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## Fall Foliage

Cannonsville Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

02-10b

April 15, 2002

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## Warm Weather Is Here! DEP Issues Save-water Alert

Weather forecasters are predicting temperatures in the 80s this week, and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is asking people to save water because the City's water supply is in a Stage 1 Drought Emergency.

"When the weather warms up," said Commissioner Christopher O. Ward, "people naturally start to use more water, whether to cool off in the shower or water lawns, wash down sidewalks and driveways or wash the car. Unfortunately, our reservoirs are extremely low for this time of year. I not only have to ask folks to save water, I have to remind them that there are stringent restrictions on water use during all phases of a Drought Emergency no matter how hot it gets.

"If you have to wash that car," continued Commissioner Ward, "you may not do it at home with a hose. Only commercial car washes that use well water are allowed to operate during Drought Emergencies. If you're tempted to wash that driveway or sidewalk, it is prohibited. Get out a broom instead. If you have to water the lawn, you may only do so between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. during a Stage 1 Drought Emergency. Watering lawns is prohibited entirely during Stage 2 and 3 Drought Emergencies.

"We are hoping that the City won't have to declare a Stage 2 Drought Emergency, but if we don't get lots of rain in the near future, we could be there within a month. Saving water can help us avoid or postpone going to that next stage."

Currently, the City's reservoirs are at 61.8% of capacity, 35.6 percentage points below the normal level of 97.4% for this date. The low water levels are caused by a serious lack of precipitation across the City's nearly 2,000-square-mile watershed since June of 2001. Over the last several years, daily water use in the City has been averaging a little over 1.2 billion gallons per day, well down from almost 1.5 billion gallons consumed in 1991. The dramatic reduction in consumption is attributable to several comprehensive water conservation measures implemented in the City and by DEP over the last ten years, including the installation of water

### MORE INFORMATION

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meters and of nearly 1.7 million low-flow toilets and other plumbing fixtures. Without those conservation measures, the City would have declared a Drought Emergency several months ago.

"New Yorkers have been saving water since the drought was announced," said Commissioner Ward. "Yesterday, however, as a result of the warmer temperatures, water consumption went up for the first time since late January. I want to thank those who have been conserving water and ask all New Yorkers to help extend the current water supply through use of conservation measures."

Simple tips for conserving water include operating dishwashers and washing machines only when full, taking shorter showers or shallow baths, and sweeping sidewalks clean instead of using a water hose. Other important conservation measures include fixing faucet leaks, which can waste hundreds of gallons of water every week, and reporting illegally opened hydrants to DEP's 24-hour helpline, 718/DEP-HELP (718/337-4357). New Yorkers may read more about water conservation and the City's water supply on-line at [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep).

**Water Saving Tips**

1. Report open fire hydrants and street leaks to DEP's 24-hour helpline, 718/DEP-HELP. An open hydrant can waste one million gallons of drinking water per day.
2. Take advantage of DEP's free water survey to help save water and cut water bills in residential and commercial buildings. To apply City residents can call 718/DEP-HELP.
3. Take shorter showers or fill the tub only halfway and save water.
4. Don't run the tap while shaving or brushing your teeth.
5. Fix leaks. Leaky faucets alone can waste up to 1,000 gallons each week.
6. Run the dishwasher and washing machine only when full. Or use short cycles if available.
7. Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket. Each unnecessary flush can waste 1.6 to 5 gallons.
8. Install water-saving fixtures including toilets, showerheads and faucet aerators.
9. Sweep driveways and sidewalks clean rather than washing them down with a hose.
10. For more water saving ideas visit DEP's Web site at [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep).