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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 16-72

July 15, 2016

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Department of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Defense Council Partner to Further Expand Green Infrastructure Program and Continue to Improve the Health of Local Waterways



New York City's Green Infrastructure Program Most Aggressive and Ambitious in Nation

[Photos of Green Infrastructure Projects are Available on DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced a new partnership with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) that will seek to expand New York City's Green Infrastructure Program, already the most aggressive and ambitious in the nation. Green Infrastructure, such as rain gardens, porous pavement and green roofs, soften the City's built environment, allowing stormwater to be naturally absorbed where it falls. Reducing the amount of stormwater that drains into the City's sewer system is a cost-effective way to reduce pollution in local waterways. Green Infrastructure also beautifies neighborhoods, improves air quality and reduces the city's carbon footprint.

"New York City has led a nationwide movement that utilizes nature to better manage stormwater, improve quality of life for residents and reduce pollution in local waterways," said **DEP Deputy Commissioner for Sustainability Angela Licata**. "We are excited to partner with the talented team at NRDC to expand our

More Information

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program even further and realize the potential of a comprehensive Green Infrastructure program.”

“Putting money into green infrastructure is win-win for everyone—it helps keep polluted water out of New York City waterways and has a host of beautifying and health benefits for neighborhoods,” said **Alisa Valderrama, Senior Project Finance Specialist at NRDC**, which is working with the New York University Center for Sustainable Business on the project. “The opportunity that we have to help drive investment in green stormwater projects on private property at this large of a scale is truly unprecedented, and will make a big difference in New York City’s ability to meet Clean Water Act goals.”

With more than 1,000 specially designed curbside rain gardens already built, and thousands more currently under construction, DEP has made great strides in managing stormwater on public property in New York City. However, to continue to improve the health of local waterways, stormwater that falls on private properties must also be better managed. In 2010 DEP launched the Green Infrastructure Grant Program, which has contributed over \$13 million to more than 30 projects built on private property. The ideas developed through the collaboration with NRDC will build upon the accomplishments of the Grant Program and seek new ways in which DEP can facilitate the expansion of Green Infrastructure to even more private properties.

NRDC will use its experience with Green Infrastructure in cities across the country to work directly with DEP, its public agency partners, the private sector, and local stakeholders during the 18-month project. Work will focus on enticing residential and commercial property owners to retrofit roofs, driveways, patios, parking lots or other paved areas—which generate stormwater runoff—with green roofs, rain gardens, and porous pavement. DEP, in collaboration with NRDC, will carry out opportunity assessments of private properties throughout the city using spatial and engineering analysis and cost estimating tools. These assessments will help DEP better understand what opportunities exist for stormwater management on private property and what incentive level makes retrofits feasible for private property owners.

The partnership will in part help the City address requirements under a Clean Water Act consent order to use green infrastructure to manage the first inch of rain that falls on 10 percent of the city’s impervious surfaces in combined sewer areas by 2030, as well as support the City’s new Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit that regulates water quality discharging directly from storm sewers.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing approximately 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.5 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 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city’s Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city’s reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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