

Special Guest *Commissioner's Corner*



Angela Licata, DEP's Deputy Commissioner of Sustainability, is a guest commentator this week.

When DEP launched the Green Infrastructure Plan in 2010, we knew the first few years would be mainly dedicated to initiating pilot projects, collecting data and planning for future construction. We also knew that the time would come when we would have multiple contracts for the construction of thousands of curbside gardens operating simultaneously across the city. I am pleased to announce that that time has come. The Office of Green Infrastructure is working hard with our partner agencies, the Department of Design and Construction, the Economic Development Corporation and the Parks Department, as we complete the first round of massive rain garden contracts and initiate the next wave of construction.

As many of you know, cleaning up Newtown Creek continues to be a priority for DEP and we recently broke ground on the construction of approximately 321 specially designed rain gardens in the Queens neighborhoods of Sunnyside, Maspeth and

Ridgewood. When construction is completed later this year, each rain garden will have the capacity to collect and absorb up to 2,500 gallons of stormwater when it rains. This will have an immediate and positive impact on Newtown Creek, as modeling shows that the 321 rain gardens will capture an estimated 38 million gallons of stormwater each year—thereby reducing sewer overflows into the waterway and improving its health. Not only will this \$7.3 million investment green the streets and sidewalks of these neighborhoods, it will also help to improve air quality.

In partnership with the Departments of Transportation, and Parks and Recreation, DEP conducts an extensive site selection process that includes geotechnical investigations and surveys. Prior to commencing construction, DEP conducted extensive outreach, including meeting with City Council Members, Community Boards 2 and 5, the Newtown Creek Alliance and numerous other neighborhood and environmental organizations. These meetings provided an opportunity to better inform communities about the purpose of

green infrastructure and the benefits it brings to their neighborhoods.

During construction, the rain gardens are excavated to a depth of five feet and are then backfilled with layers of stone and engineered soil. These layers contain void spaces that store the stormwater and promote infiltration. The addition of hardy plants further encourages infiltration through root growth and increases the capacity of the rain garden through evapotranspiration.

The rain gardens are designed so that all the stormwater is absorbed in less than 48 hours and dedicated maintenance crews ensure that they are functioning properly, including removing any trash that may have accumulated and pruning the trees and plants. The crews are active seven days a week, visit each rain garden approximately once a week—and additional crews will continue to be added as the program expands.

To date, approximately 1,000 rain gardens have been built throughout New York City with 1,500 currently under construction and thousands more planned for the next several years. Green infrastructure is becoming an increasingly important tool in DEP's mission to manage stormwater and in planning for increased resiliency in the face of more increased precipitation. Green infrastructure such as rain gardens and green-streets increase our resiliency to extreme temperatures, improve air quality and provide ecosystem benefits. These alternative approaches to stormwater management are cost-effective methods of improving harbor water quality, and we are delighted to be doing our part to help build a city that is both resilient and sustainable. To learn more, view the [2015 Green Infrastructure Annual Report](#).

Spotlight on Safety

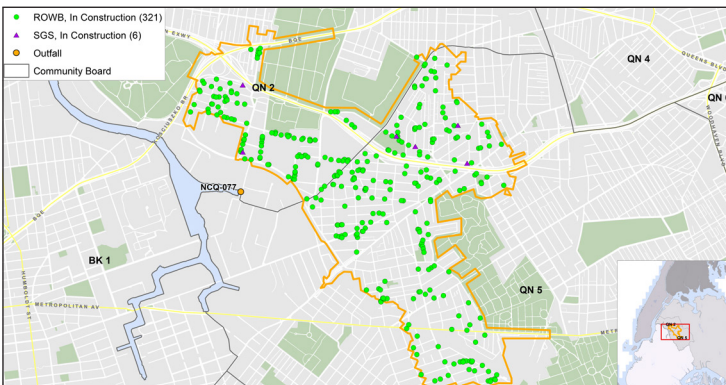
Protecting Yourself Against Dust Exposure

As the weather gets warmer, an increase in construction and housekeeping activities such as debris removal, demolition, cutting, sawing, and grinding could generate high amounts of dust. Dust is airborne [particulate matter](#) ranging in diameter from 10 to 50 [microns](#). Dust that becomes airborne could cause respiratory irritations, including sneezing and coughing.

An N95 model respirator is the most popular particulate filtering face piece respirator (dust mask) and will filter at least 95% of airborne particulates. Voluntary use of an N95 model respirator is allowed under [DEP's](#)

[Respiratory Protection Policy](#) for nuisance level dust conditions. However, employees must receive and understand the requirements of Appendix D of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Respiratory Protection standard. Appendix D provides information for employees using respirators when not occupationally required to wear them.

