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Fall Foliage

Ashokan Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System



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Statement from NYC Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway On City's Green Infrastructure Plan Receiving United States Water Prize

"It's an honor for DEP to be recognized by the Clean Water America Alliance for New York City's Green Infrastructure Plan and a testament to Mayor Bloomberg's commitment to reducing combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and improving water quality. We believe that the Green Infrastructure Plan is the most sustainable and cost-effective way to continue PlaNYC's commitment to building the infrastructure New York City needs to thrive and grow. Green Infrastructure not only improves water quality by reducing CSOs, it also cools the city, improves air quality, and increases property values. All of this adds up to an improved quality of life for New Yorkers that will save more than \$2 billion over the traditional grey infrastructure approach.

I'd like to thank DEP's Deputy Commissioner for Sustainability Carter Strickland and Deputy Commissioner for Environmental Planning and Analysis Angela Licata and their staff for the hard work, vision, and analysis that went into this plan. The next step forward is getting the State Department of Environmental Conservation to endorse the plan and modify current regulations to allow us to move forward. We have begun those conversations and hope to be able to fully implement the plan shortly."

The United States Water Prize Program honors individuals, institutions, and organizations that have made an outstanding achievement in the advancement of sustainable solutions to the nation's water challenges. Created, sponsored and administered by the Clean Water America Alliance, the United States Water Prize Program is the first of its kind to recognize successful efforts in protecting and improving the health of watersheds in this country. The award will be presented May 9 at a ceremony in Washington, DC. More information on the award can be found at www.uswaterprize.org.

The NYC Green Infrastructure Plan, released by Mayor Bloomberg in September 2010 plans for \$1.5 billion investments in green infrastructure over the next 20 years, on top of \$2.9 billion in built or planned grey infrastructure.

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The Green Infrastructure Plan explains how the City will improve harbor water quality by capturing and retaining stormwater runoff before it enters the sewer system by using streetside swales, tree pits, and rooftop detention to absorb and retain stormwater. The hybrid approach will reduce combined sewer overflows by 12 billion gallons a year – more than 2 billion gallons a year more than the current all-grey strategy while saving New Yorkers \$2.4 billion. The Green Infrastructure Plan has been submitted for approval to the State Department of Environmental Conservation in order for the plan to move forward.

Green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils, and other structural elements to mimic natural hydrologic cycles by slowing down, absorbing and evaporating stormwater. These characteristics, the minimal energy and manpower required for operation, and the relatively quick installation mean that green infrastructure can be cost-effective and provide immediate benefits. Types of green infrastructure projects include: blue roofs and green roofs for new and existing buildings that slow roof water from draining from roofs too quickly and overwhelming storm sewers; porous pavement for parking lots that allows water to seep through it and be absorbed into the ground rather than becoming runoff; tree pits and streetside swales for roadways that allow water to pool in underground holding areas until it can dissipate in the ground or transpire through plants; wetlands and swales for parks; rain barrels for low-density residential areas; and a compilation of these techniques for high-density residential housing.

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. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

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