

PHOTO INFO...

## Fall Foliage

Ashokan Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Farrell Sklerov/Michael Saucier (718) 595-6600

### MORE INFORMATION

NYC Department of  
 Environmental Protection  
 Communications &  
 Intergovernmental Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard  
 19th Floor  
 Flushing, NY 11373

(718) 595 - 6600

## Update on North River Wastewater Treatment Plant Fire and Impacts

### Overview of Incident

The North River Wastewater Treatment Plant was taken offline yesterday afternoon following a four-alarm fire in the engine room that started at approximately 11:45 am. Starting around 5:15 pm yesterday, untreated wastewater started to be directly discharged into the Hudson River and continues at this time as the plant remains offline. The North River plant has been in operation since 1986 and treats on average 120 million gallons of wastewater a day from Manhattan's west side above Bank Street and northern Manhattan.

### Status of Plant Operations

DEP is working as quickly as possible to get the plant running again. DEP staff and contractors are inside the facility assessing damage, performing cleanup activities and working toward re-energizing the facility, which is the first step toward bringing the plant online. The estimated time to bring the plant back online is undetermined. In order to minimize the discharge from the plant, DEP is performing some small "pump arounds"—pumping wastewater flow out of an 84-inch sewer at West 117th St. in Manhattan that normally flows to the plant and pumping into a 42-inch sewer at Frederick Douglass Boulevard and 117th, which flows to the Wards Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. DEP is also applying chlorine to some sewer outfalls near the plant to reduce the bacteria in the untreated wastewater discharges.

### Environmental, Health and Community Impacts

Water quality modeling indicates that there is no immediate impact to permitted beaches due to the dilution capacity of the river. Based on recommendations from NYC Health, the Hudson River, the East River from the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge to Verrazano Bridge, the Harlem River and the Kill Van Kull to the Goethals Bridge will not be fit for recreational activities such as swimming, canoeing, kayaking, windsurfing or any other water activity that would entail possible direct contact now through at least Sunday. The New York City Police Department Harbor Unit will be patrolling near the plant to ensure boaters keep a proper

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distance. The city Parks Department is restricting access to the river at the 79th Street Boat Basin and placing signs prohibiting kayaking, canoeing and other recreational activities from all city boat launch sites along the Hudson River and other appropriate sites. The Hudson River Park Trust as well as the Battery Park City Authority are also installing similar signs at sites under their jurisdiction.

DEP and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene are currently taking samples in the harbor and at permitted beaches that could potentially be impacted. Beaches remain open at this time and for the most up-to-date information, go to the NYC Health website at [www.nyc.gov/health](http://www.nyc.gov/health), [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), or call 311. Individuals can also receive proactive alerts by signing up through 311 for Notify NYC, the city's official source for information about emergency events and important city services. Riverbank State Park, located atop the treatment plant, remains closed until further notice. Westchester County and New Jersey DEP are also performing water sampling and water flow modeling to determine any impacts on their rivers and beaches.

DEP will continue to provide routine updates on the status of the plant's operations and public health impacts.

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