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Department of Environmental Protection Announces Second Annual Valentine's Day Tours of the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant

For Those Seeking an Alternative Valentine's Day Experience, a Tour of the Greenpoint Plant Will Both Educate Visitors on the Essential Wastewater Treatment Process and Provide Breathtaking Views of the City from Atop the Famous Digester Eggs

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that due to overwhelming demand a third Valentine's Day tour of the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant has been added this Thursday at 11:00 a.m. Initially, there were two tours scheduled for 9:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., but these quickly reached capacity. The tours will be led by the Plant's superintendent, Jim Pynn, who will give a short overview of the wastewater treatment process, followed by a visit to the 120 foot high observation deck located atop the digester eggs. Located in Brooklyn's Greenpoint neighborhood, Newtown Creek is the largest of the City's 14 treatment plants, with a capacity to treat more than 300 million gallons of wastewater a day from portions of Manhattan, western Queens and northern Brooklyn. It went into operation in 1967, is in the midst of a \$5 billion upgrade that will increase its wet weather capacity to over 700 million gallons a day by the end of this year, and has been honored by The New York City Art Commission with two Awards for Excellence in Design. Space is limited and those who wish to take part in the tours must RSVP to events@dep.nyc.gov. The tours will begin at the Visitors Center which is located at 329 Greenpoint Avenue. The first Valentine's Day tours in 2012

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attracted more than 220 visitors.

New York City’s 14 treatment plants together treat more than 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater each day. The system combines sanitary flow, created each time a New Yorker turns on a tap, runs a washing machine or flushes a toilet, and stormwater runoff that enters our sewers whenever it rains or snows. There are more than 7,000 miles of sewer mains throughout the five boroughs that convey the wastewater to the treatment plants where physical and biological processes closely duplicate how wetlands, rivers, streams and lakes naturally purify water. The treatment process at the plants is relatively quick, taking only about seven hours to remove pollutants from the wastewater. In the natural environment this process could take many weeks and nature alone could not handle the volume of wastewater produced in New York City.

At the plants, wastewater undergoes five major processes: preliminary treatment, primary treatment, secondary treatment, disinfection and finally, sludge treatment. Primary and secondary treatments remove between 85% to 95% of pollutants from the wastewater and ensure it meets federal Clean Water Act standards before it is disinfected and discharged into local waterways. Sludge, the byproduct of the treatment process, is digested for stabilization and is then dewatered for easier handling. The resulting material, known as a biosolid, can be re-used, including as land reclamation in coal mining operations. Since 2002, DEP has invested more than \$10 billion in upgrades to the wastewater treatment plants and related efforts to reduce sewer overflows and as a result the cleanliness and ecological health of New York City harbor water continues to improve to levels not seen in more than a century.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 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 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including nearly 1,000 in the upstate watershed. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.

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