

## Queens Adds Notch to 'Blue-Belt'



**D**EP's award-winning Bluebelts are expanding in Queens. Based on the term "greenbelt," used to describe a large area of parkland in Staten Island, DEP's "Bluebelts" provide ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management. Through preservation of natural drainage corridors, such as streams, ponds, lakes,

and other wetlands, the installation of stormwater management landscaping treatments, and construction of man-made wetlands, Bluebelts not only help prevent flooding, they also clean and filter stormwater. Bluebelts also provide important community open spaces and diverse wildlife habitats.

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## Spotlight on Safety

### Reminder – June is "National Safety Month"

Did you know in the United States alone, approximately four million people suffer a workplace injury annually, resulting in more than 80,000,000 lost hours of work and millions of dollars in lost productivity? In an effort to reduce workplace injuries, governments, unions and private sector organizations are increasing their investment in the health and safety of their employees by providing workers with safety information, equipment, and other resources.

June is "National Safety Month," an annual, month-long observance aimed at educating employees and changing behaviors that are the leading causes of preventable injuries and death. The National Safety Council encourages organizations to get in-

involved and participate in National Safety Month.

Each week during the month of June, Spotlight on Safety will focus on a topic that mirrors the weekly theme being highlighted by the National Safety Council to bring attention to a critical safety issue. The 2012 weekly themes are: employee wellness, ergonomics, fall prevention and driving safety.

Also in June, DEP will focus its "Employee of the Month" recognition award on safety. We hope to increase awareness of safety and recognize individuals whose contributions have improved the health and safety of our employees and the public we serve.

The best way to promote safety in YOUR workplace, is to lead by example!

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

Memorial Day is the perfect opportunity to appreciate the outdoors, and this year DEP has opened thousands of acres of land and water across our watershed to recreational use. I encourage all DEP employees to take the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the New York City watershed as the summer gets underway.

Commemorating a process years in the making, on Thursday DEP proudly joined Westchester County Executive **Rob Astorino** and other local officials to reopen the walkway across the top of the Kensico Dam. 🐱 Walkers, joggers, in-line skaters, cyclists, and skateboarders may now enjoy the scenic views of the Kensico Reservoir, and the towns of Mount Pleasant and North Castle. The Dam, measuring 1,843 feet in length, was closed to pedestrian access in 2005 to allow for \$42 million in structural repairs. Its reopening is a welcome step for both the Westchester community and DEP staff—and at just a 45 minute drive away from the city, a perfect way to enjoy a summer day. I thank the County Executive for his collaboration on this effort, and our diligent employees in the Bureaus of Water Supply; Engineering, Design and Construction; and Police and Security for ensuring that this critical infrastructure can be safely enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

The effort to bring more recreational access to watershed communities continued throughout the day, as Deputy Commissioner for Water Supply **Paul Rush** kicked off boating season at the Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie Reservoirs. Paul was joined at the Pepacton Reservoir by Delaware County Chairman **James Eisel**, Catskill Watershed Corporation Executive Director **Alan Rosa**, and other local officials. 🐱 A three-year recreational boating pilot program which began at Cannonsville in 2008 demonstrated how reservoirs can be enjoyed by residents and visitors, bolstering sustainable economic development while ensuring the integrity and security of vital resources. Additionally, last week's kickoff marked the opening of Devasego Park in Prattsville, which is now open for walking,



hiking, picnicking, dog-walking, fishing, and other recreational activities. The park space will also include a Public Access Area allowing for hunting, hiking, trapping, and fishing.

Since 2003 DEP has more than doubled the acreage of land available for recreational use, which serves as a testament to both the hard work of the agency and the productivity of our collaboration with local officials and stakeholders. DEP has managed this while maintaining its Filtration Avoidance Determination from EPA and State DOH. New York is one of only five large cities permitted an unfiltered drinking water supply. Our commitment to maintaining regulatory compliance was reaffirmed last week, with a draft agreement reached with DEC to solidify an interim reservoir operating protocol that provides downstream flood mitigation benefits while reducing the impacts of watershed source turbidity. 🐱 Under the agreement, we committed to conduct an environmental review which will evaluate DEP's efforts to reduce turbidity impacts in the Catskill system, along with funding for two stream restoration projects in the Ashokan watershed.

