

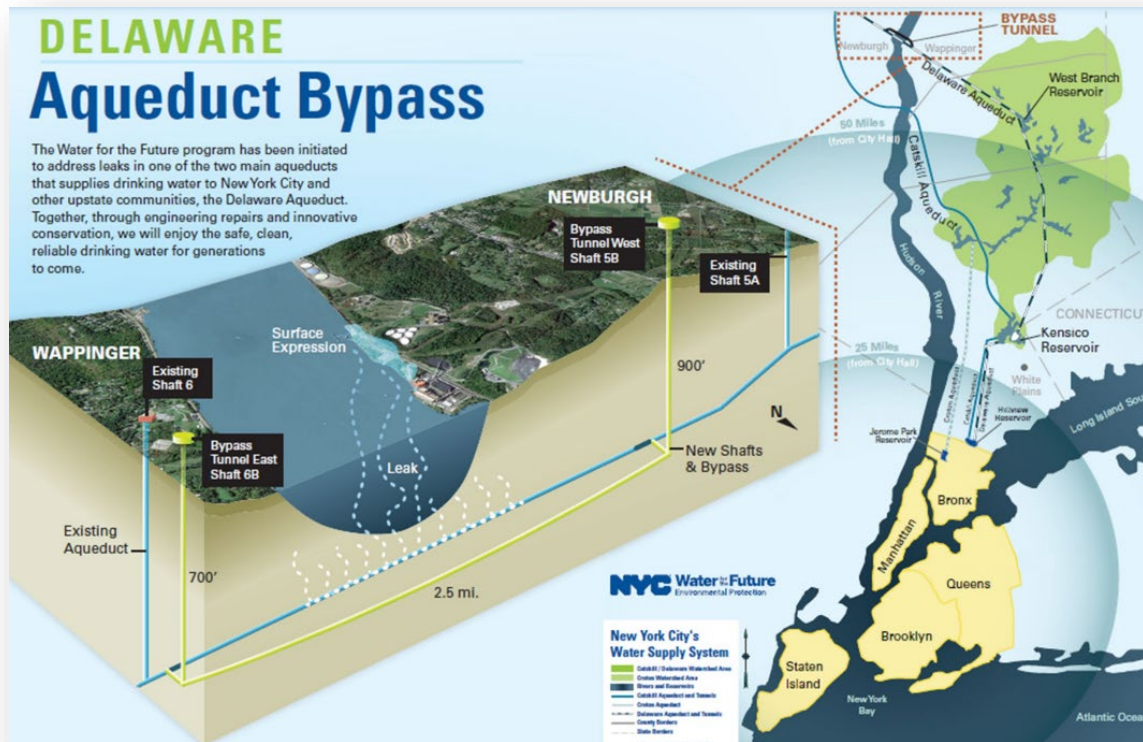
## New York City Prepares for Delaware Aqueduct Repair with Temporary Aqueduct Tunnel Closure Starting October 1, 2024

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is set to commence essential repairs on the Delaware Aqueduct by temporarily shutting down the Rondout to West Branch Tunnel (RWBT) portion of the Aqueduct starting October 1, 2024, with modified pre-shutdown water supply management operations commencing this summer.

### Background on the Project

Identified initially in the early 1990s, two significant leaks in the aqueduct deep underground have been causing a daily loss of about 30 million gallons of water per day. One leak is located near Newburgh, and the other in Wawarsing, Ulster County. To tackle this issue, in 2021, the DEP completed a 2.5-mile bypass tunnel under the Hudson River just north of the City of Newburgh to replace the most compromised segment of the aqueduct. Additionally, a smaller leak in Wawarsing will be addressed during this repair phase. This extensive process requires the complete shutdown and drainage of the Delaware Aqueduct's RWBT to integrate it with the new bypass section.

The planned eight-month shutdown was initially scheduled for the previous year but was postponed to allow for further testing and to mitigate impacts in the areas of the leaks.



