NYC Watershed Recreation

A newsletter for the recreational users who enjoy the lands and waters of the New York City water supply

Volume 2014-1

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June 2014

NYC Environmental Protection

Cover photo: Shavertown Hiking Trail Celebration. Delaware County, NY

Watershed Recreation

Paddlers in 2014 can earn a commemorative patch from the C.W.C. and the Watershed Post, shown above.

Paddlers enjoying the Pepacton Reservoir in Delaware County

Proud to Wear the Patch

There's a new way for outdoor enthusiasts to show they're proud of paddling or sailing on New York City reservoirs in the Catskills. Starting in 2014, the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) and the Watershed Post will sponsor an incentive program that will provide a commemorative patch to every person who uses a kayak, canoe, sailboat or other permitted boat on at least one of the four reservoirs that are open for recreational boating.

The Catskill Reservoir Paddler patch (shown above) can be sewn onto a backpack, jacket, or hat, or pinned to your office wall to show that you've boated the New York City water supply. CWC and DEP hope the patches will help spread word about the recreational boating program and encourage more people to experience this unique recreational opportunity on the reservoirs.

Patches will be sent to those who use a recreational boat on at least one of the reservoirs according to the following schedule:

- Schoharie Reservoir, May 26-June 30
- Neversink Reservoir, July 1-July 31
- Cannonsville Reservoir, August 1- August 31
- Pepacton Reservoir, September 1-October 13

Please note that all four reservoirs are open during the entire recreational boating season, and the dates above are only for the purpose of receiving a patch. Regular rules for permitting, boat tags and steam cleaning still apply.

To prove you've boated a reservoir on one of these dates, boaters must send a date-stamped photo from the boat looking back at the launch site, a dated access permit, or a boat rental or steam-cleaning receipt to the CWC office in Margaretville. Any of these can be scanned and e-mailed to Diane Galusha at Galusha@cwconline.org

Why Own When You Can Rent?

We're not talking real estate here, but rather canoes and kayaks!

This past boating season, DEP and the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) teamed up to enable local businesses to become rental vendors for recreational boats. Since commercial activities are prohibited on City land except with written permission, DEP gave a permit to CWC to facilitate a boat rental business. CWC then provided aluminum racks for the rental boats at select boat areas. Six vendors answered a solicitation and signed an agreement with CWC that gave them exclusive rights to rent boats at ten specific boat launch areas at four reservoirs in the Catskills.

"The CWC is happy to continue to support DEP's recreational boating program," CWC Executive Director Alan Rosa said. "The racks have allowed for safe, neat storage of canoes and kayaks, and adding rental boats will enable folks that don't own one to enjoy some quality time on the water."

The benefits to this new arrangement are many:

- Day visitors to the reservoir save time by not having to steam-clean their boats on each visit
- Rental boats don't require transportation – they're kept right at the launch sites
- People who don't own boats can still enjoy paddling on the reservoirs
- More rental boats means fewer boats stored at the reservoir, and less clutter for other users
- Renting boats has created a new opportunity for local businesses, which is good for the local economy
- Rental boats are steam cleaned before the season and stay at the reservoirs, lessening the chances of invasive species such as spiny water flea and hydrilla from entering the reservoirs
- Rentals are a great way to introduce beginners to the wonders of boating on NYC's water supply reservoirs

The program's first year was a great success! Vendors made 79 boats available for rental which resulted in over 300 boat trips for reservoir visitors. CWC plans to expand the program so that each reservoir offers equal opportunities. DEP has been very pleased with the rack system and will start providing racks for individual tag holders at the most popular boat areas this summer as well.

Rental boats on the racks at the Neversink Reservoir. DEP File photo

"The rental boat program is an innovative partnership that encourages recreation and environmental stewardship, all while helping the local economy," said DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd. "These opportunities and others would not be possible without our growing partnership with CWC."

For more information about boat rentals and recreation in the Catskill region check out www.thecatskillregion.com

RECREATION UPDATE

What is new since the previous Newsletter?

In the 2013 newsletter, DEP announced some new and exciting projects. Here are some updates:

The Trolling Motor Pilot Program on the Cannonsville Reservoir: The trolling motor program will continue as a pilot at the Cannonsville Reservoir with some minor changes. DEP will evaluate the 2014 season by early 2015 to determine the future of the program. Changes for 2014 include:

- Seasonal Trolling Motor Tags will NOT be issued, but the Two Day Tag will still be used. The Seasonal Tags used last year were discontinued because it was too difficult to confirm that motors did not move off and back onto the reservoir which increases the risk for invasive species movement.

