

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

January 20, 2012

**No. 3**

## **DEP Opens More Than 2,700 Watershed Acres for Recreational Use in Ulster County Since 2010**

*Newly Opened Parcels Primarily Used for Fishing, Bow Hunting and Hiking;  
Majority of New Acres Opened as Public Access Areas Requiring No Access Permits*

Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced that DEP has opened more than 2,700 acres for recreational use in Ulster County since 2010, bringing the total City-owned recreational lands in the county to more than 12,300 acres. Located along Route 28A, the two largest parcels total more than 800 acres and are known as the Bushkill and Stone Road areas. Both are accessible for bow hunting. The opening of areas such as Beetree and Green Eyes have made nearly 500 acres accessible with DEP Access Permits, while nearly 200 acres have been opened as Public Access Areas (PAA) at the Ladleton area. PAAs do not require DEP Access Permits and are accessible for bow hunting, hiking, fishing and trapping. Since 2010, more than 50% of the recreational acres in Ulster County have been converted to PAAs. More than 850 additional acres are projected to open in Ulster County this year, including more than 450 acres at the area of Piney Point. Nearly all of the acres to open in 2012 will be PAAs.

“DEP is continuing to open up City-owned watershed lands to compatible uses by neighboring communities, which will have the benefit of enjoying the open space for recreation,” said Commissioner Strickland. “We have collaborated with our partners in Ulster County to help encourage the tourism economy in the area, which benefits from natural areas preserved by New York City. While remaining vigilant in protecting the water supply serving more than nine million people, we will continue to make sure residents and their families benefit as well.”

An ongoing survey of more than 10,000 DEP Access Permit holders found that City-owned lands and reservoirs in Ulster County are the second-most visited in the west-of-Hudson watersheds, with 20% of respondents citing it as their location of choice. Fishing is the most popular use of watershed lands and reservoirs, with 70% of residents naming it their preference. The Ashokan Reservoir was named the most popular fishing destination, where there are also 1,658 boating permits currently held. Approximately 16% of survey participants said they use the lands for bow hunting, which is allowed on virtually all of the Ulster County acres. Hunters must have a valid New York State hunting license and DEP Access Permit, where required. 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 watershed recreational areas, including weapons restrictions, species restrictions and hunting seasons for the allowed game.

Since 2003, DEP has significantly expanded the amount of city-owned water supply acres open for recreation to 108,000—more than double the amount available in 2003. Of the 108,000 total acres open to recreation, more than 75,000 are land and 33,000 are water. Last

year, DEP announced the opening of approximately 6,600 more acres of land in the watershed for recreation. In 2010, DEP opened 9,895 acres of land. Expanding recreational opportunities in the watershed is one of the Operations goals outlined in *Strategy 2011-2014*, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to make DEP the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. The plan and additional information on permissible recreational land use is available on DEP's website at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep).

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of 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 from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and comprises 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes. 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's annual payroll for our upstate operations is roughly \$40 million. 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 opportunity. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program for the repair of Gilboa Dam and other in-city and upstate infrastructure, with a planned \$13.2 billion in investments over the next 10 years that creates up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](https://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/nycwater](https://www.twitter.com/nycwater).

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