



Fall Foliage

Cannonsville Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System



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CONTACT:

Farrell Sklerov / Mercedes Padilla (718) 595-6600

MORE INFORMATION

NYC Department of Environmental Protection
Communications & Intergovernmental Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard
19th Floor
Flushing, NY 11373

(718) 595 - 6600

DEP Marks 100th Anniversary of the Harbor Survey Program

Centennial Report Shows New York Harbor is the Cleanest in a Century

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today released a special 100th anniversary edition of the annual Harbor Survey report. Since 1909, the Harbor Survey Program has been collecting water quality data to monitor the ecological health of New York Harbor. The Harbor Survey was originally established to assess and monitor the degradation of the waters within the harbor, which, at that time, received hundreds of millions of gallons of raw sewage each day. Since then, the City has invested billions of dollars to build and upgrade the 14 treatment plants that treat an average of 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater that New Yorkers generate every day. The plants are designed to handle 1.9 billion gallons per day in dry weather and 3.6 billion gallons per day in wet weather. The 100th anniversary edition describes the history of wastewater treatment, including the pioneering achievements of DEP and its predecessors' scientists, architects, and engineers. The full report is available online at www.nyc.gov/dep.

"New York City's waterways are the healthiest they have been in a century," said Commissioner Holloway, "and this report explains how we got here, and where we're headed. Year after year, the annual Harbor Survey shows the positive impact of 100 years of water quality investments, including \$7 billion since Mayor Bloomberg came into office. But funding is only part of the story. New York City has always been a pioneer in wastewater treatment, and it's the ingenuity and dedication of our scientists, architects, engineers, and many other contributors that have made our success to date possible. And our tradition of innovation is continuing. With the help of new technologies for nutrient reduction and other treatment techniques, the health of New York Harbor will continue to improve, giving more New Yorkers access to the waterfront to live, work, and play."

The City conducts an annual Harbor Survey Program each year. This effort evolved from the initial surveys by the Metropolitan Sewerage Commission that began 100 years ago and encompassed 12 stations around Manhattan. These initial surveys were performed in response to public

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complaints about the quality of life near polluted waterways. The effort has grown into a survey that consists of 65 stations harborwide today, and expanding to 85 stations in the coming years. The number of water quality parameters measured has also increased from five in 1909 to over 20 today. This expanded and refined monitoring network has allowed DEP to demonstrate the significant improvements in harbor water quality made over the past century.

Harbor water quality improvements in 2010 include:

- ▶ In January, DEP announced that New York City's 14 wastewater treatment plants are able to meet the Clean Water Act's monthly 85% pollutant removal requirement harborwide for the first time ever—and three years ahead of schedule.
- ▶ In February, Mayor Bloomberg announced a historic agreement to improve the overall water quality and mitigate marshland loss in Jamaica Bay. As part of this agreement, DEP will invest \$100 million to install new nitrogen control technologies at wastewater treatment plants located on Jamaica Bay. The investments, made in concert with \$95 million the City already has committed for nitrogen control upgrades, are projected to reduce the nitrogen loads discharged into Jamaica Bay by nearly 50% over the next ten years. An additional \$15 million was committed to restore marshlands in Jamaica Bay. DEP is also investing an additional \$770 million in nitrogen reduction measures at three Upper East River wastewater treatment plants: Bowery Bay, Tallman Island and Wards Island. These projects are scheduled to be complete in 2012, and will reduce total nitrogen discharges into the East River by more than 52%.
- ▶ In May, DEP launched the second phase of the Eelgrass Restoration Project to help improve Jamaica Bay's local ecosystem. The project consists of 1,000 individual plantings and is part of the City's efforts to improve the overall water quality and ecology of Jamaica Bay. And in September, 10,000 oysters and a field of reef balls were placed within Jamaica Bay to evaluate oyster growth, survival, reproduction, water quality and ecological benefits. Oyster reefs once thrived in Jamaica Bay, forming an important habitat for many species and filtering Bay water. The findings of this pilot will inform future attempts to restore oyster habitat in the Bay.
- ▶ Last month, Mayor Bloomberg unveiled the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan, which will improve harbor water quality by capturing and retaining stormwater runoff before it enters the sewer system. The plan, which includes \$2.4 billion in green infrastructure, will reduce sewer overflows by 40% by 2030. This approach will also save \$2.4 billion over the next 20 years because it will reduce more costly investments in traditional sewage retention projects, like tanks and tunnels.
- ▶ Since 2002, the City has invested approximately \$7 billion to improve harbor water quality, including ongoing

upgrades of wastewater treatment plants, and the construction of sewage retention facility projects like Flushing, Paerdegat Basin and Alley Creek. These investments, in addition to previous ones, have enabled the city to increase the CSO capture rate from 18% in the 1980s to 73% today.

New York Harbor consists of nearly 600 miles of waterfront and about 240 miles of shipping channels, as well as anchorage and port facilities, centered on Upper New York Bay. The harbor main entrance from the Atlantic Ocean lies to the southeast, between Rockaway Point and Sandy Hook; there is another entrance at the outlet of the East River to the Northeast. The harbor also extends west to New Jersey, southwest to the mouth of the Raritan River, northwest to Port Newark and north to the George Washington Bridge.

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8 million in New York City. New York City's water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, and comprises 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 7,400 miles of sewer lines take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

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