

Commissioner's Corner



The Bluebelt system on Staten Island has provided DEP with an effective way to manage stormwater and reduce localized flooding, and I was thrilled to recently

announce with Department of Design and Construction (DDC) Acting Commissioner **Ana Barrio** that we have completed the largest ever expansion of the Staten

Island Bluebelt system. The \$48 million infrastructure upgrade for the South Shore neighborhood of Woodrow also added more than three miles of storm sewers, installed hundreds of catch basins and replaced existing water mains. The catch basins will allow precipitation to drain from the roadways into the new storm sewers which will then direct it to the Bluebelt wetland where it will be naturally filtered to protect the environment.

new wetland that was built on City-owned property at the east end of Sheldon Avenue. The work included the planting of 723 canopy trees, 166 shrubs, 36,850 plants and wildflowers, and 115,000 square feet of seeding. The Bluebelt will hold and naturally filter the stormwater before it eventually drains into Raritan Bay.

While the roadway was opened to add the new sewers, the City also upgraded the drinking water delivery system by replacing the old cast iron water mains with new ductile iron mains. As part of the project, 12,580 linear feet of 8 and 12-inch diameter distribution water mains were installed.

The project, which was funded by DEP and managed by DDC, began in the spring of 2014 and was completed ahead of schedule. The Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure (ISI) recognized the project with its Envision Silver Award, just the second New York City project to receive the award.

I'm so proud of all the work done by everyone who had a hand in helping the Sweet Brook Bluebelt take shape. I'd especially like to thank **Tasos Georgelis**, Acting Deputy Commissioner of BWSO, **Jannine McColgan**, **Angela DeLillo**, **Charles R. Olson**, **Robert Brauman**, **Jim Rossi**, **Dean Cavallaro** and **Joseph Scarlotta** for their efforts on the bluebelt system. I'd also like to thank Deputy Borough President **Ed Burke** and Council Member **Joseph Borelli** for attending the Aug. 16 ribbon-cutting ceremony and being such ardent supporters of the Bluebelt.

The installation of 15,059 linear feet of new storm sewers, 197 catch basins and 133 manholes will help to better manage the precipitation that falls in the area and reduce localized flooding. In addition, 23,278 linear feet of new sanitary sewers will allow 590 homes to connect to the City's sewer system and discontinue the use of septic tanks.

As part of this project, the stormwater that is collected from local roadways will be directed to the

Spotlight on Safety

Controlling the Danger of Rodents

A significant amount of damage is caused to property and food supplies every year due to rodent infestations. Additionally, rodents may also spread diseases which can be transmitted to humans directly, through handling of rodents, contact with rodent feces, urine, saliva, or dander, or through rodent bites. As these materials are aerosolized, especially in poorly ventilated areas, humans may become infected when they inhale particles. Some diseases can also be spread to humans indirectly, through ticks, mites or fleas that have fed on an infected rodent. This year has been especially bad for tick borne illnesses due to an increase in the tick population, which is directly related to an increase in the white-footed mice population. This is why it is so important to exercise proper housekeeping to avoid rodent infestation, especially

in basements or storage areas where rodents may nest.

Preventive measures include:

- keeping areas clean, uncluttered, and free from garbage, overgrown vegetation and standing water
- sealing up holes in buildings
- ventilating any high risk area before performing work tasks
- wearing protective clothing, gloves and donning a N-95 dust mask (under DEP voluntary policy) when performing cleaning tasks in high risk areas

Employees who work or perform clean-up activities in high risk areas/buildings, please consult with your Bureau Safety Officer or Facilities Management. For more information on rodent spread diseases, visit the [Center for Disease Control's](#) website.

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.



Newtown Creek \$5B Project Complete



The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has accepted DEP's Certification of Completed Construction for the \$5 billion Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade, meaning the job is officially done. Among those who attended the final progress meeting were DEC General Counsel **Tom Berkman**, DEC Regional Water Engineer **Bob Elburn**, Assistant New York State Attorney General **Andrew Gershon**, and court-appointed referee **Robert Schoff**. Former plant superintendent **Jimmy Pynn** also stopped by to celebrate the momentous occasion. Newtown Creek is the City's largest wastewater treatment facility and the upgrade has increased its wet weather capacity to over 700 million gallons a day.

Playground Spray Showers Retrofitted



DEP joined with NYC Parks and Council Member **Costa Constantinides** to announce that water-saving automatic shut-off timers and activation buttons have been installed on [400 spray showers](#) at City playgrounds in order to conserve water by ensuring that showers are activated only when in use. The \$3 million initiative, funded by DEP and jointly managed through a partnership with NYC Parks, was completed on time and is part of a larger citywide effort to reduce water consumption by 5 percent. The project also included water-saving retrofits to bathrooms in nine NYC Parks Recreation Centers. The timed spray showers were developed through the Municipal Water Efficiency Program, an interagency partnership that implements water conservation strategies at City-owned properties and facilities. Without timers and reactivation buttons, playground showers use approximately 5,600 gallons of water per day. Timers could reduce that consumption by 50 percent, or approximately 2,800 gallons per day. Now that these 400 spray showers have been upgraded, it is projected that citywide water consumption will be reduced by 1.1 million gallons per day. All newly constructed spray showers in playgrounds also utilize water-saving timers. Visit NYC Parks [website](#) for a complete list of spray showers citywide.

NYC Water Wins Taste Test



NYC Water was awarded the top prize yesterday at the 2017 Regional Tap Water Taste Contest held at the American Museum of Natural History. DEP beat out drinking water suppliers from Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties to notch the victory. Museum visitors sampled tap water from the four participating utilities and ranked them by taste. With the win, New York City tap water now advances to the state-wide contest to be held Aug. 31 at the New York State Fair in Syracuse. This year marks the 31st year that the competition, which is hosted by the Water and Wastewater Education and Outreach Committee (WWEOC), has been held in New York State. Internationally renowned for its delicious taste, NYC Water is tested more than 630,000 times a year to ensure its high quality.

Get Your Holiday Party Tickets

**DEP's
2017 Holiday Party**
You're Invited!

DEP, in collaboration with the Quality of Work Life Committee, is hosting the Agency's holiday party on Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2017, from 6–10:30pm at Russo's On the Bay in Howard Beach, NY. Tickets cost \$82 per person, and the price includes open bar, cocktail hour, buffet, and DJ. Installment payments are being accepted in the 3rd floor hallway (across from the vending machines) and in the Employee Lounge between the hours of 12–2pm on the following dates: 7/28, 8/11, 8/25, 9/8, 9/22, 10/6, 10/20, 11/3, 11/17 and 12/1. Employees who are unable to come to Lefrak to make payment(s) on the above mentioned dates, should email QWL_Events@dep.nyc.gov or call **Renee M. Alfieri** at 718-595-5827. Note: Full payment is due by Dec. 1, 2017. No exceptions. No refunds. A \$5.00 deposit enrolls you in the payment plan. Space is limited—so act fast to get your ticket!

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