

# New York City's Water Story: From Mountain Top to Tap

The water we use today is the same water that fell as rain when dinosaurs roamed the earth. In its endless cycle, water is the only substance that naturally exists as a solid, liquid or gas.



Water's journey from mountain top to tap begins when rain and snow fall on watersheds, the areas of land that catch, absorb, and carry water downhill to gently and swiftly flowing streams.



Streams provide life-cycle needs for fish and other aquatic organisms. Oxygen is added as water tumbles over rocks into deep pools. Overhanging branches keep water cool as fresh water continues its journey.



Water is naturally filtered by the soil and tree roots in dense forests as it travels toward reservoirs. The sun's heat energy releases some water molecules back into the atmosphere as gas, continuing the hydrologic cycle.



Thousands of skilled workers constructed dams and reservoirs to store large amounts of clean water and aqueducts to carry it great distances by gravity from watersheds to New York City.



The 41-mile Old Croton Aqueduct was the first to deliver a clean and plentiful supply of water to NYC. The High Bridge, completed in 1848, carried the aqueduct across the Harlem River on large stone arches.



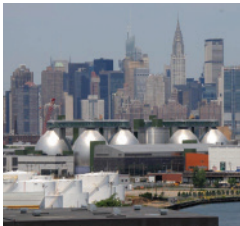
Fresh water flowed through the Old Croton Aqueduct, filling reservoirs where the Great Lawn in Central Park and the Public Library on Fifth Avenue now stand. People rejoiced when a third reservoir was built to support a growing city.



Today, thousands of miles of pipes deliver 1 billion gallons of water daily from the Croton, Catskill, and Delaware watersheds to more than 9 million people. How do you use water? How much water do you think you use?



After we use water, it travels down the drain and through sewer pipes to 14 wastewater resource recovery facilities where it is cleaned and returned safely to the waterways surrounding New York City.



Water is all around us. We experience it in many different ways using all of our senses. As water cycles through its endless journey, we appreciate that it will continue to nourish us and all living things.



Maps are amazing tools that help us find our way and explore new places. Your map uses colors, shapes, images, scale, and words to show the source of our water, its importance in our lives, and its endless journey. We hope that you enjoy learning about our shared water story.

Your name

Find where you live. What is it near?

Find your school. What is the closest body of water?

Find the reservoir closest to your school. What is its name?

Where does your used water - and stormwater - go?

Why is it important to learn about water?

Create your own compass rose.



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