

# NYC Watershed Recreation

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

*Volume 2013-1*



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*Spring 2013*



**Environmental  
Protection**

*Cover Photo by Don Sayut, taken at the  
Ashokan Reservoir in Ulster County*

# Watershed Recreation



Recreational Boaters compete in a 2012 race event held at the Pepacton Reservoir in Delaware County. Photo by Vladimir Bukalo

## Full Steam Ahead for the Recreational Boating Program!

**T**his past spring, recreational boating opportunities were greatly expanded on some West-of-Hudson reservoirs.

As of the Friday preceding Memorial Day 2012, recreational boaters had the choice of four NYC reservoirs to explore under the expanded Recreational Boating Program. The new program opened an additional 12,544 acres for boating. Boaters will no longer have to be fishing to enjoy the pristine environments of the Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie reservoirs.

This new program is based on the successful three-year pilot program on the Cannonsville Reservoir beginning in 2009. Thank you to all who participated to help make recreational boating run smoothly!

Vessels allowed under the expanded Recreational Boating Program include

canoes, kayaks, sculls, rowboats and small sailboats. Small sailboats must have a removable center/dagger board and be at least 11 feet 5 inches in length (11', 5"). Kayaks must be at least nine feet (9') in length. There is no maximum size for vessels.

The 2012 season ended with 922 recreational boating permits having been issued, with 71 percent of the vessels used being kayaks. A whopping 76 percent of the boat tags issued were for the Pepacton Reservoir.

Prior to the Cannonsville Pilot Program and the expanded Recreational Boating Program, boating on the Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie reservoirs was limited to boating for the purpose of fishing and only rowboats were allowed for use.



DEP Recreational Boating Tags

### How the Program Works

To participate in the program and prior to introducing a boat into a reservoir, a boater will select a DEP-certified private steam cleaning vendor and have their vessel inspected and steam cleaned for a fee. For a list of DEP-certified steam cleaning vendors, check the DEP Website at:

**Recreational Boating ([http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/recreation/boating\\_shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/recreation/boating_shtml)).** County, town or local tourism organizations near each reservoir may also be able to provide information regarding this exciting new program so be sure to check with them too. All boaters will need

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a free DEP Access Permit at the time of the steam cleaning appointment. For convenience, DEP Access Permits can be obtained online from the DEP website and printed at home prior to a visit to the steam cleaning vendor. View the online DEP Access Permit System at [Access Permit System \(https://a826-web01.nyc.gov/recpermitapp/\)](https://a826-web01.nyc.gov/recpermitapp/). DEP Access Permit applications are also available online and at some local DEP and government offices in the watershed. After a boat is steam cleaned, the vendor will issue a “Temporary” or “Full Season” DEP Recreational Boat Tag at the choice of the boater. A Temporary Recreational Boat Tag will be valid for one to seven days from issuance. The Full Season Recreational

Boat Tag will be valid from the day of issuance until sunset on Columbus Day,

which is the end of the Recreational Boating season.



*Pepacton Racers, October 2012. Photo by Vladimir Bukalo*

## ATTENTION FISHING BOAT OWNERS: THIS ONE IS FOR YOU!

### *The DEP Is Pleased to Announce a New Pilot Program for Fishing by Boat with Electric Trolling Motors at the Cannonsville Reservoir!*

#### **New Pilot Program Will Start At Cannonsville Reservoir This Spring**

This Pilot program will allow electric trolling motors to be used for fishing boats exclusively at Cannonsville Reservoir this year. The one-year trial comes after the successful expansion of DEP’s recreational boating program, and it marks the first time motorized boats for fishing will be allowed on any of DEP’s upstate reservoirs. The new pilot program is scheduled to begin on April 1, 2013 to coincide with the opening of trout season.

*Some quick facts about this new program:*



Motors are to be used only on row boats and jon boats and for fishing purposes only.



Boats and their motors must be steam cleaned by a certified vendor before they are used in the reservoir to help protect against the spread of certain invasive plants and animals. Certified vendors will issue a special trolling motor tag after the motor is cleaned.



Motors cannot exceed 12 volts and produce no more than 55 pounds of thrust.



Batteries to power the motors must be a sealed marine type and will have to be securely attached to the boat when on the water.



A free DEP Access Permit is needed for anyone boating and/or fishing on City reservoirs.



