

Delaware Water System Driving Tour



Time and the Valleys Museum
Grahamsville, New York

Connecting Water, People and the Catskills



Sponsored by
NEVERSINK BLOOMS
with funding made possible in part
by a beautification grant from Sullivan Renaissance.



Created by the
TIME AND THE VALLEYS MUSEUM
Grahamsville, New York
2020



This driving tour will take you to all four reservoirs of New York City's **DELAWARE WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM**. A great place to start is at the Time and the Valleys Museum and the exhibition *Tunnels, Toil and Trouble: NYC's Quest for Water and the Rondout-Neversink Story* (stop #1). This interactive exhibition gives a great background on all of New York City's water supply systems and especially the Delaware System. Check timeandthevalleymuseum.org for the most updated open days and times.

On this tour, you will enjoy gorgeous water views, beautiful, peaceful scenery and quaint towns in Sullivan and Delaware counties. **THE DRIVING TOUR COVERS A LOT OF DISTANCE AND WILL REQUIRE SEVERAL HOURS, SO PLEASE BE SURE YOU HAVE A FULL TANK OF GAS, PLENTY OF WATER AND SNACKS.**

To find restaurants and tourist attractions along the way:

sullivancatskills.com
greatwesterncatskills.com
yelp.com or tripadvisor.com

timeandthevalleymuseum.org

845 985-7700

Why Does New York City Need Upstate Water?



New York City, 1660

As early as the 1700s there were water problems. Salt from surrounding rivers infiltrated the drinking water, and increased population polluted the largest source of clean water, the Collect Pond. This caused two problems:

1. Outbreaks of sickness such as small pox, cholera and yellow fever.



Fire of 1835

2. Not enough water to put out fires, when most of the city was built of wood. Over $\frac{1}{4}$ of the entire city was destroyed by fire in 1776, and in the "Great Fire" of 1835, over 17 city blocks and 700 buildings were destroyed.

