

FROM COMMISSIONER WARD

Over the summer, DEP made significant progress in our mission to ensure that New York City's water remains clean and safe for all New Yorkers. As you may know, the City is under direction from the US Environmental Protection Agency and the New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation and Health to filter the Croton water supply, which delivers, on average, 10% of the City's drinking water.

Our regulators have ruled that the City must filter its Croton supply – the City's other water supply, the Catskill/Delaware, received a Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD) from the EPA last November - due to concerns about long-term public health risk, as well as seasonally occurring color and taste deficiencies in the water. To remedy these deficiencies and provide clean water from the Croton system in perpetuity, DEP will construct a filtration plant for the Croton supply; years of environmental studies indicate filtration combined with strong watershed protection, is the best method to guarantee safe, high-quality drinking water.

DEP is considering three different locations for the proposed plant, two in the Bronx and one Westchester County. In June, the State Legislature passed a bill allowing the City to alienate parkland under Mosholu Golf Course in Van Cortlandt Park, thereby keeping Mosholu open as a siting possibility. In July, Governor Pataki signed the bill into law. This success was due to a truly tremendous effort on the part of many staff here at DEP, City Hall, and the support of our partners in the construction trades.

The Legislation requires that DEP prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) that will contain a complete evaluation of the three potential sites. The Office of Environmental Planning and Assessment is preparing the SEIS with the assistance of our consultants, and we anticipate that it will be completed by June 2004, at which time we will be able to select the preferred location from the three sites currently under consideration.

As part of the State legislation, DEP has agreed to invest \$200 million in park-related improvements for the Bronx to mitigate the impacts of constructing the plant in a public park, if the plant is, in fact, constructed at the Mosholu site. Though the plant will be underground, the construction period of 5 – 6 years will be inconvenient for neighboring communities and park users.

City water infrastructure and parks projects have often been related or conjoined, but this mitigation package presents a real opportunity for the City to create a green legacy for the Bronx at the same time we improve the quality of Croton water for all New Yorkers.

Very truly yours,

C.W. Ward

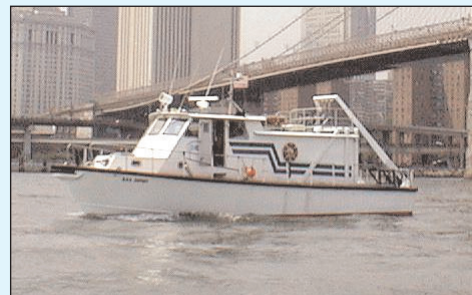
SAILING NEW YORK CITY'S WATERWAYS WITH THE BWT MARINE DIVISION

DEP has a wide range of responsibilities - not only do we maintain the City's water distribution and sewer systems, but we protect our watersheds, collect water and sewer fees from our customers, and respond to hazardous materials situations and air, noise, and asbestos complaints. DEP's Bureau of Wastewater Treatment (BWT) is charged with handling and processing New York City's 1.2 billion gallons per day of wastewater, and operates the City's 14 wastewater treatment plants and 93 wastewater pumping stations throughout the five boroughs. In addition to operating the City's wastewater infrastructure, BWT is also responsible for maintaining the high quality of the waterbodies surrounding New York City.

BWT's Marine Division operates a fleet of vessels that perform a number of duties, including monitoring harbor water quality, surveying the shoreline for combined sewage outflow, and transporting sludge to dewatering facilities.

Since 1909, New York City has been monitoring the water quality of the New York Harbor. Monitoring techniques have changed a great deal since then, but DEP's ongoing analyses indicate that it keeps improving.

In order to make sure that harbor water quality remains high, DEP monitors water at 53 different points along the Harbor, performing routine tests to measure a number of water quality indicators. The Marine Science Harbor Survey Program operates two vessels that are dedicated to monitoring the Harbor's quality - one of the vessels, the *Osprey*, was custom-made for water quality sampling in New York Harbor. It contains a shipboard laboratory that is equipped to meet all of the quality control and sampling *(continued on reverse ...)*



The Osprey

AN INTERVIEW WITH: KEANE LEITCH, WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION UNIT, BEC

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection Hazardous Materials Response Unit (HMRU) is the oldest and most technically advanced Haz Mat Unit in New York City. It emerged from the DEP's Bureau of Science and Technology in the 1970's. It currently operates under the BEC's Division of Emergency Response and Technical Assessment (DERTA). DERTA is one of the most technically accredited groups in the country and continues to receive specialized training in the use of highly advanced instrumentation at the cutting edge of technology. In the light of recent events, DERTA's Haz Mat Unit has been expanded to include the Weapons of Mass Destruction Group (WMD) with particular emphasis on biological and chemical warfare agent detection. This group cross trains with various agencies throughout New York City including FBI, NYPD, Bomb Squad, and the Department of Health. Keane Leitch is a member of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Unit in the Hazardous Materials division of BEC.

DEP: You've been worked at DEP for a while - how did you get your start with the Agency?

KL: I've been an official DEP employee for two years - but I actually worked for DEP while I was in college. I spent two years as a summer intern in the organic lab. I studied biochemistry, which means there are basically two options to pursue: medicine or pharmaceuticals – I ended up working for a vitamin manufacturer on Long Island and a pharmaceutical company in New Jersey for a while specializing in inhalation formulations. When I first graduated from college, though, my DEP supervisor had suggested I interview with Hazardous Materials. I did, and two years later they gave me a call!

DEP: When you were first hired, what did you do for DEP?

KL: I started with the Right-to-Know group. Basically, Right-to-Know keeps databases of all the facilities in the City that store hazardous materials, and what materials are stored in them, so if there's an emergency at one of the buildings, responders know immediately what substances they're dealing with. They also keep records of risk management plans on file for large facilities.