Batteries will need to be removed from the property each day.



New York state laws for trolling motors will also apply. They require users to have a whistle, a hand lantern, and an anchor on board. The boat must also be registered with the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). For more information on registering your boat with New York State, call your local DMV Office or go to: <http://www.dmv.ny.gov/recreation.htm>



Motors will need to be steam cleaned each time prior to use on the reservoir, unless it remains stored along with the boat at the reservoir.

# Focus on the East of the Hudson Reservoirs

## Boat Launching Site FAQs



### **Question: How come certain reservoirs are closed to new row boats?**

**Answer:** Several years ago, DEP conducted a Boat Area Rapid Assessment (BARA) and every boat storage area at each reservoir was inspected and inventoried. BARA considered such things as access/safety, parking capacity, the distance between the parking and the boat storage area, the slope of the boat storage area and shoreline, estimated extent of erosion and tree damage and the general appearance of the boat storage area. Based on this assessment, carrying capacities were established for each boat storage area at each reservoir. Many of the reservoirs already exceeded the carrying capacity established by the assessment and rather than requiring people to remove boats, we set the carrying capacity at the number of boats at the boat storage area at the time of the assessment. Some East-of-Hudson reservoirs were determined to be at full capacity and DEP is not allowing new boats on some of these reservoirs. Not all reservoirs were closed to new boats so all new boaters should pick an alternate reservoir if their first choice is a closed reservoir.

### **Question: When can I put a boat on an East of Hudson reservoir closed to new boats?**

**Answer:** For some East of Hudson reservoirs, DEP maintains a waiting list of people who wish to put a boat on a closed reservoir. Openings will occur when people remove a boat or DEP removes a boat due to non-compliance with DEP Recreation Rules. To find out about the waiting list and which reservoirs are closed to new boats, please call the Mahopac Boating office at **914-232-1309**



*East of Hudson boat mooring area, DEP file photo*

### **Question: If I am on a waiting list, how long do I have to wait?**

**Answer:** It varies depending on the reservoir, but the wait could be several years. For example, there were more than 160 people on the waiting list for the Kensico Reservoir and only 60 openings became available in 2011.

### **Question: Why can't DEP just build more boat storage areas?**

**Answer:** There are currently almost 7,000 boats on East-of-Hudson reservoirs. A few years ago, DEP staff explored the option of constructing new boat storage areas and determined conditions (based on BARA) were not conducive to building new boat storage areas.

### **Question: I know there are many boats that are never used. Can DEP force people to take them off?**

**Answer:** Under current DEP recreation rules, the agency cannot force people to remove their boats. However, DEP is

exploring ways to increase opportunities for everyone. For example, some people have several boats on the same reservoir. Reducing the number of boats an individual can have on a particular reservoir could open opportunities for others. Additionally, when DEP removes boats that are not in compliance with the DEP Recreation Rules, this does make some spots available for others. In 2011, DEP removed more than 600 non-compliant boats.

While DEP examines different boat management options, please send us your suggestions since the most important resource in managing these boats are the boaters themselves. If you have a boat on the reservoir that you do not use, please consider taking it home so that others on a waiting list can enjoy fishing by boat.

**Have ideas on how we can improve our boating program?  
Please let us know by e-mailing us at [recreation@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:recreation@dep.nyc.gov)**

# The Emerald Ash Borer: an Invader Among Us



Figure 1: Emerald Ash Borer  
Photo: David Cappaert, Michigan State University

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive insect from China that was first discovered in the U.S. in 2002 near Canton Michigan (see figure 1). EAB has been slowly moving east and was found in western NY in 2009. More recent discoveries were made in Ulster County in July 2010 and August 2012. EAB infests and kills ash trees including white, green, and black ash. Unfortunately, all native ash trees are susceptible to EAB. Forest inventories conducted by DEP in 2009-10 indicate that ash comprises approximately seven percent of the trees on city lands in the watershed and are the sixth most common tree found on City land. Trees play a very important role in protecting the water supply in many ways from stabilizing loose soil with their roots to absorbing minerals and nutrients that could run into area water bodies.