- Cannonsville anglers now have the option of carrying a second (securely fastened and sealed marine grade) battery in the boat. This will allow a boater the added convenience and security of a back-up battery for a longer day on the water. Check out the program details on the DEP Website at: Trolling Motor Program

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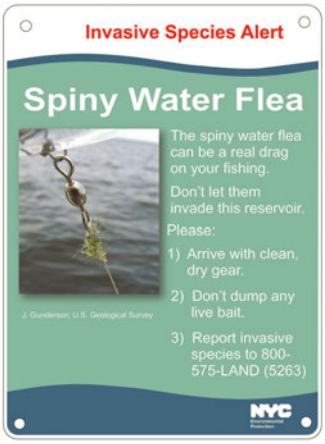
RECREATION UPDATE

Small Invaders Can Bring Big Problems

Invasive species can affect your enjoyment of the outdoor activities you love, both on land and water. These plants, animals and microorganisms have been brought here from faraway places and are surviving and thriving without the predators, parasites and diseases that kept them in check back home. Hunting and fishing opportunities can be spoiled by invasive animals that outcompete game animals and sport fish, invasive plants that provide little nutrition and crowd out native plants, and even exotic microorganisms that disrupt the base of the food chain. Everyone can help stop the spread of these unwanted invaders.

One such invader is now calling some New York waters home. Because the water flea has been found in many New York waters, fishermen and boaters should learn what to look for and how to report these invasive species if they are found in the watershed.



Spiny water flea mass on fishing line, Emily DeBolt, Lake George Association

While out on the water, look for and report invasive water fleas.

Spiny and fishhook water fleas may be small, but they have the potential to drastically change the food chain. Young fish have trouble eating them because the water flea's spiny barbs get caught in their throats and they compete with other zooplankton (small, floating animals) and newly hatched fish. On top of leading to the starvation of many fish, invasive water fleas can also foul up the guides along a fishing pole when they collect along fishing line. Use special care to avoid spreading them further. Always rinse your gear in hot water and allow it to dry for 48 hours before fishing in a new waterbody, Water fleas have infested many waterbodies in New York State and surrounding states, including the Great Lakes, the Finger lakes, Lake George, and the Sacandaga lakes. Please take special care not to introduce these invaders to the NYC Reservoir system.

Look for: Water fleas collecting on fishing line in gelatinous globs; individual fleas are approximately 3/8 of an inch in length.

Report: If you encounter water fleas in any NYC Reservoir please report it to DEP at 1-800-575-LAND or use the online report form on the DEP website at: No Flea DEP

Outdoor Guidance

In 2013 DEP began a program to allow state-licensed outdoor guides to provide fishing, hiking and other outdoor tours on City lands and waters open for public recreation.

Guide Charles Somelofsky (left) and client after a good day on the Pepacton Reservoir.

The program is open to those who have a guide license from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, (NYSDEC) and a DEP Access Permit. Licensed guides in New York must be certified in First Aid and CPR, and they must also be certified in the activities they lead, such as boating or hiking.

As of early 2014, 24 certified guide service companies had been issued a free Guide Permit from DEP to ply their trade on City lands and waters. Prior to this program there was no formal means of permission for a guide to operate on NYC watershed lands and waters.

Guide services have long been a staple of the tourism and outdoor recreation economies of the Catskills, and they offer residents and visitors activities such as guided hikes, fishing trips, hunting trips, or recreational boating outings. With over 120,000 acres of NYC Watershed lands and reservoirs to explore, there is plenty of room for everyone to operate.

DEP surveyed the participating guide services at the end of the 2013 season. Most of the outings the guides led in 2013 consisted of fishing from shore or rowboat at many of the west-of-Hudson reservoirs including Rondout, Ashokan, Pepacton, and Schoharie. One Guide service reported taking over 100 people fishing at the reservoirs this past season. Guides reported the most common fish caught were large and small mouth bass and brown trout.

Some guides also participated in the Recreational Boating Program currently in place on the Cannonsville, Pepacton, Neversink, and Schoharie Reservoirs. One service reported taking 40 people on recreational boating trips during the 2013 season. For more information about becoming a DEP permitted guide service please call 1-800-575-LAND (5263) or email recreation@dep.nyc.gov. DEP will be posting a list of DEP certified guide services on the DEP Watershed Recreation Website shortly.

More Trail Partnerships

Over the past two years DEP has continued to develop relationships with local non-profit hiking trail and outdoor recreational groups to develop more hiking trails on watershed lands on both sides of the Hudson River.

