

It's So Easy Being Green

The recently approved NYC Green Infrastructure Plan is already bringing new partners with innovative ideas to solve an old problem: combined sewer overflows. New York City, like other older urban centers, is largely serviced by a combined sewer system where stormwater and wastewater are carried through a single pipe. During heavy storms, the system can exceed its capacity, and must discharge a mix of stormwater and wastewater—called a combined sewer overflow, or CSO—into New York Harbor. To address the challenge of CSOs over the long term, in September 2010 Mayor Bloomberg unveiled the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan, which launched a series of initiatives including public participation to set out a sustainable



approach to reduce billions of gallons of CSOs by 2030 while saving \$2.4 billion through costly investments in traditional sewage retention projects, such as tanks and tunnels. Though it predated the release of the plan, one of the first projects to come to fruition in this new approach is the Flushing

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Spotlight on Safety

Most Frequently Cited Standards

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration recently released general industry statistics for the most frequently violated standards during the period October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011. They include:

1. Scaffolding, general requirements, construction
2. Fall protection, construction
3. Hazard communication standard, general industry
4. Respiratory protection, general industry
5. Control of hazardous energy (lockout/tagout), general industry
6. Electrical, wiring methods, components and equipment, general industry
7. Powered industrial trucks, general industry

8. Ladders, construction
9. Electrical systems design, general requirements, general industry
10. Machines, general requirements, general industry (machine guarding)

The most frequently cited safety violations for DEP facilities are: electrical; fire protection, confined spaces, general requirements for machines/machine guarding; working and walking surfaces crane and hoists, general sanitation/housekeeping, and powered industrial trucks.

Visit OSHA's Top 10 most frequently cited OSHA standards violated in FY 2011 (Federal OSHA data) for updated and additional information:

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. 

Commissioner's Corner

In providing water to more than nine million New Yorkers statewide, the importance of our relationship with watershed communities, including Ulster County, cannot be overstated. The site of critical infrastructure and home to 230 DEP staff, several key elements of our operations are based in Ulster County, and we are always looking to address their impact on local residents. With this context in mind, last evening I visited Ulster County Community College for a public forum hosted by County Executive **Michael Hein**. Joined by DEC Executive Deputy Commissioner **Marc Gerstman**, I heard the concerns of the Ulster community first hand in order to recognize where we can improve. It is only through an ongoing respectful dialogue that we can ensure that all concerns are adequately addressed.



While frustration is understandable in confronting challenges, it is important to focus on facts, not rhetoric. The Ashokan Reservoir is a buffer between the upper and lower sections of Esopus Creek, which becomes turbid from naturally-occurring clay deposits. Turbidity isn't caused by DEP. In fact, between September 2010 and September 2011, the upper Esopus watershed was hammered by three very significant storm events leading to the turbid reservoir conditions. As a result, to try and best balance drinking water needs (for NYC and one million upstate residents) with flood protection (for downstream communities) and community impacts, DEP activates the Ashokan Release Channel based on an Interim Protocol for operating the system that is now possible because of our investments in better forecasting and our Operational Support Tool. This protocol has already been shared with the Ashokan Release Working Group and other stakeholders, and will incorporate additional feedback from local residents and will be refined over time. In many ways the protocol is already showing its value. DEP last week reached a 10% void in the Ashokan Reservoir, which the community has sought for years so as to better mitigate against future storms.

duct in Wawarsing. DEP has committed \$3.7 million to the Wawarsing buyout program, and is currently finalizing an agreement with Ulster County to administer those funds. We've begun a \$2.1 billion repair of the Delaware Aqueduct. This enormous and complicated capital undertaking has already started and we expect to break ground by 2013, but the project will take several years to complete. While many residents would like it to be completed more quickly, it represents a vital solution to leaking issues.

Contrary to some of the comments we have heard, our relationship with Ulster County is largely productive and positive. DEP pays \$27 million in Ulster County taxes each year, more than in any county west of the Hudson. We maintain our own infrastructure, including 33 miles of highway and nine bridges. In addition to paying the county roughly \$140,000 each year on snowplowing and highway maintenance, to date we have also spent \$49 million in grants for septic repairs, \$18.5 million on local economic development, and \$11.8 million on stream management. We also do everything we can to ensure Ulster residents enjoy the natural beauty of the watershed. We have opened over 12,300 acres of Ulster County land for recreational use, including more than 2,700 over the last two years. Clearly Ulster County is our partner, and the benefits of that partnership are irrefutable.

Back at headquarters, I would like to welcome **Amanda Waters** to the DEP fold. Formerly the Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel for Sanitation District No. 1, North Kentucky's wastewater and stormwater operator, she will now work directly under Deputy Commissioner **Angela Licata** on sustainability issues. Specifically, DEP's extensive regulatory reform initiatives, our new green infrastructure program, and Long Term CSO control plans. Please join me in making it clear to Amanda that we have plenty of southern comfort right here at DEP.

Over the past two years, DEP has already made fundamental changes in how we are addressing some of the most important local issues, namely the leaks from the Delaware Aqueduct

Focus on the Field



A project manager within BEPA's Office of Water Supply Infrastructure and Watershed Assessment, **Jennifer Farmwald** is responsible for managing and undertaking environmental reviews and assisting in obtaining environmental permits for DEP's water supply and watershed projects. Jennifer, who has been at DEP for two years, was the project manager for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) supporting the Water for the Future program. It will address the leak in the Delaware Aqueduct, ensuring the viability and continued use of the NYC water supply for years to come.