Since the summer of 2010, DEP has been working in collaboration with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the US Forest Service assessing the EAB outbreak in the Ashokan Reservoir watershed and the surrounding Hudson Valley area. DEC established an incident command system for the Hudson Valley infestation to coordinate resources from various agencies. This is similar to the system used for wildfires and disaster responses. During the winter of 2010-11 teams of DEP staff collected ash tree samples on city land over an 18-square-mile area. The samples collected consisted of one-meter long sections of the trees, which

were peeled of their bark. Signs of EAB activity were then assessed, recorded and mapped. The young borers, known as “larvae,” live under the bark consuming the inner layers of the tree and creating chambers known as galleries. These galleries are curved, winding channels etched into the tree under the bark (see figure 2). Once an ash tree is infested with EAB, it dies within three years.

The statewide EAB response plan focuses on implementing a “**SLow Ash Mortality**” strategy, otherwise known as “SLAM” and includes increased detection monitoring. It also includes the establishment of “trap tree” clusters around known infestation sites. The borers prefer trees that are under stress or weakened. The trap tree clusters are small groups of girdled ash trees that attract the adult insects. Girdling is the removal of a strip of bark from around the entire circumference of the tree which interrupts the flow of nutrients between the leaves and the roots, thus stressing the tree (see figure 3). The EAB is a small winged insect (see figure 1) so the trap trees are established prior to the borers’ flight season, which begins in May. The insect lays eggs on the bark of stressed ash trees and the

larvae develop under the bark during the winter. While the larvae are developing during the winter, the trees are felled, killing the EAB larvae within the tree and eliminating future adult insects. This helps to slow the spread of the infestation.

DEP established detection trees prior to EAB flight season. Detection trees are individual girdled ash trees located ahead of areas known to contain the EAB. The detection trees are felled after EAB flight season and then multiple 1-meter sections of the girdled trees are peeled during late winter to determine and measure the presence or absence of the insects. The 2012 assessment of DEP detection trees indicates that the trap trees are slowing the spread in the Ashokan basin.

DEP’s goal is to lessen potential EAB impacts on city lands, recognizing that the impacts of the insect ultimately cannot be stopped. DEP will be planning timber harvests to address EAB and other forest needs, and will continue to collaborate with other agencies and organizations in 2013. Collaboration is vital for addressing regional, landscape issues such as invasive insects.



Figure 2: Ash Borer Galleries under the bark of an Ash tree  
DEP file photo



Figure 3: Trap trees near the Ashokan Reservoir  
DEP file photo

## ATTENTION KENSICO RESERVOIR BOATERS:

### *DEP will be removing fallen and damaged trees around Kensico reservoir in the spring of 2013*

Project will improve public safety, clean up some boat storage areas, and diversify the forest with new plantings.

As we all know, Hurricane Sandy ravaged the northeast in 2012. Unfortunately, Sandy did not spare the forests surrounding the City's upstate reservoirs. These forests are not only important for maintaining water quality, but also provide recreational opportunities, including boat mooring areas for the thousands of boaters that use the reservoirs for fishing.

The Kensico Reservoir, located in Westchester County, was hit hardest by Sandy and the DEP will be removing trees that fell or were damaged within the forested buffer lands. Most of the toppled trees were conifers, such as Norway Spruce and White Pine, and as many as 90 percent of the trees in some areas were damaged. Many of the trees left standing are now more prone to wind damage and the weakening of their roots by groundwater. Ashokan, Rondout, and Pepacton had hurricane blow-downs as well.

A forest restoration project at Kensico Reservoir to remove all fallen and damaged trees is in place which will send these trees to market for lumber by a timber company selected competitively by DEP. After the merchantable logs are removed, the limbs and branches will be chipped on site and a more diverse and resilient forest will be planted with a mix of native evergreens, hardwoods, and shrubs.

DEP expects the work to begin in the early spring of 2013 and to continue throughout the year. For the duration of the project, DEP asks that boaters stay alert to the possibility that some boat areas may be temporarily closed while work is underway.



DEP has been clearing and opening boat areas throughout the watershed and will announce these and any temporary boat storage area closings via the DEP website at **Watershed Recreation (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/recreation/index.shtml>)** and on signs posted at the boat storage areas.

