



FROM THE COMMISSIONER

I wanted to take this opportunity to update the agency of some critical initiatives that a number of your colleagues and I have been working on for the past year or so.

• **Siting of the Croton Filtration Plant:** In July 2003, the State Legislature passed a law authorizing the alienation of 42 acres of parkland in Van Cortlandt Park for the construction of a filtration plant for the Croton system. Included in that legislation was a commitment of \$200 million for Bronx parks and recreational facilities. These funds represent the cost savings of building the plant under the Mosholu Golf Course in the park, and are intended to address the temporary loss of parkland and recreational opportunities during the five-year construction period. In order to coordinate the distribution of these funds, we have been negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding between the State Assembly, State Senate, and City Council. The legislation also required the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to examine the impacts of building at the Mosholu site, as well as two other potential locations.

The SEIS was finalized in early July. This was a herculean undertaking, and the strength and soundness of the analyses enabled me to formally select Mosholu as the preferred site. We continue to work towards finalizing the MOU, which has been a difficult process of balancing many diverse and sometimes competing interests. As of this writing, the MOU is still awaiting sign-off from the State Senate. It is my hope that it will be finalized and ratified by the City Council by early September, so that we can proceed with site preparation work at the golf course.

• **Renegotiation of Consent Orders:** As many of you know, DEP underwent an intensive budget evaluation exercise last year, wherein we doubled our capital budget for the next ten years. Even though we were able to vastly increase the amount of funding for many essential projects, we were also able to identify programs for which costs could be significantly cut. We were particularly concerned about the large costs associated with the nitrogen reduction program for the Upper East River and the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) program, two multi-billion dollar initiatives to improve harbor water quality around New York City. Both of these programs had been formalized in consent orders with the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Upon reviewing the requirements of these consent orders, staff in the Bureau of Environmental Engineering and Wastewater Treatment were able to identify a variety of ways to cut costs for both these initiatives, including application of new research, investment in new technologies, and use of adaptive management strategies.

We have spent the past year negotiating with DEC to allow us to change the facility plans for these two consent orders in an effort to save hundreds of millions of dollars, while achieving the desired environmental benefits. The revised CSO consent order was recently completed. The nitrogen consent order has been trickier, and we continue – as of this writing – to negotiate with the State on several key points that remain unresolved.

Regardless of the final outcome of these efforts, the intelligence, energy, dedication, and fortitude of the staff working on these projects has been tremendous. I can't single out every one of them for commendation, as the list would be too long to print, but I hope the entire agency shares in my gratitude for and pride in their efforts.

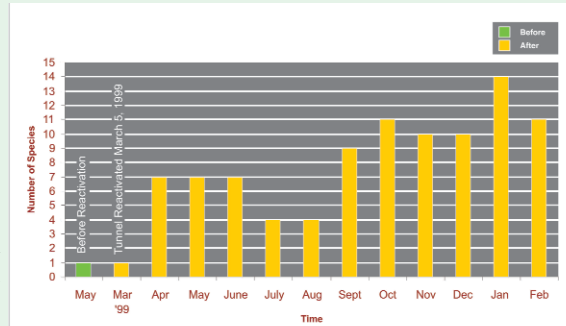
Very truly yours,

DEP REVIVES THE GOWANUS CANAL

Brooklyn's Gowanus Canal was constructed in the mid-1800s as an active waterway, and was crucial to New York City's commerce. Over time, the quality of the canal's water deteriorated due to industrialization, sewage inflows, and poor tidal flushing. In the early 1900s, as a response to these poor water-quality conditions, the City constructed a 12-foot-diameter tunnel called the Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel under the streets of Brooklyn, along with a pumping facility that could either pump water from the canal to New York Harbor, or pump higher-quality water from the harbor to the canal. In the 1960s, mechanical failure caused the City to shut down the flushing tunnel, leading to the deterioration of Canal water quality to pre-flushing tunnel conditions. Limited resources and competing priorities led to the City postponing the repair of the flushing tunnel for years.

The Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel Reactivation Project, initiated in the mid-90s, was officially completed in 2000 at a cost of \$11 million. This project entailed rehabilitation of a pump and tunnel system that moves higher quality water from the harbor to the head of the canal. Improvements in canal water quality occurred almost immediately after its reactivation: dissolved oxygen in the canal – an indicator of water quality - increased to levels above the New York State standard, and nuisance odors, associated with low dissolved oxygen in the canal, disappeared from the surrounding neighborhood. Within four to five months, the biological community in the canal – represented by the number and species of organisms that live in soft organic sediment at the bottom of the canal – increased to levels never seen before the monitoring program. Blue crabs and small fish were also observed in the canal. DEP will maintain its monitoring program in the canal to ascertain that water quality improvements are preserved. Importantly, this project has also been a significant factor in the resurgence of the neighborhood around the Canal, in terms of new residential developments and economic growth.

As a result of the rehabilitation project, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection was recently selected by the national Water Environment Federation (WEF) as the recipient of the 2004 Outstanding Achievement in Water Quality Improvement Award. This award is presented annually to the water quality improvement program that best demonstrates significant, lasting, and measurable excellence in water quality improvement or prevention of water quality degradation.



The Number of Species is Increasing in the Gowanus Canal

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

**DANA REED, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER,
BUREAU OF HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION**

Dana Reed started as DEP's new Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources and Administration (HRA) on June 28th. As Deputy Commissioner, Dana is responsible for the areas of Human Resources, Facilities and Construction Management, the DEP Fleet, and the Agency's Metrics program. After Dana had been working at DEP for about a month, the DEP Digest sat down with him to find out more about him, and to see how his first job for the City was going.

First, a little history – are you from the area, or are you a transplant?

I am originally from New York City, and I've been here, or in the region, for most of my life. I was born in Harlem, went to high school at Evander Childs in the Bronx, and lived in the New York area through college and graduate school. Coming to work at DEP is like coming home again in many ways.

(Continued ...)

(Reed, cont'd...)

And before you came to DEP, you were working in human resources, as well?

Right. After school, I began work at AT&T, designing, developing and delivering management training programs. It was a mix of general training and also more function-specific training pieces, as well. As I moved through AT&T, I was always involved in HR in some way, either working in management assessment, or with management and non-managerial staff at the company's different plants. I eventually became Engineering Safety Manager at AT&T, working on environmental safety functions for the company, and after that worked in Global Manufacturing and Engineering. Really, everything I've worked in has had some sort of an HR component.

What drew you to DEP in the first place? How has it been different than the private sector?

I was interested in the position from seeing an ad in the paper—I didn't even know it was DEP at the time! The position I read about sounded perfect for me—as Deputy Commissioner my responsibilities cover a lot of areas, and my background in the private sector seems to be a perfect fit. This job integrates a lot of what I've done before now. I think the fact that I've dealt with a lot of these issues before, even though it wasn't for the City, has made it an easier transition from the private sector. So far I'd say that the biggest difference is learning and adapting to the nuances of civil service positions and the rules and regulations that govern this system. Also, all of the acronyms can be confusing at times!

What are you looking forward to doing with the Bureau?

I am looking to begin by really focusing on four definite areas. In the future, I would like to focus on the entire agency's awareness of HRA, explaining what we do and how we can better service DEP's 6000 employees. I'd also like the group to become more customer focused, providing support for the bureaus based on their needs in alignment with each bureau's strategic plan goals and direction. The third focus area is to increase HRA's sense of follow-up and follow-through; therefore, "closing the loop" on tasks or projects. Lastly, I would like to provide HR Business Partner-type support (advice and counseling) to the senior staff to assist DEP in achieving its agency goals.

What's struck you the most since you've arrived?

