

## First “Cast-ing” Call of the Season



On April 1, DEP welcomed anglers to enjoy world-class trout fishing on its upstate reservoirs and dozens of properties that include frontage along creeks and streams throughout the watershed. Twenty-two reservoirs and lakes, covering roughly 36,000 acres, were opened for fishing from shore or from boats that have a valid DEP boat tag. [Click here](#) for a brief overview of the trout fisheries and some of the best fishing locations in the reservoirs, and [here](#) to access DEP’s Fishing Brochure.

## Spotlight On Safety

### Distracted Driving Awareness Month

The National Safety Council observes the month of April as Distracted Driving Awareness Month. This year’s theme, Take Back Your Drive, aims to raise awareness that thousands of people are killed in vehicular crashes that are caused by cell phone use, though it remains underreported. With new technology allowing us to make phone calls and dictate texts or emails while driving, people may wonder what is considered distracted driving. The truth is that hands-free is not risk-free, and using these technologies are proven

to increase the risk of a crash. The bottom line is there is no safe way to use a cell phone and drive. To combat the threat of distracted driving:

- stop using cellphones while driving
- stop texting and driving
- keep your phone out of sight to avoid temptation

To learn more about the fight against distracted driving, visit [OSHA’s Distracted Driving Page](#) and the [Official U.S. Government Website for Distracted Driving](#).

At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it’s okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau’s EHS liaison how they can help. If you’ve still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It’s DEP’s responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we’ll not only get the job done, we’ll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city. CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH [PIPELINE](#). HELP IS ON THE WAY.

## Commissioner’s Corner

At a meeting of The New York City Water Board last Friday, DEP proposed a 2.1% increase in the Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) water rate, representing the lowest increase in 16 years. Factors that allowed DEP to slow the growth in the proposed rate, while ensuring funds are available to advance all major programs on schedule in FY 17, include internal cost controls, interest rate savings, and the Administration’s ongoing reduction of the rental payment.

If the proposed 2.1% water rate increase is adopted by the Board, a typical single-family homeowner will see an increase of less than \$2 a month, on average. A typical multi-family unit with metered billing would similarly see an increase of less than \$2 a month, on average. In addition, DEP is proposing a number of progressive changes to the water and wastewater rate schedule to help ensure affordability for its most vulnerable customers.

DEP has recommended expanding the Home Water Assistance Program, which currently provides an annual credit to 51,700 low-income, senior, and disabled homeowners. We would like to extend the program to as many as 68,000 additional senior homeowners who make less than \$50,000 per year.

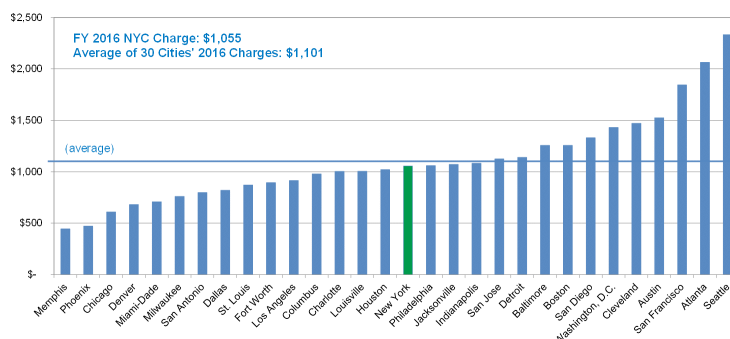
We have also proposed freezing the minimum charge for those customers who use less than 95 gallons of water per day. Those customers are currently billed at the rate of \$1.27 per day, including wastewater



charges. Freezing the minimum charge for the third consecutive year at the FY 14 rate would benefit 150,000 homeowners—many of whom are seniors—who, combined, will see savings of \$1.4 million. For customers billed based on the minimum charge, the annual water and sewer bill is only \$464 per year.

The proposal also includes a \$250 credit per residential unit for multi-family residential properties that meet affordability criteria and execute an affordability agreement containing a minimum of at least fifteen remaining years. This program will provide a total of \$10 million of assistance to properties serving as many as 40,000 units, while helping to incentivize affordability.

Below is a graph that shows how water rates in New York City compare to 30 other large cities across the country. To learn more about how DEP was able to keep this year’s water rate as low as possible, or to see a schedule of upcoming public Water Board hearings, [click here](#).



## Water & Sewer Upgrades for S.I.



Work has begun on a \$48 million construction project that will reduce street flooding and improve the reliability of the water delivery system in the Great Kills and Eltingville neighborhoods of Staten Island. The work will take place along Hylan Boulevard, as well as streets to the east and west, from Wiman Avenue to Winchester Avenue. Construction will include the installation of 172 new catch basins and more than four miles of new sewers to allow stormwater to drain from the roadways in the area. While the roadway is opened to install the sewers, nearly three miles of existing water mains will be replaced with new ductile iron pipes. Read more [here](#).

## Snowy Owl Release



Over the winter, an injured Snowy Owl was found in New York City and the The Raptor Trust, located in New Jersey, rehabilitated the Owl to the point it was ready to return to the wild. Last week, DEP's Wildlife Biologist **Chris Nadareski** joined the The Raptor Trust to band the Owl and [release him in upstate New York](#).

**We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: [newsletter@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:newsletter@dep.nyc.gov).**

## In the News

**ELECTED OFFICIALS LAUD DEP PROJECT:** Westchester Creek to benefit environmentally from \$22 million sewer upgrade.

[Read the Bronx Times story here](#)

## Out of the Archives



Looking into the south portal of the Catskill Aqueduct's Peak Tunnel on April 7, 1909, about a month after excavation began. All muck was removed by hand. Six months later, this heading met the one being excavated from the north portal about 3/4 of a mile away, making them the first tunnel headings to meet in the aqueduct.

## Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday 26 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from First Deputy Commissioner **Steve Lawitts**, Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter**, and Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

**Jeremy Jean** with BEC; **David Bishop** with BLA; **Kristy Badayos**, **Tyrone Campo** (not pictured), **Jessica Guerrero**, **Evan Pilachowski**, **Mohamed Rana**, and **Shihab Uddin** with BWSO; **Stephen Rider Jr.** and **Hamawatie Thind** with BWS; and **Matthew Carroll** with BWT; **Tia Britt**, **Nichole Chati**, **Sherif Ibrahim**, **Pamela Joseph**, **Leo Nelson**, **Anginette Peralta**, and **Rafael Santana Jr.** with CDBG; **Adrian Allen**, **Nefertiti Griffith**, and **Emelly Nunez** with OD&HR; **Gloria Rodriguez** with FDC/EEO; and **Abena Osei-Mensah**, **Dmitriy Ostaphshyn**, **Mariame Sall**, and **Paul Wojtal** with Sustainability.