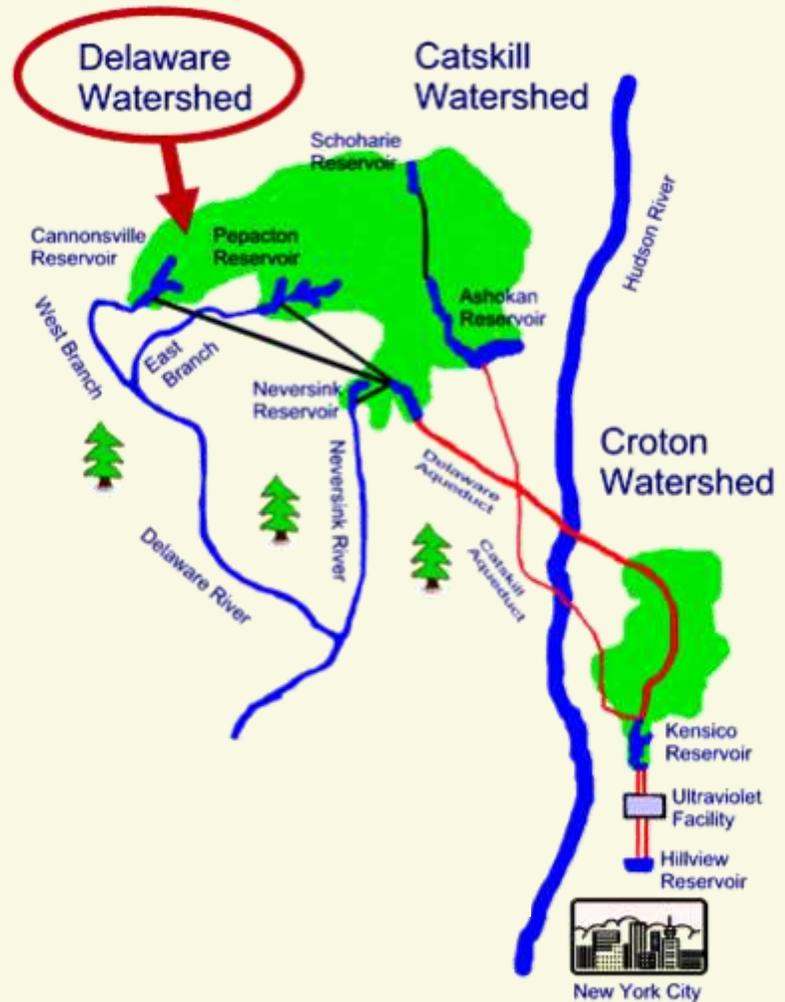
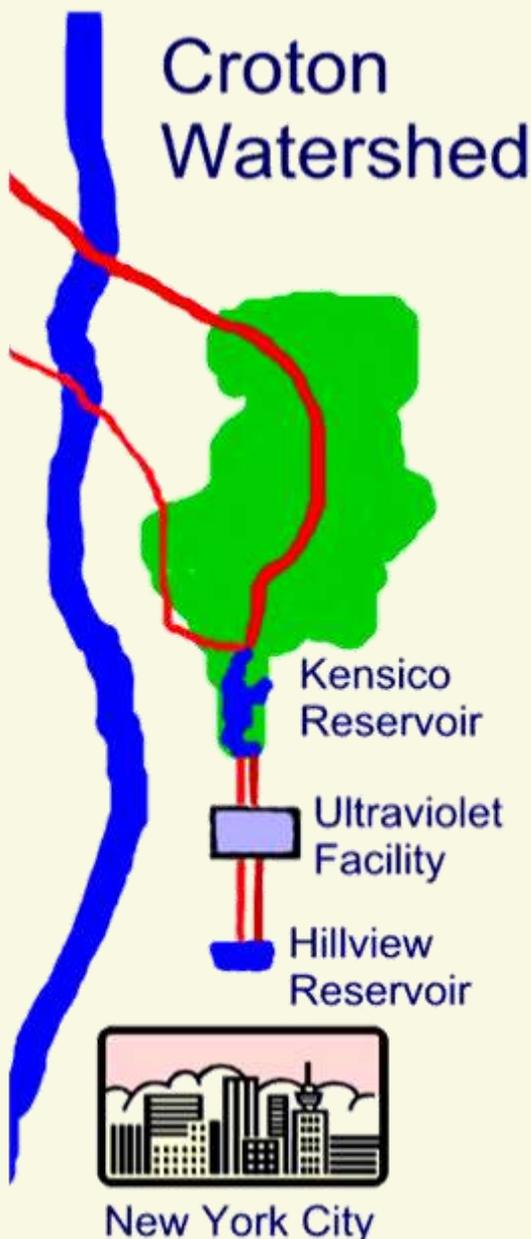
By the early 1800s, New York City began seeking water off of Manhattan Island and designing ways to bring it into the city quickly and safely.

New York City's Water Supply Systems

The first water system, known now as the **OLD CROTON SYSTEM**, opened in 1842. Finally abundant clean water for everyone!

But demand quickly overcame supply, and the **NEW CROTON SYSTEM** (an expansion of the Old Croton) was built.

The **CATSKILL SYSTEM** with the Schoharie and Ashokan Reservoirs began operation in the early 1900s, at about the same time as waves of immigrants descended on New York City, and again, there was not enough water!



Built during the 1930s and 40s, the first phase of the **DELAWARE WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM** includes the Neversink and Rondout reservoirs. The second phase, which includes the Cannonsville and Pepacton reservoirs, came on line in the 1950s and 60s. **TODAY THIS SYSTEM PROVIDES NEW YORK CITY WITH OVER 50% OF ITS WATER!**

Stop 1 Time and the Valleys Museum

332 Main Street (St. Rt. 55) Grahamsville



TIME AND THE VALLEYS MUSEUM

- Three interactive and engaging exhibits on Catskill water and the building of New York City's water systems
- 1930s Catskill Family Farm with a farm house and five outbuildings →
- Museum Shop and Research Center



Please check our website for current open hours.



To Stop #2: Make a left out of the parking lot and take a short drive up St. Rt. 55E to the Rondout Reservoir.

Stop 2 Rondout Reservoir

St. Rt. 55, East of Grahamsville



At this stop you can get out of your car and view the beautiful reservoir and information kiosk.

Construction on the **RONDOUT RESERVOIR** began in 1937 and ended in 1951. The reservoir holds 50 billion gallons of water.



Core wall of the Rondout Reservoir Dam



Seven and 1/2 miles long, the Rondout Reservoir is the most important of the Delaware system reservoirs, because it is the control reservoir. What does that mean? It means that water from the other three reservoirs are funneled by underground tunnels into this reservoir, where it is released into the Delaware Aqueduct, which goes directly down to New York City.

