

Protecting Reservoirs—A Bird's Eye View

Birds will always be attracted to water and for DEP, this will always pose a water quality challenge. That's why the Waterfowl Management Program is an important part of DEP's overall strategy to protect the water supply that more than nine million people rely on every day. The program uses various methods to discourage waterbirds such as gulls and geese from congregating on or near reservoirs, where they can leave droppings that introduce bacteria into the water supply.



Migratory populations of birds—such as geese, gulls, cormorants, swans, and ducks—enjoy using city reservoirs as temporary staging areas and wintering grounds. With that comes the potential increase in fecal coliform bacteria during the fall and winter. Birds generally roost at night and sometimes forage and loaf during the daytime on the reservoirs and most of their feeding occurs away from the reservoir.

There are many ways to keep birds away from DEP's reservoirs. Motor-

boats are used to chase them away. Pyrotechnic devices and propane cannons are used to scare them away. Growing grass discourages geese. Depredating eggs so that local breeding geese cannot reproduce is another way.

Originally developed for Kensico Reservoir in 1992 and then expanded to include five more reservoirs under the 2002 Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD) and Hillview Reservoir in the 2007 FAD, the pro-

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Spotlight on Safety

Workplace Violence: What Is it and What's My Responsibility?

According to the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), more than two million workers are victims of workplace violence each year. Workplace violence is a much more common occurrence than we think.

Workplace violence is defined as any physical assault or acts of aggressive behavior occurring where a public employee performs any work-related duty in the course of his/her employment including but not limited to: an attempt or threat, whether verbal or physical, to inflict physical injury upon an employee; any intentional display of force which would give an employee reason to fear or expect bodily harm; stalking an employee with the intent

of causing fear or material harm (DEP Workplace Violence Prevention Policy Statement, May 2011).

Repeated harassment or intimidation may be considered as both a workplace violence and EEO incident. If you witness or are a victim of workplace violence, you have the right to report the incident without fear of retaliation. If you believe that you have experienced or witnessed workplace violence, you have a responsibility to notify your supervisor. Or you can notify the DEP violence coordinator, **Persis Luke**, Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Environmental Health and Safety. She can be reached at (718) 595-526, or lukep@dep.nyc.gov

Commissioner's Corner

DEP has made major progress at North River following the four-alarm fire on Wednesday, July 20. As of last week's Pipeline report, we were operating two engines at the plant—just enough to handle all dry weather flow. By Wednesday, multi-disciplinary teams working around the clock had restored a third engine to service; and we had designed and installed 24 million gallons a day of back-up pumping to provide redundancy and additional capacity during wet weather. By Thursday, our quick work ending untreated discharges had paid off when the City's Department of Health lifted all beach closures and public health advisories for recreation on local waterways.

Since then, our recovery effort has continued to operate 24/7, and I'm happy to report that North River has been achieving secondary treatment standards since last week—an impressive accomplishment considering the scope of the damage caused by the fire, and a credit to the hundreds of men and women who have put their regular jobs largely on hold to get this done. Because we want to understand the cause of the fire and prevent a similar occurrence in the future, an independent review is already under way, and we will share the results when it's complete. The past 13 days have really been a team effort that has showcased the amazing talent and dedication of every bureau and division of DEP.

In the midst of the North River recovery, it was BWSO's turn to respond to the unexpected when a 108-year old 36-inch cast iron main ruptured at 6:30 am last Wednesday at Jerome Avenue and 177th Street in the Bronx. The break sent countless gallons of water rushing down Jerome Avenue, snarling traffic, tearing up the street, and disrupting other services, including natural gas and the subway overhead. Many people unfamiliar with our system think stopping a water main break is as simple as turning a valve closed—and in many cases it is. But when a large trunk main is impacted, turning the water off too quickly could disrupt service across a wide area and damage other mains, making the problem worse. DEP crews, led by **Jim Roberts, Ed Coleman, Tasos Georgelis and Anthony Marchese, Howard Baierlein, Peter Fahey, Jon Annunziata**



and **Johann Wiese** were immediately on the scene and directed our efforts to shut down local valves in a deliberate way that kept the strain on the system to a minimum. The break was isolated and the water turned off by 9:30 am, and we are in the process of replacing the section of the main that broke. A major thanks to Con Edison, who ensured that affected gas lines didn't create a risk to public safety, OEM, who added their substantial emergency response coordinating expertise, and the FDNY, who evacuated a homeless shelter. Though the break was a major headache for traffic and the flooded businesses, our crews were able to keep water flowing to residents throughout the entire event—showing yet again the amazing job that DEP and generations of our predecessors have done designing a redundant system that can handle unforeseen events. Read an amazing column by Michael Daly of the Daily News, which truly captured the often unnoticed role that DEP plays in New York City.

In BWS news, last week we began releasing water from Ashokan Reservoir to the lower Esopus Creek. Last December, as part of discussions regarding turbid storm-related releases, DEP committed to use the Ashokan Release Channel to release water into the lower Esopus year-round for the first time ever. These voluntary community releases will have benefits that will enhance the overall ecology and improve recreational opportunities. It's one example of how we try to balance the city's need to supply high quality drinking water to nine million New Yorkers with our obligation to ensure that downstream communities are able to enjoy recreational opportunities to the fullest—similar to our program that opens upstate land for recreational or suitable economic purposes after we purchase it to protect water quality. You can see the overwhelmingly positive reactions from upstate communities here.

