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## Department of Environmental Protection Opened More than 2,600 Additional Acres for Recreation in 2016

**More than 133,000 acres now open for fishing, hiking and other low-impact recreation**

**DEP released new RecMapper utility to help public find lands and waters for recreation**

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that 2,640 additional acres of City-owned property across the watershed were opened for recreation in 2016. With the addition of these new lands, DEP has opened a total of 133,000 acres of land and water for fishing, hiking, hunting and other low-impact activities in the watershed. More than half of these areas can be enjoyed by outdoor enthusiasts without the requirement of a DEP Access Permit.

“As the City preserved land to protect water quality in its reservoirs, it also kept a promise to open these lands to public access whenever and wherever possible,” **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza** said. “Over the past decade DEP has opened tens of thousands of acres for public recreation, promoted the use of kayaks and canoes on four reservoirs in the Catskills, supported the longstanding fishing access enjoyed by thousands of anglers, and we’ve released an online mapping utility to help the public easily find places to explore. The City is committed to working with watershed partners to promote these outdoor opportunities and to enhance recreational access in the future.”

“The Catskill Association for Tourism Services (CATS), the four-county regional tourism association representing the I Love New York Catskill Travel Region, recognizes and supports the important efforts of DEP to increase access and recreational opportunities in the Catskills,” said **Warren Hart, President of CATS and Director of Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning**. “Kudos to the DEP. With the renewed interest in the Catskills and its recreational amenities, CATS has ramped up its digital marketing for the recreational traveler and has produced a regional travel map that will be available for the spring travel season. We all recognize the need to provide products, such as this map and DEP’s RecMapper, that can enhance the recreational experience in a safe and responsible manner.”

“The Catskill Center is proud to work with DEP on its efforts to expand and highlight the recreational opportunities that make our region so special,” said **Jeff Senterman, Executive Director of the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development**. “The tourism economy of the Catskills grows stronger when we preserve lands and provide easy public access to them.”

The 2,640 acres opened for recreation last year were all located in Delaware, Greene or Ulster counties. The vast majority of them were opened as public access areas that do not require a DEP access permit. Some recreation properties—especially those near reservoirs—still require a free access permit

**More Information**

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that can be applied for by going to [nyc.gov/dep/accesspermit](http://nyc.gov/dep/accesspermit). DEP first established public access areas in 2008 to allow recreation without permits on certain watershed lands. Since then, the number of acres open for recreation without a permit has more than tripled, from 20,009 to 69,016. In total, DEP has opened 133,017 acres of land and water for fishing, hiking, hunting, snowshoeing and other forms of low-impact recreation.

The following is a list of some of the properties that were opened in 2016:

**Delaware County**

- DEP added 273 additional acres to the existing Fish Hollow recreational area in Walton, for a total of 398 acres. A DEP access permit is not required for this area.
- DEP opened the new Mill Mountain recreational area in Bovina, which comprises 135 acres. A DEP access permit is not required for this area.

**Greene County**

- DEP added 448 acres to the existing Halcott Center recreational area in Halcott, for a total of 506 acres. A DEP access permit is not required for this area.
- DEP opened the new Lanes Brook recreational area in Hunter, which comprises 135 acres. A DEP access permit is not required for this area.

**Ulster County**

- DEP added 20 acres to the existing Sholam recreational area in Wawarsing, for a total of 262 acres. A DEP access permit is not required for this area.
- DEP added 70 acres to the existing South Hill recreational area in Wawarsing, for a total of 539 acres. A portion of this land is also located in the Sullivan County town of Neversink. A DEP access permit is not required for this area.

DEP also expanded hunting opportunities last year at three recreational areas near Ashokan Reservoir. The Mile Shore, Glenford and Stone Road recreational areas, totaling 1,391 acres are now open to hunting for anyone with a state hunting license. Previously, these areas were only open to those hunters who acquired deer management assistance program (DMAP) permits from DEP.

In 2016, DEP also released an interactive recreation mapping tool to help outdoor enthusiasts find accessible lands and waters more easily. The RecMapper utility combines maps of recreation areas with data related to parcel size, location, uses allowed on each parcel, and other helpful information. It allows users to interactively explore recreation areas by zooming in to any portion of the Croton, Catskill or Delaware watershed. The map includes City recreation areas, and those owned and managed by the New York state. All the recreation parcels are highlighted on the map and users can get helpful information by clicking on them. The RecMapper also includes street maps, topographic maps and satellite imagery to help users find each site and understand its steepness, forest cover and other conditions. The tool was designed to work on computers, cell phones and tablets.

Those interested in finding recreation areas—including the new ones opened in 2016—can find them on the RecMapper by [clicking here](#), or by visiting [nyc.gov/dep/recreation](http://nyc.gov/dep/recreation).

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one 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 upstate watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$157 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 nearly \$14 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](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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