Whether through expanding recreational access or maintaining regulatory compliance, DEP has demonstrated its commitment to working with partners at the local, state and federal levels. Now that summer has arrived, there's no better way to enjoy the outdoors than by visiting the accessible reservoirs. Please join me in commending all of our local partners and DEP staff who have made it possible for all to enjoy the beautiful waters of the NYC watershed.

## Focus on the Field



Helping lead the expansion of DEP's Bluebelt Program is **Rob Brauman**, Bluebelt Construction Project Manager in the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations. As a project manager, Brauman supervises Bluebelt construction from the design phase all the way through final landscape work. Prior to joining DEP in 1993, Brauman worked as an ecologist on DEP Bluebelt and other ecological restoration projects. He has also worked for the Arizona Game & Fish Department and on several federal United States Fish & Wildlife Service projects.

Brauman is currently managing several stormwater and stream restoration projects on Staten Island that are typical of the Bluebelt program. He also supervised the recently completed construction of the first Bluebelt project in the Bronx. A

newly constructed wetland at the Bronx Botanical Garden will treat stormwater before it enters the garden's lake and has already helped alleviate street flooding in the area.


Recently, Brauman completed a project with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to survey the American eel population on Staten Island. American eels are a candidate for federal protection and surveys are being done along the Hudson River to assess the local population. The American eel has benefited from many Bluebelt projects in the Richmond Creek watershed that have led to an increase in water quality and habitat value. One of these projects, a novel fish ladder that helps fish swim upstream and over dams, contributed to a healthy stream that attracted over 12,000 migrating juvenile eels this spring.

"I enjoy working with the very dedicated and enthusiastic group of people in the bureau and being part of the new and growing field of green infrastructure," Brauman said.

While not at work, Brauman enjoys spending time outdoors with his family hiking, camping, and leading a Cub Scout program.

## Kodak Moment



BCIA staffer **Bruce Macdonald** speaks to drivers about Local Law 5, which prohibits vehicles from idling for more than one minute adjacent to any schools. In recognition of Asthma Awareness Month, throughout the month of May, DEP embarked on a citywide campaign to bring the law to the attention of drivers and reduce illegal idling. 

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

(Queens Adds Notch to 'Blue-Belt'... continued)



In 2011, DEP and the NYC Parks Department completed the restoration of Oakland Lake Park in Bayside—the first Bluebelt improvement project in Queens and part of **Mayor Bloomberg's** Green Infrastructure Plan. Oakland Lake is a 15,000 year old spring-fed, glacial pond in Alley Pond Park. The lake's 13 acres of open water are home to a variety of fish species, including bluegill carp, perch, and bass. For many years, uncontrolled storm flows had eroded the lake's slopes, sending sediment into the lake and degrading water quality. DEP's Bluebelt team developed plans to repair damage from uncontrolled stormwater flows and ensure that water entered the park in a sustainable way.

At locations where street run-off flowed into the park, the Bluebelt team, led by **Dana Gumb** and **Dean Cavallaro**, constructed swales and other drainage features to manage the water flow. At one location, a rain garden (a depression in the landscape designed to increase the rate at which water is absorbed by the soil) was installed. In addition, DEP stabilized highly eroded slopes, filled gullies and planted vegetation in previously barren areas. The Bluebelt construction in the park was preceded by the installation of storm sewers in the surrounding streets.

The latest Bluebelt project aims to address frequent flooding in Springfield Gardens and improve water quality in the lake in Springfield Park, which has filled with sediment over time and is degraded by frequent algae

blooms in warm weather. The project includes storm sewer installation and street reconstruction, and a number of significant Bluebelt components. Among them are: three large constructed wetlands, each situated at storm sewer outfalls and 2,000 square feet of porous concrete in the Springfield Boulevard median, undergirded with structural soil to encourage the growth of new trees planted in the median. Construction on the new Springfield Gardens Bluebelt is expected to begin this Fall.



Construction of DEP's Bluebelt program began in Staten Island in 1997. DEP saw an opportunity to design a network of traditional storm sewers coupled with constructed wetlands and natural drainage corridors. As part of PlaNYC and the Green Infrastructure Plan, the city has expanded the Bluebelt program to other boroughs where features such as natural or man-made wetlands can be effective in managing stormwater runoff.

## Word of the Week

**Desalination** – The removal of salts from water to provide freshwater.