

Wetland Restoration



John McLaughlin
Director of Ecological Services
NYC DEP

In New York City, wetlands were once considered wastelands to be converted to other uses. Only recently has the importance of wetlands in densely populated urban areas been recognized. In this video, our Director of Ecological Services, **John McLaughlin**, explains how DEP is working to restore this valuable ecosystem.

Spotlight on Safety

Scaffold Safety

A scaffold is a temporary structure used by workers during the construction, repair or decoration of a building. According to a study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 72% of scaffold injuries are attributed either to planking or supports giving way, or to the employee slipping or being struck by a falling object. One common hazardous condition associated with a scaffold is the structure not being properly level. Scaffolds must be leveled with supporting materials, known as shims, and securely and rigidly braced and anchored to prevent bending and swaying. Planks must be made of scaffold-grade lumber and not overloaded.

Mobile scaffolds, commonly used in the cleaning of exterior walls or during exterior painting, may not be used on a surface that is not flat or has any obstructions, such as pits and holes. The wheels on a mobile scaffold must be locked when stationary. Ladders should never be used to increase the working height of a mobile scaffold crew, even if fall protection is in place, as ladders may cause the freestanding scaffold to tip over.

Report any unsafe scaffolds at DEP's worksites to your supervisor immediately. Also, offsite unsafe scaffolds should be reported to 311 or NYC.gov.

For more information, visit OSHA's Scaffolding e-tool.

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

Steve Lawitts, DEP's First Deputy Commissioner, is a guest commentator this week.

I would like to thank the 32 employees, friends and family members who marched on behalf of DEP at the first annual NYC Disability Pride parade and all of you who participated in DEP's events celebrating "Disability Pride Month. The parade drew over 3,000 participants, including Mayor Bill de Blasio, former Iowa Senator Tom Harkin, and the Commissioner for the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), Victor Calise.

The parade coincided with the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This groundbreaking statute, which was signed into law on July 26, 1990, grants widespread civil rights protections for all Americans regardless of their disability status.

Over the past two weeks, DEP also marked this milestone by hosting two events with several prominent speakers to celebrate the achievements and progress of the ADA over the past 25 years. The events were organized not only to recognize what has already been achieved for the disabled community, but also to gain insight into how we can improve policies moving forward.

Here at DEP we highly value the diversity of our workforce and the invaluable contributions



that employees provide to fulfill our agency's mission. Twenty-five years after its inception, the Americans with Disabilities Act continues to guide the agency as we remain committed to the continued improvement of our facilities, programs and processes to ensure that all employees have equal access and opportunities to succeed.

If you would like to read the ADA in its entirety, please [click here](#). Feel free to contact Disability Rights Coordinator Tanika Thomas from DEP's Equal Employment Opportunity Office at 718-595-5742 (TanikaT@dep.nyc.gov) to learn more about the policies and procedures which guarantee diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity here at DEP.

To view videos of the events DEP hosted, [click here](#).



Beat the Heat



The City has just issued the latest heat advisory from 12pm today, July 28 to 8pm Thursday, July 30. Heat advisories are issued when the combination of heat and humidity is expected to feel like it is at least 95 degrees for 2 consecutive days or 100 degrees for any length of time.

During a heat advisory, it is important to keep a close eye on seniors and those with chronic health problems and be aware that indoor spaces without air conditioning can be much hotter than outdoor temperatures. New Yorkers are especially vulnerable to heat-related hazards as the city can be as much as 10 degrees warmer than its surrounding areas.



If you expect to be outside during a heat advisory, take frequent breaks and make sure that everyone stays hydrated. We are fortunate to have some of the highest quality tap water on the planet and it happens to be about 1,000 times less expensive than bottled water. Join us at one of our [Water-On-the-Go stations](#) and spread the word that drinking NYC tap water is an economical, healthy, and sustainable way to beat the heat this summer!

While it may be tempting to beat the heat by opening a fire hydrant, illegally opened hydrants can release more than 1,000 gallons of water per minute and reduce water pressure in neighborhoods, making it difficult to fight fires or lower water pressure in nearby buildings. Hydrants can be opened legally if equipped with a City-approved spray cap, which release only 20 to 25 gallons per minute, ensuring adequate water pressure and reducing the risk of a child being knocked over and injured by the force of the water. Let your friends and family know that City-approved spray caps can be obtained by an adult 18 or over, free of charge, at [local firehouses](#). If you observe a running fire hydrant, or are experiencing low or no water pressure, please notify [311](#).

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

Ospreys Nesting at Jamaica Bay



Ospreys, once gone from Jamaica Bay, are now back in record numbers. There are currently 21 active nests around the bay and 45 chicks have hatched this year, according to Don Riepe, who patrols the area as Jamaica Bay Guardian for the American Littoral Society... Riepe said that among another factors that contributed to the bird's rebirth is water quality improvement as well as the area's ample supply of menhaden, or bunker, the fish of choice for osprey. Read the entire DNA Info story [here](#).

Rain Barrel Giveaway



On Sunday DEP joined Staten Island Borough President James Oddo, Senator Andrew Lanza, and Assembly Member Joseph Borelli to distribute rain barrels to approximately 240 south shore homeowners. The 60-gallon rain barrels are easy to install and connect directly to a property owner's downspout to capture and store the stormwater that falls on the rooftop. The water collected in the rain barrel can then be used to water lawns and gardens, or for other outdoor chores. Rain barrels can help reduce a homeowner's water bill as watering lawns and gardens can account for up to 40 percent of use during the summer months. Since 2008, DEP has distributed more than 3,600 rain barrels. Sunday's event was held at Blue Heron Park and the rain barrels were provided free of charge.

Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 19 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from First Deputy Commissioner **Steve Lawitts** and Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development and Human Resources **Diana Jones Ritter**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Emma Angel, Victor Atlasman, Benjamin Demas, Carmen Duran, Jevon Griffin, Douglas Gutierrez, Ronya Mitchell, Rafiq Munir, Beatrice Pompee, Dave Thomas and Lamelle Wade with BWSO; **Season Clarke** and **Brianna Larkins** with BCS; **Biju Mathew** and **Uttam Paul** with BWT; **Aaron Carlson** with BWS; **Estefania Gonzalez** with BEDC; **Rasheed Lucas** with BEPA; and **Debra Raehse** with Facilities.