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## Fall Foliage

Schoharie Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## New York City Department of Environmental Protection Purchases 481 Acres in Wawarsing

Commissioner Christopher O. Ward of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that as part of its continuing watershed protection program the DEP has acquired several parcels totaling 481 acres in the Town of Wawarsing in Ulster County. Most of the lands are within the watershed of the Rondout Reservoir, which is considered a very high priority for protection of water quality.

The newly acquired land adjoins property previously acquired by the City under the 1997 Watershed Memorandum of Agreement, as well as City reservoir lands, with the entire assemblage totaling 1,170 acres.

"Land acquisition allows the City to forever protect valuable watershed property from development and pollution," said Commissioner Ward. "The response from landowners to the Program has been remarkable. We will continue to identify strategic properties through this successful program through at least 2007, and as with all newly acquired lands, the property will be protected for water quality purposes and opened when possible to the public for passive recreation."

The purchase includes two separate tracts of 349 and 132 acres, both with frontage on Sholam Road and connected by 550 acres that were acquired by the City between 1998 and 2003. Many of the previously held 550 acres are open to holders of DEP-issued Access Permits for hiking, hunting and fishing. The new 481 acres are expected to be opened for similar uses before the end of the year.

With this new acquisition, DEP has now managed to permanently protect one and three quarter miles of the Trout Creek, a major Rondout Reservoir tributary in a high priority protection zone. Over 53,000 acres of land and conservation easements in the Catskill/Delaware watershed have been secured by the City since 1997, including over 6,500 acres placed under farm easements by the Watershed Agricultural Council using City funds.

The City's Land Acquisition Program acquires conservation easements, as well as land in fee simple, at fair market value from willing sellers only and pays property taxes in

### MORE INFORMATION

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proportion to the property rights acquired. Landowners who sell conservation easements are paid upfront for development rights and are relieved of significant property tax burdens in perpetuity.

Landowners whose properties are under easement can generally continue to harvest timber and bluestone under management plans approved by DEP. Under this arrangement, DEP effectively pays good land stewards to continue to care for their land, protect their views from development and enjoy passive recreational opportunities. For more information about the Land Acquisition Program, property owners should call (800) 575-LAND.

The City has opened over 43,000 acres of its watershed land to public recreation, including over 27,000 acres of the land acquired by the Land Acquisition Program under the MOA. DEP has issued more than 67,000 access permits, over 6,300 hunting tags, and almost 10,000 boat tags to people wanting to use City watershed property for recreation. For more information on how to get a DEP Access Permit, visit the DEP Web site at [nyc.gov/watershed](http://nyc.gov/watershed) or call (800) 575-LAND.