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[Wastewater](#)

[Stormwater](#)

[Harbor Water](#)

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DEP Plans to Open 6,600 More Watershed Acres for Recreation

Announcement Comes as Turkey Season Opens; 108,000 Total Acres for Recreation to be Available, Up From 62,000 in 2003

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today announced that DEP will open approximately 6,600 more acres of land in the watershed for recreation throughout the rest of the year on a rolling basis. The announcement comes just after the opening of trout season on April 1 and ahead of the opening of turkey season this Sunday, May 1. The planned expansion will bring the total number of acres of New York City-owned water supply land and reservoirs open for recreation to 108,000 — more than double the amount available in 2003. The 6,600 acres that DEP plans to open on a rolling basis throughout this year include more than 5,800 acres of property designated Public Access Areas, where public hiking, fishing, hunting and trapping is allowed without DEP permits. The remaining acres require a DEP permit for access.

"The New York City watershed continues to grow as a recreational destination," said Commissioner Holloway. "Last year, thousands of local residents and visitors enjoyed hunting, fishing, hiking or simply strolling on watershed lands, and more than 117,000 people already hold access permits to watershed lands. By opening more acres, we hope even more people will enjoy this beautiful land and take advantage of its unique opportunities, such as the upcoming Cannonsville Adventure Triathlon on June 5. While protecting the drinking water supply system for nine million people is our top priority, we are confident that these additional recreational opportunities that benefit the communities and visitors alike are consistent with that goal."

DEP plans to open 3,800 acres in Delaware County; 1,000 acres in Greene County; 1,600 acres in Ulster County; 130 acres in Putnam County; 100 acres in Sullivan County; and 10 acres in Dutchess County. Last year, DEP opened 9,895 acres of land. DEP attempts to open as much land as possible for recreation and bases decisions to do so on potential water quality impacts, whether the land is easily

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Public Notices

Testimony and Public Comments

Capital Projects

Job Opportunities

Environmental Reviews

A to Z Index

Contact Us

accessible to the public and input from the community. DEP also added 1,800 acres of bow-hunting areas along the Neversink and Ashokan reservoirs. Of the 108,000 total acres open to recreation, 75,000 are land and 33,000 are water.

For those lands in which a free DEP Access Permit is still required, DEP streamlined the application and renewal process in 2009. Recreational users can now obtain and renew DEP Access Permits online at www.nyc.gov/dep and immediately print out the permit and vehicle mirror tag. For those not using the online system, applications for new access permits or renewals can be sent in and generally permits will be issued within two to three days.

DEP has also issued several notable land use permits for recreational uses of city land. In November 2010, a land use permit was issued to the D & D Snowdiggers Snowmobile Association for a trail that crosses city lands on the northern portion of the Cannonsville Reservoir. The trail is approximately five miles long over city land and connects the trail to New York State-owned land. Several additional parcels were added to the existing Hamden Hill Ridge Riders Permit, which expanded the snowmobile trail on six additional city parcels that were acquired since the original permit. In March, registration began for the inaugural Cannonsville Adventure Triathlon, a brand-new event in and around the Cannonsville Reservoir in the towns of Deposit, Tompkins and Hancock. The race takes place in the final year of a three-year pilot program to expand recreational boating opportunities at the Cannonsville Reservoir, which means that permitted kayaks, canoes, rowboats and small sailboats are allowed on the reservoir. Previously, only fishing boats with proper permits were allowed.

There are also expanded opportunities for hikers in Westchester and Putnam counties thanks to trail partnerships with local governments and land trusts. A land use permit with the Teatown Lake Reservation was issued in September 2010 and allows the Teatown-Kitchawan Trail to cross through city lands south of the New Croton Reservoir, connecting county parks and other existing trail networks. Another trail permit issued in October 2009 provides new recreational access close to the shore of Lake Gleneida in Putnam County within walking distance for Lake Carmel residents. DEP is also working with the Town of Somers in Westchester County to finalize a trail permit that will link Angle Fly Preserve lands, city lands and Lasdon Park lands, which will form a continuous trail.

Turkey season and trout season open in the spring and draw large numbers of users to DEP's watershed lands. The city's water supply provides some of the best trout fishing in the country, with dozens of streams, 19 reservoirs and two controlled lakes open for fishing. Turkey hunting season begins May 1 and turkey hunting is allowed on most of the open 75,000 acres of land. Hunting on water supply lands begins each fall on September 1, and ends at the close of spring turkey season on May 31. All New York State hunting regulations and laws are in effect on water supply hunting areas, including weapons restrictions, species restrictions and hunting seasons for the allowed game. Designated hunting areas are available for bow, shotgun, rifle, and handgun and muzzleloader hunting where permitted by New York State regulations.

Expanding recreational opportunities in the watershed section 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 new plan, the product of nearly one year of analysis and outreach, builds on PlaNYC, Mayor Bloomberg's sustainability blueprint for New York City. The plan is available on DEP's website at www.nyc.gov/dep.

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. 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. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

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