

## Special Guest *Commissioner's Corner*



**Angela Licata**, DEP's Deputy Commissioner of Sustainability, is a guest commentator this week.

Last week I had the pleasure of joining NYC Parks Commissioner **Mitchell J. Silver**, FAICP, Council Member **Costa Constantinides**, and kids from P.S. 171 as we cut the ribbon on **Van Alst Playground** in Astoria—the first neighborhood playground to be fully reconstruct-

ed under the Community Parks Initiative (CPI). The improvements to Van Alst Playground were funded with \$3 million allocated by **Mayor de Blasio** through the **Community Parks Initiative**, as well as nearly \$500,000 from DEP for green infrastructure improvements to absorb stormwater and improve the health of the East River. Improvements to the playground include new accessible play equipment, an adult fitness area, and efficient spray showers with timers for kids to cool off during the summer months.

The new Green Infrastructure at the playground includes rain gardens with subsurface retention basins. All of the stormwater that falls on the playground is directed to the rain gardens where it can be naturally absorbed into the ground, rather than drain into the City's sewer system, where it would



otherwise contribute to Combined Sewer Overflows into the upper East River. The existing permeable area was expanded from 5% to 22% and is able to capture 1.2" of rainfall depth runoff volume from the paved surface and adjacent street. Modeling shows that the rain gardens will prevent 32,676 gallons of stormwater from entering the sewer system every time it rains.

This event represented a milestone in the City's commitment to CPI, a plan for investing in under-resourced parks in order to create a more equitable parks system. Van Alst Playground, a Jointly Operated Playground that is shared with P.S. 171, is one of the first 35 sites that was announced by Mayor de Blasio in October 2014 to receive funding for reconstruction under CPI. Almost all of those sites are now in active construction and we'll begin to see many of these playgrounds opening later

this summer, fall and beyond. All of the parks and playgrounds that will receive improvements are in dense, fast-growing neighborhoods with an above-average percentage of residents living below the poverty level.

Capital program support for every CPI site comes from DEP, which has committed more than \$36 million in funding for the construction of green infrastructure installations.

DEP is proud to be a partner in NYC Parks' Community Parks Initiative, which is transforming neighborhood parks across the city. My team is always looking for ways in which we can reduce the water that enters our sewer system to help mitigate the risk of CSO's, and we were able to do just that at Van Alst. I'd like to thank **Teddy Geberemariam** and **John McLaughlin** for their hard work in leading the transformation of this playground.



## Spotlight on Safety

### Exercise Caution While Working in the Heat

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), each year more than 65,000 people seek medical treatment for extreme heat exposure. Labor-intensive activities in hot weather can raise the body's temperature beyond its ability to cool down through sweating. For workers, it is very important to recognize and immediately report the early symptoms of heat illnesses, such as a rash, cramps or confusion, as these can escalate to heat exhaustion or deadly heat stroke.

To protect yourself from heat illness:

- drink water every 15 minutes, even if you're not thirsty, rest in the shade to cool down

- wear a hat and light-colored cotton or linen clothing
- ventilate the work area (where feasible) to provide air flow
- if you believe a coworker is suffering from heat illness, call your supervisor and 911 immediately

OSHA has updated their original Heat Safety Tool which can check the heat index in hot and humid conditions and provides relevant protective measures. To download the updated app visit their [Heat Campaign](#) webpage.

Visit DEP's [Exposure to Extreme Heat and Cold Guidance](#) for additional information on how to recognize and prevent heat illness.

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.

## Bald Eagle Spotted at Ashokan



Just in time for Independence Day, this beautiful bald eagle was recently spotted perched atop a tree at Ashokan Reservoir. New York City's reservoir system is home to some of the largest bald eagle populations anywhere in the state. DEP currently monitors 22 active nesting territories on nine reservoirs, but bald eagles can be seen on all 19 reservoirs that comprise the water supply system. The agency diligently works to protect bald eagle nesting territories through project planning, buffer zones, and by restricting certain activities during the nesting season.

## DEP Employee Honored by SWIM



On June 28, at their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, the Stormwater Infrastructure Matters (SWIM) Coalition honored Director of Stormwater Management Outreach **Mikelle Adgate**, from the Bureau of Public Affairs and Communications, with their "SWIM Harbor Seal of Approval Award," for her work with New York City's harbor water quality advocacy community.

## Ducklings Rescued on Staten Island



DEP staffers **Garret Mosley** and **Mike Nichols** joined forces with NYC Parks Urban Park Rangers last week to rescue six ducklings that had fallen through a sewer grate off Clove Road and Victory Boulevard, in the Sunnyside section of Staten Island. Mosley and Nichols, both assigned to Staten Island Sewer Maintenance, removed the grating as Park Rangers gently lifted the ducklings into a net. The ducklings were later reunited with their mother, who was anxiously waiting in nearby Clove Lakes Park.

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

## Kudos Corner

DEP was recognized earlier this year as a top water utility nationwide in the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy's 2017 City Energy Efficiency Scorecard. The report ranks cities based on the energy efficiency of their local government operations, community-wide initiatives, buildings policies, energy and water utilities, and transportation policies. DEP received a perfect score in the Efficiency Efforts in Water Services category, with specific mention of DEP's water demand management, energy and greenhouse gas emissions management, and green infrastructure programs. The City of New York placed second overall nationwide. The full report can be viewed [here](#).

## Rain Barrel Giveaway in Queens



DEP recently partnered with Council Member **Costa Constantinides**, Chair of the Council's Environmental Committee, at Chappetto Square in Astoria to [distribute rain barrels](#) to approximately 100 homeowners from the Astoria, Jackson Heights, Woodside, and East Elmhurst neighborhoods of Queens. The 60-gallon rain barrels easily connect to a property owner's downspout to capture the stormwater that falls on the rooftop. They also help to reduce the amount of stormwater that enters the City's sewer system, which helps to protect the health of local waterways, including Flushing Bay and the East River.

## Catch Basin Unit Hits Milestone



The Catch Basin Inspection Unit (pictured above) of the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations recently celebrated successfully inspecting 146,463 catch basins in one year. The team previously had three years to complete such inspections, but the City Council changed the requirements and mandated that, starting in Fiscal Year 2017, all catch basins be inspected every year for a period of three years, ending June 30, 2019. As the team enters the second year of the new program, updates are being made to the tablet-based mobile application used by the inspectors so that they can better capture the conditions found at target locations. The catch basin inspection program and its use of mobile applications provides a faster method of distributing cleaning and repair work orders to the appropriate sewer repair yards.