

Special Guest *Commissioner's Corner*



Paul Rush, DEP's Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Water Supply, is a guest commentator this week.

When I meet with elected leaders and watershed residents in the Catskills, some of their most enthusiastic comments about DEP are related to our recreational boating program. When you venture out onto our reservoirs in a kayak or canoe, it's easy to understand why visitors

and outdoor enthusiasts have come to love this program. It offers an absolutely unique experience for those who want to enjoy the scenic beauty of the Catskills.

It's an experience that more and more people are taking advantage of. This week, we announced that our recreational boating program attracted 1,463 visits in 2015, an all-time high for the program that marks the largest year-over-year increase

in participation since it began in 2012. That number topped last year's 1,182 visits, representing an increase of roughly 24 percent.

For those who are hearing about this program for the first time, recreational boating is allowed at our non-terminal reservoirs in the Catskills: Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie. The season runs from Memorial Day to Columbus Day each year. Participants can use kayaks, canoes, small sailboats or sculls on these reservoirs, as long as they are steam cleaned beforehand to prevent the spread of invasive species. Regular monitoring by DEP scientists has shown that recreational boating has shown no impact on water quality in our reservoirs.

Participation has grown steadily since we began with fewer than 1,000 visitors in 2012. Recent increases have been driven by the success of a rental program that allows visitors to rent a kayak or canoe from one of six businesses in the Catskills that store pre-cleaned boats alongside the reservoirs. These boats are stored on racks that were purchased by the Catskill Watershed Corporation, which helps administer the rental program and has played a key role in its success. Local businesses rented their boats a total of 683 times in 2015—an increase of 92 percent from the previous year.

We expect the rental program to continue growing because it provides easier access for tourists and local residents who don't own a kayak or canoe. Rental boats also provide easy reservoir access for our DEP colleagues in New York



City who are reading this column and would like to visit the reservoirs next year. Local campgrounds and lodges have said they are including reservoir boating in their marketing plans, and many visitors are renting a boat as part of their Catskills vacations. This is great news for the local businesses who can make some extra money by providing safe access at 10 launch sites around the reservoirs.

The program has attracted visitors from near and far. In 2015, roughly 19 percent of the recreational boating tags issued by DEP went to residents of the five West-of-Hudson watershed counties, including Delaware, Greene, Schoharie, Sullivan, and Ulster. About 11 percent of the tags were issued to residents of New York City or Long Island. Visitors from five states also received tags, including Connecticut, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Vermont.

I want to thank all the Bureau of Water Supply employees who administer, oversee and promote the recreational boating program. Its success is due to their hard work. [Click here](#) to see more photos.

Spotlight on Safety

Maritime Safety

DEP employees are responsible for performing a wide array of tasks, some of which involve marine vessels. The Bureau of Wastewater Treatment (BWT) operates sludge boats and other harbor vessels, the Bureau of Water Supply (BWS) uses boats to perform various tasks including reservoir sampling, and the DEP Police often use boats for rescue operations.

A primary cause of workplace injuries aboard vessels are slips, trips and falls, which can be caused by slippery surfaces on board or while boarding or departing a vessel. To prevent falls that can lead to injuries and overboard incidents:

- ensure manholes/hatches are closed
- wear slip resistant footwear
- paint the perimeter of barges and all tripping hazards with a contrasting color
- when boarding/departing vessels ensure gangways, ramps and ladders are properly secured and hold onto guardrails

All vessels must be equipped with Personal Flotation Devices and all on board should be aware of rescue procedures. Notify emergency personnel and supervisors immediately if a person falls overboard. For more information, read [OSHA's Publication on Deck Barge Safety](#).

At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it's okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau's EHS liaison how they can help. If you've still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It's DEP's responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we'll not only get the job done, we'll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city. CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH [PIPELINE](#). HELP IS ON THE WAY.



FRESH
From the Catskills
RIGHT TO YOUR DOOR!

The Pure Catskills Marketplace is an online collection of high-quality and authentic farm, food and forest products grown, raised and made throughout the region.

purecatskillsmarketplace.com

Our partners at the Watershed Agricultural Council recently opened an online marketplace that sells farm and forest products from the Catskill Mountains. The new [Pure Catskills Marketplace](#) is a one-stop digital shop for honey, handmade wood products, maple syrup and other goods that are produced by watershed businesses that work on the land surrounding New York City's reservoirs. These local farms, forest producers, and artisans help protect our drinking water with their sustainable practices. The online marketplace was launched in the fall. Additional products—including farm fresh vegetables and meats—will be added to the marketplace over the next several months. Each purchase from the online shop helps reinforce a mission that is supported by DEP and the Watershed Agricultural Council—to invest in healthy forests, farmland protection, and clean drinking water. Shop local on the [Pure Catskills Market](#) this holiday season and support the watershed businesses that help protect New York City's drinking water every day!

Holiday Toy Drive

With the Thanksgiving food drive behind us, toys are now being accepted for DEP's holiday toy drives. Please donate a new, unwrapped toy to help make the holidays a little brighter for children from toddlers to teens. **Final day for collection at Lefrak is this coming Monday, December 7—only one more weekend left to shop!** Toys should be brought to your [bureau coordinator](#). Please [click here](#) for information on where and what is being collected at the watershed sites. Thank you in advance for helping to make the holidays a little more joyful for your neighbors.

December Blood Drive

To help ensure that blood will be available to those who need it, DEP is hosting blood drives at the below locations and times:

Lefrak: 6th Floor Training Room, 12/2, 12/3, 7:45am to 1:45pm; **Kingston/Catskill Area:** 51 Albany Avenue, Kingston, NY, 12/2, 1:00pm to 6:00pm; **Downsville Region Area:** Downsville Fire Hall, 12/9, 9:00am to 2:00pm; **Kensico/Highland Regions - Sutton Park Area:** Sutton Park-2nd Floor, 12/10, 8:30am to 2:30pm; **Grahamsville Region Area:** Neversink Firehouse, 12/17, 10:00am to 3:00pm. For the in-city blood drive, [click here](#) for more information, and for the upstate blood drives, [click here](#).



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently recognized DEP with a Breathe Easy Award for the work to implement and enforce Local Law 77, which requires that all diesel-powered non-road equipment 50 horsepower or greater be equipped with a diesel particulate filter or EPA verified Tier IV device. This work included educating the construction industry about the new law and, since 2013, over 150 pieces of equipment, such as backhoes, have been retrofitted at registered construction sites throughout the five boroughs. DEP was also lauded for its aggressive inspection and enforcement policy. Through these efforts, emissions of harmful particulate matter have been reduced by 56 percent on average. Kudos to **Gerry Kelpin, Shailendra Koya (Sonny)** and **Alyssa Preston** for their leadership roles in this effort.

Thanks for Giving



Thank you to everyone who made a donation to the Thanksgiving holiday food drives at DEP. Your generous contributions were greatly appreciated. In-city collections to The Food Bank for NYC totaled 1,227 pounds—the equivalent of 1,023 meals. Please [click here](#) to see photos of the collections at all the various sites. Thank you all - job well done!

We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: newsletter@dep.nyc.gov.