permits on certain watershed lands. Since then, the number of acres open for recreation without a permit has more than doubled, from 20,009 to 52,198. These lands are typically open for fishing, hiking, hunting, cross-country skiing and other low impact recreational activities.

The year also brought new partnerships which have enhanced the existing recreational use of City-owned land in the watershed, including:

- In January 2012, the Finger Lakes Trail Conference received a DEP land-use permit to construct and maintain 2.5 miles of a hiking trail over City water supply lands just north of the Cannonsville Reservoir. The Finger Lakes Trail System includes the main trail from the Pennsylvania-New York border in the Allegany State Park to the Long Path in the Catskill Forest Preserve, as well as many smaller trails. Portions of the trail inside the City’s watershed ran along public roads, but the DEP permit allowed for a section of the trail to be moved into woods and fields owned by the City. The low-impact hiking trail primarily follows existing trails and old tracks.

- DEP issued a land-use permit to allow the Village of Fleischmanns to use City land for a temporary park after its village park was destroyed by tropical storms Irene and Lee in 2011. DEP also established Devasego Park, a designated use area on City land adjacent to Schoharie Reservoir, so that residents and visitors would have a public area close to the heart of Prattsville for walking, Frisbee, picnics and other outdoor activities.
- DEP also worked with the Town of Andes and the Catskill Mountain Club to allow two new hiking trails on City land in the Pepacton Reservoir basin. One trail, located on the north side of the reservoir, begins at the Shavertown Bridge boat launch site and rises through the woods to scenic fields. The other trail, off Finkle Road, begins at a scenic pull-off that Andes built on City land after receiving a land-use permit from DEP several years ago.
- DEP partnered with Westchester County to allow participants in the Westchester County Adaptive Deer Management Program to enter City lands around Muscoot, Cross River and New Croton Reservoirs. These lands will be open to hunters who were enrolled in the special program to help manage the high deer populations in that portion of the county.

The expansion of the recreational boating program in 2012 brought kayaks, canoes, rowboats and non-motorized boats to Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie reservoirs. A total of 983 tags were issued to recreational boaters, 45 percent of whom were from outside the watershed and 10 percent of whom were from outside New York. Permits for recreational boating, which require certification that the boat has been steam cleaned, can be obtained free of charge through DEP's website.

"Delaware County has already seen an uptick in visitors because DEP chose to expand recreational opportunities on its land and on the Pepacton and Cannonsville Reservoirs," Delaware County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jim Eisel said. "New businesses that rented kayaks, steam cleaned boats, and offered other services began emerging once DEP opened its reservoirs to more recreational boating. It's a clear sign that Delaware County and DEP working cooperatively has strengthened the tourism economy."

"We are excited about the additional recreation land DEP has opened for the public to enjoy," Greene County Legislature Chairman Wayne Speenburgh said. "By complimenting the many recreational trails, ski slopes and other destinations that already exist, DEP is helping attract more visitors to enjoy the unique natural beauty of the Catskills."

Expanding recreational opportunities in the watershed is one of the goals outlined in *Strategy 2011-2014*, a comprehensive strategic plan that outlines 100 distinct initiatives to help ensure that DEP is the safest, most efficient, cost-effective and transparent water utility in the nation. The plan is available on DEP's website at www.nyc.gov/dep.

There are now 114,833 acres of City-owned land open for recreation in the watershed, including 80,941 acres of land, and reservoirs that comprise 33,892 acres. Much of that land was purchased through DEP's Land Acquisition Program, including 6,811 acres of land and conservation easements in 2012. The acquisitions in 2012 included 4,007 acres of land that were purchased outright, of which 3,726 acres, or 93 percent, have been or are expected to be opened for public recreation. Recreation is not allowed on conservation easements. The 2007 Filtration

Avoidance Determination issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requires New York City to continue an active Land Acquisition Program, focusing on properties selected for their water quality protection benefits. The City only acquires land and easements from willing sellers, and pays fair market value based on independent appraisals.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight 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 has 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 \$153 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 opportunities. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program with more than \$13 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

Notable Additions to Recreation Lands in 2012

Ashokan Basin – Ulster County

- Piney Point Public Access Area on Piney Point Road in Olive expanded from 369 to 838 acres and was renamed Ticetonyk Mountain
- 280 acres will be added to the Lost Clove Unit on Lost Clove Road in Shandaken
- 451 acres of Ashokan Reservoir buffer lands on the west side of Rte 28 have been opened as the Sand Hill bow hunting unit
- 130 acres are added to the North Ashokan Recreational Unit on the south side of Route 28 in Olive

Delaware County

- 820 acres on Scutt Mountain Road in Stamford & Bovina added to Pink Street Recreation Unit
- 340 acres in two acquisitions on Fall Clove Road in Andes, opened as the new Fall Clove Road Public Access Area
- 329 acres added to the Sally Alley Unit at the end of Sherwood Road in Roxbury
- 290 acres on Baumback Road added to the West Settlement Unit in the Town of Roxbury
- 265 acres added to the Buffalo Hollow Unit at the end of George Lawrence Road in the Town of Roxbury
- 191 acres on County Route 33 in Kortright opened as the new Wright Brook Public Access Area
- 165 acres added to the Brush Ridge Unit on Brush Ridge Road in Middletown, just east of the Village of Fleischmanns
- 154 acres on Roses Brook Road in Stamford opened as the new Roses Brook Farm Public Access Area
- 139 acres added to the Carman Road Recreation Unit on County Route 2 in Hamden
- 127 acres in two acquisitions on Scotch Mountain Road in Delhi opened as the new Scotch Mountain Public Access Area

Neversink & Rondout Basins

- 43 acres on Route 55 in the Town of Neversink added to the South Hill Unit
- 24 acres on DuBois Road in the Town of Denning added to the Sundown Unit
- 368 acres at the end of East Mountain Road, along the border of Sullivan and Ulster counties, will be added to the North Side Unit

Greene County

- 396 acres in three acquisitions added to the Patterson Ridge Unit on State Route 23 in Ashland
- 325 acres added to the Mount Hayden Recreation Unit at the end of Nauvoo Road in Windham
- 196 acres added to the Case Road Unit on Case Road in Ashland
- 73 acres added to the Center Jewett Unit on Route 23A in Jewett
- 252 acres of Schoharie Reservoir buffer land opened as the Devasego Public Access Area in the Towns of Roxbury and Prattsville

2012 Land Acquisition Program Purchases & Easements

Delaware County:	3,705 acres
Greene County:	1,141 acres
Sullivan County:	640 acres
Ulster County:	590 acres
Putnam County:	426 acres
Schoharie County:	304 acres
Dutchess County:	7 acres