

Rain Garden Stewardship in Bed-Stuy



DEP celebrated the launch of its Rain Garden Stewardship Program with its first stewards—the Chauncey Street Block Association—during a planting event Saturday in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. Participants refreshed and revitalized the rain gardens on their street by sowing new seeds and planting perennial flowers, ornamental grasses, shrubs, and ground cover. About 25 people joined in the fun, with the youngest participant being 10 years old and the oldest in his 70's. The group planted 115 plants in eight rain gardens, and DEP also recruited seven new stewards. The blossoming Rain Garden Stewardship Program promotes community participation through understanding how intentionally designed green spaces, such as rain gardens, support stormwater management, reduce pollution, and stimulate biodiversity in an ever-developing city like New York. As a steward in the program, community members help care for the rain gardens by performing basic rain garden maintenance so that the gardens can infiltrate large volumes of stormwater as designed and help keep New York City streets green and its waterways clean.

Spotlight on Safety

Workers' Memorial Day

April 28 is observed each year as Workers' Memorial Day to honor those who have lost their lives or have been injured on the job, and to renew the commitment to protect the safety and health of all workers. DEP is committed to ensuring all employees remain safe on the job by implementing applicable safety regulations and policies and providing resources for employees to report unsafe conditions. This includes the [Workplace Violence Prevention Program](#). DEP employees have the right and are encouraged to report incidents

or concerns about workplace violence without fear of retaliation. The agency's [Employee Concern Procedure \(ECP\)](#) is another option for employees to report unsafe conditions. ECP ensures that concerns reported by DEP employees or contractors are promptly reviewed and resolved. Directly report a concern or an EHS violation to your supervisor, Bureau EHS Safety Officer, or the Employee Concerns Hotline (800-897-9677) anytime. If you are a DEP contract employee, please call (718) 595-4700.

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.

Special Guest Commissioner's Corner



Angela Licata
Deputy Commissioner
Sustainability

As we celebrate Earth Week, I am pleased to announce that work is underway to restore tidal wetlands at Alley Creek in Bayside, Queens. The \$1.8 million project will restore approximately 1.9 acres of critical tidal salt marsh and maritime grassland habitat and includes the removal of debris and invasive common reed grass. The restoration effort aims to re-establish natural tidal flushing to improve the health of the waterway and support a diverse and complex salt marsh habitat. As part of the design for this wetland restoration project, progressively smaller tributary channels will provide even greater water quality benefits. Work is expected to be completed in 2019.

The first phase of the work includes the excavation of historic fill material, including asphalt and concrete, as well as the removal of invasive reed grass. Approximately 2,500 cubic yards of clean sand will be used to bring the site to the correct elevation to support wetland vegetation and create multiple tidal channels, which have been designed to maximize the area of low marsh vegetation. After placing and grading the sand, approximately 27,400 plants will be installed as 2" plugs, including a variety of native wetland species such as smooth cordgrass, saltmeadow cordgrass, and, sea-



shore saltgrass. The upland portions of the site will be seeded with a diverse mix of at least 15 species native to local maritime grassland habitats, including little bluestem and seaside goldenrod among others. Read more about the project [here](#).

Wetlands, which are transitional lands between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, provide a wide variety of beneficial functions. They attenuate flooding, help maintain stream flow, improve water quality, absorb nutrients and carbon, and provide plant and wildlife habitat. Nearly half the nation's threatened and endangered species rely on wetlands to survive. New York City has lost approximately 85% of its historic tidal wetland coverage over the last 200-years. I want to thank **John McLaughlin, David Lin, Sarah Bray, Pinar Balci, and Jackie Chen** for their efforts in this vital tidal wetlands restoration project.



Making a More Sustainable City



The Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction's Sustainability Section Chief **Erika Jozwiak** joined a panel discussion this month with Council Member **Costa Constantinides**, the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, and ALIGN NY at the DC 37 Earth Day Expo. The event centered on DEP and NYC's sustainability efforts, including lowering energy and greenhouse gas emissions, climate resiliency into the far future, green infrastructure implementation, and reducing waste. The panel also included an overview of NYC's goals for electric vehicle charging stations, education on the link between environmental justice and sustainability, and a discussion of legislation for emission reduction targets. The event also showcased sustainability initiatives from around the city and included a DEP water bottle and reusable bag giveaway for attendees. Thanks to **Jennifer Norton** of the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations for her integral role in organizing this event!

Water Conservation at BBG



The Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) last week opened the [Water Conservation Garden](#), a water reuse project toward which DEP provided \$210,000 in funding for a water re-circulation pump and bio-filter valves. Program Manager **Benjamin Huff** from the Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction worked on the project, with funding provided by the Water Demand Management Project, which is directed by **Alan Cohn** and **Erin Morey**. The completed project allows the Garden to recirculate rainwater collected throughout its 52-acre watershed and channel it through the Shelby White and Leon Levy Water Garden pond, the Japanese Hill-and-Pond Garden, and the rest of BBG's brook system, reducing freshwater consumption from an estimated 22 million to 900,000 gallons per year. Additionally, by using satellite technology and computer modeling, BBG can monitor weather and release water from the pond in the Shelby White and Leon Levy Water Garden prior to major storm events. This reduces the discharge during storm events to the city's combined sewer system from 8 million gallons to only 2.5 million gallons per year. Photos from the ceremony can be viewed [here](#).

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

Green Playground Opens in East Harlem



DEP recently joined with NYC Parks Commissioner **Mitchell J. Silver**, elected officials, community groups, residents, and children to cut the ribbon on the reconstruction of Playground 103, a Community Parks Initiative (CPI) site in East Harlem. The new and improved playground was funded with \$5.3 million from **Mayor Bill de Blasio**; \$695,000 from DEP, and \$625,000 from FEMA. DEP has committed approximately \$50 million in funding for the construction of green infrastructure installations at CPI sites citywide. At Playground 103, the construction of six rain gardens and a subsurface detention system will capture up to 1.7 million gallons of stormwater that fall on the playground each year. By capturing the stormwater and keeping it out of the combined sewer system, the green infrastructure will help to improve the health of the East River. In addition to managing stormwater, green infrastructure helps to improve air quality while also providing shade and lowering summertime temperatures.

Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 31 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Director for Human Resources **Herb Roth**, Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott**, HR Specialist **Grace Franco**, and HR Generalist **Conor Bulger**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Yanira I. Aparicio, Selochinie Bruschi, Jahne S. Champagne, Shanel L. Coleman, Jhomari L. Cuff, Saidah Green, Zeekeya S. Jackson, Usha F. Kellman, Kathryn A. Moulterier, Javern A. Peniston, Thasima E. Seargeant, Advait Uday, Elliot E. Vazquez, and Arif Zaman with BCS; **Jessica C. Emmerson** with BEDC; **Rayn B. Riel** with BEPA; **Rafael L. Castro, Christopher Howard, Brian J. Lewandowski, Jami L. McClaney, Jose L. Mojica, Nixon K. Noel, Andrew Olesh, Eliezer Ramirez, Evan A. Smellie, Christian M. Syversen** (not pictured), **James V. Tripi, Dwight Varlack, and Brian E. Welch** with BWT; **Akilah Q. Lewis and Conor A. Purtell** with FMC.



This month, DEP is celebrating our value of sustainability. If you know someone who embodies this value, please send an email by April 23 to values@dep.nyc.gov, and include the name of who you are nominating, their bureau, and a brief description of how they embody this value.