



**Environmental  
Protection**

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor  
Carter Strickland, Commissioner

*WEEKLY*

# PIPELINE

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## 'Boat'-load of Recreation on City Reservoirs



Photo by Vladimir Bukalo

**A**s the largest municipal water utility in the country, one of our primary missions is to supply and distribute more than one billion gallons of drinking water each day to more than nine million New Yorkers. In order to protect the water supply and ensure its availability to future generations, the agency is vigilant in ensuring that watershed lands are used in a manner that is compatible with high quality water. At the same time, we work cooperatively with wa-

tershed communities to promote economic development and recreational opportunities that are sustainable over the long term.

Over the last decade we have continued to acquire land around the reservoirs to protect the watershed while also opening a great majority of them up to the public. There are currently 108,000 acres of city-owned land in the watershed that are open for activities such as boating,

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## Spotlight on Safety

### Mercury Exposure

Mercury is a naturally occurring element found in air, water, and soil. It is also used in industrial and commercial equipment—such as switches, thermostats, and thermometers. In the water utility industry, mercury was commonly used in the past in various large scale flow metering equipment. This makes proper management of mercury an important issue for DEP. Mercury exposure can occur when these items break and the mercury has spilled or leaked out. The Office of Environmental, Health and Safety (OEHS) recently issued a revised Mercury

Management policy that highlights important procedures for managing mercury and mercury equipment properly.

DEP facilities have already been assessed for the presence of mercury as part of the Legacy program. Employees working in environments where there is a history of a mercury spill, mercury equipment or employees who currently work with mercury equipment should be trained with respect to safe work procedures and potential exposures. If you have additional questions, please contact your EHS representative or OEHS.

## Commissioner's Corner

Over the last few decades, DEP has developed new and innovative strategies to effectively control, treat, and process stormwater by preserving and optimizing natural environments.

Sometimes these strategies take advantage of unique circumstances and willing partners. That was the case two weeks ago when we joined The New York Botanical Garden to unveil the first-ever Bronx Bluebelt wetland. More commonly, these strategies were the product of necessity, as one of the few viable solutions for alleviating flooding in low-lying and former wetlands that were developed without extensive grading. Those topographical conditions are why we started the Bluebelts in Staten Island and are now bringing them to Queens. Today we broke ground on our newest Bluebelt in Springfield Gardens, Queens, the fourth phase of a comprehensive water and sewer infrastructure upgrade. I joined the Department of Transportation and the Economic Development Corporation to announce a \$69 million project that includes the installation of 84 catch basins, approximately 2.8 miles of new sewer lines, nearly three miles of water mains, and new streets and sidewalks to help alleviate chronic roadway flooding. The project will also include a pilot program to use more than 25,000 square feet of porous concrete in the median along Springfield Boulevard, among the first of these innovative installations on a New York City roadway. Porous concrete allows stormwater to pass through it so that it can then be absorbed into the ground, rather than having it run off into the nearest catch basin and discharged into the sewer system.

Neighborhood stormwater will be collected in the project's 84 new catch basins and diverted into the newly constructed Bluebelt wetlands, including Springfield Lake. Along with the new sewer infrastructure, these natural systems will improve the lake's water quality and aquatic habitat; wetlands store stormwater and allow suspended solids and debris to settle, while excess nutrients are absorbed by vegetation. The fil-



tered water will then make its way through Springfield Lake and tributary streams before flowing into Jamaica Bay.

Innovative stormwater management practices are being deployed in the upstate watershed as well. Yesterday, I visited the Kensico Reservoir for an update from Assistant Commissioner **David Warne**, Chief of Eastern Operations **Mark Donecker**, and Kensico Regional Manager **Ralph Marchitelli**. Kensico Reservoir is a critical component of the New York City water supply, receiving all water from both the Catskill and Delaware watersheds. Over the years, DEP has completed 45 separate stormwater management projects to ensure the highest quality water is flowing into the Kensico Reservoir. Yesterday, I observed the latest industry standard in stormwater detention basin construction—offline detention basins. A couple of decades ago, detention basins were dug into streambeds to allow streams to handle additional capacity and allow solids and debris to settle before they entered the reservoir. Today, detention basins are constructed next to streams and water is piped from the stream to the basin during high flows. This minimizes the impact on the natural streambed at normal flows and helps protect the existing habitat. Yesterday, I observed the progress on one such off-line detention basin that will be completed next year. My thanks to David, Mark, and Ralph for guiding me on the Kensico tour, as well as to all DEP staff who continue to keep us on the front lines of innovative stormwater management.

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.