85 Mile Long Delaware Aqueduct

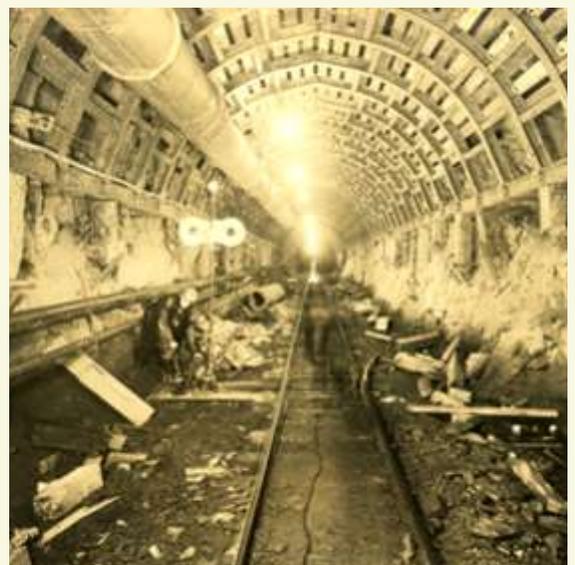
— THE LONGEST CONTINUOUS TUNNEL IN THE WORLD —



The Delaware Aqueduct needed reinforcement through areas of unstable rock and to withstand pressure from exterior groundwater.

Concrete and reinforced steel:

- Reduces the aqueduct's resistance to water flow.
- Prevents collapse.
- Stops water leakage.



Communities Removed for the the Rondout Reservoir: Eureka, Montela and Lackawack



Eureka



Montela



Lackawack

You are standing on the county line, marking the boundary between Sullivan and Ulster counties. The popular County Line Barber Shop and Bar stood directly on top of this line.

You could have your hair cut in the left side of the building (in the dry town of Neversink) and then go to the right side of the building in the not-dry Town of Wawarsing and have a drink at the bar!



To Stop #3: Make a right out of the Rondout Reservoir kiosk pull off and take St. Rt. 55 west back though Grahamsville and then through Neversink. After reaching the Neversink Reservoir, go over the dam and park at the kiosk pull off on left.

Stop 3 Neversink Reservoir

- Construction Dates: 1941 to 1953
- Capacity: 35 billion gallons
- Length: 5 miles long
- Depth: 175 feet

S.A. Healy Company from Chicago, Illinois constructed the reservoir and dam. The reservoir took two years to completely fill.



The dam's cut off wall is eight feet wide at the bottom, four feet wide at the top and 166 feet tall. The earthen structure containing the cut off wall is 1500 feet wide at the base, 60 feet wide at the top, 200 feet high and 2800 feet long. It is made of seven and one half MILLION cubic yards of compacted soil and one million cubic yards of rock.

The NEVERSINK TUNNEL carries water from the Neversink Reservoir through a mountain to the Rondout Reservoir.

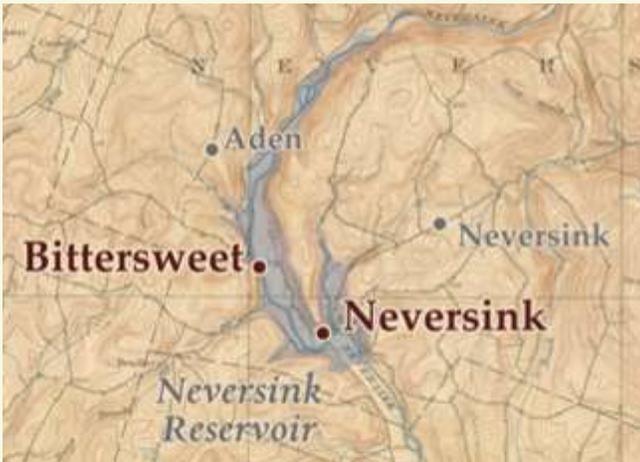
WORLD WAR II

In 1941, the federal government diverted earth moving equipment to build air fields and other military projects.

In November, 1943 equipment, materials and personnel restrictions stopped all work on the Neversink Reservoir until 1946.



Communities Removed for the Neversink Reservoir: Bittersweet and Neversink



Bittersweet had a post office, schoolhouse and 15 homes. The name “Bittersweet” comes from the area’s abundance of bitter-sweet, a plant with bright orange berries and bitter-sweet tasting bark.



