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Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel Re-Opened After Semi-Annual Maintenance Period

Commissioner Emily Lloyd of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that the Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel has been re-opened after being closed temporarily beginning March 15 for its semi-annual maintenance period. The shutdown was scheduled to take anywhere from two to ten days, but an inspection of equipment in the tunnel showed that the longer shutdown was not necessary.

"The Gowanus Flushing Tunnel has helped to bring better water quality to this important area of Brooklyn," said Lloyd. "It has also caused a reduction of odors and has even helped bring life back to the Canal. The DEP is committed to maintaining the Tunnel, and as part of the maintenance program the Tunnel is shut down briefly twice a year for inspection and to repair moving parts in the pumping device."

The Gowanus Flushing Tunnel was built in 1911 to bring fresh water to the Canal. It contained a propeller that circulated water from New York Harbor, and functioned until the mid-1960s, when service was suspended due to mechanical failure. Efforts to improve the area's sewage collection and treatment through the construction of the Red Hook Wastewater Treatment plant, which began operating in 1987, did little to solve the canal's odor and pollution problems.

In 1994, DEP undertook a project to reactivate the flushing tunnel, and by 1999 it was re-activated with new pumps, motors and fans allowing aerated water from Buttermilk Channel in the East River to be pumped into the head end of the Gowanus.

Today, the Gowanus Flushing Tunnel operates 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, bringing fresh oxygenated water into the Canal. DEP monitors the quality of the water in the Canal to ensure it complies with New York State water quality standards.

MORE INFORMATION

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