

Special Guest Commissioner's Corner



Paul Rush, Deputy Commissioner for Water Supply, is a guest commentator this week.

I am pleased to announce that we recently released DEP's annual [Watershed Recreation Newsletter](#), which serves as a source of information for thousands of watershed residents and visitors who enjoy recreating on water supply lands and reservoirs. The 2017 edition includes a calendar of outdoor events such as family fishing days,

boater safety courses, and guided hikes. The newsletter also provides a wealth of information for anglers, hikers and other outdoor enthusiasts. I hope the newsletter will also inspire our DEP colleagues working in the five boroughs to join us at one of the many events in the watershed, some of which are only a short distance from the City.

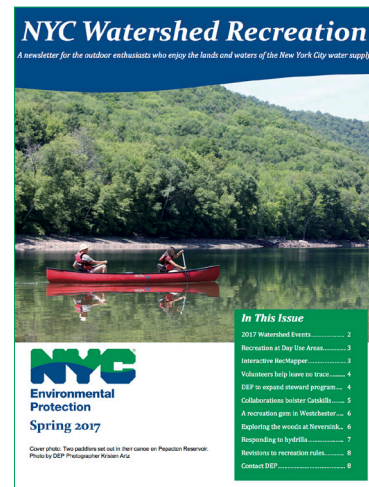
One highlight of this year's newsletter is the interactive [RecMapper](#) utility that was developed by DEP

to help watershed residents and visitors find recreation areas more easily. After using the interactive map to zoom in to recreation areas, users can also print or download aerial, road or topographic maps of each parcel.

The newsletter also includes stories on upcoming revisions to DEP's recreation rules, and partnerships that are helping to expand outdoor offerings in the Catskills. Those who regularly use City-owned property for recreation will also find a helpful directory of DEP phone numbers and other contact information to renew permits and boat tags, or ask questions about accessible properties.

Central to this year's newsletter is a calendar of events that DEP will host throughout spring and the first part of summer. More information on all these events can be found on DEP's watershed [Facebook page](#). Some upcoming events include:

- **April 29, Family Fishing Day at Kensico Reservoir:** This is a great family event only 15 miles north of New York City. Experts will be at the reservoir to teach kids how to fish. Bait and tackle will be provided for those who don't have their own. The event will be held from 9am–2pm.
- **May 6, Boater Safety Event at Pepacton Reservoir:** DEP Police Officers will teach boater safety for those who fish and paddle on reservoirs in the Catskills. The event starts at 10am at the Shavertown Boat Launch off Route 30 in Andes, Delaware County.
- **May 13, Boater Safety Event at New Croton Reservoir:** DEP Police Officers will teach boater safety for those who fish on reservoirs east of the Hudson River. The event starts at 10am.
- **May 27, Family Fishing Day at Pepacton Reservoir:** Experts will teach kids how to fish at this fun family event in the Catskills. Bait and tackle will be provided for those who don't have their own. This event will be held from 10am–2pm.
- **June 3, Safety & Survival Hike at Pepacton Reservoir:** Join



DEP Police at the Shavertown Trail in Andes, NY, to learn navigation, safety and survival techniques that can be helpful while hiking. The event, which begins at 10am, will be followed by a Q&A session and an optional 2-mile hike with spectacular views of Pepacton Reservoir.

- **June 24, Family Fishing Day at Rondout Reservoir:** Families will love this fishing event along the border of Ulster and Sullivan counties. Bait and tackle will be provided for those who don't have their own.

There are now more than [133,000 acres of water supply property open for recreation](#) in the watershed. Of that, more than 69,000 acres of land are in public access areas that are open to recreation without a DEP permit. For those areas that require a permit, the free-of-charge DEP Access Permit can be obtained [online](#).

I want to thank everyone in the Natural Resources Division of BWS for putting together this useful newsletter and for organizing our recreational outreach events. Credit also goes to our GIS experts who built the RecMapper utility, and to the DEP Police for leading or assisting with many of the upcoming watershed events. I hope watershed residents, visitors and our DEP colleagues will join us throughout the year to enjoy the protected lands and reservoirs that comprise our world-class water supply.

Spotlight on Safety

New NIOSH Sound Level Meter App

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) estimates 22 million workers are exposed to hazardous noise levels every year. NIOSH has developed a new, free mobile application for iOS devices that measures sound levels in workplaces. The NIOSH Sound Level Meter app displays real-time noise exposure data based on NIOSH and OSHA limits.

Some key benefits of the app are:

- raises workers' awareness about their work environment
- helps workers make informed decisions about the potential hazards to their hearing
- serves as a research tool to collect noise exposure data

This also serves as a reminder of the seriousness of hearing loss and to always wear proper PPE, such as ear plugs or ear muffs, to protect yourself. You can learn more about how to use the app by visiting [NIOSH's 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.

