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225 Spray Showers in City Playgrounds Have Been Upgraded With Timers to Help Conserve Water

Timers and Activation Buttons Reduce Water Consumption by 80 Percent; 400 Spray Showers to be Upgraded by 2017, Saving 1.5 Million Gallons of Water a Day

Retrofits Part of Citywide Effort to Reduce Water Consumption by 5 Percent

Photos are Available on Photos are Available on DEP's Flickr Page

Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Emily Lloyd and Parks and Recreation (DPR) Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver today announced that five-minute automatic shut-off timers and activation buttons have been installed on 225 spray showers at City playgrounds in order to reduce water consumption by ensuring the showers are activated only when in use. The work is part of a citywide effort to reduce water consumption by 5 percent by 2018. In addition to the 225 spray showers where the upgrades have been completed, similar work is currently underway on an additional 145 showers. The initiative aims to put the water conservation measures in place at 400 spray showers by 2017. Reducing water use by playground showers also creates additional capacity in local sewer systems, which will help mitigate flooding during heavy rain and ease pressure on the City's wastewater treatment plants. In addition, it will reduce the costs associated with treating the water before use and cleaning and disinfecting it at the treatment plants after use. The timed spray showers were developed

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through the Municipal Water Efficiency Program, an interagency partnership that implements water conservation strategies at City-owned properties and facilities. DEP is funding the approximately $3 million cost of upgrading the 400 spray showers. The announcement took place at Harlem's St. Nicholas Park South Playground.

"The spray showers available at NYC playgrounds are a terrific way to cool off on a hot summer day, and the new shut-off timers and activation buttons will ensure we protect our indispensable supply of healthy water and reduce waste," said **DEP Commissioner Lloyd**. "I'd like to thank Commissioner Silver and the Parks Department who have been terrific partners on so many projects important to the future of New York City."

"NYC Parks spray showers help our little New Yorkers beat the heat throughout the summer and our successful partnership with NYC DEP is helping to make them even better by conserving water," said **DPR Commissioner Silver**. "The installation of these timers across New York City have already reduced the amount of runoff that enters our sewers and are saving thousands of gallons of water per day."

Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Council's Environmental Protection Committee, said, "Spray showers in our city's parks provide much-needed cooling during the summer in a fun and interactive way for children. Installing automatic shut-off timers will reduce water waste and create additional sewer system capacity. This effort will make our water system more efficient and protect our water quality. I thank DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd and Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver for their leadership on this important issue."

Timed playground spray showers are the result of significant interagency cooperation to conserve water during high demand summer months by ensuring that the showers are activated only while in use. Without timers and reactivation buttons, playground showers use approximately 5,600 gallons of water per day. Timers could reduce that consumption by 80 percent, or approximately 4,500 gallons per day. Once all 400 spray showers have been upgraded, it is projected that citywide water consumption will be reduced by 1.5 million gallons per day.

Since the program launched, DEP has upgraded 225 spray showers, including:

- 55 in Brooklyn
- 36 in Manhattan
- 76 in Queens
- 8 in Staten Island
- 50 in the Bronx

St. Nicholas Park South Playground has not only benefitted from this new timer on the spray shower, but it has also seen targeted improvements through the Community Parks Initiative. Through this program that Parks launched last year with Mayor de Blasio, 60 parks and playgrounds across the city have received upgrades and repairs since the spring. Parks recently gave the basketball courts, swings and park house at Saint Nicholas a new coat of paint and repaired the basketball hoops and backboards, refurbished the handball courts, sanded and painted all the benches, and added two new welcoming planters at the entrance. Thanks to DEP's water conservation program and the Community Parks Initiative, this playground is not only now a vibrant community space, but also serves as an example of a more healthy and sustainable New York.

One of the keys to ensuring a continued supply of healthy drinking water for the city's growing population is a project to repair the leaking Delaware Aqueduct, which currently supplies about half the city's drinking water. DEP is currently excavating two 800 foot deep shafts that will be used to construct a 2.5-mile bypass tunnel around a portion of the Delaware Aqueduct that is leaking in Roseton, in Orange County. The project will also include repair work to fix leaks

in Wawarsing, in Ulster County, from the inside of the existing tunnel. The 2.5 mile bypass tunnel will run east from the Town of Newburgh in Orange County, under the Hudson River, to the Town of Wappinger in Dutchess County. In order to facilitate these repairs to the Aqueduct, the tunnel must be temporarily shut down between 2022 and 2023. In preparation for the shutdown, DEP has developed a combination of conservation programs and supplemental supplies that will ensure an uninterrupted supply of water. The program was initially estimated to cost over $2 billion, but through advances in the engineering and design of the bypass and the water supply projects to support the repair, the estimated cost has been reduced to approximately $1.5 billion.

As part of the larger water conservation initiative, DEP has developed the Municipal Water Efficiency Program to identify opportunities to conserve water at City-owned properties and facilities. As part of this program, DEP has already begun a partnership with the New York City Department of Education to install more than 40,000 high-efficiency bathroom fixtures in 500 public school buildings across the city. These retrofits will conserve approximately 4 million gallons of water each school day.

To encourage water conservation in private properties, DEP launched a voucher-based program to replace roughly 150,000 outdated residential toilets with high efficiency models. The new toilet rebate program will build on the success of a similar rebate program that ran from 1994 to 1997 and replaced 1.3 million toilets and reduced citywide water consumption by 90 million gallons per day. High-efficiency toilets use only 1.28 gallons of water per flush, compared to traditional toilets which can use as much as five gallons. As a result of those programs, the transition from frontage billing to metered billing, and the roll out of Automated Meter Readers and real-time feedback about water consumption, overall water use in the city has declined from over 1.5 billion gallons a day in 1980 to roughly 1 billion gallons a day at present, while the city's population grew from just over 7.1 million to 8.5 million in the same period.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.4 million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 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 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with nearly $14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter.

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