



PHOTO INFO...

**Fall Foliage**

Schoharie Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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**DEP Plans to Open 12,000 More Watershed Acres for Recreation****Turkey Hunting Season on City-Owned Lands Opens on Saturday**

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today announced that DEP plans to open 12,000 more acres for recreation throughout the rest of the year on a rolling basis. The announcement comes just ahead of the opening of turkey season on Saturday, May 1. The planned expansion will bring the total number of acres of New York City-owned water supply land open for recreation to 71,000, more than double the amount available in 2003. The 71,000 acres includes approximately 30,000 acres of property designated Public Access Areas which were opened in the last three years, where public hiking, fishing, hunting and trapping is allowed without DEP permits. The remaining acres require a DEP permit for access.

"The planned opening of 12,000 acres of watershed lands for recreation is another example of our efforts to expand the opportunities for families and visitors to enjoy themselves on watershed lands," said Commissioner Holloway. "Being a landowner carries with it the responsibility to work with our upstate partners to help the economy through recreation and tourism. We can do this while vigilantly protecting the water supply system for half of New York State, roughly nine million people."

Last year DEP opened 7,158 acres of land, bringing the total number of acres open for recreation to 58,957. In 2003, there were 28,573 acres available. The 12,000 acres that DEP plans to open on a rolling basis throughout this year will bring the total number of acres open to recreation to 71,000. DEP attempts to open as much land as possible for recreation and bases decisions to do so on potential water quality impacts, whether the land is easily accessible to the public and input from the community. DEP plans to open 5,018 acres in Delaware County; 3,179 acres in Greene County; 1,783 acres in Ulster County; 903 acres in Putnam County; 820 acres in Schoharie County; and 418 acres in Westchester County.

Turkey season opens one month after the start of trout season, another highly successful recreational activity in

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NYC's watershed. The City's water supply provides some of the best trout fishing in the country, with dozens of streams, 19 reservoirs and two controlled lakes open for fishing. Recently, DEP opened 12.5 acres, including 440 feet of river frontage, on the Beaverkill River, a famous trout fishing destination. The site provides public access to the Beaverkill and is adjacent to an existing parking area, for easy access. Earlier this month, DEP and Trout Unlimited announced the restoration of a key section of Horton Brook, which feeds into the Beaver Kill, and is a known critical spawning area for trout. The restoration project will reduce erosion of sediments into Horton Brook, reduce sedimentation on trout spawning areas downstream, slow the velocity of the brook when it floods, and reduce the size of the delta at the brook's mouth which, when too large, can prevent trout from reaching the cold brook waters needed for summer survival.

Turkey hunting season runs through May and hunting is allowed on virtually all of the open 71,000 acres. DEP also allows hunting for all species permitted under New York State law. Hunters must have a valid New York State hunting license and Access Permit. DEP Access Permits are not required on Public Access Areas but are required on those designated "entry by permit." Hunting on water supply lands begins each fall on September 1, the first day of squirrel hunting season, and ends at the close of spring turkey season on May 31. All applicable New York State hunting regulations and laws are in effect on water supply hunting areas, including weapons restrictions, species restrictions and hunting seasons for the allowed game. Designated hunting areas are available for bow, shotgun, rifle, and handgun and muzzleloader hunting where permitted by New York State regulations.

DEP manages the City's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8 million in New York City, and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties. Approximately 1,000 DEP employees live and work in the watershed communities as scientists, engineers, surveyors, and administrative professionals, and perform other critical responsibilities. DEP has invested over \$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.

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