

## Commissioner's Corner



Earlier this week, DEP joined partner agencies, elected officials, environmental advocates, and community groups to announce a major expansion of New York City's nationally recognized Green Infrastructure Program. In the coming months, the City will accelerate ongoing construction to build approximately 2,000 specially engineered curbside gardens, called bioswales, in

Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens. When construction is completed, the 2,000 new bioswales will have the capacity to collect and absorb more than 4 million gallons of stormwater when it rains. DEP engineers estimate that the new bioswales will capture more than 200 million gallons of stormwater each year, and will improve the health of the Bronx River, Flushing Bay, Gowanus Canal, Jamaica Bay and Newtown Creek. To date, 255 bioswales have already been constructed and there are plans to add thousands more over the next several years.

By softening the impervious urban landscape and naturally absorbing rainwater that would otherwise drain into the combined sewer system, analysis shows that this adaptive approach to improving the health of our waterways will also have many additional sustainability benefits,

such as cleaner air, a cooler city, and more beautiful communities, at a substantially lower cost than similar investments in grey infrastructure alone.

Bioswales are constructed on city sidewalks and resemble standard street tree pits. However, bioswales vary in size, have curb cuts that allow stormwater to enter and overflow, and are designed in a way that allows them to manage between 1,300 and 3,000 gallons each during a storm. DEP has worked with the Departments of Transportation, Parks and Recreation, and Design and Construction to develop [standard designs](#), specifications and procedures for building green infrastructure installations.

During construction, bioswales are usually excavated to a depth of five feet and are then backfilled with layers of stone and engineered soil. These layers contain void spaces that store the stormwater and promote infiltration. The addition of hardy plants encourages infiltration through root growth and increases the capacity of each bioswale through evapotranspiration.

DEP's Green Infrastructure Program primarily targets neighborhoods that are serviced by combined sewers—which manage both rain water and the wastewater from homes and businesses. DEP engineers, armed with maps of the local

water and sewer systems, walk the streets to identify sidewalk locations that are upstream of a catch basin and have the space necessary to accommodate a bioswale. This initial group of potential locations is then reviewed by the Department of Transportation to ensure they meet all necessary pedestrian and vehicle clearance requirements and the Department of Parks and Recreation provides guidance on trees and planting plans. Soil samples are also taken from the locations to ensure each garden can absorb the necessary amount of stormwater. The extensive survey and testing ensures that each site functions as designed.

To maintain the newly constructed bioswales, DEP provides funding to the Department of Parks and Recreation, which assigns crews dedicated to the upkeep of the gardens, including trash removal, pruning the trees and caring for the plants. Maintenance crews are active seven days a week and visit each bioswale once a week. Additional crews will continue to be added as DEP's Green Infrastructure Program expands.

For more information on the Green Infrastructure Program, view the [2013 Annual Report](#). Photos of recently installed bioswales are available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#). To view a video of a bioswale collecting stormwater go [here](#).

## Spotlight on Safety

### Top 10 Citations

Each year, OSHA provides a list of the top-10 most frequently violated federal workplace safety standards. Last year, top citations included:

1. Fall Protection, construction
2. Hazard Communication, general industry
3. Scaffolding, construction
4. Respiratory Protection, general industry
5. Powered Industrial Trucks, general industry
6. Lockout/Tagout, general industry
7. Ladders, construction

8. Electrical: Wiring Methods, general industry
9. Machine Guarding, general industry
10. Electrical: Systems Design, General Requirements, general industry

OSHA supports workplace safety by offering resources to help employers comply with, and workers to understand, federal safety regulations in an effort to prevent these violations. Health and safety tips for each of last year's top violations are available here: [Most Frequently Cited Standards](#).

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.



## Service Line Protection



One out of every four eligible homeowners in New York City is now enrolled the agency's Water and Sewer Service Line Protection Program, which has already saved DEP customers more than \$20 million in repair charges that would have otherwise been paid out of pocket.

Property owners in New York City are responsible for maintaining their water and sewer service lines. On average, it costs property owners in New York City between \$3,000 and \$5,000 to repair a water line break and between \$10,000 and \$15,000 to replace a sewer line break. In 2013, DEP responded to more than 3,950 reported water leaks, of which more than 80 percent were discovered to be private service line problems.

To help property owners better manage these risks and the high costs of service line breaks, the New York City Water Board issued a Request for Proposals from qualified providers for a Service Line Protection Program in 2011. After a thorough review, American Water Resources was awarded a contract as the exclusive provider of Service Line Protection for approximately 670,000 eligible properties in New York City.

American Water Resources fully manages the Service Line Protection Program, which provides for an unlimited number of claims, a 24/7 Customer Service Center to handle repair requests, quick response times by NYC licensed master plumbers, and all the necessary permits. Customers do not have to submit claim forms or pay deductibles, and the monthly program fee is itemized and included on each participating customer's regular DEP water and sewer bill.

Monica West, a Queens homeowner who recently had a service line emergency claim with American Water Resources said, "I was very impressed with the service I received when I had a sewer problem in August. The plumber they sent came within a very reasonable time period, he assessed the problem quickly, and my broken sewer pipe was fixed in three days. I highly recommend having this program."

More information about the program—and the eligibility for individual properties—is available online at [AWRUSA.com/NYC](http://AWRUSA.com/NYC). Photos of a New York City service line repair can be viewed on [DEP's Flickr Page](#).

## Free Flu Vaccine

The Mayor's Office, in collaboration with the Office of Labor Relations, is launching a Flu Vaccination Campaign. This Friday, November 14, free flu shots will be made available to active DEP employees at Lefrak headquarters. To receive a free flu shot employees must show their DEP identification and City health insurance cards and complete a consent form. It is anticipated that flu shots will be made available at other DEP locations in the near future. Be on the lookout for an email message that will provide more information on how to make an appointment.

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

## Press Box



"The gardens appeared suddenly along an industrial corridor of Brownsville, Brooklyn—one, two, a half-dozen—as if airlifted from a cul-de-sac upstate... In what officials have billed as one of the most ambitious programs of its kind in the United States, New York City has, with little fanfare, embarked on a roughly 20-year, \$2.4 billion project intended to protect local waterways, relying in large measure on "curbside gardens" that capture and retain storm-water runoff."

Read the entire NY Times article [here](#).

## Holiday Food Drive

To benefit charities, both in the city and the watershed, during the Thanksgiving holiday, DEP is holding its annual food drive. Non-perishable food items can be brought to the 19<sup>th</sup> floor at [Lefrak Headquarters](#), as well as offices in [Downsville](#), [Kingston](#), [Grahamsville](#) and [Valhalla](#). Final days to donate differ, so please click on the link for each office to get more information.

## Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 16 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from First Deputy Commissioner **Steve Lawitts** and Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

**Elene Geguchadze, Michael Hanlon, Jin Kanu, Kathryn V. Phillips, Laura Sword and My N. Tang** with BEDC; **David V. Bovenzi, Audrey Hauron and Emily P. Perrin** with BWSO; **Faith T. Barclay and Nadine Elmani** with Sustainability; **Candice E. Clifford and Colleen G. Peralta** with Executive; **John Herrera** with Budget; **Danielle Korcecki** with BWT; and **Alex Kotlyarsky** with OIT.