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Department of Environmental Protection and Bronx River Alliance Join Local Teens to Demonstrate How a Litter Control Device Prevents Tons of Trash and Debris from Reaching the Bronx River

Program Aims to Educate Local Residents about How Littering Affects the Cleanliness of the Bronx River;

DEP also Releases the 2012 New York City Harbor Water Quality Report which Shows that the Health of New York Harbor Continues to Improve to Levels Not Seen in Generations

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Carter Strickland today joined the Bronx River Alliance's Education Director Damian Griffin and nearly a dozen teens from the Bronx River Arts Center's Summer Program to demonstrate how a litter control device located along the Bronx River prevents tons of trash and debris from reaching the River. Much of the trash and debris found in New York Harbor, and its connected waterways, originates as litter discarded on city streets that is subsequently washed into the sewer system. To help keep the litter from reaching the Bronx River, DEP has installed below-ground control devices at four sewer outfall locations in the south Bronx. Today's event was held at the litter control device located along West Farms Road, just west of the Bronx River.

In addition, DEP today released the [2012 New York City Harbor Water Quality Report](#), which shows that the health of New York Harbor continues to improve to

More Information

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levels not seen in generations. Due in large part to the City's extensive investments in its wastewater collection and treatment systems, New York Harbor quickly recovered from the effects of Hurricane Sandy and continues to provide rich and vibrant ecological habitats and a range of recreational opportunities for the residents of New York and the tens of millions of tourists who visit the city every year.

"Under Mayor Bloomberg's leadership, we have invested more than \$10 billion towards improving New York City harbor water and robust testing shows that the overall health of our waterways continues to improve to levels not seen in more than a century," said Commissioner Strickland. "By reaching out to local communities we hope to engage them in the important effort to reduce littering and further improve the cleanliness of the Bronx River and all of New York Harbor."

"Though many people think of industrial sources as the only cause of river contamination, the fact is that stormwater also can be damaging to the health of the River," attests Damian Griffin, Bronx River Alliance Education Director. "DEP's investment in education, litter control, and stormwater management through the installation of green infrastructure will go a long way in improving the health of the River as well as aesthetics for the communities that enjoy the parks along the Bronx River Greenway."

The litter control devices use hydraulic bar screens and nylon netting systems to capture the litter within a sewer outfall before it can reach the Bronx River. This is the first time this type of technology is being used in New York City and, later this year, DEP will complete construction on a similar facility at the head of the Gowanus Canal. The litter control devices have been installed at the following locations in the Bronx:

- West Farms Road
- Bronx Park Avenue
- Bronx Zoo
- Sound View Park

The litter control devices use either nylon netting, which has a lower installation cost but requires manual cleaning after each storm, or hydraulic bar screens, which are more costly to install but are self-cleaning and direct the trapped debris to a wastewater treatment plant where it is removed. The control devices have been installed in phases over the last 18 months and thus far more than 10 tons of trash and debris has been removed from the nylon netting system, including the device at West Farms Road. The performance of both methods will be monitored closely and will inform decisions about future deployment of the pollution control devices.

In addition, the city's 144,000 catch basins are designed to trap litter before it can make its way into the sewer lines. DEP also has a fleet of four skimmer boats that patrol the harbor to capture floating debris, including wood, plastic, metal, rubber, and glass.

The Bronx River Alliance has also developed an educational program that will have the teens survey their local neighborhoods for the presence of trash cans, catch basins, and street litter and then graph the results to gain a better understanding of where the trash may be originating from.

The Bronx River is approximately 23 miles long and winds through lower Westchester, Bronx Park, the New York Botanical Garden, and the Bronx Zoo and empties into the Upper East River between the Soundview and Hunts Point neighborhoods.

DEP manages New York 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. 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. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$14 billion in investments 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 at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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