

Sandy Shivers Some Timbers



DEP this month will begin removing hundreds of trees around Kensico Reservoir—many of them roughly a century old—that were toppled by the pouring rain and strong winds of Hurricane Sandy. The work comprises roughly 45 acres across four different work sites on Nanny Hagen Road, Route 120, and West Lake Drive. At some of those sites, the historic storm blew down as many as 90 percent of the trees, which are mainly

Norway spruce that were planted when the reservoir was built.

Some of the 100-foot-tall trees uprooted completely, while others snapped about 20 feet up from their base. Most of the trees will be carefully removed by contractors and shipped to Canada where they will be milled for lumber. Some of the trees will be chipped and spread onsite to help stabilize the soil around

(Continued on reverse side)

Spotlight on Safety

Now, hear this!

Scientific evidence links hazardous noise exposure to hearing impairment, hypertension, and sleep disturbance. Loud noise can also cause physical and psychological stress and reduce productivity.

“Engineering” and “Administrative” controls can help reduce the hazards of noise exposure. Engineering controls involve reducing noise levels by modifying or replacing equipment. Administrative controls are changes to policies that reduce/eliminate worker exposure to noise. The use of hearing pro-

tection devices can help prevent occupational noise exposure.

However, the most important and long lasting way to reduce harmful noise is through project design. This requires the consideration of human factors in the design phase of any project and DEP’s Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction has been proactively evaluating ways that worker safety can be improved through project design.

For more information visit: [DEP Hearing Conservation Policy](#) and <http://www.osha.gov>.

Commissioner’s Corner

DEP is an incredibly complex organization, with skilled employees who work in a wide variety of trades and professions to provide critical services to more than nine million New Yorkers in the city and upstate. One thing that we all share in common is pride in our collective work and the opportunity to explain what we do to our family, friends, and neighbors. To that end, the agency has adopted an official statement that reflects the breadth of our duties in the simplest, clearest terms:

At DEP it is our mission to protect public health and the environment by supplying clean drinking water, collecting and treating wastewater, and reducing air, noise, and hazardous substances pollution.

Two years ago we set an ambitious agenda to carry out this mission and reach our goal of becoming the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. Thanks to the dedication of the nearly 6,000 women and men at DEP we are well on our way to achieving that objective. On Monday, we released the 2012 Progress Report on the department’s strategic plan, *Strategy 2011-2014*. The report documents progress towards completing 100 distinct initiatives.

At the plan’s mid-way point, 57 of the 100 initiatives have been fully achieved, 30 are on track to be completed on schedule, and the remaining 13 are in the planning and design phase. Next week’s edition of Pipeline will feature many of DEP’s key *Strategy 2011-2014* accomplishments. For those of you interested in more detail on the progress we have made, the complete report is available on DEP’s website [b](#).

An important part of *Strategy 2011-2014* is building infrastructure to ensure future generations of New Yorkers continue to enjoy the benefits of a pristine drinking water supply. Last week we announced the completion of a \$41 million upgrade at one of the most

important pieces of our water supply system—Hillview Reservoir in Yonkers. The 90-acre reservoir is the last stop for the water before it enters City Water Tunnels No. 1, 2, and 3 and it receives nearly a billion gallons of water each day through the Catskill and Delaware Aqueducts. At just over 300 feet above sea level, it ensures the system has enough pressure to send water nearly 31 miles to consumers in Staten Island. The \$41 million in improvements included the rehabilitation and modernization of the four chamber buildings, installation of enhanced security systems, and roadway and landscaping upgrades.

Another key component of *Strategy 2011-2014* is protecting public health and last week we announced a new rule that will require dry cleaning businesses to post the primary chemicals used in the cleaning process so that consumers can read information about potential health effects. Most dry cleaners use perchloroethylene or “perc,” which is regulated by federal, state, and city governments. However, some dry cleaners have more recently promoted the use of non-perc chemicals and these cleaning agents may also pose health risks. DEP’s new rule will help inform consumers about the use of non-perc chemicals and any potential health effects. We developed the rule in close consultation with industry groups and the cost of compliance is minimal or non-existent; dry cleaners simply have to fill out and print the applicable forms from the DEP website and post them in their business.

Whether it is investing in infrastructure, working with private industries to protect public health, or any of the countless others services we provide New Yorkers, DEP employees have shown their commitment to innovation across the board. I am proud that in two years we have accomplished more than half of the initiatives set forth in *Strategy 2011-2014* and I look forward to working with all of you to finish the job.