Finger Lakes Trail

In June 2011, DEP began working with the Finger Lakes Trail Conference to create and improve trails in the western Catskills.

The main Finger Lakes Trail runs approximately 562 miles from Allegany State Park on the Pennsylvania border to the Catskill Park where it meets the Long Path, and is the longest continuous foot trail in New York State. The Finger Lakes Trail currently enters the Watershed near the Cannonsville Reservoir. Portions of the trail used to follow local roads through the towns of Tompkins and Walton. DEP issued a land use permit that allowed new sections of the trail to be constructed on City watershed lands so hikers could avoid using the roadways. This improved safety and the overall trail experience. The new trail section winds through old fields with valley and reservoir views and has the feel of being surrounded by nature.

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Wounded Warriors Triumph at the Ashokan Reservoir

This past deer hunting season, DEP partnered with the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) to host a hunt for the Wounded Warrior Project on Ashokan reservoir lands. Four wounded soldiers participated in the event and three hunted.

Three antlerless deer were harvested using Deer Management Assistance Permits DEP obtained from NYSDEC.

Two deer were kept by the veterans and the third was donated to the Venison Donation Coalition. The two deer harvested were transported to a local butcher who processed and packaged the meat so the warriors had it for their return home. All services were volunteered.

The RGS drew on an array of volunteers including four state-licensed guides who volunteered their time to sit in the hunting blinds with the veterans. Blinds, heaters and other equipment were donated by volunteers. The Ukrainian National Association in Kerhonkson provided the lodging for the warriors. A dinner and fundraiser was held by the RGS on Saturday night at the association's estate. The dinner was attended by more than 40 people, including Congressman Chris Gibson.

Pictured front row, left to right: Volunteer Don Brokema, Warrior "Bert" Humphries, guide Marty Giuliano, Warrior Christine Magdalene, Warrior Edward Afanador, and guide "Sonny" Young. Back Row, left to right are: DEP Police Sergeant Dave Wiswall, DEP's BWS Paul Lenz, Warrior William Hayes and RGS volunteer and guide Bill Swiac.

RECREATION UPDATE

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Deer Management Assistance Permits, (DMAP)

For the second year, DEP issued DMAP's from NYSDEC. These permits were used on specific lands surrounding the Ashokan Reservoir. DEP also opened some new tracts of lands for hunting specifically for DMAP holders.

- Successful 2012 DMAP hunters and survey respondents were issued a DMAP in 2013. There was a high rate of interest and all new applicants were selected in a blind lottery after an informational meeting.
- Two new parcels of land at the Ashokan were opened for the first time ever for hunting with a DMAP permit. These lands totaled over 3,400 acres to hunt with a DMAP.
- The end result was a higher deer harvest success rate than the previous year to help support our forest management efforts at the Ashokan. DEP hopes to apply for DMAP again in 2014. Stay tuned for information on the DEP Watershed Recreation website early this fall.

RECREATION UPDATE

More Trail Partnerships *cont'd from page 5*

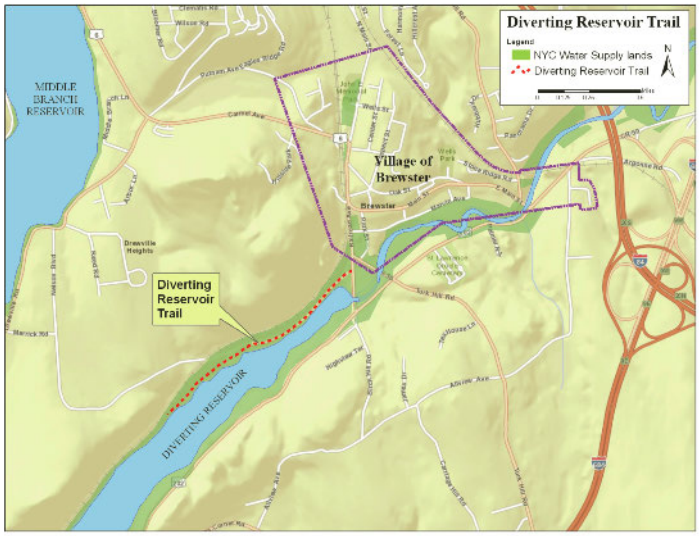
The first section of the new trail begins on the south side of Loomis Brook Road and then descends through DEP's Fletcher Hollow Recreational Unit. The second section continues off of Dryden Brook Road and follows a stretch of old abandoned highway before crossing Apex Bridge and then joins the old Ontario & Western Railroad grade that takes it all the way to Beerston.

