

Commissioner's Corner



Yesterday I joined **Jim Rossi**, Chief of Bluebelt Maintenance and Watershed Maintainers **Anthony Lerman** and **Vincent Cittadino** to get a firsthand look at what

will be the largest ever expansion of our [award winning network of Bluebelts](#) on Staten Island's South Shore. Over the last several decades, residential and commercial development on Staten Island far outpaced the construction of new sewer infrastructure and several streets in the Woodrow area are not currently equipped with catch basins or storm sewers. As a result, roadway flooding can occur during heavy rain storms. Council Minority Leader **Vincent**

Ignizio and Deputy Borough President **Edward Burke** joined us yesterday to announce a \$48 million upgrade that will add more than three miles of storm sewers, install hundreds of catch basins, replace existing water mains, and include a significant expansion of the Sweet Brook Bluebelt.

The project will allow rain water to drain into new storm sewers that will flow into the expanded Bluebelt wetland where it will be naturally filtered before it is discharged into the harbor. Four miles of new sanitary sewers will also be installed and that will allow nearly 600 homes to connect to the City sewer system and discontinue the use of septic tanks. Homeowners will not only benefit from flood protection, but increased property values as well. The project is just getting started and is expected to be completed by the fall of 2017.

In total, the infrastructure improvements will include the installation of roughly 15,000 linear feet of new storm sewers, nearly 200 new catch basins, and more than 100 new manholes. In addition, 23,000 feet of sanitary sewers will be added to help bring homeowners off septic systems and 723 canopy trees, 170 shrubs, 36,900 plants and wildflowers, and 115,000 square feet of seeding will also be planted. While the roadway is excavated to add the new sewers the City will also upgrade the drinking water delivery system by replacing more than 12,500 feet of older cast iron water mains with new ductile iron mains.

Over the last decade DEP has constructed Bluebelts for approximately one third of Staten Island's land area. During that time, the City has purchased approximately 400 acres of wetland property for Bluebelts that provide drainage for 19 watersheds, covering about 14,000 acres.

Staten Island is the birth place of New York City's Bluebelt program and today there are more than 60 of them on the Island. Bluebelts preserve and enhance natural drainage corridors such as streams and ponds, to control and filter stormwater. They provide important open space and support local wildlife. The Bluebelt model is a sustainable and cost effective way to provide flooding relief for areas with poor drainage. Bluebelts also helps reduce DEP's carbon footprint since every gallon of water managed by the Bluebelts is a gallon of water that does not have to be treated at a wastewater treatment plant. The program has been so successful on Staten Island that we have recently expanded it to areas in Queens and the Bronx.

I would like to thank the Staten Island Bluebelt Maintenance Unit as well as **James Garin**, Director of Engineering for the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations, **Dana Gumb**, Chief of the Bluebelt Unit, **Nick Barbaro**, Chief of the Capital Development and Planning Section, and all of the hardworking staff who have helped make our Bluebelt program a success.

Spotlight on Safety

5 Steps to an Effective Lockout Program

Stored energy from electrical, chemical or other sources can be hazardous to workers. In order to prevent the unexpected startup or release of stored energy during equipment maintenance, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires proper lockout/tagout procedures. Safety padlocks and lockout tags are essential, however, they alone do not guarantee compliance.

Lockout compliance requires effective communication and a sound program with machine-specific procedures and comprehensive training. To establish an effective energy control program and to ensure DEP facilities use best practices, the following 5-Step Plan is recommended:

- **Step 1** Develop and document equipment energy control policies and programs
- **Step 2** Create and post equipment-specific lockout procedures
- **Step 3** Identify and mark all energy isolation points
- **Step 4** Train employees and conduct periodic inspections
- **Step 5** Equip employees with the proper lockout tools and warning devices

For more information please see: [Beyond the Products: 5-Steps to a Best Practice Lockout Program](#) and [DEP Policy: Control of Hazardous Energy Lock-Out/Tag-Out](#)

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. 🙌



Focus on the Field



DEP's nearly 6,000 employees are responsible for everything from forestry management in the watersheds to wastewater treatment, air and noise enforcement and billing and customer services in the city. Ensuring that the Commissioner is briefed on operational events and is prepared for everything from City Council hearings to presentations to the Water Board requires a full time staff, including Deputy Chief of Staff **Kim Seiler**.

