

## Banding Peregrine Falcons



**D**EP research scientist **Christopher Nadeski** and NYS DEC biologist **Barbara Saunders** partnered last month to band 10 new peregrine falcon chicks at three Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) bridges. MTA provides a nesting box for the falcons on each span—the Verrazano-Narrows, Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Memorial, and Throgs Neck Bridges. The identifying bands help wildlife experts keep track of the number of peregrines in the city, and identify them in case they become sick or injured. A video of the banding can be viewed [here](#).

## Spotlight On Safety

### The Importance of Regular Safety Communication

As we near the middle of National Safety Month (NSM) it is important to remember the National Safety Council's theme of "Staying Safe for Life." Regular safety communication is beneficial to the workplace for many reasons. Safety communications aid in avoiding complacency in the workplace, preventing workplace fatalities, and protecting new workers.

In the current issue of Safety & Health Magazine, the article "New Workers, Higher Risk" focuses on the importance of communicating to new workers their safety rights and responsibilities, and that they should not fear speaking up about a hazard they witness. Employees who are new, both in the office and the field, may be

unfamiliar with their workplace's safety protocols, which is why orientation and training is crucial to keeping new workers safe. Good communication is important, especially if employees work in different locations; understanding the safety protocols of each location can help to protect them.

At DEP, striving for safety excellence should always be on the minds of employees, and this effort shows in the form of various policies, procedures and guidelines, and communications and trainings—such as the EHS Orientations and [Hazard Communication/Right-to-Know Program](#). For more information on this topic, read the full [Safety & Health Article](#).

## Commissioner's Corner



*This week's Commissioner's Corner was written by Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development & Human Resources **Diana Jones Ritter**.*

Over the next decade, more than half of the DEP work force will be eligible for retirement. We are working diligently to develop and prepare employees so that they will be ready to take on new leadership roles in the coming years. In addition, the summer internship program is an integral part of our effort to attract and retain DEP's next generation of talented and diverse leaders. In fact, many current DEP employees began their careers in the summer internship program.

With schools concluding their spring semesters, DEP has had 115 interns attend orientation over the last few weeks and receive an overview of the department. The interns hail from New York City and as far away as Michigan and Indiana. They represent schools such as Tulane, Yale, Columbia, Cornell, the City University of New York, the State University of New York, and Tu-

lane and Vermont Law Schools. An internship provides a terrific stepping stone to potential career opportunities within DEP. We are especially proud of the diversity represented within this year's class as we continue to implement the agency's Diversity Strategic Plan to maximize the benefits that a diverse and inclusive workforce brings to fulfilling our mission and goals.

The summer internship program gives both graduate level and undergrad students an inside look at the important work DEP employees do every day while also affording them the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to many of our projects. Some of the interns have been assigned to the Water-On-the-Go program while others will be assigned to all of DEP's bureaus at locations from the watersheds to Staten Island. They will be exposed to all areas of the agency through weekly meetings and facility tours, similar to the 'Brown Bag' presentations and 'DEP Employee Experience Tours' we have launched for all employees. At the end of the summer, some of the interns will make group presentations to DEP's senior staff concerning their projects. I encourage everyone to integrate the interns into all of our projects and engage them in the important work of protecting public health and the environment. Let's inspire them to come back!

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.



## BWT Operators Win Big



Bureau of Wastewater Treatment (BWT) operators had a triumphant showing at the Joint NEWEA/NYWEA Operations Challenge 2016 held June 6 and 7 in Mystic, Conn. The nine-team competition featured two DEP teams, the **26<sup>th</sup> Ward Unflushables** and the **Jamaica Sludge Hustlers**, as well as teams from New Hampshire, Virginia, Maine, Rhode Island, Maryland, Long Island and Rochester. The 26<sup>th</sup> Ward Unflushables emerged victorious in several top categories—winning 1<sup>st</sup> place overall, 1<sup>st</sup> in the state and 1<sup>st</sup> in the Collections event. They also garnered 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Lab event, 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Safety event, 3<sup>rd</sup>