(continued on reverse ...)

KEEPING OUR WATER SAFE: THE DEP POLICE DIVISION

The DEP's Police Division's (DEP PD) mission is to ensure the safety of DEP personnel and the security of our facilities and infrastructure. Right now, DEP PD is working to strengthen its capacity even further, focusing on personnel enhancements, comprehensive training programs, and the addition of state of the art technology and equipment. As the Police Division expands its capabilities, it is also working to reflect a proactive and progressive protection policy, while remaining responsive to the needs of communities its policies affect.

The DEP Police Division has, over the past year, gone through a period of reorganization and expansion, resulting in a number of specialized subdivisions and units for the department.

The Environmental Enforcement division's responsibilities include patrols and short-term investigations relating to crime, terrorism, and intentional and unintentional pollution. The division performs its duties throughout the watersheds, and has response capability throughout all of New York City's five boroughs. DEP PD's Detective Bureau and Intelligence Division is responsible for long-term investigations covering crime, terrorism, and pollution. DEP PD Detectives are also assigned to the NYPD's Intelligence Division and the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force.

In addition to the Environmental Enforcement unit and the Detective Bureau and Intelligences Division, DEP PD has a Special Operations Division consisting of a number of highly specialized units: two seven-member Emergency Service teams; a fourteen-member Strategic Patrol unit protection infrastructure; a four-dog Canine unit; a Special Projects unit; a full-time Aviation unit surveying the entire watershed; and an Environmental Police Academy, which provides 20 weeks of certified basic recruit academy training, including 830 hours of environmental law, police science, and firearms training.

The DEP Police Division exists to serve you and the people of New York City and the watershed communities, but it also relies on your eyes and ears – please remember to report dangerous, suspicious and unusual activity to the DEP Police Division at 1-888-426-7433. In an emergency, dial 9-1-1.



(*Harbor Water Quality, cont'd ...*) requirements that the US Environmental Protection Agency mandates.

Another of the Marine Division's responsibilities is to run DEP's Shoreline Survey Program. The Division maintains and operates three shoreline service vessels, the *Neptune*, the *Poseidon*, and the *Clinton Morris*, which a team of BWT inspectors use to identify and monitor outfalls along the shoreline of the City, providing early detection of raw sewage discharges. DEP can also use the vessels in emergency monitoring situations and for monitoring water quality during the beach season.

The Marine Division's Sludge Transportation program uses three motorized vessels, the *North River*, *Newtown Creek*, and *Owls Head*, to carry sludge – the solid byproduct of the wastewater treatment process – from wastewater treatment plants that lack dewatering facilities to those that do. Dewatering allows us to remove 90% of the water from sludge, resulting in a more compact "cake" of biosolids. Sludge vessels have been part of New York City's sludge transportation system since the 1930s – before they went into operation, the City actually deposited sludge directly into the waters surrounding the wastewater treatment plants.

(*Keane Leitch, cont'd ...*)

DEP: Since you started working for DEP, you've changed divisions? What are you involved with now?

KL: I specialize in biological and explosive materials for the Weapons of Mass Destruction unit. Basically, we respond to reports of unknown substances, like an unidentified white powder found at a location. Even though we're all trained as chemists, in order to stay on top of things we're constantly reading and training across disciplines with experts in various fields. On top of that, our unit is one of the most specialized in the City, using our mobile laboratory when we're on-scene. It's an amazing tool and was specially constructed for our unit. It's exciting because we're employing an actual laboratory when we're in the field, and we're using techniques and instruments that are proven to work – so dependable that they would stand up in court as evidence. We're straddling both worlds – work in the field and in a lab; it makes us unlike any other civilian unit in the City.

DEP: What's your favorite part of doing what you do every day?

KL: Well, every day is something different – that's what I'd say is the most interesting. We always have the chance to learn in the field, and we're always working with other agencies, like the Department of Health or the Bomb Squad or the Joint Terrorism Task Force, so I'm exposed to a broad base of how different parts of the City work. And it's never boring – when you get to work, you're never sure what your day is going to look like. With all that we do, I can definitely say that I'm always learning something new.

LEARNING IS FUN WITH DEP IN YOUR SCHOOL!

DEP's Office of Education is ready to kick-off the 2003-2004 school year with a variety of free, inquiry-based education resources for teachers, students, parents and curriculum specialists. Education staff travels throughout the five boroughs and beyond, providing professional development workshops, classroom visits, assembly presentations, interpretive field experiences, assistance with curriculum and research project development and much more. Printed material, including the popular New York City's Water Saver's Workbook and the special New York City edition of The Magic Schoolbus at the Waterworks (and a guide for teachers) is also made available in classrooms.

A highlight of the school year is DEP's annual Water Conservation Art & Poetry Contest where fifth and sixth grade students reveal their knowledge of water through artistic expression. Thousands of students have participated in this program since it began 17 years ago. Some of their beautiful work adorns DEP's publications.

Special exhibitions in museums and libraries, theatrical performances and partnerships with other education organizations complement this comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, hands-on approach to learning. In other words, learning is fun with DEP!

If you would like to find out more about DEP's education resources, please contact Kim Estes-Fradis, Director of Education, or Doreen J. Bader, M.S., Research Scientist/Environmental Educator, both reachable at ext. 3506.

"Dear DEP:

Thank you soooooo much for teaching us not to waste water. I would also like to thank the ones who provided water for us. I really learned a lot about water reservoirs and other things too. Right after school I went back home and told them about saving water. My favorite part was when we were making rain for the mountains. Water is really important in this world; without it people can't survive. I guess saving water also means that you are saving the earth."

(From a NYC Student)