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**DEP, Parks Department Complete Improvement Project for Oakland Lake Park**

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway and Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe today announced the completion of a \$2.5 million capital improvement project to restore the 46-acre Oakland Lake Park in Bayside, Queens. The multi-phase restoration, which is the first project in DEP's newly expanded Bluebelt program in Queens, includes restoration and repair of the park's perimeters, lake shoreline, ravines and side slopes, the planting of thousands of new trees, new recreational opportunities, and the installation of storm sewers in the streets near the park to better control stormwater runoff and avoid erosion. The restoration will restore the ecological health of Oakland Lake Park, which has endured many years of stormwater runoff that has caused erosion and significant sediment and debris build up. Improving the water quality of the lake will bring new species and enhance the environment for birds, fish and plants, and offers enhanced opportunities for recreational users to more fully enjoy water activities such as fishing, canoeing and kayaking.

"Oakland Lake Park suffered years of degradation because of unmitigated stormwater runoff," said Commissioner Holloway. "Partnering with the Parks Department, we have restored this beautiful park for the Bayside community to enjoy, in a way that will protect and enhance water quality. Using natural features that DEP has pioneered through the Bluebelt program, as well as traditional infrastructure improvements, we've eliminated the threat that stormwater posed to this park, and we've done it with the first-ever Bluebelt project in Queens. This nationally-recognized program has been naturally treating stormwater runoff in Staten Island for years, and we are thrilled to bring its water-quality and aesthetic benefits to Bayside as well."

"Thanks to \$2.5 million improvements to Oakland Lake Ravine by the Department of Environmental Protection, the former beauty of this section of Alley Pond Park has been reclaimed. A new drainage system to control runoff has been installed, which will allow the new plantings, including thousands of trees and native wildflowers, to flourish," said

**MORE INFORMATION**

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Parks Commissioner Benepe. "The new fishing pads and canoe launches, along with boulder seating and new fencing, are welcome additions that will allow greater access to the lake and increase visitors' enjoyment."

"The completion of this Bluebelt project is an outstanding accomplishment that involved city agencies, elected officials and the community in a combined effort to improve drainage, protect Oakland Lake and other parkland. The entire area will now be greener, ecologically improved, protected from erosion and more hospitable for wildlife to thrive in a more natural environment. I was happy to support the new Alley Creek CSO facility, which will work in conjunction with all the work that has been done, and I thank the Bloomberg Administration and all our partners in government and the community for making today possible," said Queens Borough President Helen Marshall.

"The restoration of Oakland Lake Park means a cleaner and healthier environment for the residents of Queens to enjoy," said Council Member Mark S. Weprin.

"This project is an outstanding example of how the community, local elected officials and city agencies can collaborate to solve a long standing community flooding condition/problem, while cleaning up the eco-system, rehabilitating a neglected park, creating dozens of acres of wetlands, putting hundreds of union workers to work, and saving the last kettle lake in the City of New York (Oakland Lake). For generations to come, thousands of our residents will be able to enjoy what we were able to create and save. It is so important that we do everything we can to restore and save these natural areas in NYC. I am proud of the small part I played in it all and am glad that this 15 year project has finally been brought to fruition," said Jerry Iannece, Chair of Community Board 11 and former President of Bayside Hills Civic Association.

The improvement of Oakland Lake Park includes five sites that were in need of a major restoration after years of erosion. At all sites, DEP has re-directed stormwater from peripheral streets that flowed untreated into the park and Oakland Lake. Runoff caused damage and erosion to the park's ravines and the lake's water quality. Now, the stormwater from the street overflows is captured by catch basins or by two newly constructed rain gardens. The project includes numerous retrofitted peripheral catch basins with curb pieces, the installation of new French drains and new, higher curbs, all to better intercept street storm flows. The project also included the removal of accumulated debris from four ravines. The ravines were then re-contoured, stabilized, and re-vegetated with trees, shrubs, grasses, wildflowers and ferns. The new vegetation will serve to stabilize surface soils, and prevent them from eroding and being transported to the lake.

The Oakland Lake Park restoration also includes the installment of three paved fishing pads and canoe launches with boulder seating along the lake's shoreline. The fishing pad installations will improve access to the water. The new railing will reduce trampling of the shoreline and reduce soil compaction and erosion. The restoration will allow public access to the shoreline. The improvement project for Oakland Lake Park is the first Bluebelt project built in Queens to channel stormwater as part of the stormwater runoff control plan that DEP has put in place to help avoid Combine Sewer Overflows into New York Harbor. This project was built in conjunction with Alley Creek CSO Facility, the five-million gallon CSO-retention facility that captures and stores combined stormwater and wastewater

that previously was discharged into Alley Creek and Little Neck Bay during heavy rainfall.

Oakland Lake and Ravine is a 15,000-year-old spring-fed glacial kettle pond located in Alley Pond Park. Glacial boulders bank the 13 acres of Oakland Lake. The formation of wetlands can be traced back to the most recent ice age. A massive ice sheet called the Wisconsin Glacier advanced on New York City 75,000 years ago, pushing rock, soil, and boulders ahead. When the ice melted 17,000 years ago, water flowed to the sea, creating streams and rivers that carved through rock. Oakland Lake is home to fish, including bluegill carp, perch, and bass. The natural diversity of the area also attracts birds, such as cardinals, dark-eyed juncos, mallards and scaup ducks, in addition to thousands of migratory birds. For more information, please visit [www.nyc.gov/parks](http://www.nyc.gov/parks).

The award-winning Bluebelt program provides ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management, and preserves natural drainage corridors, including streams, ponds, lakes, and other wetland areas. Preservation of these wetland systems allows them to perform their functions of conveying, storing, and filtering stormwater. In addition, Bluebelt systems provide important community open spaces and diverse wildlife habitats.

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. New York City's water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the City, and comprises 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,400 miles of sewer lines take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. For more information, visit [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep) or follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](http://www.facebook.com/nycwater).

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