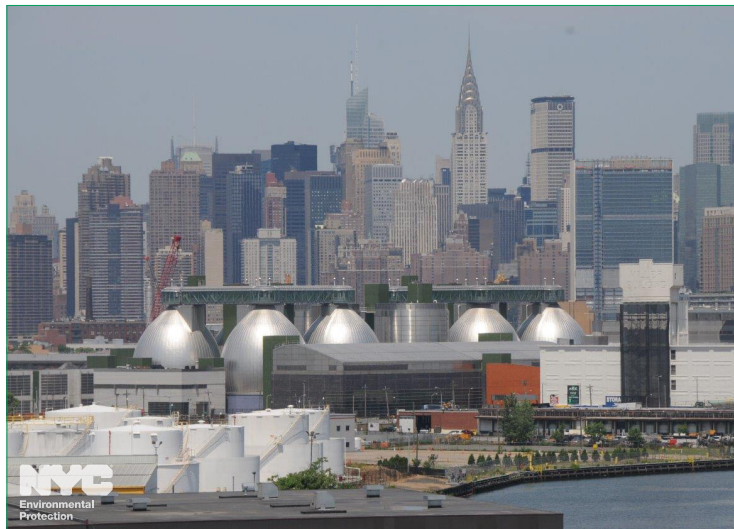


## Black Gold



"New York City is poised to become the country's largest producer of an unexpected type of green energy. This fuel source you can make yourself—and you certainly do. **Anthony Fiore**, Director of NYC DEP's Office of Energy, explains how the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant is turning sewage and food scraps into black gold." Listen to the interview [here](#).

## Spotlight on Safety

### Don't Get Burned

Each year there are nearly half a million burn injuries that require medical attention and more than 3,000 deaths from fires and burns. National Burn Awareness Week is observed during the first week of February and helps to promote the importance of fire prevention and the protection of human health. It's also a good time to remind employees that although few burn injuries actually occur at work, steam pipes, electrical arc flashes, hot machine components, and chemicals are sources for potential burn injuries.

Employees should take extra time to become aware of their surroundings when working, ensure that lock-out/tag-out procedures are in place and are followed, observe posted warning and hazard signs, and make a conscious effort to keep away from hot components. In situations where the hazard cannot be removed completely, employees must make sure that work tasks are assessed by EHS and they follow safe work practices and wear required personal protective equipment when working in close proximity to high heat or burn hazards.

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 Roberts**, DEP's Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations, is a guest commentator this week.

Since late last week, New York City has been hit with frigid temperatures, snow, and ice. Despite the adverse conditions, crews from DEP's Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations have performed admirably, responding to several emergencies over the weekend.

Early Saturday morning, DEP responded to reports of a heavy street leak on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Arriving on scene, District Supervisor **Jason Seminara**, Supervisor **Anthony Gentiella**, Laborers **Mike Perez**, **Chris Roane**, **Frank Puglisi**, and Apprentice Laborer **Ed Rivera** encountered extreme icing conditions. In less than 45 minutes the crew executed a shutdown on four gate valves, stopping the leak before any properties were damaged by flooding and ensuring that no customers lost water service.

On Staten Island, crews braved cold temperatures as they re-

sponded shortly after 1:00am to a reported leak on Fairbanks Avenue and repaired a leaking 8 inch water main. In less than two and a half hours, the more than 25 homes affected by the shutdown had their water service restored. In Queens, District Supervisor **Kieran Quigley** and his crew also responded to a heavy street leak on Saturday morning and found that a break on an 8-inch water main had undermined gas and electrical equipment. After shutting the water off DEP crews coordinated with the utility companies to repair the damaged gas and electrical equipment and restored water to all DEP customers early Sunday.

In addition to responding to service line leaks and water main breaks, this weekend crews from BWSO's Distribution Engineering and Field Operations responded to a massive 7-alarm fire at a warehouse in Williamsburg to support firefighting operations and ensure FDNY members had adequate water pressure.

These are just a few examples of the emergencies DEP engineering and field staff respond to each and every day, often in tough conditions. I want to extend a personal thanks to the men and women who work for the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations, and in every bureau at DEP. Thanks to your hard work and dedication, we provide more than half the state's population with reliable water and wastewater services every day, in any weather.



## Focus on the Field



New York City's drinking water is among the cleanest and safest in the world. But how do we know that?

Just ask **Kirsten Lewis Askidsen**, who oversees a team of roughly 35 scientists and analysts at our upstate Kingston laboratory, home to some of the most important water quality testing that's done in the watershed every year.

Askidsen, who began her career at DEP in 1992 as an assistant chemist, now manages three teams that collect, test and analyze New York City's water every day. In total, the groups under Askidsen's care analyze more than 1,110 samples each month.

"We need these data to maintain our filtration avoidance and make operational changes," Askidsen said, noting that her group's work is key to helping the Bureau of Water Supply find and deliver the best drinking water from our upstate reservoirs every day. "I'm lucky to have a dedicated staff that pays attention to the quality of their work."

