

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 24, 2013

No. 72

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION HOSTS
CATSKILL TOURISM EVENT AT NEW YORK CITY'S BROOKLYN
BRIDGE PARK**

*“Watershed Experience” Event Aimed to Boost Catskills Tourism Economy by Marketing
Outdoor Recreation and Noteworthy Destinations to New York City Residents*

Tourism agencies, businesses, and nonprofit groups from the Catskills joined the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) this past Saturday at Brooklyn Bridge Park to introduce city residents to the numerous tourism destinations that are within a short drive of the five boroughs. “The Watershed Experience” featured Catskill businesses that offer hiking, boating, fishing, lodging, farm-fresh food, concerts, festivals, shopping, and more. Businesses that participated are located within the Catskill/Delaware watershed, a region that includes six City-owned reservoirs that deliver more than 1 billion gallons of high-quality drinking water to 9 million New Yorkers every day.

“The Catskill/Delaware watershed has been maintained in its natural state and this ensures an ample supply of high quality water for almost half of New York State’s population,” said DEP Commissioner Carter Strickland. “DEP is proud to partner with our neighbors in the watershed to encourage New York City residents to visit the nearby Catskill region for low-impact recreation, rest, and relaxation.”

The event, held at Brook Bridge Park’s Pier 1, included destinations from Delaware, Green, Sullivan and Ulster counties. Many tourism attractions offered free trips or other giveaways to the thousands of people who frequent the park on summer weekends.

The event was part of DEP’s ongoing effort to support local economies in the Catskills through opening its lands and reservoirs for outdoor recreation. City reservoirs comprising 33,892 acres are open for recreation, including the boating program that started last year at the Cannonsville, Pepacton, Neversink, and Schoharie reservoirs. In addition, more than 80,000 acres of City-owned land in the watershed are open for hiking, hunting, cross-country skiing, and other low-impact recreational activities. That includes more than 52,000 acres of land that can be accessed without a permit. Expanding recreational opportunities in the watershed is one of the goals outlined in *Strategy 2011-2014*, a comprehensive strategic plan that outlines 100 distinct initiatives to help ensure that DEP is the safest, most efficient, cost-effective and transparent water utility in the nation.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.3 million in New York City, and

residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam, and Westchester counties. 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 employs nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and others professionals in the upstate watershed. In addition to its \$68 million payroll and \$157 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$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. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program with over \$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, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

-30-

Contact: Adam Bosch (845) 334-7868
 Chris Gilbride (718) 595-6600