

## Special Guest *Commissioner's Corner*



**Paul Rush**, Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Water Supply, is a guest commentator this week

I am pleased to announce that DEP saw a total of 1,668 boats used in 2016 through our recreational boating program in the Catskills, another all-time high for the program since it began in 2012. This year also marked the first time that kayaks and canoes rented from local businesses in the

Catskills accounted for the majority of boats used on the four reservoirs—a trend that underscores the program's support of local tourism and outdoor recreation economies.

Overall participation in the recreational boating program represented a 14 percent increase from the previous year, during which 1,463 boats were used. That increase was driven by the success of the rental program,

which allows visitors to rent a kayak or canoe from one of six businesses in the Catskills that store pre-cleaned rental boats alongside the reservoirs. Local businesses rented a total of 912 boats in 2016, an increase of 34 percent from the previous year. The rental program, administered in partnership with the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC), began in 2013 to provide easier boating access for visitors to the Catskills and for local residents who don't own a boat. It has also helped support local businesses by providing a new source of revenue. The recreational boating program at Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie reservoirs complements the traditional use of metal rowboats for fishing, which has been permitted for decades on all New York City reservoirs.

During this recreational boating season DEP issued 756 tags to those who own a boat, including 543 kayaks, 164 canoes, 40 rowboats, and nine sailboats. Including boat rentals, Pepacton Reservoir attracted 856 tags and rentals, the most of any reservoir, followed by 550 at Neversink, 191 at Schoharie, and 71 at Cannonsville. Nearly 40 percent of tags issued to boat owners went to residents of the five watershed counties, including Delaware, Greene, Schoharie, Sullivan, and Ulster. About 24 percent of the tags were issued to residents of New York City or Long Island. Visitors from 11 states also received tags, including Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Texas.

For the third year, rental boats were available from 10 launch sites alongside the four reservoirs. Local businesses this year again reported that more visitors were adding a boat rental on the reservoirs as part of their stay at local campsites, lodges or other overnight facilities, which had included boating on the reservoirs as part of their marketing. The rental program is adminis-

tered with significant help from the CWC, which funded the acquisition of 30 storage racks for the rental boats. CWC also administers the process to vet and approve businesses that applied to participate in the rental program.



2016 marked the fifth year of the recreational boating program, which followed a three-year pilot that began in 2009 at Cannonsville Reservoir. Prior to 2009, DEP only issued tags for metal rowboats that were used and stored at the reservoirs for the purpose of fishing. More than 12,000 tags are currently issued to anglers who have rowboats at the reservoirs. Regular water-quality monitoring at each of these reservoirs has shown no impact from recreational boating. DEP's invasive species experts have surveyed every boat launch site and found no sign of aquatic plants or animals that can harm drinking water quality. Every boat that is used on the reservoirs is required to be inspected and steam cleaned to avoid the spread of invasive species.

This year's results show that our recreational boating program in the Catskills is providing more revenue to local tourism businesses and outdoor equipment shops, and it is making this type of recreation more accessible and affordable for those who don't own a boat. I want to thank the Catskill Watershed Corporation for partnering with DEP to promote paddling and sailing on New York City's reservoirs in the Catskills. Our hope is that the successful recreational boating program continues to attract people who want to explore the scenic beauty of the region.

## Spotlight on Safety

### 2013 Explosion and Fire at Williams Olefins Plant

The Williams Olefins Plant, located in Geismar, LA, produces ethylene and propylene for the petrochemical industry and employs approximately 110 people. On June 13, 2013, an explosion and fire at the plant killed two employees and injured 167 others, most of which were contractors. The final report, issued last month by the Chemical Safety Board, concludes that Process Safety Management (PSM) program deficiencies at the plant during the last 12 years led to the fatal incident. Certain DEP facilities regulated by [OSHA's Process Safety Management Standard](#) take preventative measures such as:

- Conducting written hazard assessments detailing the

potential effects of an accidental release

- Evaluating worst-case and alternative accidental releases
- Conducting inspections of mechanical integrity of critical equipment
- Informing the public and emergency response agencies (e.g. the fire department) of any hazards should an accidental release occur
- Holding evacuation/rescue drills with emergency response personnel

For more information on the Williams Olefins Plant explosion and final report, read the [CSB article](#).

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.



## NYC Educators Tour The Watershed



DEP hosted nearly 50 educators from New York City this past week-end for a tour of the watershed. The group learned about the City's water supply, and the vital roles played by forests and streams. Importantly, the educators also learned about the Catskills and the invaluable role the region has played in allowing New York City to survive and thrive for the past century.

## Kudos Corner



The 19<sup>th</sup> annual New York City Technology forum was held on November 14, and two employees from the Office of Information Technology were honored: **Joan Palmer**, for Excellence in IT Support and Service - Manager, and **Zakir Hossain**, for Excellence in IT Support and Service - Staff.

## Welcome Aboard



Yesterday, 7 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter**, Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott**, and HR Specialist **Grace Franco**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

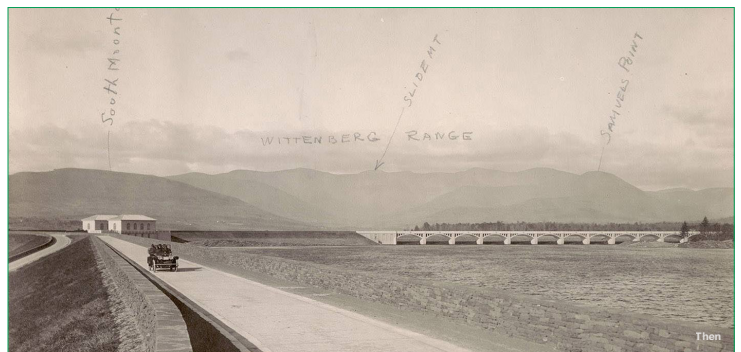
**Sara Hoskinson** with BWS; **Thomas Bucco** (not pictured), **Nicholas Delany** and **Natan Mandelbaum** with BWSO; **Leonid Gavrilchik** and **Anna Polischouk** with BWT; and **Matthew Viggiano** with CDBG.

## M/V Newtown Creek Portal Presentation



DEP Marine Operations was presented a portal window from the [decommissioned M/V Newtown Creek](#) sludge boat, which is now a casino-themed diving attraction in Pompano Beach, Fla., during a ceremony today on the Marine Section dock at Wards Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. Among those on hand to mark the occasion were Deputy Commissioner **Pam Elardo**, Assistant Commissioner **John Petito**, Marine Chief **Kevin Byrnes**, **Robert LaGrotta**, **Walter Goyzueta** and **Dean Morace** (all from BWT), **Henry Yi** (BLA), Pompano Beach Assistant City Manager Gregory Harrison, and Rob Wrye from Isle Casino Racing Pompano Park. The sludge boat was [retired in summer of 2014](#), sold at auction in 2015 to the city of Pompano Beach and has since been renamed Lady Luck. It was [sunk to a depth of 125 feet](#) this past July and is the star attraction in a multi-wreck dive site known as [Shipwreck Park](#). The sunken sludge boat is haven for both divers and marine life alike, providing a unique diving experience and becoming the largest artificial reef in the area.

## Out of the Archives: Then and Now



Views of Ashokan Reservoir's upper gate chamber and dividing weir bridge taken 100 years apart: Nov. 3, 1916 and Nov. 2, 2016.

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