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Stormwater Control Project in Carmel to Improve Water Quality in West Branch Croton River

New Retention Basin and Wetlands to Decrease Pollutants in Stormwater Runoff and Help Beautify Carmel Neighborhood

Commissioner Christopher O. Ward of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that the DEP will build its first new stormwater retention project at the northeast corner of Route 6 and Meadowlark Drive in the Town of Carmel. The project will improve the quality of stormwater entering New York City's Croton Falls Reservoir and will result in numerous aesthetic improvements to half an acre of City-owned property.

Work on the Meadowlark Drive Bluebelt Project is expected to begin in early summer and last approximately four months. The project will cost about \$750,000, of which \$205,000 will come from the US Army Corps of Engineers and the State Department of Conservation under the federal Water Resources Development Act. The remaining portion will be paid by New York City.

"The goal is to improve water quality by increasing the retention time of stormwater that runs off a section Route 6 at that location, and from other impervious surfaces," said Commissioner Ward. "By routing that water through created wetland we can allow more suspended particles to settle out before the runoff reaches the reservoir and we can take advantage of the natural cleansing properties of vegetation. If this project is successful the DEP will undertake numerous similar projects throughout the watershed."

The project will replace an existing retention basin that was built almost ten years ago. The new wetland/stormwater system will use a series of earthen berms to direct stormwater runoff through a twisting manmade marshland and then into a small pool before the water discharges into the West Branch Croton River. A low stone wall will surround most of the area. The West Branch Croton River connects the West Branch Reservoir and the Croton Falls Reservoir, and any water that enters it winds up in New York City's water supply.

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The project is designed with an emphasis on beautification and fitting manmade objects seamlessly into the natural environment. Berms and part of the surrounding area will be planted with wildflowers. The new marshland will be have low marsh and high marsh plantings, and all structures and walls will be built with stone and other rustic materials.

The project was developed by the DEP engineers and makes use of many of the techniques the agency has developed while constructing the Staten Island Bluebelt system, and the stormwater management controls required by the U.S. EPA's filtration avoidance determinations.

The Staten Island Bluebelt system has saved New York City hundreds of millions of dollars in sewer construction costs by using the natural features of Staten Island's open space to convey and manage stormwater runoff. Besides large cost savings, the project has the added benefit of preserving neighborhood open space and wetlands.

The DEP has been monitoring stormwater quality going in and out of the Carmel site for over a year, and will continue to do so during and after construction to determine the effectiveness of the project in removing suspended solids and other pollutants. Based on the success of the project and what is learned from the monitoring, the City will look to build ten similar projects by 2007 in its watershed.

For more information on watershed protection, Bluebelt management practices and the Staten Island Bluebelt please see the Department of Environmental Protection's Web site at www.nyc.gov/dep.