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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2004 Deer Season Most Popular Ever On New York City Water Supply Lands

Over 32,000 Acres Open in Seven Counties

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Acting Commissioner David B. Tweedy announced today that hunting on City water supply lands in 2004 increased significantly from 2003 as the DEP opened to hunters more area than ever before.

There were 9,756 DEP Hunting Tags issued, an increase of nearly 4,000 from the previous year. Hunting took place in seven different counties on 70 areas totaling 32,788 acres, making DEP's program one of the largest of its kind in New York State. Since the inception in 1999 of deer hunting on DEP land, the number of hunters has increased five-fold and the area available to them has doubled.

"We work every year to try to maximize opportunities for deer hunters," said Tweedy, "and we're pleased that even more sportsmen are benefiting. Hunters tell us all the time that there are fewer and fewer areas open to them, but the City's land acquisition program is helping to turn some of that around.

"Fewer than one in 20 landowners who sold property to the City have historically allowed free and open access to their land for hunting. But when DEP is able to acquire property which can be opened safely and without risk to water quality or surrounding private property, we are usually able to open that land for public use, including deer hunting in season."

DEP Land Management has found that, as in previous deer seasons, areas east of the Hudson River generally had more activity that areas west of the River. The two most popular hunting areas in 2004 were the 1,085-acre Horse Pound Brook Unit in the Town of Kent in Putnam County and the 1,556-acre Ashokan North Unit in the Town of Olive in Ulster County.

Other popular areas included the New Croton Unit in the Town of Yorktown in Westchester County and the Speedwell Mountain Unit in the Town of Tompkins in Delaware County. Most hunting areas were busiest on opening day and the first weekend of regular gun season, but otherwise saw only light use. DEP foresters noted that the full moon and warm

MORE INFORMATION

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weather during the early part of the season may have reduced daytime deer activity, and consequently the overall harvest.

Hunters with 2004 tags are encouraged to complete and submit their 2004 hunt surveys by January 22nd. The surveys are used to improve hunting opportunities, and those who return completed surveys will automatically receive a 2005 deer hunt tag in late summer provided their access permits remain valid.

Hunters who used their 2004 DEP tags to harvest a doe on DEP hunting areas are eligible to receive a Petzl headlamp and a copy of Jim Zumbo's "Amazing Venison Recipes" as part of a DEP incentive to harvest does. These hunters should send in photocopies of their completed New York State Department of Environmental Conservation deer report tag with their completed 2004 deer hunt surveys to be entered in the lottery drawing that will be held at the end of January.

Detailed information on the 2004 deer season will be publicized after completed surveys are received. More information about recreation on City water supply lands can be found at nyc.gov/watershed.