## Watershed Recreation Has Never Been Better!

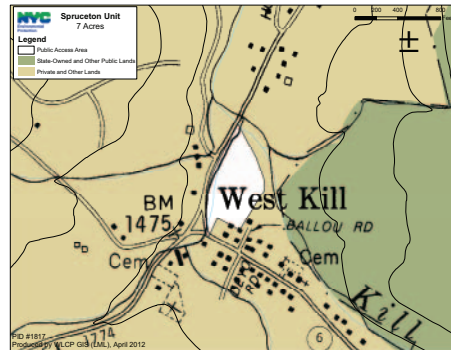
Over the past few years, DEP has focused on opening more city-owned lands and waters for outdoor recreational uses. The reservoirs themselves have been a haven for fishermen for many years and at one point, comprised the majority of city-owned acreage open for public recreation.

In more recent years, DEP has purchased land in the watershed beyond the immediate area of the reservoirs in an effort to protect the water supply for more than nine million New Yorkers. These recently acquired watershed lands have been recognized as a regional recreational resource that can help protect the water supply as a primary purpose, but also provide outdoor recreational opportunities to watershed residents and visitors.

The recreational opportunities offered by the reservoirs are now complemented with an impressive portfolio of watershed lands open for recreation. These lands, in combination with the reservoirs, now total more than 100,000 acres open for some form of recreation. The majority of open lands West-of-Hudson are **Public Access Areas** in which you can hunt, hike, fish, and trap **without a DEP Access Permit**.

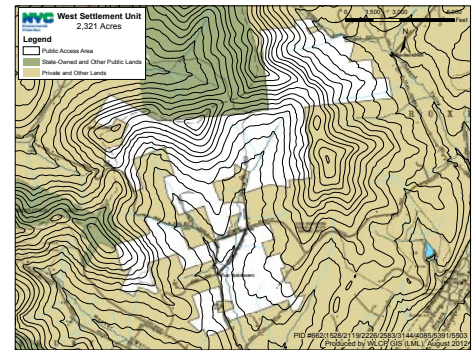
These watershed lands are organized into individual recreational units ranging in acreage from the seven-acre Spruceton Unit located in the Greene County Town

### The Spruceton Recreational Unit in Lexington: 7 acres

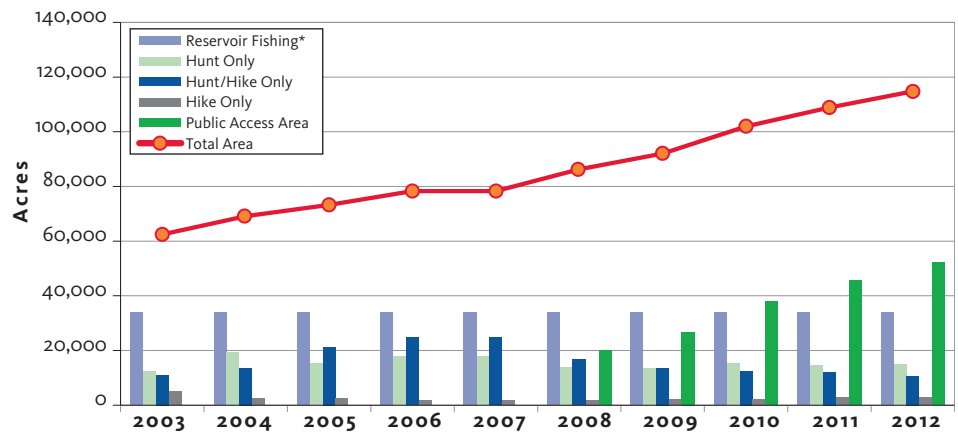


of Lexington to the 2,321-acre West Settlement Recreational Unit located in the Delaware County Town of Roxbury. (see maps below).

### The West Settlement Recreational Unit in Roxbury: 2,321 acres



### New York City-Owned Water Supply Land Open for Recreation as of December 31, 2012



## Continuing Efforts to Reduce White-tailed Deer Impacts on Water Supply Forests

DEP has been working with Westchester County to allow participants of the Westchester County Adaptive Deer Management Program to enter city-owned reservoir lands on Muscoot, Cross River and New Croton Reservoirs. These lands will not be open to the general public, only those hunters who have enrolled and been accepted in the County's program. In response to the recommendations of the Westchester County Citizen's Task Force on White-tailed Deer and Forest Regeneration, the County has developed a successful program to reduce detrimental deer impacts on forest regeneration and other ecosystem impacts at Lasdon Arboretum, Ward Pound Ridge and Muscoot Farms

through a managed hunting program. City-owned land is adjacent to these areas and is also being impacted from high deer populations and impacts.

