

Commissioner's Corner

Last Tuesday, I joined with elected leaders and public safety officials to mark the next phase of construction for release works at Schoharie Reservoir. The release works are one component of a larger \$400 million program aimed at strengthening the 90-year-old Gilboa Dam and ensuring that Schoharie Reservoir continues to provide reliable, high-quality drinking water to New York City in the future. The program began with

the full-scale rehabilitation of Gilboa Dam, a \$138 million project that finished in 2014. It will also include upgrades to the Shandaken Tunnel Intake Chamber and site restoration work. DEP implemented the program of repairs and upgrades at Schoharie Reservoir more than a decade ago to achieve modern dam safety standards at Gilboa Dam. The release works are expected to be completed in the year 2020.

City, state and local representatives who visited the worksite in Gilboa were able to view the micro-tunneling machine, which, on Wednesday, was lowered 182 feet down a shaft to begin work on more than 2,000 feet of subsurface tunnels. Once it begins tunneling, the machine is expected to excavate about 20-40 feet per day. The tunnels are part of a \$142 million project that will provide DEP with the ability to release water from the reservoir into Schoharie Creek to facilitate dam maintenance, respond to potential emergencies, mitigate flood risk for downstream communities, and enhance downstream habitat for fish and wildlife.

voir, several hundred feet south of the dam. Once workers bore into the bottom of the reservoir, a specialized dive team will remove the micro-tunneling machine from the 135-foot-deep water and install the remaining parts of the intake structure. The construction of both tunnel sections is expected to take six months.

The valve chamber—which acts as the portal that releases water into the creek—will include two valves capable of releasing about 65-1,550 million gallons of water each day. A third, smaller valve will be capable of smaller releases up to 65 million gallons per day.

Releasing water from Schoharie Reservoir will support multiple goals related to reservoir operations, public safety and conservation. The release works will provide DEP with the capability to draw down the reservoir for periodic maintenance and in response to potential emergencies. The release tunnel would also help DEP mitigate flood risk for downstream communities by releasing water to counterbalance snowpack in the Schoharie watershed.

New York City depends on Schoharie Reservoir to provide nearly 15 percent of its daily drinking water, and our neighbors downstream rely on its infrastructure for public safety. The work we are doing now will ensure that both objectives are met for decades to come. I'd like to thank BEDC, BWS and the various contractors for their involvement in this important project.

The unmanned micro-tunneling machine will be operated by remote control from the surface. Operators will track the progress and performance of the machine by watching it on monitors inside a control room. While the machine drives the tunnel ahead, personnel will only enter the tunnel if the machine needs maintenance or if cutters on the head of the machine need to be changed.

The machine will drive two tunnel sections that total 2,118 feet, running as deep as 185 feet below the surface. The first leg of the tunnel will stretch 1,188 feet from the gate shaft to a valve chamber on the eastern bank of Schoharie Creek. The valve chamber will be located about 1,000 feet downstream of Gilboa Dam. A second leg of the tunnel, stretching 930 feet, will run from the gate shaft to the intake structure at the bottom of Schoharie Reser-

Spotlight on Safety

On May 5, representatives of DEP's Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) community, including Directors and the DEP's Office of Environmental, Health and Safety (OEHS) Assistant Commissioner **Persis Luke** joined their counterparts at Con Edison for a one-day EHS experience exchange and benchmarking session. The event was held at the Con Edison Learning Center in Long Island City and included representatives from BWSO, BWS, BWT, BCS, FMC and Sustainability. Con Edison was represented by various EHS staff, Directors, and Andrea Schmitz, EHS Vice-President.

The event was organized by OEHS as part of its strategic planning initiatives to build a networking relationship with various entities that have an advanced EHS program. This is intended to provide DEP's EHS leadership with opportunities to gain insight into approaches, challenges and overall successes with EHS implementation.

In their opening remarks, both Luke and Schmitz collectively outlined the organizational progress made in EHS, the challenges faced, the importance of a positive safety culture and



management systems implementation for sustainability.

