

The Neversink Reservoir
Year Completed: 1953
Capacity: 34.9 billion gallons
Watershed size: 93 square miles

Introduction:

Neversink Reservoir is one of several in the Catskill Mountains that supply water to New York City and other communities along its water supply network. It is located in Sullivan County's Town of Neversink, 75 miles northwest of the city.

It is fed by the Neversink River, the longest tributary of the Delaware River. Water collected in the reservoir in turn goes through the Neversink Tunnel a short distance east to Rondout Reservoir to be pooled with that from Pepacton and Cannonsville as well, providing nearly half of the NYC's daily consumption.

History

Construction began in 1941, as the city realized that after World War II, it would need to increase its supply aggressively to meet explosive growth. Neversink was ultimately chosen after opposition from the region's trout fishermen and the geologic impossibility of the site halted plans for smaller reservoirs along Willowemoc Creek.

Two local hamlets with long histories in the area, the ironically named town of Neversink and the aptly named Bittersweet, were condemned and flooded to make the reservoir a reality. Neversink was relocated some distance away and still exists today; Bittersweet is gone completely. The reservoir was finished in 1953 and began sending water the following year, although only in 1955 did it reach its planned capacity. At full capacity, Neversink holds 34.9 billion US gallons. The upper Neversink drains a 92-square mile area, the smallest of any of the city's Catskill reservoirs, reaching all the way to Slide Mountain, the Catskills' highest mountain, through six towns and two counties. It is 5 miles long.

Activities:

Neversink is not as easily reached as some of the city's other Catskill reservoirs. Fishing is permitted in season with a fishing license in addition to the appropriate New York state license, and the reservoir is known, as with most Catskill fishing areas, for its trout. However boats are not allowed to leave the reservoir for environmental reasons and must be stored near it year round. Hunters with valid city and state permits may also use the lands around the reservoir where hunting is permitted during the season. Beyond this, however, no recreational use of the reservoir is permitted.