Askidsen is similar to the conductor of an orchestra that has three sections. One section collects samples from throughout the Catskill System, including Ashokan Reservoir, Schoharie Reservoir, and the streams that surround them. Another section, known simply as the "Kingston Lab," tests those samples, along with others from the Delaware and Croton systems. It also examines some distribution samples from the five boroughs to check for lead and copper in privately owned homes as part

of DEP's free residential lead testing program.

The third section is a pathogen lab that tests for cryptosporidium, giardia and other microscopic organisms that can potentially cause gastrointestinal illness. The lab processes and analyzes samples from Hillview Reservoir, streams, wastewater treatment plants and other key points to ensure these are kept in check. This testing is among the most important to protect public health.

"Kirsten has extensive technical and laboratory experience at DEP and uses this knowledge to effectively manage the Kingston Water Quality Operations," Director of Water Quality **Steve Schindler** said. "We also rely on her input to provide water quality recommendations for the operation of the water supply, which is critical to meeting our mission of supplying high-quality water to our customers."

Askidsen studied biology and chemistry at Middlebury College in Vermont. Askidsen is an avid birder—a term reserved for enthusiasts of bird watching. She even met her husband, John, on a birding trip to Costa Rica.

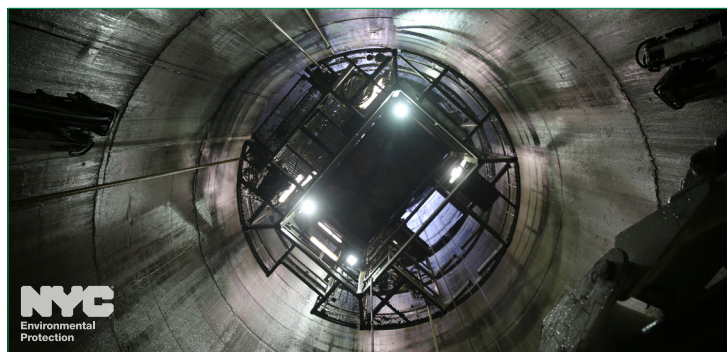
Before coming to DEP, Askidsen worked at the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology as an analyst focused on cell biology and cancer research. After that, she owned a Mexican food restaurant called "El Poco Loco" (The Little Crazy) in the small watershed hamlet of Phoenicia. Askidsen also did most of the cooking at the restaurant, but she said none of her science experience was used to heighten its taste.

## HOPE 2015

Due to severe weather, the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) had to postpone its annual Homeless Outreach Population Estimate (HOPE) Count. This unique opportunity to volunteer in an extraordinary citywide effort has been rescheduled for Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015. To help with this effort, DHS needs approximately 3,000 volunteers to help survey the number of homeless individuals living on city streets, parks and in other public spaces throughout New York City.

Volunteers will assist from approximately 10:30pm to 4:00am and employees interested in helping to conduct the survey should visit [nyc.gov/dhs](http://nyc.gov/dhs) or [CityShare](http://CityShare) to register. Any questions can be directed to the HOPE team at [hope@dhs.nyc.gov](mailto:hope@dhs.nyc.gov).

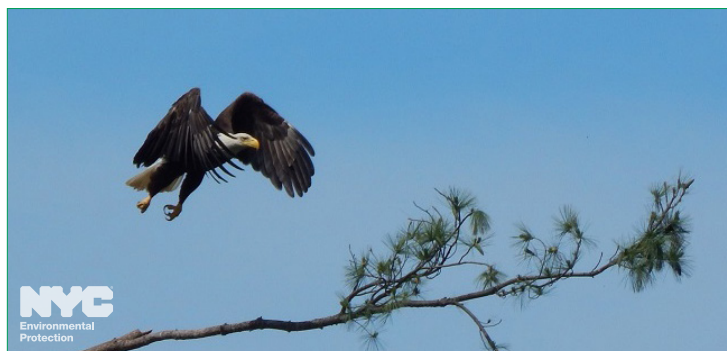
## Fixing the World's Longest Tunnel



"Workers are burrowing through 700 feet of rock and dirt to stop New York City's drinking water from seeping into the ground before it gets to the city. Once they dig down below the Hudson River, crews will build a 2.5-mile bypass tunnel to replace a section of the Delaware Aqueduct that has been leaking up to 35 million gallons of water each day for decades. The \$1.5 billion project, which takes place about 75 miles north of Midtown Manhattan, will enable the longest continuous tunnel in the world to continue providing about half of the metropolis's water."

Read the entire article and view the video [here](#).

## EagleFest



This Saturday, February 7, DEP staff will be attending the annual Hudson River Eagle Fest at Croton Point Park. The event will take place from 9am until 4pm and will include bird walks, bus tours to numerous viewing sites and children's activities. More information, including how to purchase tickets, can be found [here](#).

**We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: [newsletter@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:newsletter@dep.nyc.gov).**