In 1870, Neversink had a church, hotel, grist mill, store, two shoe shops, blacksmith shop and a few homes. By 1926, it had over 200 residents, 50 homes, three garages, two casinos and a bowling alley!



Ousterhout Boys and Cousin, Bittersweet

Former residents still remember the three fine swimming holes and fly fishermen recall the great fishing on that section of Neversink River. After condemnation, Neversink was relocated to its current site on State Route 55.



To Stop #4: From the Neversink Reservoir kiosk, make a left on St. Rt. 55, going west towards Liberty. At a very sharp right hand curve, make a left on to Clements Road and continue until you come to a “T”. Make a right turn to enter St. Rt. 17W. Take St. Rt. 17 to Exit 84, Rt. 8 Deposit/Walton (about 50 miles). Go 2.5 miles on Rt. 8 and make a right on Rt. 10, to the reservoir.

Stop 4 Cannonsville Reservoir



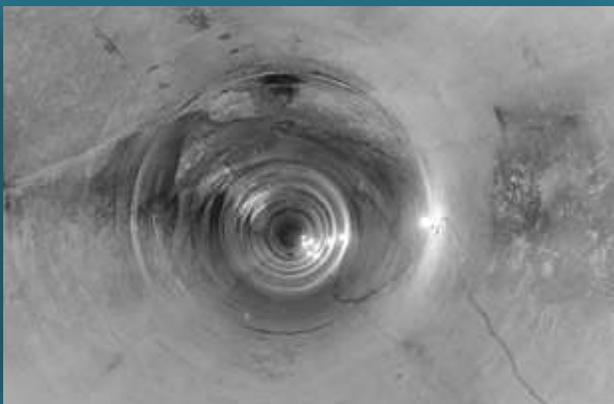
The best place to view the reservoir is six miles along Rt. 10 at the kiosk pull off.



CANNONSVILLE RESERVOIR

Construction Dates: 1955 to 1965

- Capacity: 100 billion gallons
- Length: 16 miles long
- Drainage Basin: 455 square miles



WEST DELAWARE TUNNEL

Construction Dates: 1955 to 1965

- Capacity: 500 million gallons daily
- Diameter: 11 feet 4 inches
- Length: 44 miles, from Cannonsville Reservoir to Rondout Reservoir

Communities Removed for the Cannonsville Reservoir: Cannonsville, Beerston and Rock Royal

- Land Aquired: 19,910 acres
- Displaced: 1,000 residents
- Eleven cemeteries with 2,150 graves moved



Cannonsville



Beerston



Rock Royal



Rock Royal Hotel

To Stop #5: Continue on St. Rt. 10 along the Cannonsville Reservoir to Walton. In Walton, take Rt. 206 south, until you reach Downsville. If you want to take a slight detour - visit the covered bridge right outside of Downsville. Continue on Rt. 206 (becomes Rt. 30) and you will reach the Downsville Dam.

Stop 5 Pepacton Reservoir

Continue on Rt. 30 until you come to the kiosk on your left.



DOWNSVILLE (PEPACTON) RESERVOIR

- Construction Dates: 1947 to 1954
- Capacity: 140 billion gallons
- Length: 18 miles long
- Dam: 2,450 feet long
- 200 feet high

Largest Reservoir in the Delaware System



Downsville Dam



Core wall of the Downsville Dam

EAST DELAWARE TUNNEL

Construction Dates: 1949 to 1955

- Capacity: 500 million gallons daily
- Diameter: 11 feet 4 inches
- Length: 25 miles

The East Delaware Tunnel connects the Pepacton Reservoir to the Rondout Reservoir.



Communities Removed for the Pepacton Reservoir: Arena, Pepacton, Shavertown and Union Grove

- Land Aquired: 13,384 acres
- Displaced: 974 residents
- Moved: Ten cemeteries with 2,371 graves



Shavertown

Arena



We Hope You Enjoyed The Tour!

**TO RETURN
TO ST. RT.
17:**

Take Rt. 30
back
towards
Downsville.
Make a left
on to Rt.
206 towards
Roscoe and
St. Rt. 17.
From there
you can find
your way
home!



**You Are
Here**



**Time and the Valleys Museum
332 Main Street
Grahamsville NY 12740
845 985-7700
timeandthevalleymuseum.org**