

NEWS from the Catskill Watershed Corp

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CWC contributes to Catskills Interpretive Center project; establishes municipal loan program

MARGARETVILLE, N.Y. November 19, 2014 – The Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) Board of Directors voted November 4 to allocate \$123,000 from the Catskill Fund for the Future to help develop the Catskill Interpretive Center (CIC) in the Town of Shandaken.

The Board also approved a new program to provide low-interest loans to CWC member towns and villages.

The CIC funds will be provided to the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development which owns the 62-acre site in Mt. Tremper and is coordinating a cooperative venture to build the 1,700-square-foot facility. It will be named for retired Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey who was a devoted advocate for it for the past three decades.

The CWC funds will go towards costs of construction of a replica of a Ranger Station/Observer's Cabin Museum adjacent to a full-sized fire tower to be constructed with other funds.

The CWC grant will also fund an interactive digital display unit that will feature a database of outdoor recreational opportunities and cultural activities in the Catskill Region, and will be accessible to several people at a time using touchscreen technology. It will be connected to a new CIC website and to the Catskill Association for Tourism Services (CATS) website.

Included in the CWC grant is \$10,000 per year for five years for maintenance and operation. The NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has allocated \$100,000 for operation and maintenance over the next five years.

In addition to the Catskill Center, the CWC and the DEP, other partners in the venture are the Friends of the Catskill Interpretive Center, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the NY/NJ Trail Conference, the Central Catskills Chamber of Commerce and other organizations and municipalities.

Construction of the CIC, which will serve as a gateway to the Catskill Park, Forest Preserve and the wider region including the New York City Watershed, is well underway using \$1 million in NYS funds and a \$380,000 federal appropriation. Eastman Associates from Oneonta is the general contractor. Completion is anticipated in early 2015.

Municipal loan program

In other business at its November meeting, the CWC Board authorized establishment of a new program to offer low-interest loans of up to \$250,000 to West-of-Hudson Watershed municipalities.

The Catskills Municipal Assistance Loan Program will provide loans to towns and villages as an alternative source of funding. At the same time it will offer a secure rate of return for the

CWC's Catskill Fund for the Future through local investment rather than purchasing bonds on the open market.

Applicants must be signatories to the 1997 Watershed Memorandum of Agreement and voting members of the CWC. A municipality must issue a bond or note as evidence of its obligation for the repayment of the loan within one year, renewable for up to five years.

The CWC is a non-profit, Local Development Corporation responsible for several environmental protection, economic development and education programs in the New York City Watershed West of the Hudson River. Visit www.cwconline.org for more information.