



## **Department of Environmental Protection Hosts Teens from Bronx and Ulster County as Part of Watershed Education Program**

### **Students are involved in “Stream Teams” initiative that focuses on watershed education**

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on Tuesday hosted eight teenagers from high schools in the Bronx and Ulster County who spent time with DEP employees to learn more about water quality, watershed protection, flooding and other environmental issues. The students included five from the Bronx Lab School and three from Onteora High School in Boiceville, N.Y. The teens are participating in a program called “Stream Teams,” which seeks to educate young people about environmental issues and careers in the New York City watershed. The program also strives to connect students from the City with their peers from the watershed.

“DEP staff members were more than happy to meet with students who have shown genuine interest in the many jobs that protect New York City’s water supply,” DEP Commissioner Carter Strickland said. “We hope these students continue to explore their interests, pursue their studies, and perhaps join DEP one day as the next generation of clean-water stewards.”

“The Stream Teams project is an example of the way our education grants help students see just how special our region is and how they can play an important personal role in protecting it,” said Alan Rosa, executive director of the Catskill Watershed Corporation. “The future of the water system and watershed will one day be in their hands.”

“Our Stream Teams program brings together both the benefactors and caretakers of the New York City water supply,” said Melanie Forstrom, the program leader for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County. “The program has been especially timely as youth participating in it have experienced Tropical Storms Irene and Lee, as well as

Superstorm Sandy, within a short window of time, and they are now receiving information about how to protect water quality in the face of extreme weather events cause by climate change.”

During Tuesday’s program, each student was paired with an employee at the City’s water-quality laboratory in Kingston to learn more about protecting the City’s lands and reservoirs, which supply water to 9 million residents across the State of New York. Their mentors included experts in the fields of water ecology, microbiology, stormwater management, wastewater management, mapping, land acquisition and law enforcement. As part of the Stream Teams initiative, the students previously participated in a community service project to help hurricane victims in Breezy Point, Queens, and an overnight trip to the Ashokan Center in Ulster County where they learned more about water-quality testing and flood prevention. The students will use the knowledge they have gained to give presentations throughout their communities, including a group presentation at the Ashokan Watershed Conference on April 27.

The “Stream Teams” initiative—overseen by the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County—is among 398 watershed education projects funded by the Catskill Watershed Corporation in partnership with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection since 1998. Education grants are provided for projects and programs that heighten awareness and understanding of the New York City water system, its vast watershed west of the Hudson River, and the critical need to protect water quality. More information can be found at: [www.cwconline.org](http://www.cwconline.org), or [www.watershededucators.org](http://www.watershededucators.org). Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County runs programs in environmental conservation through the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program, along with programs in agriculture, nutrition, youth development and more. Additional information can be found at [www.cceulster.org](http://www.cceulster.org).

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 \$153

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 \$13 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 [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](https://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/nycwater](https://www.twitter.com/nycwater).