

Special Guest *Commissioner's Corner*



Anastasios Georgelis
Deputy Commissioner
Water and Sewer Operations

DEP continues to work to improve water quality in the Gowanus Canal and, recently, construction was completed on the first phase of installing high-level storm sewers along 3rd Avenue in the Gowanus neighborhood. The additional capacity in the neighborhood's drainage system will help to reduce roadway flooding and the amount of pollution that may be discharged into the canal during heavy rainstorms. Phase I began in the spring of 2016, cost \$26 million, and was completed earlier

this month. Work on Phase II is now underway, will cost \$27 million, and will be completed in 2020. While the roadway is open to build the sewers, nearly two miles of new water mains are also being installed. Funding for the project is being provided by DEP while DDC is managing the construction.

During the first phase of the project, more than 4,800 linear feet of new high-level storm sewers were installed along 3rd Avenue, between Carroll and Douglass streets, as well as portions of Denton Place and President, Union, Sackett and DeGraw streets. The construction of nine storm chambers and 48 new catch basins will help to drain

precipitation from the roadways and alleviate localized flooding. All existing catch basin drainage connections were switched from the existing combined sewer to the new high-level storm sewers. This will ensure that more wastewater is routed to a wastewater treatment plant and reduce the likelihood and volume of any combined sewer overflows into the Canal.

While the roadway was open to construct the sewers, approximately 5,000 linear feet of new ductile iron water mains were added to replace older cast iron pipes. This will ensure the reliability of the water delivery system for decades to come, while new fire hydrants will provide firefighters with ready access to the City's water supply. Upon construction's completion, the roadways were resurfaced and new sidewalks, pedestrian ramps, and curbs were installed. Tree planting is scheduled to take place during the next planting season, in the spring of 2019.

This project is the latest in a series of steps DEP has taken to improve the water quality of the Gowanus Canal. In late 2013, DEP [reactivated the Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel](#) for the first time since it was shut down for a full, \$177 million rehabilitation in 2010. The Flushing Tunnel brings more oxygenated water from Buttermilk Channel, lying between Governors Island and Red Hook, to the head of the canal. The activation of the flushing tunnel has already increased the dissolved oxygen content of the water in the Canal, which has improved its aesthetics as well as providing a more suitable habitat for plant and aquatic life. DEP is also building [green infrastructure throughout the Gowanus Canal drainage area](#). Green infrastructure allows stormwater to be naturally absorbed into the ground, thereby keeping it out of the sew-



er system where it could contribute to overflows into the Canal. This includes nearly 70 curbside rain gardens and [two green play-grounds](#). DEP is also designing green infrastructure upgrades for the Gowanus Houses.

Third Avenue has been a chronic flooding location for many years, and this \$52 million investment will go a long way towards improving conditions for both residents and businesses. I want to thank my staff and our colleagues at DDC for their work on this project, which is already helping to reduce combined sewer overflows and improve the health of the Gowanus Canal.



Spotlight on Safety

Slips and Trips, Not Just Falls

Falls are common and often deadly workplace hazards that can be prevented. Most people may think of a dangerous fall only from an elevated location, but slips and trips can lead to same-level falls that can cause serious injury and death.

Here are some tips to prevent slips, trips, and falls:

- Avoid walking too fast, and distractions, such as looking at your cell phone
- wear appropriate shoes for the weather and/or your job
- be aware of uneven walking surfaces
- clean up spills immediately and keep walkways clear of obstructions

- wear and use proper fall protection equipment
- ensure necessary fall prevention systems such as guardrails are in place
- when using a ladder, ensure the base is on a firm, solid surface, and maintain three points of contact with the ladder
- never use a ladder during windy or inclement weather

If you see a slip, trip or fall hazard in your workplace, report it immediately to prevent serious injuries.

For more information, visit the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) and [National Safety Council](#) websites.

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. HELP IS ON THE WAY.

Focus on the Field: Value Ambassadors for Innovation

This month, Weekly Pipeline celebrated DEP's core value of Innovation by launching the Value Ambassador program. As part of the program rollout, we are highlighting three DEP employees, nominated by their peers, who through their work best represent Innovation at DEP. Over the next seven months, Weekly Pipeline will continue to showcase DEP's core values.



November: Innovation



December: Support



January: Diversity



February: Service



March: Integrity



April: Sustainability



May: Transparency



June: Safety

CHRIS MARTELL is the Plant Chief at the Wards Island Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility in the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment. Over his 29 years at DEP, Chris has frequently identified and implemented innovative methods to solve emergencies and other plant challenges. One example of Chris's ingenuity is how he designed custom rollers and bushings for the dewatering belts at Ward's Island, which improved the reliability of the process and reduced the number of system failures.

While running a plant is a full time job, Chris still finds ways to implement innovative approaches. For example, he has led the redesign of the electric actuators for the air blowers, identified new grit pumps from the mining industry for replacement in order to reduce failures, and increased main sewage pump emergency capacities by pioneering a design idea that



provided reliable pumping of sewage flow and an accelerated project schedule. He also has implemented "The Secret Odor Control Weapon" to reduce odor complaints from near-by park-goers.

For this and many future innovations to come, Chris was nominated by **Pam Elardo** and **Bob LaGrotta**.

ALAN COHN is the Managing Director of Integrated Water Management in the Bureau of Environmental Planning and Analysis, where he leads initiatives to prepare DEP and the city for climate change and population growth. Alan understands that innovation is key for cities to adapt to a changing economic, social, and environmental world, and over his nine years at DEP, has been creative in identifying small and large ways to plan and design for a more resilient and sustainable city.

Recently, Alan has been a leading force for implementing cloudburst management strategies in New York City. Cloudbursts are heavy rainfall events that can inundate urban areas and cause severe damage and local flooding. Together with international experts, Alan is working with external stakeholders, such as the Department of Transportation, the Mayor's Office, and New York City Housing Authority residents, to develop cloudburst projects that make NYC more



resilient during these heavy rain events. Alan has represented DEP for nearly a decade with the Water Utilities Climate Alliance, which brings the country's water agencies together to facilitate collaboration on climate change issues affecting water and wastewater utilities.

Alan was nominated by **Angela Licata**, **Pinar Balci**, and **Hannah Doherty**.

PAUL SHEANE, Chief of Operational Information Systems for the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations, manages a team of specialists who support the bureau's technology and information needs for water distribution and sewer collection systems. Through Paul's leadership and innovative thinking, the team was able to combine various software applications containing critical field data conditions into BWSO's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, vastly improving the availability of field information for decision making.

Paul was instrumental in upgrading the communication infrastructure of SCADA by moving the network from the city's NYCWiN system onto the more reliable 4G LTE wireless technology. Paul continues to innovate by testing out new technologies that aim



to improve operational efficiencies, such as the logger units that are used in the pilot leak detection program.

Paul was nominated by **Tasos Georgelis** and **Mike Farnan**.

Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 18 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Commissioner **Vincent Sapienza**, Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott** (not pictured), and HR Specialist **Grace Franco**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Amy Mendez and **Lisa Wiles** with BCS; **Johnny Calixto**, **Adam J. Farrell** and **Mohammed F. Shahriar** with BEC; **Matthew J. Kane** with BWS; **Steve Carrea**, **Rafael J. Dominquez**, and **Farrokh Firoozan** with BWSO; **Yakov Alayev**, **Thomas Carberry**, **Gary T. Gatens**, **Andrew T. Luong**, **Nabil M. Mahdi**, **Adam D. Sloan** and **John B. Welsh** with BWT; **Marya Shuksta** with EHS; and **Theresa C. Arias** with Housing Recovery.

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