## Focus on the Field



DEP uses telemetry (remote monitoring) in many ways, from automated meter reading to leak detection—and it's no wonder that **Brian Fenton** is a big fan. As an Associate Project Manager at the Facilities Analysis Section in the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment, Fenton receives data remotely from the sewer collection system's 96 pumping stations and 102 key regulators that help direct wastewater to the city's 14 wastewater treatment plants. Telemetry provides continuous monitoring and sends alarms enabling quick reactions to events, even at night. As he puts it, "getting 'real-time' information is critical in ensuring that a small issue does not become a bigger one if it goes unnoticed, which helps to improve water quality."

"Brian has been actively involved with Collections Facilities Telemetry since the inception of the program in the late 1980s," said **Frank Kulcsar**, Facilities

Analysis Section Chief. "He has extensive knowledge of the 200 facilities that convey sewage to the treatment plants and also manages the maintenance contractor that keeps the telemetry system operational."

Fenton particularly enjoys the challenges of keeping the telemetry systems at the 200 facilities updated. The native New Yorker has been with DEP for nearly 25 years. He started as an engineering intern after graduating with a degree in Electrical Engineering.

Music is Fenton's main hobby and he has been playing the bagpipes for almost 30 years—since his days at his alma mater Manhattan College. You can hear a brief excerpt here [🔗](#) of Fenton's rendition of "Minstrel Boy," an Irish patriotic song with a melody that is frequently played at funerals of members of organizations who have died or been killed in service.

## Did You Know

...that if all the ice covering the Antarctic and Greenland suddenly melted, oceans all over the world would rise about 220 feet, enough to cover a 22-story building? Ice sheets contain enormous quantities of frozen water and form in areas where snow that falls in winter does not melt entirely over the summer.

It is estimated that sea level would rise 200 feet if the Antarctic Ice Sheet melted and 20 feet if the Greenland Ice Sheet melted. The Antarctic Ice Sheet extends 5.4 million square miles, roughly the area of the contiguous United States and Mexico combined, while the Greenland Ice Sheet extends about 656,000 square miles covering most of the island of Greenland, three times the size of Texas.

**'RETIRING' MINDS WANT TO KNOW:** On October 4, 2012, representatives from the New York City Employees Retirement System (NYCERS) visited DEP to provide information to employees on Pension Tier 4. They gave a lunchtime seminar, which was attended by more than 300 employees in the Lefrak Cafeteria. The seminar was also video conferenced to three locations (Kingston, Sutton Park and Grahamsville) in the upstate watershed offices. For more information on NYCERS, click here [🔗](#).

(Boatload of Recreation on City Reservoirs... continued)



Photo by Vladimir Bukalo

hunting, hiking, and fishing—as well as economic activities like hay cropping.

In 2009, a three-year pilot program began which opened up the Cannonsville Reservoir to recreational boating. Monitoring reports during the three-year pilot revealed no negative impacts to water quality and no indication of invasive species—key indications that expanding the program to other reservoirs would not have a negative effect on DEP's ability to provide clean drinking water.

This year, for the first time, the Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie reservoirs, in addition to the Cannonsville, were opened for recreational boating. From the time the season opened on Memorial Day, nearly 1,000 boat tags were issued, of which 45 percent went to individuals from outside of the watershed and 10 percent went to individuals from outside of New York State. The strong boating season was a boon to the local businesses that steam clean the boats and to those that provide tourism related services. A total of 983 tags were issued and included 697 kayaks, 241 canoes, 31 rowboats, two sculls, and 12 small sailboats. Permits were available free of charge and required a certification that the boat had been steam cleaned by a certified vendor.

In addition, this past Friday the Pepacton Reservoir hosted the 2012 United States Adventure Racing Association (USARA) National Championships. More than 165 competitors from around the nation kicked off the 30-hour, 100-mile race with a 12-mile canoe paddle, during which racers navigated a series of checkpoints on the reservoir. Competitors then raced along an obstacle-course-like route hiking, cycling, navigating by compass, and rappelling down rock faces over a 100-mile course that ended in Ulster County. The event marks the first time the Reservoir has been opened for an adventure racing competition. In order to hold the event on the Pepacton, USARA applied for a land-use permit that was reviewed by DEP staff to ensure that the event would not impact water quality and complied with all safety and logistical mandates. DEP Police monitored the event in case of any emergency.

"We will continue to closely monitor how these events affect the water supply but the success of the 2012 season was overwhelming. As we move forward we will continue to look for opportunities for additional recreation within the watershed that is compatible with our mission of providing high quality drinking water," noted Deputy Commissioner for Water Supply **Paul Rush**.

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