

## Healthy Forests = Healthy Water



**D**EP is in the midst of a forestry project alongside Ashokan Reservoir that aims to limit the impact of the emerald ash borer, an invasive beetle native to Asia. The project will enhance public safety by removing infested trees that could fall, and it will promote forest regeneration by thinning the canopy and allowing sunlight to reach the forest floor. By managing and improving the forests around New York City's reservoirs, these projects help to protect the quality of the water because healthy trees prevent erosion and serve as a natural filter. See additional photos [here](#).

## Spotlight on Safety

### Danger From Above

Falling ice becomes a dangerous projectile and can cause significant injury and even death. If an icicle falls from a tall building, it can land up to 100 feet away from the base of the structure. It is important that employees exercise caution around tall buildings during this time of year and below are a few simple safety tips to keep in mind:

- be aware of your surroundings and remain vigilant for falling ice
- do not stand under or near structures with hanging icicles

- wear a hard hat when working in areas where there is a potential for falling ice
- never place a ladder directly against a gutter covered with ice
- if you notice ice falling from a structure, notify your supervisor and take steps to warn other employees of the hazard

For more information, visit [National Safety: Dangers of Falling Ice](#).

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.

## Commissioner's Corner

Over the last decade, several companies that manufacture sanitary wet wipes have been marketing them as "flushable." In addition to selling traditional baby wipes that claim to be flushable, these companies have also been advertising wipes aimed at adult consumers. As a result, wastewater treatment plant operators across the country, and around the world, have seen an enormous increase in the amount of non-biological material arriving at wastewater treatment plants and that ultimately ends up in landfills. In New York City, the amount of non-biological waste—cans, trash, plastic bags, etc... has doubled since 2008, and evidence suggests that nearly all of the additional material is sanitary wipes.

One of the first steps in the wastewater treatment process is screening all of the non-biological solid materials that end up at our 14 treatment plants out of the sewage stream. This can include anything that was improperly flushed down the toilet, along with any leaves, sticks, or litter that is discarded on the street and ends up in our catch basins. The screens occasionally even capture more interesting things, like live turtles that have ventured into the sewer system. Traditional toilet paper is organic and breaks up in the sewer system, harmlessly passing through the screens and removed later in the treatment process. However, sanitary wipes—even those marketed as flushable, tend to be petroleum-based and arrive at the treatment plants

intact causing a big headache for plant operators.

Because they don't break down in water, sanitary wipes clog screens and cause damage to motors, pumps, and other equipment. In addition, there is a cost associated with removing the additional material to landfills. Since companies began marketing these wipes as flushable, DEP's shipping and landfill costs have increased by as much as \$3 million each year.

Earlier this month, the New York City Council introduced legislation that would prohibit companies from selling wipes that claim to be flushable and impose stiff fines for violators. We have been working closely with the Council on this issue and with industry groups that represent manufacturers to ensure that anything marketed as flushable is not only safe for a homeowner's plumbing, but also for our wastewater treatment infrastructure and environment.

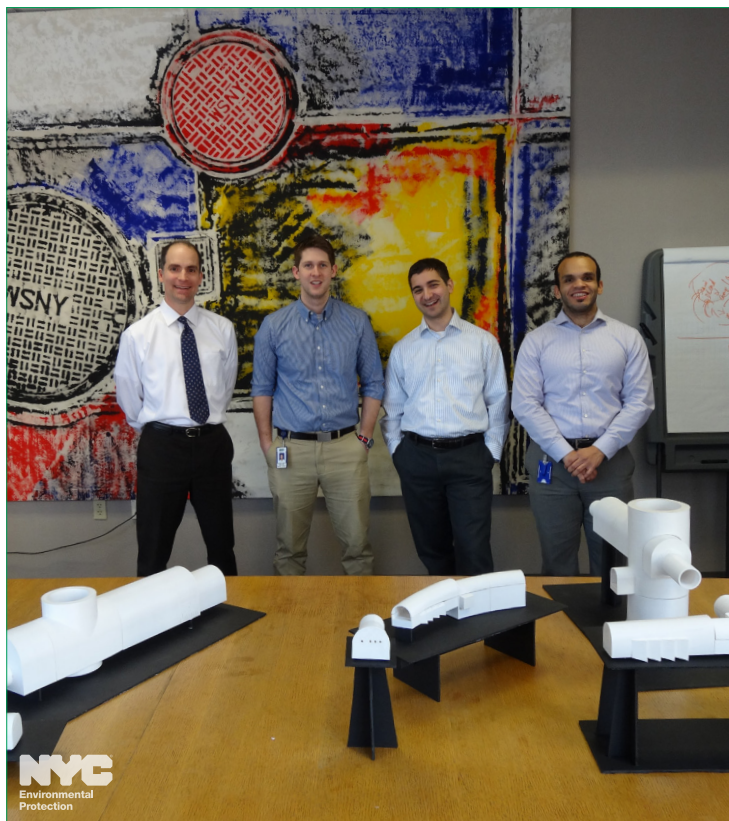
For many families, especially those with young children, sanitary wipes are an absolute necessity and the intention of this legislation is not to discourage their use. Our goal is to ensure that consumers have the correct information about what can and cannot be flushed down the toilet safely, and that wipes should be discarded in the trash rather than flushed down the toilet.

