

Watershed Conservation Corps Turns 20



Seven SUNY Ulster college students joined DEP this summer through the Watershed Conservation Corps. Since 1996, this unique program has recruited SUNY Ulster students to work in the field alongside DEP stream scientists to gather reams of data that support projects throughout the watershed. “The program is such a win-win for us and the college,” said **Beth Reichheld**, who manages DEP’s stream program. “It has allowed us to maximize our work during field season, and it lets the students

get out in the field to learn alongside our scientists.” The 10-week program utilizes students who are concentrating on geology, biology and other environmental sciences at the college. Several alumni of the program have become full-time employees at DEP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other noteworthy environmental groups. This year, the seven students have compiled thousands of measurements at the West Kill in Greene County, the Neversink River in Sullivan County, the East Branch Delaware River in Delaware County, and myriad other streams that funnel water into New York City’s reservoir system. Their program is now shepherded by **Mark Vian** of the Bureau of Water Supply (BWS) and **Emily Smith**, who works with BWS through a contract with SUNY Ulster. Students in the program have learned to perform surveying, fish sampling, analysis of substrate characteristics, hydraulic analyses, vegetation monitoring and planting, gauge calibrations, and more.

Spotlight On Safety

Beware of Dogs!

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), approximately 4.5 million dog bites occur each year in the United States. Therefore, it is important to remember that if you are around an unfamiliar dog, there is a possibility they may feel provoked and bite you. The extent of dog attacks to DEP field employees may not be as significant as other professions, such as postal workers, but the danger is still relevant and can present safety risks. Aggressive dogs that are not restrained or controlled in locations where job

tasks are conducted may pose a safety threat to field staff.

DEP field employees should always be aware of their work environment and unsafe conditions. If an unleashed and potentially aggressive dog is observed, request that the business/home owners secure or control the animal. Contact your supervisor if you have questions on performing work at locations where you have encountered aggressive dogs.

To learn more on how to avoid, and protect yourself from, dog bites go to the following CDC link, [Preventing Dog Bites](#).

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.

Special Guest Commissioner's Corner



This week's Commissioner's Corner was written by Deputy Commissioner for OD&HR **Diana Jones Ritter**.

For many college students, summertime is a chance to break away from school work, reunite with friends, and simply relax. However, [for one group of more than 100 dedicated young people](#), this summer was spent working alongside the nearly 6,000 professionals here at DEP in our summer internship program.

An internship at DEP can provide a student with a terrific stepping stone for evaluating potential careers. Look no further than **Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**, who was a summer intern in 1981, and began working for the department two years later. To remain competitive with peers, students should not wait until their senior year to do an internship—they should start as early as possible!

The summer internship program is an integral part of our effort to attract and retain DEP's next generation of talented and diverse leaders, which is one of the reasons we continue to be among the top water utilities in the nation. With more than 55% of DEP's current workforce eligible to retire over the next 10 years, inspir-

ing and developing talent for the future is essential. This summer, our staff worked hard to attract interns from the five boroughs, and from as far away as California and Indiana. Schools represented by this year's class include Tulane, Yale, Columbia, Cornell, the City University of New York, the State University of New York and Tulane and Vermont Law Schools. I'm also very proud of the diversity represented by this year's class, as the best ideas and solutions are generated when we seek input from employees and/or interns who hail from varied backgrounds.

This summer's program provided our interns with an inside peek at the critical work DEP employees do every day, while also affording them the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to many of our projects. Some of the interns were assigned to the Water-On-the-Go program while others were dispatched to various DEP bureaus at locations spanning from Staten Island to the upstate watersheds.

The program culminated last Wednesday with the Summer Intern Fair, where the interns showcased the skills and talents they brought to our important mission of providing high quality drinking water and protecting public health and the environment. Their energy and enthusiasm, coupled with a thirst for knowledge, has definitely served as an inspiration to all of us. I want to thank everyone at DEP for their work on this year's program, and I'd especially like to acknowledge **Grace Pigott**, the entire Organizational Development & Human Resources team, intern supervisors and other bureau partners for once again coordinating and facilitating this wonderful program.



Last Splash For DEP Sludge Boat



This past July, one of DEP's veteran marine vessels gained a new life underwater just off Pompano Beach on the Florida coast. The 324-foot tanker, formerly known as [the M/V Newtown Creek](#), was once the largest sludge vessel in the country and transported roughly 17 billion gallons of sludge while in operation. The resilient ship survived engine room fires, flooding, Hurricane Sandy, and the great blizzards of 1996 and 2006. The *M/V Newtown Creek* was [retired in summer of 2014](#) and sold at auction in 2015 to the city of Pompano Beach, which planned to incorporate the massive vessel into a diving attraction. In April of this year, the decommissioned sludge boat began its 1,500 mile journey to South Florida, where it was eventually renamed Lady Luck, [sunk to a depth of 125 feet](#), and became part of a multi-wreck dive site known as Shipwreck Park. The ship has since been transformed into a casino-themed haven for both divers and marine life alike, providing a unique diving experience and becoming the largest artificial reef in the area.

Don't Forget To Apply For IDNYC



All DEP employees are reminded to apply for [IDNYC](#), the program launched in January 2015 by **Mayor de Blasio** that provides a free, government-issued ID card to any New York City resident over 14 years of age. The benefits of a free IDNYC include free one-year memberships to 40 of the City's greatest museums and cultural institutions, in addition to rewards that include ticket discounts for movies, Broadway shows, live performances, sports events, amusement parks, and more. IDNYC cardholders can also access services and programs offered by the City as well as by businesses. Additionally, IDNYC helps enhance public safety, by serving as a recognized ID for interacting with NYPD.

High-Flying Repairs At Breakneck Ridge



Last Wednesday, a specially trained helicopter crew successfully airlifted construction materials to two DEP facilities near Breakneck Ridge in upstate Hudson Valley. The materials will be used for planned maintenance at these locations, which are superstructures associated with the Catskill Aqueduct, a 92-mile-long conduit that carries water from Ashokan Reservoir to New York City. The materials—each load was carefully tethered to the chopper—were flown in because neither building has viable road access. The operation required a portion of the Breakneck Ridge Trail to be temporarily closed to ensure public safety.

Strike a Pose With Lunchtime Yoga



DEP employees can enjoy free yoga sessions on Wednesdays and Fridays, from 12:10 to 12:50pm at the Rego Center Community Room, located off Horace Harding Expressway, on 97th Street, near ALDI. Admission is limited to the first 50 employees and a limited number of loaner yoga mats are available for use, but please call in advance to reserve one. For more information, contact either **Melissa Siegel** at msiegel@dep.nyc.gov or call ext. 7418, or contact **Neeraja Nalamothu** at neerajan@dep.nyc.gov or call ext. 5363.

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