

## Natural Gas Drilling in the Watershed

**N**ew York City's upstate watershed is simply staggering: everyday, it provides nine million New Yorkers with about 90% of their daily drinking water, or about one billion gallons. And to protect the water itself, DEP has made massive investments throughout the watershed. These investments have paid off: the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded DEP with an historic ten-year Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD), which testifies to DEP's comprehensive watershed protection program. New York is one of only five large municipalities to be recognized with a FAD.

The land surrounding the watershed is a big part of the reason New York received that FAD. Most experts agree that protecting the land around a watershed is the best way to preserve the water itself. The City already owns about 137,000 acres in the upstate watershed; together with State-owned and other protected areas, this creates an ecological buffer that naturally protects the safety of our source waters.

Maintaining the integrity of that buffer is why DEP and several other State and federal agencies are working to make sure that the natural gas drilling that has been proposed for



the Marcellus Shale formation does not compromise our upstate watershed. The Marcellus Shale—a mix of rock, silt, clay, and other materials—plunges to 2,000 feet underground, and is a potential source of natural gas.

To extract the natural gas that is bound up in that deep formation, gas and oil companies would use a technique called hydraulic fracturing, or "hydro-fracking." The technique blasts water, sand, and other chemicals deep into the earth, creating the potential for groundwater contamination. Together with effects of the pressure on fractured formation and underground infrastructure, the other potential impacts include spills from the storage, use and disposal of chemicals and "produced" water, the construction of thousands of

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## Spotlight on Safety

### Your MSDS

A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is designed to provide both workers and emergency personnel with the proper procedures for handling or working with a particular substance. MSDS's include information such as physical data (melting point, boiling point, flash point etc.), toxicity, health effects, first aid, reactivity, storage, disposal, protective equipment, and spill/leak procedures. These are of particular use if a spill or other accident occurs.

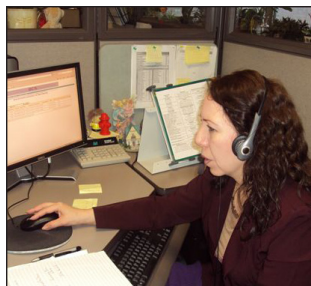
– The Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) 29 CFR 1910.1200 regulates communication of hazardous materials in the workplace.

Employers shall have a material safety data sheet in the workplace for each hazardous chemical that they use. MSDS binders are a useful reference tool. Employees should take time to review their MSDS binder and familiarize themselves with potential hazardous substances in your workplace.

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



The past 2 days have been yet another reminder of how challenging our work in the field can be on any given day. BWSO crews have been on extended shifts dealing with roadway flooding, sewer backups, and clogged catch basins. And the BWT teams at our 14 wastewater treatment plants have been on overdrive dealing with substantially increased flows Citywide.

Thanks to everyone for your tremendous efforts, particularly all of the teams at the BWSO sewer yards, led by **Gerry Tangredi, Ed Canicatti, Jason Seminara, John Abrusci, Mike O'Shea, Dan Bollaert, Fred Young, Jose Alvarez,** and **Jim Watson**. And I also want to recognize Senior Stationary Engineer Electric BWT **Kevin Buckley** and his **Collection Facilities North** crew, who unclogged regulators, reset pumping stations, and optimized capture at the Flushing Bay CSO Retention facility.

It's also a very busy time of year for the Bureau of Customer Services.

DC **Joe Singleton** and the entire BCS team is dealing with a tremendous increase in customer call volume as property owners seek to pay outstanding water bills to avoid the Lien Sale or service termination. Last week, DEP mailed 18,545 notices to single-family homeowners for overdue water and sewer bills, which follows on the 60-day Lien Sale notice that went to 15,693 properties a few weeks ago. Today I visited the BCS Manhattan service center, where BCS Director of Field Operations **Kevin Milosky** and Manhattan Borough Manager **Jacqueline Holly** introduced me to the entire team and gave me a tour, including a look at meter-reading files that are nearly a hundred years old. Chief Inspector **Jerry Archibald** explained how a water meter works (with props), and how our meter inspectors figure out if there is a water leak at a particular property. Thanks to everyone I met today, including Chief Clerk **Ivy Cornish**, Permit/Cashier Supervisor **Kim Purvis**, Cashiers **Faye King** and **Peter Chin**, AMR Supervisor **Willesley Alexander**, and inspector **Sal Salerno**. Keep up the great work, and I look forward to visiting the rest of our borough offices soon.

### BCS Call Center – Great Work!

It's all hands on deck in the Bureau of Customer Services. After Service Termination Notifications were mailed out to 18,545 account holders, DEP's Call Center—led by DC **Joe Singleton**—has been inundated by 12,828 calls, including calls to the contact and collections centers. The day the notification went out, DEP received a record 2,437 calls. That day, the phones started ringing at 9:00 in the morning, and didn't stop until after 8:00 that night. The Call Center has extended hours to make it easier for our customers to reach us, it is open late on Tuesdays and Thursdays until 8:00pm, and on Saturday from 9:00am to 5:00pm. To all of you in the Bureau of Customer Services, keep up the good work, and keep answering those calls!

## Focus on the Field



**Deven Shah** joined DEP in 1985 and is a machinist with the Major Equipment Services Section under the supervision of Section Chief **Pete Faiello**, and overall direction of DC **Vincent Sapienza**, in the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment. The 62 employees in Major Equipment Services are responsible for the repair and maintenance of large equipment at the wastewater treatment plants and pumping stations.

