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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MORE INFORMATION

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Two-day Symposium on the Future of Jamaica Bay and its Improvement as an Environmental Resource

NYC DEP Convenes Regional and Environmental Experts to Discuss Conservation Efforts

On October 28 and 29, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection will convene a two-day, state-of-the-science symposium highlighting emerging research on a range of issues impacting the ecology of Jamaica Bay. Jamaica Bay is a unique and irreplaceable ecological resource that has survived and often thrived alongside human habitats, but like many other important tidal estuaries along the Eastern Seaboard, it is facing an alarming rate of marshland loss and environmental degradation. The symposium, held in Brooklyn and Manhattan, will enhance scientific understanding of these trends and inform the ongoing development of a comprehensive and effective strategy to improve the ecological health of the Bay.

The symposium will feature new research from several regional experts, including multiple studies on the mechanisms and drivers of marshland loss; presentations on successful, ongoing restoration pilots in Jamaica Bay and other, similar water bodies; as well as an attempt to identify what new research is needed to address potential future threats to the Bay.

"Jamaica Bay is home to thousands of species of plants and animals and one of New York City's largest and most vital green spaces. Conserving the Bay is a critical component of Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC initiative, and will likely have benefits that reach far beyond the boundaries of the Bay," said DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd. "This symposium will be a key step in achieving the Mayor's goal and realizing those benefits."

Specific presentation topics will include: the relationship between shifts in the Bay's tidal patterns, largely a symptom of climate change, and marshland loss; the effectiveness of innovative stormwater management systems in limiting the pollution that enters Jamaica Bay; and the success of a fledgling effort to restore native

Construction, Demolition & Abatement	eelgrass populations in portions of the Bay. A full program agenda is attached.
ABOUT DEP	In 2007, DEP issued the “Jamaica Bay Watershed Protection Plan” a document that, in accordance with Local Law 71 and substantial stakeholder input, outlined a multi-faceted approach to restoring and protecting the critical ecological resources of the Bay. Research presented at the symposium will enhance the ongoing development of these strategies and guide the implementation of DEP’s program to improve the water quality and ecological diversity of the Bay.
Inside DEP	The two-day session will culminate with a tour of Jamaica Bay on the North River, a DEP vessel. The tour will be led by renowned naturalist Don Riepe. Riepe has extensive experience with Jamaica Bay and is a board member of New York City Audubon and heads the Northeast chapter of the American Littoral Society.
News	The symposium is co-sponsored by the National Park Service and will include presentations by many distinguished speakers and representatives from numerous academic, governmental, and research institutions including Columbia University, Cornell University, Queens College, Stony Brook University, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers.
DEP Featured In...	Jamaica Bay is one of New York State’s great natural assets. Its 15,000 acres serve as home to hundreds of unique plant and animal species and ecosystems, and affords numerous, diverse recreational opportunities – all largely within the confines of a major urban center. The Bay is also located within one of the most densely developed urban watersheds in the country – 63,500 acres and home to more than two million people who collectively produce 250 million gallons per day of wastewater, all of which is discharged to the tributaries or open waters of the Bay after treatment.
Stories from DEP	Since 1994, DEP has invested more than \$600 million to attenuate combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and improve water quality, upgraded the Bay’s four wastewater treatment plants to reduce nitrogen loading by more than 30%, and drastically expanded sewers in the Jamaica Bay drainage areas. The agency has also closed, capped and initiated the restoration of the Pennsylvania and Fountain Avenues landfills on the Bay’s northern coast, the largest restoration project ever undertaken in New York City; completed extensive wetland restoration within Idlewild Park (at the headwaters of Jamaica Bay); and begun key ecological pilots that could lead to the regeneration and restoration of critical aquatic ecosystems and communities. More recently, DEP completed facility plans that comprehensively address the impacts of wastewater treatment plants and CSOs on Jamaica Bay and its tributaries.
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