To see additional photos of the damage wipes can cause at our wastewater treatment plants, [click here](#).



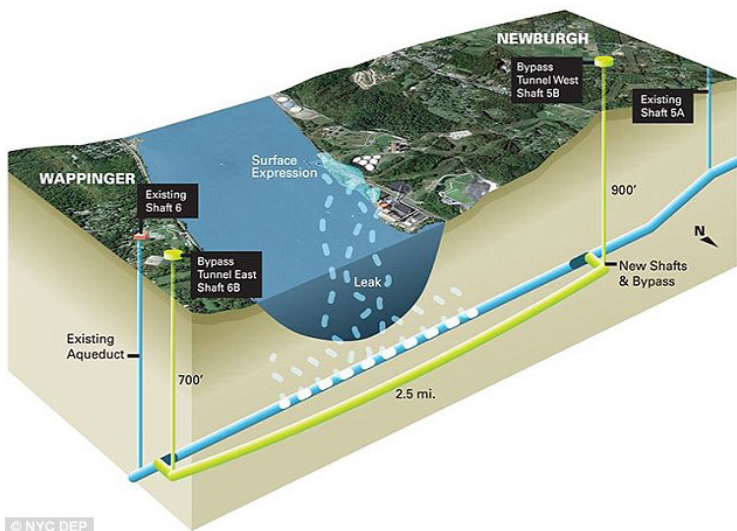


## Models for Engineers



As excavation of the two shafts for the Rondout-West Branch Bypass Tunnel continue to reach new depths, designers of the Bypass engaged in their own construction efforts. **Christopher Dianora**, **Noel Flores**, and **Devon Smith** of BEDC's Tunnel Structural Section, under the guidance of **Louis Csak** from Quality Assurance, collaborated to print 3D-scale models of the Bypass for a pre-bid conference.

The models, completely created in-house, included the bottoms of Shafts 5B and 6B, tunnel bell outs, the drainage tunnel for removing water from the existing tunnel, and the two intersections of the Bypass Tunnel and the existing Rondout-West Branch Tunnel.



## Did You Know...



That key DEP infrastructure statistics have been posted on The Source? Have you ever been preparing a presentation or speech and wondered exactly how many Bluebelts DEP has built or how many miles of upstate roads the department maintains? Now this information is available under Employee Resources on The Source, or [here](#).

## Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 19 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from First Deputy Commissioner **Steve Lawitts** and Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

**Bobby Brooks**, **Michael R. Burgess**, **Daniel Castro**, **Dolores E. Hewitt**, **Jeannot Paul**, **Jennie Saldana** and **Keith J. Williams** with BWT; **Brenda Fantasia**, **Ghyslin Louis-Jeune**, **Richard Sadlak**, **Maria Slaoutskaya**, **Larron A. Win** and **Guo Zhan Wu** with BWSO; **Daniel Lyon**, **Enoma O. Omoregie** and **Ronald F. Pena** with BWS; **Joyce Antipov** with BEDC; **Na R. Kim** with BCS; and **Henry Yi** with BLA.

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