Several things!! For one I have a great staff of dedicated employees. They all have welcomed me into the organization from the first day. They have even gotten used to my sense of humor and my walking around and talking to everyone rather quickly. Further, I would have to say that it is the warmth and openness of everyone I encounter throughout the agency. DEP people overall have made my starting here and my transition an easy one. I don't know why this is so but maybe it's in the water!!



The Jamaica Bay Hackleheads: Kevin McCormack, Steve Terwilliger, Steve Moltz, Gearge Sullivan III, and Joe Atkins, after their victory.

DEP FLEET MOVES INTO NEW CENTRAL FACILITY

On June 14th, 2004, DEP took occupancy of its new Central Vehicle Repair facility, located at 30-03 Review Avenue in Long Island City, Queens, which will provide routine preventive maintenance service and minor repairs to 1,300 of DEP's 2,100 vehicles. DEP's Fleet Division consolidated its central Maspeth Shop and two satellite repair shops in Brooklyn and Queens, in the process moving garage equipment and 1.5 million pieces of inventory from the three facilities to the new location.

Important facts about the Central Repair Facility include:

- **Improved features:** The garage has 23 vehicle lifts; a vehicle wash area; and an Emissions Testing room.
- **Increased Space:** Almost 100,000 square feet of office and garage space, as well as 21,000 square feet of outdoor parking. Inside the facility has space for up to 80 vehicles either being repaired or waiting for repair. This is in addition to the outdoor parking area, which is used for vehicles waiting to be processed, and visitor parking.
- **Improved staffing and hours:** Central Vehicle Repair is staffed by 60 employees who work two shifts from 6:00am to 11:30pm.

The Central Vehicle Repair facility will increase the Division of Fleet Services' efficiency and effectiveness in maintaining and repairing DEP vehicles. The increased size and improved configuration of the shop, as well as the ability to work two shifts consecutively means that Fleet will be better able to schedule preventative maintenance in advance, as well as address unplanned maintenance and repairs more quickly.

If you have any questions, or require any assistance, please call the new Central Vehicle Repair Customer Service telephone number: (718) 610-0800.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Over the past two months, DEP Staff has done a lot to be proud of:

- On Wednesday, July 28th, DEP completed excavation on the Manhattan Leg of Stage II of City Water Tunnel No. 3. Since the start of excavation in October 2003, almost 19,000 feet have been excavated. Due to a combination of good luck, good management, and good rock, the job was finished several weeks ahead of schedule.
- Ten of our wastewater treatment plants won Peak Performance Awards from the Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies (AMSA). Gold Awards went to **Bowery Bay, Coney Island, North River, Oakwood Beach**. Silver Awards went to: **26th Ward, Owls Head, Port Richmond, Red Hook, Rockaway, and Wards Island**. Congratulations especially to Bowery Bay for winning Gold while under so much construction!
- In July, the Mayor's Office of Contracts delegated DEP's **Agency Chief Contracting Officer, Carol Fenves**, authority over Level III procurement-related decisions - those decisions up to \$5,000,000. Carol is one of the few ACCOs in City government to have been awarded this level of responsibility.
- On June 14th, **Anne Seeley**, a Division Director in BWS, received Water for People's Ken Miller Award, for her efforts to spread awareness and knowledge of the public health need for clean drinking water and sanitation around the globe.
- On July 12th, DEP's **Bureau of Environmental Engineering** was recognized by the Mayor's Art Commission for Excellence in Design for their work designing an above-ground super-structure for City Tunnel Shaft 21 in lower Manhattan.
- Two teams from DEP did exceptionally well at this year's statewide Operators' Challenge: The **Jamaica Bay Hackleheads**, from the Jamaica Bay WTP, and the **Bowery Boys**, from Bowery Bay, finished first and third in the state, respectively. In October, the Hackleheads travel to New Orleans for the national Competition. Congratulations and Good luck!
- **Save the Date:** DEP's Education Fair is Tuesday, October 26th, in the 3rd floor cafeteria at Lefrak.

Ideas for the next newsletter? Send them to Ryan Purdy, at rpurdy@dep.nyc.gov.