

Queens Students Release Trout



DEP recently joined Trout Unlimited and agriculture students from John Bowne High School in Queens to release [juvenile trout](#) that the students have raised in their classrooms since October of last year. Nearly 100 fingerlings were released into the Cross River where it passes through the Ward Pound Ridge Reservation in Westchester County. Cross River feeds into New York City's Cross River Reservoir.

Spotlight on Safety

National Fall Prevention Stand-Down Week

This week is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) National Fall Prevention Stand-Down Week, as well as [Construction Safety Week](#). May is also [Building Safety Month](#) and May 10 is NYC's Department of Building's "[Build Safe/Live Safe Conference](#)", which is held annually during Construction Safety Week. Each year DEP's Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction hosts a table at the event.

Fall prevention is not only the most violated OSHA standard, but also the leading cause of deaths in the construction industry. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 37% of the construction fatalities in 2016 were related to falls from elevation. Fall fatalities are preventable.

Therefore, to prevent fall fatalities and injuries, OSHA requires:

- fall protection at elevations of 4 feet in general industry workplaces and 6 feet in the construction industry
- fall protection when working over dangerous equipment and machinery, regardless of the fall distance
- informing employees about fall hazards, the importance of fall prevention, protective methods, and bureau policies

If you have a concern regarding potential fall hazards take the opportunity to speak to your supervisor or bureau EHS representative. To learn more about how you can be part of this week's events, visit OSHA's [National Fall Prevention Stand-Down](#) website.

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.

Special Guest *Commissioner's Corner*



James Mueller
Acting Deputy Commissioner
Engineering, Design and
Construction

I'm excited to share with you all that a micro-tunneling machine recently "holed through" on the first of two legs for a tunnel that will release water from Schoharie Reservoir to the creek downstream. The landmark moment happened at 9:02 p.m. on April 23 when the machine broke through a wall of rock and entered a chamber on the eastern bank of Schoharie Creek.

The milestone is part of a \$142 million project to build a low-level release at Schoharie Reservoir. The new tunnel will provide DEP with the ability to release water from the reservoir into Schoharie Creek to facilitate dam maintenance, respond to potential emergencies, mitigate flood risk for downstream communities, and enhance downstream habitats for fish and wildlife.

The project began with the construction of a 182-foot-deep gate shaft along Route 990V in Gilboa. The micro-tunneling machine was lowered down that

shaft last year and in October began work on the land leg of the tunnel, a 930-foot-long section between the shaft and the future valve chamber on the bank of the creek. It will be lowered down that shaft again to build the second leg of the tunnel, a 1,188-foot stretch between the shaft and the bottom of the reservoir. Once that portion is finished, the tunneling machine will be pulled up from the bottom of the reservoir and out of the water.

The unmanned micro-tunneling machine used for the project is 9.5 feet in diameter and is operated by remote control from the surface. Operators have tracked its progress and performance by watching monitors from inside a control room at the worksite.

The project is part of a \$400 million program that included the full-scale rehabilitation of Gilboa Dam, completed in 2014, and ongoing work to upgrade the Shandaken Tunnel Intake Chamber. I'd like to thank everyone from the Gilboa team for their tireless efforts on this project. I look forward to sharing more updates in the coming months as work continues to progress.



Focus on the Field



Lakeisha Bradshaw (left) and Robin Sanchez (right) as they prepare packets for educators.

Although DEP's Education Unit is comprised of a small staff, it certainly makes a big impact—directly servicing more than 25,000 students and more than 1,000 teachers each year through field trips, professional development workshops, and in-classroom lessons. BPAC's Education team organizes dozens of teacher professional development workshops throughout each school year, while also hosting more than 6,000 students at the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, reaching 10,000 students through the Trout in the Classroom program, spearheading a program with New York City public schools surrounding Jerome Park Reservoir, coordinating an annual Art & Poetry contest that reaches more than 2,000 New York City and Watershed students, and providing an important support network for educators.

Robin Sanchez, Deputy Director of Education, came to DEP as an intern after receiving her Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Planning from Binghamton University and while obtaining a Master's degree in Environmental Conservation Education from NYU. While studying at NYU, she took part in an internship under the leadership of DEP's Director of Education **Kim Estes-Fradis**. She stayed in contact with DEP and eventually returned to work for the agency full time in 2014.

For Sanchez, interning was an eye-opening experience. She was able to gain first-hand knowledge of what it is like to be a part of a large government agency that is also dedicated to, and funds, environmental education.

"I knew I wanted to work with young people and I liked the idea of the informal education DEP provides, the interacting with the public, while also sharing important environmental messages," she said.

DEP's Education team works with students of all grades, learning levels, and disciplines.

"In the morning we could be teaching a group from a Pre-K program and in the afternoon we could be giving a tour to PhD graduate students," she said.

Every lesson is tailored to each group by using a questionnaire that helps determine their learning level, grade, and curriculum, and every year the team reevaluates the current NY State standards to ensure their educational materials complement NY State curricula requirements, with a particular focus on integrating STEM, hands-on and inquiry-based education into lessons.

To reach even more educators, Sanchez is currently developing DEP's first-ever comprehensive curriculum guide which will offer an inclusive framework for providing an environmental-based education that encompasses our entire water system—from the reservoirs to NY Harbor, and everything in between.

Originally from Mamaroneck in Westchester County, New York, Sanchez now resides in the Astoria neighborhood of Queens. You could say teaching is in her DNA, as almost all of her family members are educators. But Robin knew early on that she didn't want to be confined to a classroom. DEP provides the best of both worlds, as she is able to spend much of her time out in the field in the very environment for which she instills a love and appreciation into the young people who will eventually become the next generation of environmental stewards. Her work coaxes New Yorkers into

(Focus on the Field... continued)

feeling more comfortable with the outdoors and by educating people about the full water cycle, program participants gain an understanding of just how they fit into our natural world too.

Sanchez says much of her work is about "providing the best pub-

lic face for the agency, breaking down barriers between us and the public by creating accessible and meaningful resources to interpret DEP's mission, and being able to bring hands-on environmental experiences to young people."

Tech Start-Ups Help With Health



Helene Abiola
WorkWell NYC

In 2018, two innovative health technology start-ups have emerged that can help us lead healthier lives and save us time and money.

Zocdoc allows you to input the name of your health insurance plan and then find doctors by zip code who take your insurance. You can even read reviews from other patients. Once you find a doctor who is to your liking, you can see open appointments and book one online instantly. If you don't already have a general practitioner picked out, go to zocdoc.com and get started. Besides the primary care doctor, you can also find specialists such as dermatologists, allergists, cardiologists, chiroprac-

tors, dentists, ob-gyn, psychiatrists and many more.

Teladoc is a new benefit offered to City of New York Employees that allows you access to a US licensed doctor by phone, tablet or computer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You should have recently received a mailer at your home from Teladoc instructing you to visit teladoc.com/emblemhealth and setup your account in less than 5 minutes. With Teladoc, doctors are available around the clock and the co-pay is only \$10. It's also a valuable resource if you are traveling and/or get sick or forget a prescription afterwards. If you live and work for DEP in-state where there aren't a lot of in-network doctors available, it may make sense to utilize Teladoc for certain types of visits such as flu, allergies, rash or sinus infections.

Welcome Aboard!



Last week, 53 new Sewage Treatment Workers attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott** and Recruitment Coordinator **Briana Lomax-Day**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

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