

[Home](#)
**Customer Services**

- › [Pay Online](#)
- › [Ways to Pay Your Bill](#)
- › [eBilling](#)
- › [Account Information](#)
- › [Customer Assistance](#)
- › [Service Line Protection Program](#)
- › [Water Rates](#)
- › [Property Managers & Trade Professionals](#)

**Water Utilities**

- › [Drinking Water](#)
- › [Wastewater](#)
- › [Stormwater](#)
- › [Harbor Water](#)
- › [Long Term Control Plan](#)

**The Watershed**

- › [Watershed Protection](#)
- › [Watershed Recreation](#)

**Citywide Initiatives**

- › [Regulatory Reform](#)
- › [Environmental Education](#)
- › [Conservation Programs](#)
- › [Air Pollution Control](#)
- › [Noise Codes & Complaints](#)

**Business and Professionals**

- › [Forms & Permits](#)
- › [Support for Businesses](#)
- › [Doing Business with DEP](#)
- › [Asbestos Abatement](#)
- › [Construction, Demolition & Abatement](#)

**About DEP**

- › [Inside DEP](#)
- › [News](#)
- DEP Featured In...
- Stories from DEP
- Press Releases



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 16-06  
January 29, 2015

Contact:

[depressoffice@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:depressoffice@dep.nyc.gov), (845) 334-7868

## Department of Environmental Protection Opened More than 2,800 Acres and Enhanced Recreation Opportunities in the Watershed in 2015

**More than 130,000 acres now open for fishing, hiking and other low-impact recreation**

**Photos are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)**

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that more than 2,800 additional acres of city-owned property across the watershed were opened for public recreation for the first time in 2015. The new lands opened for recreation this year put the total over 130,000 acres for the first time, more than half of which is now open for access without the requirement of a DEP Access Permit.

“For nearly a decade, DEP has sought to expand, improve and simplify recreational access to our reservoirs and the scenic lands that surround them,” **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd** said. “We are proud that New York City water supply properties now include some of the best hiking trails, fishing opportunities and hunting lands anywhere in New York, attracting local residents and visitors from throughout the northeast. In 2016, DEP will continue to work with our partners to examine our existing programs, add at least one new hiking trail in the Catskills, and support the state’s first Catskill Challenge this coming summer.”

“Making DEP land accessible to the public is a huge financial boost to our local economies throughout the Catskill Mountain region,” said **Delaware County**

**More Information**

NYC Department of  
Environmental Protection  
Public Affairs  
59-17 Junction Boulevard  
19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Flushing, NY 11373  
(718) 595-6600

Public Notices

Testimony &amp; Public Comments

- › [Capital Projects](#)
- › [Careers at DEP](#)
- › [Environmental Reviews](#)
- › [Interagency MOUs](#)
- › [A to Z Index](#)
- › [Contact Us](#)



**Chamber of Commerce President Ray Pucci**, who also leads the regional group Catskill Area Tourism Services. “The quality of the recreation available on these properties is outstanding and is attracting more visitors every year to the area.”

“The Catskill Center applauds DEP’s continuing effort to open watershed lands for public recreation,” said **Jeff Senterman, Executive Director of the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development**. “Highlighting the region’s natural beauty and multitude of fun recreational opportunities, is a sustainable way to boost our region’s economy while protecting the environment.”

DEP opened 2,810 additional acres of land for recreation use in 2015, all of which are public access areas that can be used without a permit. Use of some water supply properties—especially those near reservoirs—still requires an access permit that is available free of charge on the DEP website. The newly opened properties include 2,260 acres in Delaware County, 424 acres in Greene County, 79 acres in Schoharie County, and 47 acres in Ulster County. DEP also removed permit requirements from 209 acres in the Catskills, making them even easier for the public to enjoy. DEP 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 tripled, from 20,009 to 66,480. In total, DEP has opened 130,653 acres of lands and reservoirs for fishing, hiking, hunting and other forms of low-impact recreation.

Many of these recreation areas are open year-round, including during winter for activities such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Those using the recreation areas should pay careful attention to posted signs that outline the allowable uses. That information, along with a list of recreation areas, can also be viewed on the DEP website by [clicking here](#).

In addition to expanded access across the watershed in 2015, some of DEP’s popular recreation programs also experienced an increase in participation. They included:

- The recreational boating program at Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie reservoirs tallied 1,463 total visits, an all-time high and the largest year-over-year increase for the program since it began in 2012. That total includes 683 visitors who rented a kayak or canoe from one of the six watershed businesses that store and rent boats from alongside the reservoirs—an increase of 92 percent from the 355 rental visits in 2014. The rental program is administered with significant help from the Catskill Watershed Corporation, which funded 30 storage racks for the boats and administered the process to vet and approve the rental businesses.
- 2015 was the third year for a pilot program that allowed the use of electric trolling motors for fishing at Cannonsville Reservoir. The program issued 152 tags to fishermen this year, exactly double the number of tags that were issued in 2014 (76). DEP had circulated a survey to anglers at other reservoirs in the Catskills to gauge their interest in an expanded trolling motor program. DEP plans to continue the trolling motor program at Cannonsville in 2016.
- The number of state-certified outdoor guides offering fishing, hiking and other expeditions on city-owned property also expanded in 2015. A total of 34 guides are now permitted by the city to offer guided outdoor trips that have long been a hallmark of the Catskills. That’s up from 23 guides that registered when the program began in 2013. The state certification process requires the guides to know first aid, CPR, and water safety.
- In addition, DEP worked with the state Department of Environmental Conservation to continue a deer management program to include 12,000 acres around Ashokan, Cannonsville and Neversink Reservoirs. Deer Management Assistance Permits were issued to 400 hunters—up from 280 last year—to help control deer populations on lands immediately adjacent to these reservoirs. Deer in large numbers can inhibit the regeneration of forests that serve as an important natural filter for water before it enters the

reservoirs.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to more than 9 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 upstate watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$157 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 nearly \$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 [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

 [All Press Releases](#)

