

Autumn in the Watershed



Autumn is a great time to visit New York City's reservoirs and the thousands of acres of open land that surround them. This photo, taken from the top of Overlook Mountain in Ulster County, shows Ashokan Reservoir and the Catskill High Peaks, which are transitioning into their fall colors. The photo was taken during a group hike organized by the nonprofit Catskill Mountain Club, which has partnered with DEP to create several of the hiking trails that traverse NYC's upstate water supply lands. More information about hiking can be found on the DEP website by clicking the [Watershed Recreation](#) link on the home page.

Spotlight on Safety

Seasonal Flu

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), seasonal flu activity can begin as early as October. Seasonal Influenza is primarily spread through droplets that are released when infected people sneeze or cough, but germs can also be transmitted from touching affected surfaces. The 2015-16 flu vaccines have been updated to better match the circulating viruses and if you have not yet received a vaccine, they are available at many pharmacies, as well as at your doctor's office. Please note, it takes about two weeks after the vaccination is administered for the protection to kick in, so get vaccinated now!

Here are some every day tips to help prevent the spread of germs, especially in the workplace:

- wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- use disinfectant wipes/spray to keep surfaces clean
- if you are sick with a flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever has passed without the use of fever-reducing medicine

For additional information, visit the [CDC](#).

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.

Commissioner's Corner

Last week, I had the pleasure of joining Parks Commissioner **Mitchell J. Silver** to announce that the City has doubled the funding for the Community Parks Initiative (CPI)—a citywide program to improve historically under-funded parks in densely populated and growing neighborhoods with higher-than-average concentrations of poverty. In total, CPI will invest \$285 million in capital dollars through 2019—along with a sustained annual commitment of more than \$2.5 million in expense funding—to improve neighborhoods' quality of life by revitalizing 67 community parks that have not undergone significant improvements in decades. CPI is part of OneNYC, the mayor's plan for a just and strong New York City.

These wholesale capital improvements are complemented by immediate targeted improvements such as new pavements for basketball courts, new plantings, and aesthetic improvements. To date, the Parks Department has completed targeted improvements in 60 CPI neighborhood playgrounds. The new, additional funding will allow this targeted improvements program to continue, with an additional 25 targeted improvement sites to be completed over the next 12 months.

DEP supports CPI because it provides us with a terrific opportunity to expand our

portfolio of green infrastructure installations. To this end, we have pledged more than \$50 million to fund the construction of green infrastructure within the selected parks. The green infrastructure will manage at least the first inch of rain that falls on each park, and we are also working to direct stormwater from adjacent streets to the green infrastructure within the parks. By keeping the stormwater out of the sewer system, we will help to reduce Combined Sewer Overflows and improve the health of local waterways. The ancillary benefits of green infrastructure, including increased shade and cleaner air, will also be welcome additions to these neighborhoods.

In addition to CPI, we are working with the Department of Education and the Trust for Public Land to build green infrastructure in school playgrounds, and we are also partnering with the New York City Housing Authority to add green infrastructure at their properties. This work complements our ongoing construction of thousands of curbside bioswales, as well as the grant program that provides funding to private property owners to build green infrastructure. I would like to thank all the staff that are working so hard on these initiatives, including the entire Bureau of Sustainability, Deputy Commissioner **Angela Licata** and Director of Ecological Services **John McLaughlin**.



Pictured left-to-right: John McLaughlin, Commissioner Silver, Commissioner Lloyd, and Parks' Brooklyn Borough Commissioner Kevin Jeffrey

National Skills Competition



Last month, the Jamaica Sludge Hustlers—representing the Jamaica Wastewater Treatment Plant—participated in the National Operations Challenge competition in Chicago, Illinois. The Sludge Hustlers earned their way to the national arena by securing second place at the New York State Operations Challenge event in June. A record-high 44 entrants, including teams from Canada and Germany, participated in the two-day competition and each competed in a number of timed and judged events including: repairing a leaking pipe while it remains in service, a confined space rescue of a fellow employee, restoring main pumps to service and programming them for emergency use, and tests on advanced process techniques and discharge standards. Congratulations to the Sludge Hustlers, including **Robert Ferland**, **Michael Gravelli**, **Ray Antenucci**, **Salvatore Scapelito**, Coach **Joseph Atkins** and Coach/Coordinator **Howard Robinson**.

Kudos Corner



Late last month, the \$138 million full-scale rehabilitation of Gilboa Dam was recognized as the National Dam Rehabilitation Project of the Year by the Association of State Dam Safety Officials. The prestigious award recognizes unique projects that advance state-of-the-art designs in the field of dam safety and exemplify the professional engineering and construction standards that dam safety requires. In addition, **Emory Chase**, BEDC's accountable manager on the Gilboa Dam project, received a Certificate of Merit from the National Safety Council for demonstrating quality leadership on a project that had numerous challenges including natural disaster, engineering, safety, and environmental concerns. Congratulations to all! [Click here](#) to read more and [here](#) to see more photos.

Reservoir Cleanup Day



Earlier this month, DEP partnered with watershed community groups to remove litter and recyclables from public recreation areas at nine reservoirs in the Catskills and Hudson Valley. 347 volunteers collected more than 100 bags of debris—enough to fill 19 pickup trucks—from Ashokan, Cannonsville, Kensico, Lake Gleneida, Muscoot, New Croton, Neversink, Pepacton, and Rondout Reservoirs. Recyclable materials were separated from trash as the volunteers collected the debris from the cleanup areas. In many cases, the debris had blown onto the reservoir property from nearby roadsides, or had washed up along the shores from storms. Some was also left behind at access areas used by the public for fishing and boating. The hard work of the event's participants, which included school groups, business leaders, local non-profits, watershed citizens, and DEP staff, will help to ensure that dozens of miles of shoreline will remain pristine for the thousands of enthusiasts that enjoy our outdoor recreation areas every year. The Catskill Watershed Corporation co-sponsored the event and provided gloves and bags for the volunteers. To read more, [click here](#) and to see more photos of the event, [click here](#).

Welcome Aboard!



Today, 21 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter** and Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Emma Benyaminov, **Irene O. Fong**, **Tornell Tinort** and **John J. Mims** with BWSO; **Inna Avrasina**, **Deborah R. Bander**, **Supurna Banerjee**, **John R. Fraticelli** and **Kenya D. Townsend** with EDC/BIB; **Scott E. Joran** with CDGB/BIB; **Vincent M. D'Erasmo** and **Bernadette Moncrieffe** with CS; **Matthew S. Lepold** with CFO/FMC; **Ronald Bruce**, **Katitan E. Fangman**, and **Olaitan Femi Falade** with Police & Security; and **Luciano DiPreta**, **Giovanni Escamilla**, **Mark A. Maxwell**, **Salvatore J. Renna**, and **Benjamin Santiago Jr.** with BWT.

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