If you have questions on the requirements for using respirators at your site, consult your bureau-designated EHS representative. You can visit the [CDC website](#) or [OSHA's website](#) for more information.



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.

Family Fishing Days



DEP is hosting two upcoming Family Fishing Day events co-sponsored by the state Department of Environmental Conservation, which will supply fishing poles and bait to those who do not have their own. The first event is being held Sunday, June 12, from 9am to 2pm at the Woodstock Dike on Ashokan Reservoir. The second event will be held Saturday, June 18, at the State Route 10 boat launch on Cannonsville Reservoir. More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Spring Blood Drive

The New York Blood Center is experiencing a serious shortage in blood supply due to a fall-off in donations. To help ensure that blood will be available to those who need it, DEP is hosting blood drives at the below locations and times. Donors with an O-negative blood type, or “universal donors,” are especially urged to give because their blood can be transferred to anyone.

Lefrak: 6th Floor Training Room, 6/8 and 6/9, 7:45am to 1:45pm;
Downsville Region Area: Downsville Fire Hall, 6/8, 9:00am to 2:00pm;
Kingston/Catskill Area: 51 Albany Avenue, 6/8 from 1:00pm to 6:00pm; **Kensico/Highland Regions - Sutton Park Area:** Sutton Park-2nd Floor, Large Training Room, 6/16, 8:30am to 2:30pm; **Grahamsville Region Area:** Grahamsville Fire House, 6/29, 9:00am to 3:00pm.

Welcome Aboard!



Today, 32 new Sewage Treatment Workers attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Acting Commissioner **Steve Lawitts** (not pictured), Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter** and Payroll Coordinator **Lauren Gallo**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Luis Acosta, Linden Alphonso, Paul Amonds, Rocco Amoroso, Royston Bacchus, Yevgeniy Batanov, Alfonso Cammarata, Christopher Capece, Erik Climent, Jack Columbano, Vincent Demarco, Shaheen Ferdouse, John Gannon, Nicholas Lombardi, Vadya Mato, Eamonn Melly, Stephen Miller, Gerlando Minio, Loran Moon, Fritzner Morency, Robert Murtha, Paul Mutze, Brian O'Connell, Robert Orloff, Trevor Rodrigues, Luigi Sanelli, Parmanand Sankar, Keith Spellman, Lyndon Swan, Robert Vitale, Charles Zanfordino and Donald Zimmerman with BWT.

Protecting Our Reservoirs

Bureau of Water Supply (BWS) employees **Carl Steen** and **Fred Reinhart** adopted a good habit when repairs began nearly a decade ago at Gilboa Dam. Every time a contractor came with a new boat or barge, the two watershed maintainers asked a simple question before thoroughly inspecting each vessel: Where is this boat coming from?

A silver pontoon that arrived at the staging area on May 4 had been somewhere in the Midwest, at a job near the Mississippi River. That's probably where it picked up some scuzzy-looking barnacle that Reinhart spotted toward the bow.

“That immediately threw up a red flag for us,” Steen said.

The two inspected the boat and Steen discovered a batch of the undesirable creatures near the engine pivot at the back of the boat. Zebra mussels are on DEP's most “unwanted” list. The dime-sized mussels, native to Russia, are an invasive species that can clog intakes or harm water quality when they die and decompose in a reservoir.

Steen and Reinhart's discovery set off a quick collaboration across BWS that led to the mussels being identified, and prevented the boat from entering the water.



Boats that are found to have zebra mussels are generally cleaned and quarantined for two weeks. In this case, the contractor at Schoharie Reservoir chose to remove the boat and bring in a new one. The pontoon and other vessels will be gathering samples of soil and rock beneath the reservoir to support construction of the new release works.

Mike Fleischman, supervisor of watershed maintainers at Schoharie, said the sharp-eyed discovery by Steen and Reinhart serves as a good reminder for BWS staff and the contractors working at the site.

“It's an intense thing that happens to the contractor because this can bring the project to a screeching halt for a time,” Fleischman said. “They've got about 30 more boats and barges coming in to support the project, so we'll be keeping an eye on it.”

Bowery Bay Upgrades



Newly-hired Deputy Commissioner of Wastewater Treatment **Pam Elardo** and New York City Council Member **Costa Constantinides** took NY1 on a tour of Bowery Bay to showcase the completed \$3 million upgrades, including new aluminum covers and carbon filters to eliminate nuisance odors. The story can be viewed [here](#).

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