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DEP's First Bluebelt Wetland in the Bronx Controls Stormwater at The New York Botanical Garden and Reduces Combined Sewer Overflows

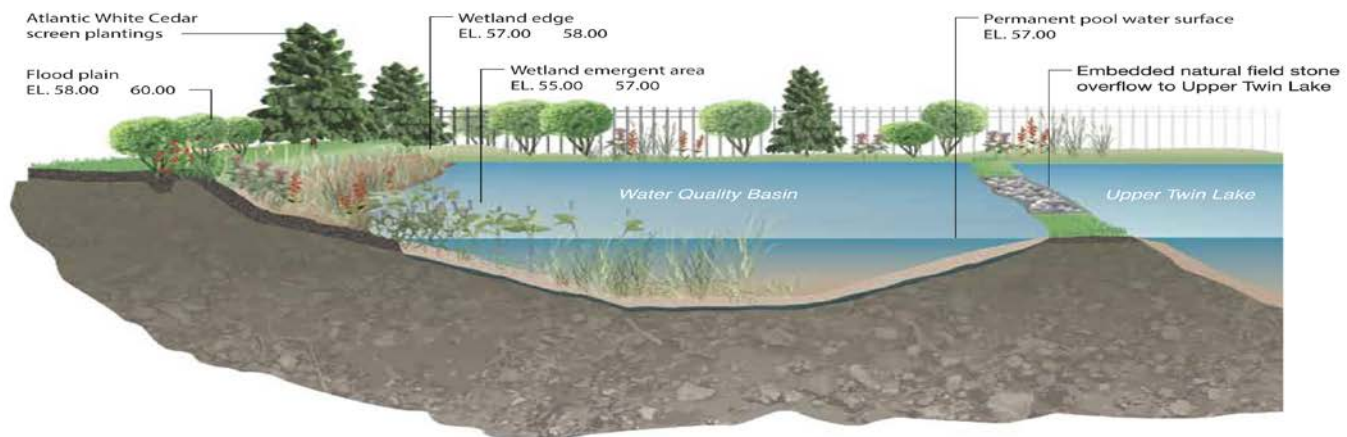
*Project Addresses Flooding Condition on Southern Boulevard and Becomes a Permanent
Feature of the Garden;*

Expanding the use of Bluebelts is Part of Strategy 2011-2014

Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland and New York Botanical Garden Chief Executive Officer Gregory Long today announced the completion of the first Bluebelt stormwater detention wetland in the Bronx. A recurrent flooding condition along Southern Boulevard has been alleviated through the construction of a stormwater wetland that both stores and treats the runoff. Implementing green infrastructure principles, the stormwater from Southern Boulevard is collected in newly installed catch basins and discharged into a wetland where the water is naturally filtered. The wetland, which is now a permanent feature at the Garden, was funded by DEP and cost approximately \$500,000.

“By bringing our award- winning Bluebelt program to the Bronx we have mitigated what was a potentially dangerous flooding condition on Southern Boulevard,” said Commissioner Strickland. “But the project also demonstrates that by harnessing nature and capturing and treating stormwater at the source, we can reduce urban flooding and improve harbor water quality in a sustainable and cost-effective manner.”

“We are extremely grateful that the Department of Environmental Protection has designed and built a beautiful and environmentally friendly solution to a longstanding problem,” said Gregory Long, Chief Executive Officer and The William C. Steere Sr. President of The New York Botanical Garden. “For many decades, flooding in this location has been a cause for concern. In recent years, it has created unsafe driving conditions during and after any significant rainfall and has led to erosion around the Twin Lakes area of the Garden. We thank Mayor Bloomberg and his administration for their vision in engineering a project that solves the flooding problem, enhances the Garden’s natural beauty, creates habitat for birds and other wildlife, and will serve as an educational tool to teach everyone about the benefits of proper stormwater management.”



The project included the installation of four catch basins at a low point on Southern Boulevard. The catch basins have the capacity to capture more than 5,770 gallons of stormwater a minute and discharge it into the wetland's water quality basin, the deepest portion of a stormwater wetland, where suspended solids and debris settle and vegetation absorbs excess nutrients. The filtered water is then slowly spilled into the adjacent Upper Twin Lake, which eventually feeds into the Bronx River and New York Harbor. In addition, more than 3,000 native herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees have been planted around the wetland to help create a habitat which will attract wildlife.

The New York Botanical Garden is located within a combined sewer area, meaning stormwater and wastewater are carried through a single sewer pipe to wastewater treatment plants. During heavy rain storms the system's capacity can become overwhelmed and it will discharge a mix of stormwater and wastewater—called a combined sewer overflow (CSO)—into New York Harbor. By creating a Bluebelt at this location, during an hour long heavy rain storm more than 350,000 gallons of stormwater will be filtered naturally and will never enter the sewer system and contribute to CSO's.

The Bluebelt program preserves and optimizes natural drainage corridors including streams, ponds and lakes. Stormwater is directed to the wetlands where it is stored and naturally filtered. In addition, the Bluebelts provide important open spaces and diverse wildlife habitats. Over the last ten years DEP has built Bluebelts for approximately one third of Staten Island's land area. In the South Richmond and mid-Island areas, the City has purchased approximately 400 acres of wetland property for Bluebelts that provide drainage for 19 watersheds, covering about 14,000 acres. Expanding the use of Bluebelts to reduce flooding and improve the water quality of New York Harbor is one of the Operational goals outlined in *Strategy 2011-2014*, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to make DEP the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. The plan is available on DEP's website at www.nyc.gov/dep.

The New York Botanical Garden is located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road. It is easy to reach by Metro-North Railroad or subway. The Garden is open year-round, Tuesday through Sunday and Monday federal holidays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The best way to enjoy the Garden is with the *All-Garden Pass*, which includes admission to the grounds as well as to seasonal gardens, exhibitions, and attractions such as the Enid A. Haupt

Conservatory, Everett Children's Adventure Garden, and Tram Tour. For ticket pricing, please check our Web site. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit nybg.org.

The New York Botanical Garden is located on property owned in full by the City of New York, and its operation is made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. A portion of the Garden's general operating funds is provided by The New York City Council and The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Bronx Borough President and Bronx elected representatives in the City Council and State Legislature provide leadership funding.

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of 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 7,400 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP employs nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. DEP has a robust capital program with a planned \$13.2 billion in investments over the next 10 years that creates up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.

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