Focus on the Field

Since 1992, DEP's Lead Unit, a part of the Distribution Science and Planning Section within the Bureau of Water Supply (BWS), has worked to ensure New Yorkers have the highest quality drinking water by supplying free lead testing kits citywide. While New York City's water is virtually lead-free when it is delivered from the City's upstate reservoir system, water can still absorb lead from lead service lines, solder, fixtures, or pipes found in some buildings and homes. To minimize the leaching of lead, DEP has an active corrosion control program to reduce absorption of lead from plumbing. DEP also offers free lead testing upon request to any City resident as part of the Free Residential Testing Program, the largest program of its kind in the nation. In recent years, requests for lead kits have skyrocketed, going from about 2,000 in 2015 to more than 11,000 in 2016.

DEP's Water Research Scientist **Ariane Coelho Brotto**, Ph.D., a recent ACE Award recipient, monitors the integrity of data pertaining to lead levels in drinking water at residential properties. She is overseeing the development of a new and more robust database, and produces performance metrics. Shortly after she started with DEP last June, she noticed some emerging trends when analyzing the increased dataflow in the Free Residential Testing Program.

"I investigated the historical data for patterns and customer behaviors" when filling out questionnaires on the forms, she said. "There were specific instructions not being followed properly."

These missteps were impacting the efficiency and usefulness of the testing results and meant new water samples needed to be collected.

This discovery led to an improvement in communication with our customers. Ariane set about revising the text-heavy sample collection and mailing instructions. She developed a pamphlet with pictures accompanying six easy-to-follow steps as a way to help guide customers through the sample collection process. The booklet, which



will soon be available in ten different languages, is provided with the lead test kits which can be requested through the City's 311 system. During peak periods, her office has responded to upwards of 1,200 kit requests in a week.

"Ariane has been a great addition to the program. She has taken initiative to make improvements without prompting, which has helped to streamline processes in the Lead Program, and significantly improved data integrity," said BWS Section Chief of Distribution Science and Planning **Carla Glaser**.

Samples collected as part of the Free Residential Testing Program are sent to DEP's upstate lab in Kingston, and Ariane works very closely with other scientists there to ensure quality control. Results are then mailed to residents with recommendations on how they can minimize their exposure to lead in drinking water. The test results may also help residents identify the source of lead in their water, if any—whether it be with a service line or interior plumbing.

Ariane, a native of Brazil, holds her bachelor's degree in Chemistry and master's degree in Geosciences, and came to DEP after obtaining her Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from Columbia University. She currently lives in Harlem with her husband. When asked why she decided to join DEP instead of going to work in the private sector she smiled and replied, "I wanted to have a significant impact on the environment and public health in the urban context. I'm just one individual, but working with the BWS team we ensure safe drinking water for 9 million people every day. It's very rewarding."

DEP Featured in NYWEA Video



Please take a moment to view the above [video](#) put together by our friends at the New York Water Environment Association about the critical wastewater work taking place across the state. The video features Deputy Commissioner **Pam Elardo** (BWT) reviewing wastewater treatment infrastructure, and **Zainool Ali**, plant manager for Newtown Creek, discussing the state-of-the-art technology at the recently upgraded plant.

Donors Needed for Spring Blood Drive

DEP is partnering with the New York Blood Center to host spring blood drives. Locations and times are as follows: **Lefrak**: 6th Floor Training Room, 3/8 and 3/9, 7:45am–1:45pm; **Downsville Region Area**: Downsville Fire Hall, 3/8, 9am–2pm; **Kensico/Highland Regions–Sutton Park Area**: Sutton Park–2nd Floor, Large Training Room, 3/9, 8:30am–2:30pm; **Kingston/Catskill Area**: 51 Albany Avenue, 3/20 and 3/27, 1pm–6pm

Welcome Aboard!



Last week 45 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Acting Commissioner **Vincent Sapienza**, Acting Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations **Tasos Georgelis**, Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter** and Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott**.

These new employees with BWSO will all dedicate their time to the critical work of maintaining DEP's Green Infrastructure assets. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Thomas Arrington, Tomeka Bennett, Isaias Bermudez-Martes, Leonard Boyd, Cain Brandon, Jamal Brannon, Nadejda Brook, Topaz Brown, Tasha Bussey, Robert Chambers, Dara Clement, Andrew Clemente, Boubou Diambou, Emanuel Evans, Josuel Fernandez, Vanessa Francois, Thomas Geraci, Miguel Gonzalez, Dana Hoey, Jeremy James, Joshua Jimenez, Melissa Johnson, Raymond Kairys, Allen, Laboy, Andrew Lanier, Troy Lyte, Tina Maldonado, Darren Marcial, Perry Mason Jr., Akil Mason-Bovell, Kaya Mcfarlane, Theo Mixon, Michael Moloney, Ricardo Morales, Michael Morton, Laquashia Moses, Malachy Mulvey, John Nazryk, Billy Oliver, Christopher Pierce, Irving Pluck, Thi Ha Sam, Felix Vainblat, Malik Washington and Eric Yen.

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