Jennifer has been exemplary in putting the EIS together. She worked hard to make sure that the EIS is easily understood and

comprehensive in order to assist DEP in presenting the project and its implications to the public. She has helped develop strategies and measures to minimize the impact of the project on the host communities and the environment. "The Water for the Future EIS was equal parts challenging and rewarding," said Jennifer. "The complexities and nuance of this critical infrastructure repair required a keen eye to detail as well as the project as a whole. In working closely with colleagues throughout DEP, I have also forged amazing friendships and am grateful to have worked with such a wonderful team. While there is still work to be done, I look back on what we have accomplished with a sense of pride and satisfaction."

Prior to coming to DEP, she worked for the Inter-American Development Bank as a consultant to Quito, Ecuador's water supply utility, where she helped develop a strategy to scale up investments to modernize their system.

When not at work, Jennifer, who has a master's in public administration from NYU, enjoys hiking, playing with her dog, and hanging out with friends and family.

Kudos Corner



SANTA'S HELPERS: On December 16, both civilian and sworn members of the Bureau of Police and Security 7th Precinct held their Annual Santa Run to provide gifts to children at the Maria Ferri Children's Hospital at Westchester Medical Center. Each year the precinct members purchase games and toys and working with "Santa" along with hospital staff visit each child to deliver a personal gift. Pictured are (1st row) **Christine Dresser**, Sergeant **Maximo Lambert**, **Christina Chan**, Officer **Kristy Tangredi**, Sergeant **Anthony Garcia**, Officer **Luis Alvarez**; (2nd row) Chief **Peter Fusco**, Officer **Jose "Santa" Salas**, Lieutenant **Michael Reda**, Captain **Robert Wisker**.

WATERFRONT WIN: Vision 2020, New York City's Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, an initiative of the Department of City Planning, has been selected by the American Planning Association to receive the 2012 Daniel Burnham Award for a Comprehensive Plan, the highest award bestowed upon a comprehensive plan. Congratulations to City Planning's **Michael Marrella** and to DEP's **Alan Cohn**, who served on the advisory committee.

Word of the Week

DIFFUSER: A device used to distribute an air stream from an aeration tank's blower system into fine bubbles. Also used to distribute, mix and add chemicals, such as chlorine used for disinfection.

(It's So Easy Being Green... continued)

and Gowanus Green Infrastructure Grant Initiative that supports the PlaNYC goals of improving water quality by reducing the likelihood and intensity of combined sewer overflows.

DEP has been the architect and the managing agency for the Green Infrastructure Plan by creating the vision and implementing green infrastructure projects like this initiative to capture and manage stormwater runoff during wet weather. The plan offers opportunities for not-for-profit organizations and educational institutions that were eligible for funding to develop projects that can reduce or manage stormwater on private property and public sidewalks. At the helm of the \$2.6 million initiative is **Ashley Ryan** of DEP's Bureau of Environmental Planning and Analysis. "It has so far been great working with all the different grantees and their partners. Each project is quite unique yet all working towards the same goal; capturing stormwater at the source while greening our city," said Ashley.

Under the grant initiative, the city chose four projects with one more to be identified. **Manhattan College:** \$660,440 for the installation of a modular green roof project on New York Hospital. It will be designed to control runoff from a one to one-and-a-half-inch rainfall on a half-acre roof. **Regional Plan Association:** \$600,000 for Sponge Park™ bioretention basins under the Long Island Expressway near the Van Wyck Expressway. One basin is 1,963 square feet and has the capacity to store approximately 34,000 gallons from a two-inch rainstorm, and the second is approximately 9,900 square feet and has the capacity to store approximately 170,000 gallons. **Gowanus Canal Conservancy:** \$583,470 for the 6th Street Green Corridor Project that will build a series of curbside swales ranging from 400 square feet to 1,200 square feet

along 6th Street and 2nd Avenue in Brooklyn. The project will capture approximately 40% of the runoff generated within the swale areas, which cover over 45,000 square feet of street and sidewalk surfaces. **Unisphere, Inc.:** \$386,551 for treatment wetlands and rain gardens for treating stormwater entering Meadow Lake. This project will construct two 5,000-square-foot treatment wetlands that will receive runoff from two one-acre portions of a parking area at the southwestern edge of Meadow Lake in Flushing Meadows Corona Park. Each treatment system is designed to capture over 36,000 gallons for each one- to one-and-one-half-inch rainstorm or a total of over 72,000 gallons for each storm.

As the new projects are ready to start, Ashley said that "All of the projects are incorporating native plants adapted for the specific conditions of the site while at the same time providing a habitat for our local wildlife. It's very exciting to be part of a program that is developing such innovative and sustainable practices in managing stormwater."

Each awardee will have one year to fully build the project once construction starts and will then be required to monitor the project for three years and track relevant data in order to evaluate its success. All the projects are currently in design and construction is scheduled to start in the spring of 2012. The projects selected will ultimately provide critical information on whether green infrastructure projects are an effective tool to help reduce combined sewer overflows and improve New York City's harbor water quality. The Flushing and Gowanus Green Infrastructure Grant builds on PlaNYC's goals of positioning New York at the top five cities in the world with efficient environmental policies that will bring extraordinary results for the city's environment, communities, and a cleaner harbor for years to come.

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