Seiler was born and raised in Queens, graduated from Archbishop Molloy High School in Briarwood and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in urban studies and anthropology from Queens College. During her studies she also interned at the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development. While there, her interest in urban policy was piqued when she worked alongside an Urban Fellow on a strategic planning project.

Upon graduation, Seiler was accepted into the Urban Fellows program and was matched with DEP. She joined the Commissioner's Office and helped to coordinate the Water on the Go program. Still in its infancy, Seiler helped to grow the number of drinkers who visited Water on the Go stations from 80,000 in her first year to half a million two years later. She was also charged with reinvigorating DEP's Summer Internship program. Taking lessons learned from her experience as an Urban Fellow, Seiler sought to

connect interns from all of DEP's bureaus and instituted knowledge sharing programs such as brown bag luncheons on timely topics, tours of DEP facilities, and group projects that are presented to the commissioner.

"The summer internship program is relatively short, so we've attempted to immediately engage interns in not only the work of their assigned bureau, but the critical work that goes on across the department," she said.

Seiler was hired full time as a Special Assistant to the Commissioner in 2012. Since then she has helped to produce the inaugural State of the Sewers report, coordinated outreach sessions for the Strategic Plan update and organized monthly Brown Bag luncheons. Last month, she was promoted to Deputy Chief of Staff.

"Kim is intelligent, hardworking and organized—all traits that have made her a wonderful addition to the Commissioner's office," said Chief of Staff **Chris Hawkins**. "I have no doubt that she will continue her terrific work in supporting the Commissioner and the entire department in her new role."

"Coordinating the work of the operational bureaus with the Commissioner's office has been an amazing experience," said Seiler. "I literally learn something new every day and am continually impressed with the knowledge, talent and experience of DEP's staff."

Last fall Seiler began taking evening classes at New York University's Wagner School with the goal of earning a master's degree in public administration. She is also planning her wedding, which will take place next month. She still lives in Queens and enjoys working in her garden at home. With the onset of warmer weather she recently planted this year's crop, which includes strawberries, jalapenos and tomatoes.

Did You Know...

That yoga classes begin at the Valhalla office on April 22 at noon in the third floor conference room? Contact **Roya Riaz** at (914) 773-4453 in order to attend the 45 minute class. Special thanks to **Meredith Taylor** for making the suggestion to have yoga at upstate facilities and to Roya for coordinating!

Extra, Extra!



At DEP, we provide our employees with the training to safely work on our streets, but we need the public's help to prevent accidents and injuries. Click the photo to see a video about Work Zone Awareness Week that DEP created to share with our Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube followers.

For those of you wishing to view the video outside of the office, you can watch it [here](#) on our YouTube Channel.

Save the Date (and the Earth)!

Come celebrate Earth Day with DEP! Join us at noon on Tuesday, April 22 for an Earth Day Brown Bag with **Bridget Anderson**, Director of the Department of Sanitation's Recycling Unit, who will share the inside scoop on an organic collections pilot, why not all plastics are alike, and what actually happens to your trash and recycling once it leaves the building.

The brown bag will be held in the LeFrak cafeteria and will be videoconferenced to the Gramercy, Kingston, and Valhalla offices. Additional events will be announced later in the week as well, so make sure to check the Source for details.

Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 17 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter** and Deputy Director of Human Resources **Herb Roth**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Darica Davis, Morgan A. Jones, Nyles Kendall, Thomas L. Long, Chelsea B. O'Shea and Swapan Saha with BEDC; **Christopher Gozza, Alfred L. Pico, and Roy Sirengo** with BWS; **Reinaldo Gonzalez, Kinsley Major and Eric Richardson** with BWT; **George E. Kurien and Mohammad Waqas** with BWSO; **Flavio Reyes and Llanos Small** with Sustainability; and **Jessica Keating** with BPA.

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