Deven moved to the United States in 1983, and has worked at the Tallman Island WWTP

since 1996, where he maintains equipment including “tri-fuel” engines that can run on natural gas, diesel fuel, and even digester gas. Using digester gases for fuel cuts down on emissions, an important part of **Mayor Bloomberg’s** PlaNYC (plus it’s just a cool thing to do). Deven’s excellent trouble-shooting skills make him invaluable in keeping these challenging engines operational, and helping to make the City a little greener. Deven also maintains the five blowers and five pump engines to make sure that Tallman Island Plant continues treating 80 million gallons of wastewater every day. There’s a lot of work that goes into maintaining and operating a functional wastewater treatment plant.

Deven is married with two children: his son is a medical doctor, and his daughter is in medical school. He is a native of Gujarat, India and loves to travel.

## Cas Asks

askcas@dep.nyc.gov 

**Robert Rickey**, Red Hook Plant Superintendent, BWT, submitted one thing that he thinks everyone should know about DEP but may not:

When you flush the toilet or send something down the drain, where does it go?


I’ve been asked that question many times by many people! People are often surprised to learn that flushed toilet water does not go straight into the sea. A complex network of underground pipes and pumping stations carry this “wastewater” from homes and businesses and from street-corner catch basins to wastewater treatment plants. The employees at these plants use chemical, mechanical and biological processes to remove solids materials, which is called sludge. The sludge can be recycled as a fertilizer product. The last step in the treatment process uses sodium hypochlorite (concentrated bleach) to kill pathogens, before the water is discharged to the surrounding waterways.

### View and Vote in the 2010 Water Resources Art and Poetry Contest

Please join DEP’s education staff in selecting top entries from DEP’s 24th Annual Water Resources Art and Poetry Contest. Fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from New York City public, independent and parochial schools have submitted creative entries that celebrate their understanding of New York City’s water supply and wastewater treatment system and the importance of water conservation.

When: Tuesday, April 6th between 10:00 am – 4:00 pm (It takes about an hour to judge all the entries.)

Where: Cafeteria, 3rd Floor, Lefrak High Rise.



Click here  for information about the contest and for a copy of the guidelines that describe the rules and contest themes.


### (Natural Gas Drilling... - continued)

well pads, hundreds of thousands of truck trips, surface water extraction, and air pollution.

“DEP has been in the forefront of conducting an objective, science-based analysis of this type of gas drilling and extraction. Our conclusion, after an exhaustive year-long analysis, was that the current technology creates too many risks to our water supply and infrastructure that are not addressed by the State’s proposal. We simply can’t gamble with the water supply for nine million New Yorkers,” says **Carter Strickland**, the Deputy Commissioner for Sustainability.

Following DEP’s analysis, other governmental entities have cautioned against the State’s proposal for gas drilling. Three months ago, New York State Attorney General **Andrew Cuomo** released a 128-page report saying that the State should consider banning any drilling in lands that feed into New York

City’s water supply . The EPA also submitted comments against the State’s proposal. Soon, the EPA will begin studying hydro-fracking’s “effects on water quality and public health” , and several United States Congressmen have drafted legislation that would compel the drilling industry to identify the chemicals they use to dig. Finally, the Water Research Foundation will hold workshops to analyze the effects of natural gas drilling, providing DEP with additional insight and critical analysis.

DEP will soon roll out a new feature on our own website that discusses this important issue . We’ll update this feature regularly with reports, articles, and studies. Please take a look and tell your friends and family. Once you’ve visited, write your elected officials: we need everyone to understand why our watershed is so important, and why this proposal is so dangerous.

## Milestones

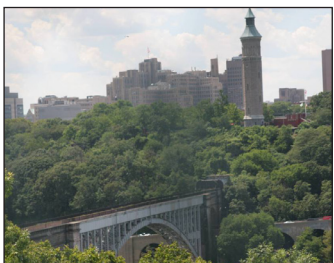
Best wishes to the following employees on their retirement in March/April 2010: FMC: **Larry Murray**, **Efrain Vazquez**; BWT: **Edward Diel**, **Chun Tien**, **Pedro Delaluz**; BWSO: **Mel Hansen**, **Phil Saglimbene**.

## DEP: Then & Now



card from Scott Foster Collection)

**Then:** New York City’s oldest standing bridge, the High Bridge (1848) was built to carry the Old Croton Aqueduct over the Harlem River. The High Bridge was once part of the first reliable and uninterrupted water supply system in NYC. The Old Croton Aqueduct was the first of its kind ever constructed in the U.S. States. (Post-



**Now:** The bridge spans the Harlem River, connecting Manhattan and the Bronx, and has been closed for over 30 years. It soars 138 feet above the 620 foot-wide Harlem River, with a total length of 1,450 feet. NYC Parks is developing plans to reopen it and the renovation will follow historic preservation principles to restore the architectural details of the landmarked structure. Once reopened it will be a link in NYC’s expanding waterfront Greenway, and create new pedestrian and bicycle access for public enjoyment.

### Fill Out Your Census Forms

As 120 million households receive their 2010 Census forms in the mail this week, U.S. residents are encouraged to participate in a process that is as old as the nation itself. Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution requires a census of the population every 10 years to ensure the fair allocation of representatives in Congress. For more information, go to <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/index.php>

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