The key take-away from the event was *Safety is not a Destination*, but a Journey, consistent with the industry-wide EHS management system models of continuous improvement. Topics discussed included Con Edison's EHS program, Incident and Employee concerns management, environmental management systems (ISO 14001) and employee training tracking, EHS communication and compliance auditing. The day concluded with a site tour of the Learning Center, and technical discussions on electrical grid operation, safety hazards and Operators' practical training curriculum.

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.



May is American Wetlands Month



DEP is celebrating *American Wetlands Month* by hosting a [wetlands exploration event](#) at Ashokan Reservoir on May 26. DEP wetland scientists at the event will display samples of plants and wildlife found in nearby wetlands, and answer questions about these unique habitats. This drop-in event will take place from 1:30-6 p.m. at the Ashokan walkway's Olive-bridge Dam parking area on Route 28A. The month of May is set aside each year to recognize the vital role that wetlands play in our nation's ecological, economic and social health. American Wetlands Month has been celebrated each May since 1991. 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. Approximately 35,000 acres of wetlands are located within the watersheds that surround New York City's reservoirs. This includes 23,000 acres of wetlands in the portion of the watershed located east of the Hudson River, and 12,000 acres in the west-of-Hudson portion of the watershed.

Beware of "WannaCry" Ransomware

The ransomware "WannaCry" is a malicious software which covertly encrypts your files, preventing you from accessing them, then demands payment for their safe recovery. Like most tactics employed in cyberattacks, ransomware attacks can occur after clicking on a phishing link (disguised to look like a legitimate business) or visiting a compromised website.

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) is closely monitoring DEP infrastructure and has implemented security measurements to further mitigate the risks. We are also working closely with the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) to receive guidance and recommendations.

Please help us to protect our infrastructure by ensuring you are applying the following general recommendations:

- Do not visit untrusted websites or follow links provided by unknown or untrusted sources
- If there are any doubt about the integrity of the e-mail or source sender, do not click on any links or execute attachments
- Do not download and install software onto DEP systems without approval from DEP OIT
- If you noticed suspicious activities on your workstation, please contact DEP OIT service desk at 718-595-4160 or by email at ITServiceDesk@dep.nyc.gov

Remember, official DEP OIT communications will only be sent from OIT Communications and DEP OIT will never ask you to validate your password.

Watershed Green Infrastructure Honored



The Public Design Commission recently presented DEP with a [special recognition](#) for "the agency's thoughtful design of green infrastructure in the watershed to help protect the city's water supply." A [press release](#) from the Mayor's Office detailing all of the projects honored at the 35th Annual Awards for Excellence in Design noted that, "DEP's use of green infrastructure in its upstate properties not only results in resilient and innovative designs, but is a critical component of the agency's ability to maintain the high quality of New York City's drinking water supply."

The upcoming projects include:

- Revamping the site of the former Armonk Bowling Alley to become 3.44 acres of wetlands, restoring the adjacent Bear Gutter Creek, and installing a permeable-pavement parking lot and side-walks as part of the town's beautification efforts of Old Route 22.
- Improving the metering and access at an existing BMP alongside Kensico Reservoir, with upgrades including a gravel roadway, extension of a box culvert, and new rip-rap at a site known as BMP-37.
- Building a stormwater detention system on Drewville Road near Croton Falls and placing new catch basins to keep water clean on Maple Avenue near Cross River.

Rain Barrel Giveaway in the Bronx



DEP joined with Council Member James Vacca and Bronx Community Board 10 this past Saturday at I.S. 192 in Throggs Neck to distribute free rain barrels to nearly 100 homeowners from the Bronx communities of Throggs Neck, City Island, Pelham Bay and Morris Park. The 60-gallon rain barrels easily install to a property owner's downspout and store the stormwater that falls on the rooftop. The water collected in the rain barrel can then be used to water lawns and gardens, or for other outdoor chores. They also help to reduce the amount of stormwater that enters the City's sewer system, which helps to protect the health of New York Harbor. Last year, DEP distributed a record-setting 11,111 rain barrels to New York City homeowners.

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