

Special Guest *Commissioner's Corner*



Tasos Georgelis, Robert Brauman, and Staten Island Deputy Borough President Ed Burke

Tasos Georgelis, Acting Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations, is a guest commentator this week.

Last week I had the opportunity to join with Staten Island Deputy Borough President **Ed Burke** and personnel from BWSO and BPAC as we toured the ongoing construction of the New Creek Bluebelt. The

first Bluebelt to be situated in the borough's Mid-Island section, this \$22 million project will see two, of what will eventually be 19, Bluebelt wetlands built in the area. As many of you already know, the Bluebelt program preserves natural drainage corridors such as streams and ponds, and optimizes them to help control and filter stormwater.

Spotlight on Safety

Workplace Walking Surfaces & Fall Protection

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recognized that slip, trip and fall hazards in a workplace contribute to the most frequent injuries and illnesses, but were not comprehensively addressed in the Walking Working Surfaces regulation. In November 2016, OSHA revised its regulation to include revisions to the existing sections of general guidance, floor openings (man-holes), ladder safety, stairways, scaffolding, as well as three newly developed regulations addressing fall protection and necessary training.

The most common causes of slip, trip or fall accidents in a workplace are:

- unexpected movement of underfoot surfaces (mats)
- collapse or breakage of support structures (floorboards, ladder rungs, scaffolding)
- slippery/sudden change in traction of floor surfaces
- lack of handrails
- floor clutter (extension cords, hoses, pipes)
- poor lighting conditions
- weather—snow, ice, rain or mud on walking surfaces

DEP has a [Walking/Working Surfaces—Scaffolding and Aerial Lifts](#) policy in place to protect employees. Click [here](#) for more information on the new OSHA rule.

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.

The tour, which was led by **Robert Brauman**, the Bluebelt division's construction project manager, highlighted the current work taking place on opposite sides of Freeborn Street in Midland Beach. Large swaths of phragmites, common reed grass which is prone to brush fires, have already been cleared to make way for a new 4.7 acre freshwater wetland between Nugent Avenue and Freeborn, and another .7 acre freshwater wetland between Freeborn and Olympia Boulevard.

These wetlands will slow the stormwater down after it empties from the sewer system and surrounding watershed and detain it, allowing it to be naturally filtered. The water will then slowly flow over weirs and into the new west branch of New Creek. The stream will be built to a width of 32 feet and will run southeast through City-owned property that, in later phases of the project, will be developed into freshwater wetlands. For now, a makeshift stream runs through the site to prevent the ground from getting soggy, making it difficult for the excavators and front-end loaders to maneuver.

The contractor is in the process of building a culvert beneath Freeborn that will allow the new stream to pass under the existing roadway, naturally moving the water from upstream to downstream. The new water management system also calls for culverts to be built under Olympia Boulevard and Graham Boulevard, before meeting the main channel of New Creek near Slater Boulevard. Eventually, the sys-

tem will empty into lower New York Harbor.

Once the Bluebelts are fully constructed, more diverse wetland plantings, including herbaceous plants, wildflowers, woody shrubs and trees, will be added to the landscape in an effort to attract wildlife. Future phases of the project will include the installation of catch basins and storm sewers under neighborhood streets to collect and convey the stormwater to the Bluebelts.

It is expected that the New Creek Bluebelt will improve the low-lying area's drainage system, help reduce street flooding and provide some much-needed relief to Midland Beach residents. The project is being funded jointly by DEP and an \$11 million U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant secured by **Senator Charles Schumer**. DDC will manage the construction of the Bluebelts, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

I'd like to thank Deputy Borough President Burke for his longtime support of the Bluebelts. We at BWSO look forward to continuing to work together with Staten Island Borough Hall on this and other infrastructure projects that will improve the quality of life for Staten Islanders. Additionally, I want to thank Rob, and BWSO staff **Nick Barbaro, Charlie Olson, Thomas Wynne, Jason Nahvi, Jannine McColgan, Jim Rossi, Dean Cavallaro**, and **Frank Fontana** for participating in the tour, as well as **Mario Bruno** and **Ibrahim Abdul-Matin** from BPAC, and **Michael Kim** from the Commissioner's Office.



