

## A Floating Lab



**W**ith the warmer weather, New Yorkers will flock to beaches, kayak in the city's rivers, and enjoy other recreational activities on local waterways. During the summer months, DEP's Marine Sciences Section also ramps up its water quality sampling program. