

Special Guest *Commissioner's Corner*

Paul Rush, DEP's Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Water Supply, is a guest commentator this week.

The Bureau of Water Supply last week celebrated the opening of its new water quality laboratory in Westchester County, marking the culmination of an effort to upgrade all the watershed laboratories that ensure New York City's drinking water is safe and high-quality. **Commissioner Lloyd** cut a ribbon to commemorate the opening of the new laboratory, located in Hawthorne, and several local officials joined us to celebrate the occasion.

The new laboratory is a 4 mile drive from Shaft 18 at Kensico Reservoir. It is home to 45 water quality scientists who collect and analyze samples from reservoirs, streams,



wastewater treatment plants and other key locations throughout our east-of-Hudson watershed. The samples tested at this laboratory are particularly important because many come from facilities that can

convey drinking water directly into New York City's distribution system. Our scientists test these samples for dozens of parameters that tell us about the water—from temperature and pH, to pathogens and dissolved oxygen.

The facility replaces the former Kensico Laboratory, which was built in 1955 alongside Kensico Reservoir. (To give everyone a sense of time, the Brooklyn Dodgers won the World Series that year.) The Hawthorne Laboratory—which also is home to scientists from a former lab in Brewster and an existing DEP outpost in Valhalla—was designed to support modern equipment and the daily tasks of our water quality staff. Laboratory benches are the correct height and width, network connections are installed throughout the facility, and electrical, heating, cooling and ventilation systems function properly.

Scientists at the Hawthorne Laboratory will collect more than 8,600 samples and perform nearly 90,000 analyses each year to ensure the quality of water in our system. In total, water quality scientists at our four laboratories in the watershed and in the city collect 48,000 samples and perform more than 560,000 tests annually.

Importantly, the laboratory in Hawthorne is also the final piece of a plan conceived in the 1990s to upgrade and consolidate our laboratories in the watershed. Previously, water quality scientists stationed in the Catskills were relocated to new laboratories in Grahamsville and Kingston.

Now that we have successfully upgraded and consolidated the watershed laboratories, it is time to shift our focus to the Distribution Laboratory at Lefrak. Located on the sixth floor of the low-rise building, the laboratory performs almost 1,000 water quality tests daily, ensuring NYC's high quality water is in compliance with all drinking water regulations. To maintain this level of service in an environment of advancing technologies and changing regulations, we have initiated planning for an upgraded, modern laboratory that will allow our colleagues to complete their important work.

I want to thank all the staff from water quality, operations, budgeting and procurement who helped BWS execute this plan to provide appropriate, modern facilities for the important work that our water quality scientists do 365 days a year. Click [here](#) to see more photos.

Spotlight on Safety

Phillips Petroleum Explosion

October marked the 26th anniversary of the disaster at the Phillips Petroleum Company plant in Texas. While maintenance work was being performed at the facility, a valve was not secured properly and 85,000 pounds of highly flammable ethylene-isobutane gas was released into the plant. There were no detectors or warning systems in place to give notice of the impending disaster and within two minutes, the large gas cloud ignited with the power of two-and-a-half tons of dynamite. The explosion could be heard for miles in every direction and the resulting fireball was visible at least 15 miles

away. Twenty-three workers at Phillips were killed and another 130 were seriously injured as the first explosion set off a chain reaction of blasts.

And, the worst industrial accident in history, the Bhopal Chemical Release, occurred just five years prior to Phillips. That two significant disasters could occur within such a short time-frame should remind us all of the importance of process safety and risk management programs. For more information on these topics visit the [Occupational Health & Safety Administration](#) and the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#).



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.

Trout in the Classroom



Since 2002, DEP and Trout Unlimited have worked together to educate students in New York City and watershed communities about the importance of protecting our shared water resources through the Trout in the Classroom program. Watch this [video](#) to learn how the conservation-oriented environmental education program teaches young New Yorkers, ranging from pre-k to grade 12, about the connections between trout, water quality, the environment and steps they can take to improve the ecological health of the New York City watershed.

Mark Your Calendars

MILLIONTREESNYC FALL 2015 INITIATIVE: Eight years ago, the city launched MillionTreesNYC with an ambitious goal: to plant and care for one million new trees across the city. DEP employees, friends and family are invited to join MillionTreesNYC to plant trees in Buck's Hollow, Staten Island this Saturday, November 7. The event lasts from 10 am to 2 pm and will be located at the Greenbelt Nature Center. Transportation will be provided from City Hall for volunteers who do not have their own vehicle. More details, including registration information, can be found [here](#).

GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CITY EMPLOYEES: The Mayor's Graduate Scholarship Program (MGSP) provides outstanding City government employees with the opportunity to continue their education in graduate study. Participating schools offer full or partial scholarships in areas of business and public administration, policy analysis, law, engineering, nursing and other profession-specific programs to eligible and qualified applicants. Applications for the 2016/17 MGSP filing period should be submitted to OD&HR Workforce Development & Training, Attn: Briana Lomax-Day, by November 16, 2015. Please refer to the Employee Resource Center's "Did You Know" Section for more detailed information or contact Ms. Lomax-Day at (718) 595-6249 or BrianaL@dep.nyc.gov.

DEP THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVES: November 9 is the kick-off for the holiday food drive at Lefrak. In-city donations will once again go to support the Food Bank for New York City. Food drop-off is in the Dividing Weir on the 19th Floor at Lefrak. For more information, please contact Joe Sokolowski at ext. 6168, Sara Pecker at ext. 5487, or Eileen Alter at ext. 6601. Please click [here](#) for information on the food drives being held at the various BWS facilities in the watershed. Thank you for making the holidays a little happier for your less fortunate neighbors.

That's Deep...



DEP's work on the Delaware Aqueduct Bypass Tunnel is continuing safely and according to schedule. Workers are currently mining two shafts on either side of the Hudson River to gain access to the subsurface, which will allow tunneling to begin next year. Shaft 5B in Newburgh is currently built to a depth of 740 feet, while Shaft 6B in Wappinger is at roughly 580. They will be 900 and 700 feet deep respectively.

When it's finished in 2023, the bypass tunnel will convey water around a leaking portion of the existing Delaware Aqueduct in Newburgh. It is the largest single repair project in the history of NYC's water supply system.

Out of the Archives



Employees of the Knox Fence Company construct wire fencing at Hillview Reservoir in Yonkers. First the line wires were strung, then vertical stays were fastened using a special tool that held the stay to the line wire and clamped a wire lock around them. The board with a small level attached to it rode on the wires to maintain the spacing of the line wires and plumb the stays. October 22, 1915. For more photos from DEP's archives, visit the [Out of the Archives album](#) on our Flickr page.

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