Focus on the Field



If you file an air / noise complaint with 311, **Daniel Corchado** just might be the inspector that shows up to investigate. He is part of the professionally trained staff that help DEP's Bureau of Environmental Compliance (BEC) enforce the City's air and noise codes. As an Air and Noise Pollution Inspector, he must be knowledgeable about air/ noise regulations, as well as the certificates that are required to operate boilers, dry cleaning machines and other heavy machinery that can affect air quality.

Since noise continues to be the number one quality of life issue in New York City, Corchado and his colleagues rarely experience a dull moment. In fact, BEC responded to 42,029 noise complaints in 2016 alone. For Corchado, it's all in a day's work. "Every case is different," says Corchado. "I can go from measuring noise in an 8th floor walkup, to inspecting a boiler in the basement of a skyscraper, to monitoring dust on a construction site. I'm always learning something new."

As a kid growing up in the Bronx, Corchado would regularly work with his father on cars in the neighborhood. It was during this time that he learned how important it was to use his ears and nose to help pinpoint and resolve mechanical issues. Corchado went on to fine-tune his inspection skills professionally, spending 10 years as a master certified technician at Mercedes-Benz before making his transition to DEP.

From the time a noise report is logged into the 311 system, DEP has seven days to answer. The noise code stipulates the allowable ranges and times for each type of noise, but in a city the size of New York, it is often difficult to

measure an offending noise at the precise moment that it's happening. As a result, it is not uncommon for Corchado to visit the same location multiple times to ensure a proper reading. As part of his investigations, he also takes photos to document as many details as possible, since he will be the DEP representative that is called to testify in court for any violation that he issues.

"Daniel is a great asset to our team," says **Joseph Scafidi**, Principal Inspector, Enforcement. "His enthusiasm and approachability set an example for everyone. He works very well with the public and his inspections are always thorough. Whether he is engaging with members of the community or testifying in court, Daniel can be counted on to put his best foot forward and has proven to be a dependable representative for the agency."

Corchado's favorite part of his job is when he can successfully resolve a complaint. "Many New Yorkers are living with nuisance noises or odors 24/7. It's rewarding to establish contact with a business owner or construction site manager to help them understand the rules so they can comply with the regulations that are in place. When noise is reduced or the air is made cleaner, it's good for business and improves the environment for everyone."

In his spare time, Corchado enjoys cycling around the five boroughs and travelling with his wife. So far, he and his wife have visited Jamaica, Aruba, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic and Mexico. They have a special penchant for snorkeling and are already planning their next adventure later this year.

Airboat Training



DEP police officers recently trained on airboats during simulation exercises held at Pepacton Reservoir in upstate Delaware County. Scenarios when an airboat might be deployed include emergency search and rescue operations in wintry weather, or if a water quality scientist needs to access an iced-over reservoir to take a water sample. The DEP Police protect the City's water supply reservoirs, infrastructure, and the 2,000-square-mile watershed that stretches across parts of nine upstate counties.

Sewer Upgrade for St. Albans



Construction is underway on a [\\$20 million sewer project](#) along 119th Avenue in the southeast Queens neighborhood of St. Albans that will improve drainage and reduce flooding. Most of the roadways in this area lack adequate stormwater infrastructure, including catch basins and sewers, and during heavy rain there can be chronic flooding. Funding for the project is being provided by DEP while DDC will oversee the construction. As part of the project, stormwater and sanitary sewers will be installed along 119th Avenue between 196th Street and 192nd Street, and along Lucas Street from 120th Road to Springfield Boulevard. While the roadway is opened to install the sewers, new water mains will also be constructed to improve water distribution in the area. This project is part of **Mayor de Blasio's** commitment of \$1.7 billion to address flooding in southeast Queens.

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