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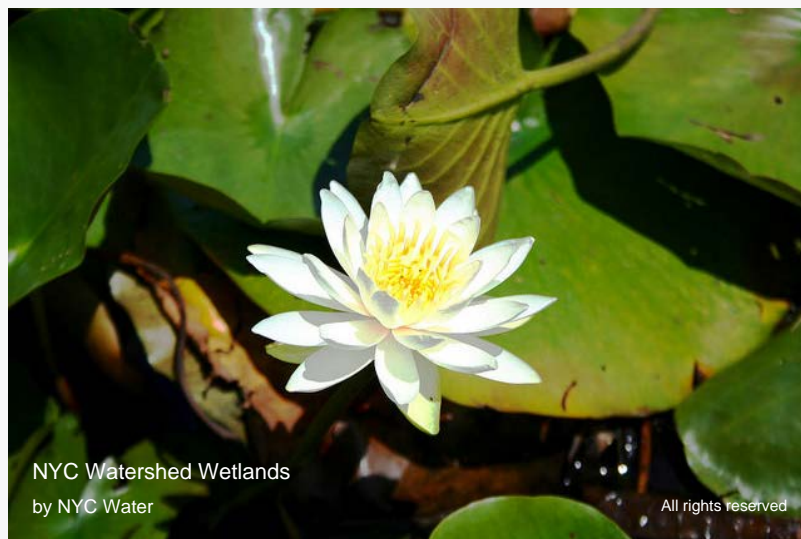
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DEP Encourages People to Explore Recreation Areas to Celebrate American Wetlands Month



DEP scientists will display wetland plants and wildlife on May 26

Public encouraged to explore wetlands in recreation areas to mark American Wetlands Month

Photos available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that it will celebrate American Wetlands Month by hosting a wetlands exploration event at Ashokan Reservoir on May 26. DEP wetland scientists at the event will display samples of plants and wildlife found in nearby wetlands, and answer questions about these unique habitats. This drop-in event will take place from 1:30-6 p.m. at the Ashokan walkway's Olivebridge Dam parking area on Route 28A.

The month of May is set aside each year to recognize the vital role that wetlands play in our nation's ecological, economic and social health. American Wetlands Month has been celebrated each May since 1991. Wetlands, which are transitional lands between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, provide a wide variety of beneficial functions. They attenuate flooding, help maintain stream flow, improve water quality, absorb nutrients and carbon, and provide plant and wildlife habitat. Nearly half the nation's threatened and endangered species rely on wetlands to survive.

Approximately 35,000 acres of wetlands are located within the watersheds that surround New York City's reservoirs. This includes 23,000 acres of wetlands in the portion of the watershed located east of the Hudson River, and 12,000 acres

More Information

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in the west-of-Hudson portion of the watershed. Roughly 5,000 acres of these wetlands are protected on City-owned lands in the watershed. These wetlands protected by DEP comprise 10 percent of wetlands in the east-of-Hudson portion of the watershed, and 22 percent of wetlands in the west-of-Hudson watershed. Approximately 57 percent of City-owned wetlands were purchased by the City since 1997, as part of its watershed protection programs. DEP actively monitors over 120 acres of wetlands on water supply lands to better understand their characteristics and functions.

Many of these wetlands are situated within DEP recreation areas that are open to the public. To mark American Wetlands Month, local residents and visitors may enjoy the unique plants, wildlife and scenery at some of the following wetlands:

West of the Hudson River

- [The Yankeetown Pond recreation unit](#) in Woodstock includes an 80-acre lake that is surrounded by nearly 20 acres of diverse wetland habitat. Additionally, floating aquatic species such as water lilies, bog, sedge meadow, scrub-shrub and forested swamp can be seen. The wetland is also home to several beaver lodges. This unit is open to DEP access permit holders.
- [The Schoharie Headwaters access area](#) in Hunter also has some impressive beaver habitat, along with a scrub-shrub marsh and forested wetland complex. This area is open to the public without the need for a DEP access permit.
- [The Red Brook Headwaters recreation area](#) in Neversink includes more than 50 acres of wetlands, including a complex of marsh, scrub-shrub, hemlock and hardwood swamps. This area is open to the public without the need for a DEP access permit.

East of the Hudson River

- DEP has preserved two wetlands in the Town of Kent that are open to access permit holders. [The Hickory Nut Hill Unit](#) offers a quick hike to a 25-acre marsh complex, and the [Kent Cliffs](#) area includes a 40-acre forested wetland.

While exploring these sites, visitors should take note of the unique and diverse plants and wildlife, including dragonflies, frogs, salamanders, turtles, birds, and mammals such as raccoons, deer, and bears. The soft soils in and around wetlands can be mounded with tussocks created by certain types of plants. All these features combine to form a productive ecosystem that provides us with countless benefits.

Wetlands come in many varieties, including forested swamps, vernal pools, wet meadows, marshes, bogs, and fens. Forested wetlands are the most common type in the City's east-of-Hudson watershed, comprising 70 percent of the wetland acreage, with red maple swamps being most common. Red maple swamps often include yellow birch, green ash, and hemlocks along with an understory of shrubs and herbaceous plants such as tussock sedge and skunk cabbage. Emergent wetlands are the most common wetland type mapped in the west-of-Hudson watershed, comprising 31 percent of the wetland acreage, followed by forested wetlands. Emergent wetlands include types such as cattail marshes and wet meadows which are typically drier than marshes and comprised of sedges, grasses, and wildflowers. Less common, but present, are bogs and fens that typically have unique plant species due to the chemistry of their water sources.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of high-quality water each day to more than 9.5 million New Yorkers. This includes more than 70 upstate communities and institutions in Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties who consume an average of 110 million total gallons of drinking water daily from New York City's water supply system. This water comes from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and the system comprises 19 reservoirs, three controlled lakes, and numerous tunnels and aqueducts. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers

and other professionals in the watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$166 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$1.7 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 with \$20.7 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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