in the Pump Maintenance event, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Process Control event. The Jamaica Sludge Hustlers took 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the state, as well as 1<sup>st</sup> in the Safety event, 1<sup>st</sup> in the Pump Maintenance event, 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Collections event, and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Process Control event. The teams are overjoyed and very proud to bring home the state trophy to NYC. **Howard Robinson, III**, the Operators Challenge Coordinator and Chief Operator, Coney Island WWTP, expressed his sincerest thanks to DEP for its continued support, particularly Assistant Commissioner **John Petito** (BWT), Director of Plant Operations **Arthur Spangel** (BWT), Deputy Commissioner **Diana Jones Ritter** (Bureau of Organizational Development & Human Resources), and newly-hired Deputy Commissioner **Pam Elardo** (BWT). The teams aim to build on these big wins and carry that enthusiasm into the national competition, which will be held at the Water Environment Federation's Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference in New Orleans from September 24-28.

## Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 32 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Acting Commissioner **Steven Lawitts** and Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development & Human Resources **Diana Jones Ritter**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

**Ashley Aviles**, **Leslie Sanchez-Romero** and **Gary Sidoti** with BCS; **Sergey Levin** with BEDC; **Susan Darling** with BEPA; **Stephanie Cruz** with BLA; **Joshua Gomez** and **Pasquale Libassi** with BWS; **Sayyid Baksh**, **Nicholas Bellaby**, **Frank Deguardia**, **Michael Hirschberger**, **Corey Holder**, **Jubril Kassim**, **Arthur Lynch**, **Lawrence MConneughey**, **Fitzgerald Mortel**, **Cesar Rivas**, **John Rodriguez**, **Hommy Rosa Torres**, **Iris Santos Arora** and **Daniel Schiulaz** with BWSO; **Michael Bryant** and **Aklema Zannath** with BWT; **Rodrick Aleandre**, **Yevgeniya Kotlyarskaya** and **Tyrece Wilson** with CDBG; **Rodel Delizo**, **Sean Hinds** and **Lakeisha Howard** with FDC; **Sonia San Agustin** with FEC; and **Claire Cammarata** with OD&HR.

## DEP Police Swear In New Recruits



Twenty-three DEP Police recruits were sworn in June 6 at the DEP Police Academy. The class consists of candidates hailing from 12 counties and speaking four languages, including Cantonese, Greek, Russian and Spanish. The men and women will train at the former Army Reserve Center in Kingston, which last April became the permanent home of the DEP Police Academy. They will undergo intense training in counterterrorism, the environment, police science, the use of firearms, and defensive tactics. In addition, they will take courses in environmental conservation law, land navigation, fish and wildlife science and watershed protection. Best of luck to all of the recruits!

## Dragon Boat Festival

DEP is entering a boat in the annual Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival, held in nearby Flushing Meadows Corona Park, where the team will compete against other NYC agencies. There are 12 paddlers, a helmsperson and a drummer in each race boat. The Festival will be held on August 6 and the first practice will be held at Flushing Meadows Park on Sunday, June 19, at 11:30am. The only requirement is that participants are willing to work as a team, attend practices, are not afraid to get wet, and are prepared to have boatloads of fun! For more information, please contact **Michael Shum** at [mshum@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:mshum@dep.nyc.gov).

## Spring Blood Drive

The New York Blood Center is experiencing a serious shortage in blood supply due to a fall-off in donations. To help ensure that blood will be available to those who need it, DEP is hosting blood drives at the below location and times. Donors with an O-negative blood type, or "universal donors," are especially urged to give because their blood can be transferred to anyone.

**Kensico/Highland Regions - Sutton Park Area:** Sutton Park-2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Large Training Room, 6/16, 8:30am to 2:30pm, and **Grahamsville Region Area:** Grahamsville Fire House, 6/29, 9:00am to 3:00pm.

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