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.

Focus on the Field



When peregrine falcons nest in the concrete jungle of New York City, BWS Section Chief to Wildlife Studies **Chris Nadeski** can be at the top of any building or any bridge—hundreds of feet up in the sky—checking on the chicks and banding them. Banding helps track the birds and provide information such as where they travel and age. While Chris does all of the banding work in the city, the falcon project is a cooperative effort between the city and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, federal agencies, environmental groups and the general public.

Chris is at work by 5:00 am because of the variety of projects

he's in charge of. "Some days I begin with a survey of water bird populations in the upstate reservoirs and then I am off to the city to work for the peregrine falcon project, or airport safety issues related to wildlife," said Chris, who drives dozens of miles from location to location every day.

When not atop a skyscraper, Chris is in the watershed heading the successful Waterfowl Management Program to control bacteria pollution in the reservoirs by controlling the bird population. "My job is a lot of fun. I enjoy going from place to place and this program takes me in many different directions of the water system to work on a team protecting NYC water from bacteria found in wildlife populations," said Chris.

Chris has worked for DEP for 20 years and has both a bachelor's and master's degree in biology. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his wife and children. For vacation this year, he is looking forward to a week in Kentucky with his church to help rebuild depressed areas of the region.

Did You Know

...that hydrants aren't just for fighting fires? They also serve vital operational needs for New York's water supply and delivery system. For example, during service disruptions caused by water main breaks, a hydrant is the crucial tool that allows air to enter and exit the affected water main, which ensures that the break remains isolated. At some locations, there is more than one water main, and so each needs a distinct hydrant connected to it.

Press Box

DEP participated in this documentary , produced by NYC Media. It analyzes PlaNYC, the city's sustainability blueprint for making a greener, greater New York City and offers an in-depth look at the investments the City is making in its future.

"On graduating from Brooklyn Technical High School, Jim Pynn wanted a career in which he could do something every day for the environment ... His choice of that career turned out great for him and for the city. Pynn is now superintendent of the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant in Brooklyn, the largest of the city's 14 treatment facilities at 310 mgd design flow." – Treatment Plant Operator Magazine feature on DEP Newtown Creek WWTP Superintendent Jim Pynn 

Milestones

Best wishes to **Amy Follweiler**, BWS and **Tom Murphy** who were married on July 9, and to **Arthur Tringali**, BWS to **Diane Foy** on July 23.

Ask Cas

askcas@dep.nyc.gov 

- Q. Why are cave-ins repair the responsibility of DEP, whereas potholes are the responsibility of DOT? Does it have anything to do with our infrastructure?
- A. Cave-ins and potholes have different causes and thus are resolved differently. Cave-ins are usually very deep, possibly with a bottom that cannot be easily seen from the street surface. They are typically caused by issues with the underlying infrastructure such as a defective sewer and can also be caused by other utilities in the street, for example, Con Edison infrastructure. DEP is only responsible for those cave-ins that are resulting from our infrastructure. Potholes are shallower than cave-ins; typically they have a circular shape with a more easily definable bottom. Potholes are caused by regular wear and tear on the roadway including the impacts of weather and traffic.

Kodak Moment



REPAIR AND RESTORE: Site of Jerome Avenue 36-inch water main break after the water was pumped out. Beneath New York City streets is a maze of water, sewer, electrical and gas pipes.

(Protecting Reservoirs—A Bird's Eye View... continued)

gram is run by the Bureau of Water Supply. It was developed to assess and mitigate pollution impacts on reservoirs, in the form of fecal coliform bacteria, from birds. The management of bird populations at key reservoirs throughout the watershed is essential to meet water quality regulations. It's a year-round job, with DEP and DEP contractor wildlife biologists beginning as early as 4:00 am to conduct bird population surveys and collect and analyze fecal samples from birds and mammals. Certain species of birds have identification tags placed on their legs to track their local movements around the reservoirs during breeding seasons and to distinguish residents from migratory populations.

"The Waterfowl Management Program is an important element of the city's FAD," said BWS Assistant Commissioner **David Warne**. "It's been highly effective in consistently controlling coliform contributions from birds in key upstate reservoirs. Since coliforms are one of the pri-

mary regulated parameters under the FAD, keeping levels in check is of paramount importance. It is fair to say that Waterfowl Management is one of the key reasons DEP has been able to sustain its FAD for more than 18 years and counting."

The program was designed to study the relationship between seasonal trends in bird populations on the reservoirs as well as trends in fecal coliform concentrations both within the reservoir and at some water sampling locations. Following several years of waterbird population monitoring, DEP's scientific staff—consisting of wildlife biologists and microbiologists—identified birds as a significant source of fecal coliform at the Kensico Reservoir. In response, DEP developed and implemented the Waterfowl Management Program and received federal and state approval for the techniques that have been critical to the city's ability to continue meeting federal and state drinking water quality standards.

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