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Ashokan Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System


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DEP Announces Activation of the Ashokan Reservoir Release Channel

Releases Will Improve Water Quality After Recent Storm and Enhance Flood Prevention Protection

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that it will activate the Ashokan Reservoir Release Channel and release 250 million gallons per day (MGD) from the Ashokan Reservoir for the next few weeks, depending on circumstances. The releases will improve water quality in the reservoir, which saw an increase in turbidity levels as the result of snowmelt and rains on December 25 and 26, and will enhance flood prevention protection. Turbidity, or cloudiness, is measure of the quality of water. The Ashokan release channel is a concrete canal used to convey water released in a controlled manner from the reservoir through the upper and lower gate chambers to the Little Beaverkill stream and the lower Esopus Creek.

"Activating the Ashokan Release Channel will ensure that we continue to deliver the highest quality drinking water and help to protect communities downstream," said Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway. "Being a good and responsible neighbor is critical to our partnerships in the watershed. The operation of the release channel is just one example where water supply protection efforts provide benefits to upstate communities in addition to downstate consumers."

In September 2008, DEP, the Open Space Institute (OSI), and the Ashokan Foundation announced the completion of a three-way transaction on the 374-acre property formerly known as the Ashokan Field Campus. The agreement allowed DEP more flexibility in operating the Ashokan Reservoir and managing turbidity by releasing water from the reservoir to the lower Esopus Creek.

Releasing water to the release channel allows DEP to create room in the Ashokan Reservoir to capture runoff from intense storms.

Located in Ulster County, the Ashokan Reservoir is approximately 13 miles west of Kingston and 73 miles north

MORE INFORMATION

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of New York City. It was formed by the damming of the Esopus Creek, which eventually flows northeast and drains into the Hudson River. Consisting of two basins separated by a concrete dividing weir and roadway, the reservoir holds 127.9 billion gallons at full capacity and was opened in 1915. The Ashokan is one of two reservoirs in the City's Catskill Water Supply System and currently supplies about 40% of New York City's daily drinking water.

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. New York City's water is delivered from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and are comprised of 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes. The DEP police protect the watershed and its facilities, including seven wastewater treatment plants.

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