



Fall Foliage

Pepacton Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System



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**DEP Opens Visitor Center at Newtown Creek
Center Highlights the Life Cycle of NYC Water; Tours Available to the Public and to Schools**

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today opened the new Visitor Center at the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. The center, part of the ongoing \$5 billion upgrade of the plant, chronicles the life cycle of New York City water, starting with its origin in the upstate watersheds, to its distribution through 6,300 miles of water mains, to its treatment at one of the City's 14 wastewater plants. The center also houses a signature water sculpture designed by world-renowned artist Vito Acconci, that symbolizes the flow of drinking water to New York City from the upstate watersheds. Commissioner Holloway was joined by Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, State Assembly Member Joseph Lentol, City Council Member Stephen Levin, City Council Member Diana Reyna, Director of the New York City Percent for Art program Sara Reisman, Management Partner of Polshek Partnerships Tim Hartung, and Newtown Creek Monitoring Committee co-Chair Paul Turrci.

"The Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant is a part of the City's water infrastructure that plays a critical role in protecting the public health of all New Yorkers. It is also a stunning public work," said Commissioner Holloway. "This Visitor Center is designed to educate New Yorkers and visitors from around the world about the complex and ingenious system that brings more than a billion gallons of water here every day, and to explain how the infrastructure investments that Mayor Bloomberg has made a top priority will sustain and improve our water quality for generations to come."

"Cleaner waterways in and around New York City are due in no small part to state-of-the-art facilities like the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant," said Brooklyn Borough President Markowitz. "And thanks to this new educational visitor center — complete with water landscape and lighting designed by world-renowned artists and architects — we all will have a better appreciation of the treatment process and how it's helping to make our city more livable and sustainable."

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"I am excited to be a part of the opening for the Newtown Creek Visitor Center. The Department of Environmental Protection has partnered with our community to develop a world-class educational resource for students and the general public," said Council Member Levin. "I cannot wait until the entire project is completed, especially the final two phases of the highly anticipated Nature Walk."

"The Newtown Creek Monitoring Committee is pleased with DEP's progress at transforming the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant and adjacent waterfront into a Greenpoint destination," said Irene Klementowicz, co-chair of the committee. "The plant continues to be an exciting model of the benefits of community-city collaboration, one that includes a shared vision of an aesthetic integration of the plant into the neighborhood. In a trend that started with the Nature Walk, the Visitor Center is the latest example of these efforts and one that will benefit residents citywide as it provides lessons about the importance of municipal infrastructure and environment. DEP's commitment to continue to reduce odors and expand waterfront access and green space around the plant are further examples of our partnership efforts. The committee looks forward to continuing to work with DEP."

"It is exceedingly rare that an architect has the opportunity to collaborate with engineers on the design of the external enclosure of complex infrastructure, with the goal of enhancing the public's access to and understanding of essential systems and processes," said James Polshek, Senior Design Counsel at Polshek Partnership Architects. "For this we thank the New York Public Design Commission. The Visitor Center at Newtown Creek is a metaphor for the welcome that this environmentally critical complex offers to the people of the City of New York."

"Inside meets outside, and vice versa. The floor inside the building and the concrete sidewalk outside slope toward each other and meet at the glass wall," said Vito Acconci in describing his water sculpture. "A waterfall flowing down outside meets a waterfall flowing down inside; at a bulge and recess in the glass wall, a walkway through the water inside meets a walkway through the water outside; from outside you sit inside the building while from inside you sit outside — inside you sit next to a person outside, and vice versa."

New Yorkers of all ages will learn about the amazing story of New York City's water cycle. Through education panels that contain pictures and stories of DEP personnel, visitors will learn: how water is collected in 2,000 square miles of upstate watersheds; how more than 1 billion gallons of fresh drinking water is delivered to 9 million New Yorkers each day; and how the City treats and discharges 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater that is produced in New York City on a daily basis into New York's harbors. The exhibit also includes a replica of a 96-inch New York City sewer main, a scale model of the Newtown Creek plant and a water landscape.

The center also features a multi-purpose room on the second floor. This room will be used by DEP's education staff as a classroom for visiting school groups, and DEP is developing a plan to make it available to local community groups and organizations. The room overlooks the air and electrical power generation section of the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Members of the public will be able to visit the Visitor Center

on Friday and Saturday from noon to 4 p.m., and school groups will be able to visit on Tuesday and Thursday by appointment from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Those interested in scheduling a tour should contact the DEP Education Office at educationoffice@dep.nyc.gov, or by phone at 718-595-3506.

The Visitor Center adds additional public space to the Newtown Creek plant. The Nature Walk was designed by environmental sculpture artist George Trakas and opened in 2007. The walk borders the plant, and offers visitors a view of its settling tanks and digester eggs. It is open to the public seven days a week.

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, through its Percent for Art Program, commissioned Vito Acconci to design the water sculpture. Under New York City's Percent for Art Law, one percent of the budget for eligible City-funded construction projects is dedicated to commissioning permanent, site-specific artwork. The Percent for Art Program brings artists into the design process, enhancing the City's civic architecture and providing venues for New Yorkers and visitors to experience art outside traditional settings. The program supports and strengthens New York City's vibrant cultural life through public funding for programs, operations and capital improvements throughout the five boroughs.

The upgrade of the treatment plant has been monitored by the Newtown Creek Monitoring Committee, a group of Greenpoint citizens who volunteered to help oversee the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade. Established in 1996, the committee is one of the longest standing citizen committees in New York City and a model of public involvement in a large, multi-decade project. The committee has worked closely with DEP in multiple parts of the project, including the design and construction of the Visitor Center and the Nature Walk.

The Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, built in 1967, is the largest of New York City's 14 wastewater treatment plants and is currently undergoing a \$5 billion upgrade. The plant serves approximately 1 million residents in a drainage area of more than 15,000 acres. The plant upgrade began in 1998 and will be completed in 2014. Upgrade work includes a 50% increase to existing treatment tank volume, an increase in electrical power supply and emergency power generation capability, new disinfection facilities to chlorinate plant effluent, and new sludge handling facilities, including thickeners and egg-shaped digesters. New sewage pumps and screens, a central residuals facility, odor control equipment for tanks and buildings, sludge loading facilities and three sludge transport vessels are in the process of being installed. DEP and the State Department of Environmental Conservation announced this past January that the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant was meeting the Clean Water Act's pollutant removal standards, three years ahead of schedule.

DEP manages the City's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8 million in New York City. New York City's water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the City, and comprises 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 7,400 miles of sewer lines take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants.

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