### Preparations for the Shutdown

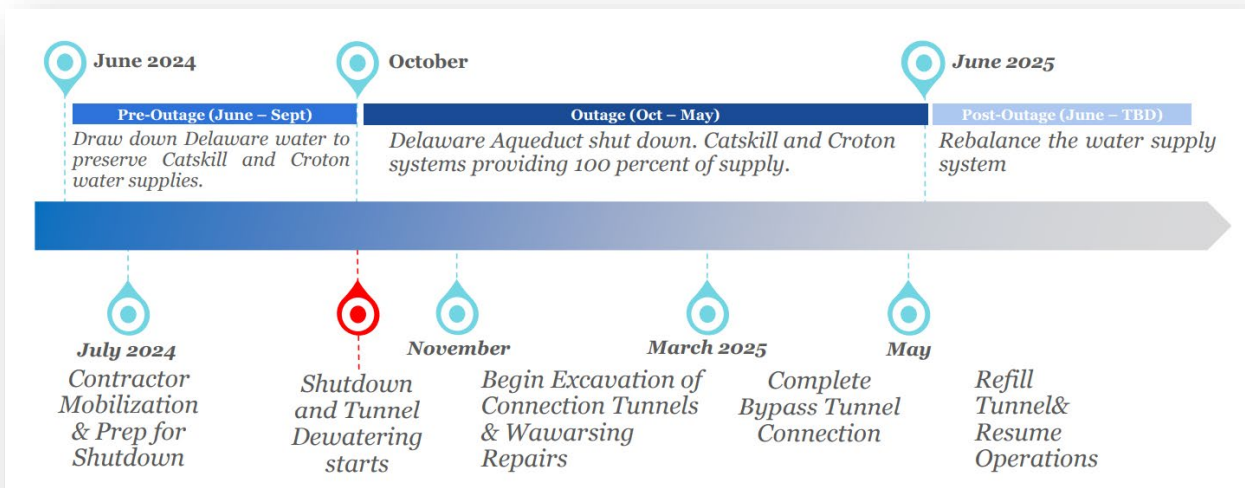
In anticipation of the shutdown, starting in June 2024, the DEP will modify water management strategies to increasingly rely on the northern and eastern Catskill and Croton Systems. This adjustment will help manage the water levels across the city’s 19 reservoirs, accommodate seasonal usage patterns and ensure adequate water supply while minimizing any risk of overflow or spills.

During the shutdown, fluctuations in reservoir water levels may differ from typical seasonal patterns, with some reservoirs east of the Hudson River likely experiencing notable temporary reductions in capacity.

## Impacts on Recreation

While the shutdown will affect some recreational activities, most will remain available on DEP lands and waters.

- In the **Delaware System (the Cannonsville, Pepacton, Neversink and Rondout reservoirs in Delaware, Sullivan and Ulster counties)**, activities such as recreation boating and fishing will continue on all reservoirs as usual. The Neversink, Cannonsville, and Pepacton will continue to support recreational boating throughout the season. During any periods of lower water levels, accessing the water for fishing and boating might require a longer walk, but all land-based activities such as hunting, hiking, and trapping will continue without interruption. Water releases into Delaware River tributaries and the Neversink River will proceed as per the Flexible Flow Management Program (FFMP). The releases may, depending on seasonal precipitation, remain higher than usual during the pre-shutdown phase as DEP plans to lower the Cannonsville, Pepacton and Neversink reservoirs to below 70 percent of capacity by the time of the shutdown.
- In the **Catskill System (the Ashokan and Schoharie reservoirs in Ulster, Schoharie and Greene counties)**, fishing from both shore and boat at Schoharie and Ashokan reservoirs will continue as usual, with Schoharie also supporting recreational boating all season. Similar to the Delaware



system, lower water levels during the shutdown may impact routine water access but won't restrict other activities. Releases to the lower Esopus Creek during the shutdown will also

continue pursuant to the Interim Release Protocol, including the Conditional Season Storage Objective of 90 percent capacity in the Ashokan from mid-October through mid-March.

- The **Croton System (12 reservoirs and 3 controlled lakes in Westchester and Putnam counties)** will maintain fishing access across all of its reservoirs and hunting, hiking, and trapping will remain unrestricted. In-stream water discharges, however, may vary from typical conditions. Moreover, fluctuating water levels will necessitate ice fishing restrictions at several reservoirs during the winter of 2024-2025. As part of the planned modified pre-shutdown operations, release flows in the West Branch Croton River from Boyd Corners Reservoir all the way to the Muscoot Reservoir will be reduced to seasonal minimums this summer and/or during the shutdown period. Also starting this summer, releases from the East Branch and Diverting reservoirs into the East Branch Croton River will be reduced by at least half. During the shutdown starting Oct. 1, releases from East Branch Reservoir will be increased significantly above normal to increase flow into the Croton Falls Reservoir to augment the City's supply system.

## Stay Informed

The Delaware Aqueduct is expected to fully reopen in May 2025, after which DEP will work on rebalancing the water supply across the Delaware, Catskill, and Croton systems. Given the project's complexity, real-time weather and environmental conditions may impact reservoir levels, water releases, and stream conditions, thereby influencing both repair progress and recreational activities.

For the latest updates on the shutdown and its impacts, please visit the DEP website or follow the DEP Watershed Facebook page. Additionally, DEP has released a detailed presentation on the project, which includes projected reservoir levels during the shutdown, available for further information.

**DEP Website:** [New York City Department of Environmental Protection](#)

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