In 2012, DEP opened additional Ashokan Reservoir lands in Ulster County for deer hunting with bow and arrow. DEP is actively working to open additional reservoir lands for deer hunting to reduce deer numbers and limit detrimental deer impacts on forest regeneration. Several areas around the Ashokan currently have active forest management projects underway and the more deer impacts that can be reduced, the greater the success of these projects. In the early Fall of 2012, DEP applied to the New

York State Department of Environmental Conservation, (DEC) for Deer Management Assistance Permits (DMAP). A DMAP permit allows a hunter to take an additional antlerless deer in accordance with all DEC laws and regulations. DEP was issued a limited number of DMAP permits that were given out to hunters on a first come, first serve basis. The DMAP permits were for 3 specific City properties around the Ashokan Reservoir. The public response to the DMAP permits was very positive and the result was 7 additional deer were harvested from the City lands. DEP hopes to obtain DMAP permits in the future to help further manage the deer herd where forests need a chance to regenerate.

## Watershed Recreation is Serious Business

### 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 and other information, go to Recreation on DEP's Web site at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep)

**For permit inquiries**  
please e-mail  
[recreation@dep.nyc.gov](mailto: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, 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).

A study commissioned recently by three not-for-profit groups found that recreation in the Catskills attracts roughly 1.7 million visitors every year, yielding an estimated economic impact of \$114 million.

Those numbers were compiled in a December 2012 study commissioned by the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, Catskill Mountain Keeper, and Catskill Heritage Alliance. The economic impact study cited the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) recreation lands, boating program and other watershed investments as contributing factors to the robust tourism economy of the Catskills.

DEP Commissioner Carter Strickland responded to the study with a statement that outlined some of the City's latest efforts to encourage recreation throughout the watershed. The statement said:

*"DEP employs almost 1,000 professionals in the watershed that help ensure that nearly nine million New Yorkers have a reliable supply of high quality tap water. In addition, we have a robust capital construction program that creates good local jobs.*

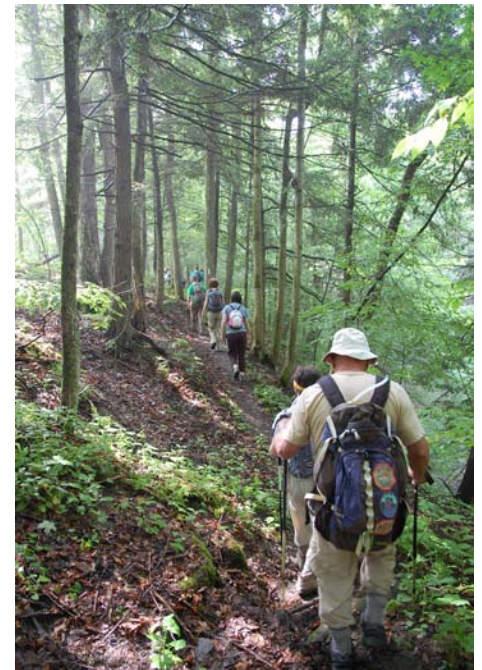
*We are also proud that our efforts to encourage recreation throughout the watershed have strengthened the tourism economy that has been a hallmark of the Catskills for decades. New York City currently owns 114,833 acres in the Catskills that are open for fishing, hiking, boating and other forms of low impact recreation that attract people from other regions of the state and country. In the past five years alone, we have removed the permit requirements from 52,198 acres of that recreation land, making it even easier for our neighbors and visitors to enjoy.*

*To further enhance the recreational value of City land in the watershed, we have issued land-use permits to local groups to build and maintain trails for hiking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. We've also established a successful recreational*

*boating program on four of our reservoirs – Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie – which attracted 922 boaters last year, including some from as far away as Florida and Kansas. And this year, DEP will begin a pilot program that will allow electric trolling motors for fishing at Cannonsville Reservoir.*

*As a diligent steward of protected land in the watershed, we will continue to work with our local partners to explore additional opportunities to share the scenic beauty of the Catskills and strengthen the regional economy, while protecting the vital high quality water supply that nearly half the state's population depends on every day."*

An executive summary of the economic impact study can be found at:  
[www.catskillheritage.org/images/EconomicImpact.pdf](http://www.catskillheritage.org/images/EconomicImpact.pdf).



*Photo courtesy of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference*