Shavertown Trail

Another active trail group in the watershed is the Catskill Mountain Club (CMC), whose members work tirelessly to improve outdoor recreational opportunities in the Catskills. A group of CMC members in partnership with the Town of Andes proposed the development of two trails on City lands in the town. The first of these, the Shavertown Trail, was issued a permit in 2012 and was constructed late that summer. The trail starts across from the Shavertown Boat Launch site at the Pepacton Reservoir and then climbs up the ridge to a perched pond overlooking the reservoir. A side trail allows the more avid hiker to further explore the wooded, rocky ledges that run for miles along the side of Perch Lake Mountain. The second trail project, called Palmer Hill, was just completed and provides excellent valley and mountain views from a network of trails through old farm fields just outside of the Hamlet of Andes.

Diverting Reservoir Trail

All trail proposals on City lands are managed under a Land Use Permit (LUP) which includes liability insurance requirements, health and safety procedures and stewardship plans. The most recent trail LUP was issued to the Putnam County Land Trust at the end of 2013 to develop a one-mile-long trail on the northwestern side of the Diverting Reservoir. The trail will provide recreational access to lands previously only open to fisherman with a trailhead just on the edge of the Village of Brewster.



Diverting Reservoir Trail

Ulster County Rail Trail

The DEP is working closely with Ulster County on a proposal to convert the former Ulster and Delaware railroad easement that runs through City lands north of the Ashokan Reservoir into a multi-use trail. While the project is still in the design stage, the expectation is that the future Ulster County Rail Trail Project will be a huge draw for outdoor enthusiasts in the region.

Railroad bed spanning the Northern shore of the Ashokan Reservoir.

Contact Us

For immediate Access Permit issuance, printable maps of recreation areas, application forms, answers to frequently-asked questions, recreation rules and regulations, up-to-date recreation area lists, recreation program schedules and other information, go to Recreation on DEP's Web site at **www.nyc.gov/dep**

For permit inquiries

please e-mail
recreation@dep.nyc.gov

or

DEP Access Permits
71 Smith Avenue
Kingston, NY 12401
800-575-LAND (5263)
For information about specific recreation areas, reservoirs, programs such as interpretive hikes and boat storage and registration, call the DEP Regional Office for that area:

Ashokan (Ashokan Reservoir)
845-657-2663

Carmel (East of Hudson Lands)
845-808-1750

Downsville (Pepacton and Cannonsville Reservoirs)
607-363-7009

Gilboa (Schoharie Reservoir)
607-588-6231

Grahamsville (Rondout and Neversink Reservoirs)
845-334-7152

Mahopac
(East of Hudson Reservoirs)
914-232-1309

To report dangerous or suspicious activity, water quality threats or to report fish kills on city-owned reservoirs and lands call the DEP Police at **888-H2O-SHED** (426-7433).

Staying Safe on the Water

DEP reminds all boaters to be safe on the water this season. Personal floatation devices (PFD) are to be **worn by everyone** at all times from November 1 through May 1, according to NYS navigation laws. Additionally, every boat used on City reservoirs must have at least one U.S. Coast Guard approved wearable PFD in good condition for each person on board.

Each person on board who is under the age of 12 must wear a securely fastened U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD at all times. All boaters should be familiar and comply with U.S. Coast Guard, New York State, and any other applicable laws and regulations regarding PFD use. Since smaller vessels are being used on the reservoirs, boaters should have no more occupants than what the "maximum capacities" guidance is for their boat. Overloaded boats can become unstable and easily tip. Standing up to fish or reaching out too far to land a fish can also be unsafe. Whenever possible, boat with a friend. If you are going out alone, please tell someone where you will be going and what time you plan to return. When your vehicle is parked at any DEP reservoir boat launch site, please remember to display your Access Permit hang tag on your rearview mirror. If you have misplaced that hang tag, please contact DEP Access Permits at the phone number listed on the left of the page.

Helpful Hints to Keep your DEP Recreational Permits Valid.

If you own a boat that's kept at a NYC reservoir, please remember that your DEP Access Permit must remain valid at all times. Boats with valid DEP Boat Tags can still be removed from the property by DEP if the boat owner's Access Permit has expired.

Also, please inform DEP of any change of address or contact information. Your access permit information can be updated using the online DEP Access Permit System, e-mailing DEP Recreation at recreation@dep.nyc.gov or by calling us at 1-800-575-LAND. You can also download and print a form to update your access permit from the DEP website and drop it in the mail to us. DEP sends reminders to all Access Permit and Boat Tag holders when permits need to be renewed so it is important that your current address is on file with us.

Environmental Protection