

Protecting the City's Water Supply



As part of DEP's mission to protect the quality of New York City's water supply, BWS employees from the Natural Resources Division recently inspected 16 boat launch areas at the Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie reservoirs in the

Catskills. **Meredith Taylor** and **Tom Baudanza** donned wet suits and snorkeling gear to scour the launch sites for any signs of invasive animals, plants, and microorganisms that can degrade water quality. Safety Specialist **Steve Coppey** observed the dives.

Spotlight on Safety

Overexertion Injuries

Overexertion injuries are a leading cause of lost days away from work, and occupy a top spot on DEP's yearly recordable injuries and illnesses.

Commonly identified as strains or sprains, overexertion can occur when a person carries, lifts, pushes or pulls heavy loads causing stress in a person's joints. Overexertion injuries can cause lower back pain, muscle spasms, muscle weakness, swelling and cramping. Exposure to these known risk factors increases a worker's risk of injury.

Work related overexertion can be prevented. To help reduce the risk of these types of injuries:

- Stop and think about safety before undertaking the task at hand.

- Assess the weight of the load (by observing or pushing).
- Bend at the knees.
- Keep the load as close to the body as possible.
- Keep the back straight.
- Avoid twisting.
- If possible use mechanical equipment to lift the load or lighten load if possible.

Consult with your supervisor and bureau EHS staff to evaluate your work methods that may have potential for causing injury.

For more information on overexertion visit the Occupational Safety and Health Administration page on [Ergonomics](#).

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

Heavy downpours like we saw today can produce a lot of runoff and require our sewer system to keep up with the enormous volume of stormwater. In addition to our efforts to retain or detain stormwater at the source through initiatives like the recently adopted site connection standard and our green infrastructure program, DEP has significantly enhanced the way we maintain our sewer system to maximize the amount of water it can handle during heavy rain.

We have been enhancing our management of the sewer system upstream of individual interceptors—which can deliver much more water than our larger interceptor sewers—to prevent sewer back-ups or surcharges to homes, and to protect the quality of life of New Yorkers. For these smaller sewers, we are employing cutting edge technology to quickly respond to problems before they result in sewer back-ups and to target our resources, since less than one percent of sewer segments experience issues in any one year. Last year, for example the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations (BWSO) cleaned more than 700 miles of the City's sewer system—more than double the amount cleaned just five years ago. Much of the work was proactive cleaning done through a program that grew out of our strategic plan, *Strategy 2011-2014*, and targets areas with reported sewer back-ups. Using GIS technology, BWSO maps reported sewer back-ups and identifies areas with repeat complaints, which are then addressed by crews.

BWSO is also experimenting with new remote monitoring technology that can alert engineers to problems before they result in sewer back-ups. The devices are installed inside manholes and monitor the elevation of the flows inside the pipe. If the wastewater approaches a level that could result in a back-up, the sensor sends an alarm to DEP headquarters and crews are dispatched to investigate and fix the problem. To test the effectiveness of this technology, BWSO installed 21 sensors in Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island last



year and recently added 25 additional sensors throughout the city. Plans are also in the works for 18 additional locations, for a total of 64. Since the first sensors were installed, DEP has responded to nearly 130 alarms and addressed a number of issues that could have resulted in a sewer back-up.

Improved monitoring and maintenance are paying off for New Yorkers. By using technology to maximize the effectiveness of our crews, we have seen a nearly 40 percent reduction in reported and confirmed sewer back-ups over the last five years.

In addition to proactive monitoring and maintenance, we have committed billions of dollars in upgrades to our infrastructure over the next 10 years, including nearly \$2.2 billion for sewers—of which \$353.9 million will fund high-level storm sewers to further reduce combined sewer overflows and sewer backups. Over the next five years, we will also install thousands of green infrastructure installations on our sidewalks, and work with our partners to build green roofs, community gardens and other installations that will help soften the City and manage stormwater.

Maximizing the effectiveness of our sewer system and finding ways to improve the way we manage stormwater can help prevent some real headaches for New Yorkers. I commend Deputy Commissioner **Jim Roberts**, **Tasos Georgelis**, and the whole BWSO team for their efforts and for their smart use of technology to improve the services we provide to the City of New York.

Focus on the Field



Nearly two dozen DEP police recruits listened carefully as Sgt. **Thomas Reis** explained the extreme situations that might call them to duty one day. On a screen at the agency's police academy in Kingston, the recruits learned from real-life debriefs of school shootings, kidnappings, and other crimes.

Reis summed up their duty as police officers in one poignant sentence, noting that their priority as police officers must always be to protect the innocent.

"Your actions are dictated by the priority of life," Reis said.

Reis was a graduate of DEP's first police academy in 2002 and has been teaching young recruits since 2003. He was an electrician working in New York City before the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 spurred him to become a police officer.

He now works out of the Gramsville Precinct in Sullivan County, where he is the team leader for one of the Emergency Service Units within the DEP police. These units include highly trained officers who can respond to a range of extreme emergencies that might include swift-water rescues, hazardous material spills, or even counterterrorism operations. They are also charged with patrolling and protecting DEP's vast infrastructure.

In the recent past, officers from this unit have helped rescue watershed residents when floodwaters trapped them in their homes.

"I like the job because it's always evolving—it's different every day," Reis said. "One day you could be called to respond to a disabled elevator in a shaft 700 feet below ground, and the next day you could be called to a water rescue."

His training paid off this summer when a boat capsized on Cannonsville Reservoir, dumping two boaters into the water on Independence Day weekend. Reis was just leaving a training exercise when he heard the call and responded to the boat launch. With help from local firefighters, Reis swam to the men, helped them float on a life ring, and loaded them into a rescue boat.



Reis was born and raised in Delaware County, where he coaches youth sports and is president of the local Little League.

Extra Extra!

Please take a moment to view the first edition of [DEP News](#). We hope to make this a regular monthly addition to Pipeline. If you have any story ideas for future news segments please email newsletter@dep.nyc.gov.



Delaware County Fair



Yesterday, Commissioner **Carter Strickland** attended the opening day of the Delaware County Fair in Walton, NY, which is attended by thousands of people in the watershed every year. DEP and the Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC), who is celebrating their 20th anniversary this year, will have a tent at the fair. WAC is an

important component of DEP's Watershed Protection Program as they facilitate the planning and funding of sustainability projects for farms in the watershed. Pictured with Commissioner Strickland are **Craig Cashman**, WAC's Executive Director, and **Fred Huneke**, the Chairman of WAC's Council of Directors.

Welcome Aboard



Yesterday, 22 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Chief Financial Officer **Steve Lawitts**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Ernesto Gonzalez, George Hart, Nymbat Juramt, Jorge Medina, Adrian Perumalu, Asly Raymond, Anthony Scivoli, and Darrel Sankarsingh with BWSO; **Steven Cubero, Howard Hughes, Kurt Hunte, Scott Meservey, John O'Donohue, Harrinarine Ramoutar, and Wafaa Wahba** with BWT; **Sarah Hathaway and Eduardo Pinzon** with BEDC; **Keshia S. Brown and Maria K. Petkanas** with BCS; **Mario Bruno** with BPA; **Samantha Morris** with BEPA; and **Joseph Paige Sr.** with BWS.

We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: newsletter@dep.nyc.gov.