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. [b](#)

Focus on the Field



Amanda Locke hopped over some fallen trees last week and walked into a small strip of forest within shouting distance of Croton Falls Dam. Locke was there to inspect a “thinning” project. About four years ago, foresters had removed a few trees from this small forest, hoping that those left standing would be able to grow stronger and absorb more nutrients and water.

“Stand right up there,” Locke said, pointing to the stump of a tree that had been cut down. “Now look up.”

There should have been a hole in the canopy above—a space occupied by the tree that once stood there. But instead, the branches of the surrounding trees had grown and filled in the gap in the canopy. It was a sign that this forest management project had worked.

“This looks really good,” said Locke, the forester in charge of the east-of-Hudson watershed, where she manages roughly 19,000 acres of forest.

Locke, who earned her master’s degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, has worked at DEP for eight years and she helps ensure that east-of-Hudson forests remain healthy and robust. In a region where highways and developments have crept closer to the reservoirs, forests serve as an important buffer and a natural filter for New York City’s drinking water.

That’s why Locke said projects like the one around Croton Falls Dam, or the one starting now around Kensico Reservoir, are so important. Locke oversees the crews that remove the fallen, damaged, or old trees from the forests, and ensures that stormwater controls are in place to protect the water supply while work is ongoing.

“Amanda has done a great job under extraordinary circumstances,” said **Ira Stern**, chief of the natural resources division, “and I’m sure her continued attention to quality will lead to a very successful project.”

Locke and others must confront a litany of challenges while trying to maintain the forests. Healthy forests depend on tree regeneration—the replacement of old trees with new ones—but many natural factors are hampering that process. For instance, an exploding population of whitetail deer is eating saplings as they begin to grow. A recent survey in Westchester County found 30-40 deer per square mile, or roughly four times the population that would allow new trees to grow.

Still, Locke believes DEP’s forestry management plan will help ensure that the forests remain healthy.

“These forests protect the water supply,” she said. “They intercept rain, their roots hold soil in place, and they absorb nutrients that could cause algae blooms or other problems.”

(Sandy Shivers Some Timbers... continued)



Kensico Reservoir. The project will remove an estimated 480,000 board feet of lumber.

The forest management project will also remove some weakened trees that were left standing. Many of those trees are now more prone to wind damage and the weakening of their roots by groundwater, which can also cause them to fall. DEP will replace the fallen trees with a more diverse forest, including dozens of species of conifers, hardwood trees, and shrubs.

The forest project will also benefit local communities surrounding the Reservoir. In recent years, fallen trees have often closed local roads in the towns of Mount Pleasant and North Castle, and knocked out electricity by pulling down utility lines. The new trees will be planted far enough away from the road to help prevent those problems in the future.

By planting dozens of species to replace a forest almost en-

tirely composed of spruce, the project will improve aesthetics and diversify the forest. Diversity is important, especially as a protection against native pests, pathogens and invasive species. For instance, if an invasive bug were to eat and kill one species of tree, a diverse forest will help prevent a complete die-off.

Forest management projects are an important aspect of protecting water quality. Trees absorb nutrients such as phosphorus, nitrogen, and potassium that can cause algae blooms, or affect the taste and smell of water. Their root systems anchor the soil and their leaves catch falling rainwater to prevent erosion, which can lead to sediment and turbidity problems.

The harvest of trees around Kensico is expected to last several months, while the planting of new trees is expected to take place in spring 2014.

DEP March Blood Drive

The Greater New York Blood Program is experiencing a serious shortage due to a fall-off in donations. To help ensure that blood will be available to those who need it, DEP is hosting a blood drive at the below locations and times.

Grahamsville Region Area: Grahamsville Parking Lot, 3/6-3/7, 10:00am to 3:00 pm; **Downsville Region Area:** Downsville Fire Hall, 3/6, 9:00am to 2:00 pm; Lefrak: 3rd Floor Cafeteria, 3/12-3/14, 7:45 am to 1:30 pm; **Kingston/Catskill Area:** 51 Albany Avenue, 3/11, 1:00pm to 5:00 pm; **Kensico/Highland Regions-Sutton Park Area:** Sutton Park-2nd Floor, 3/14, 8:30 am to 2:30 pm.

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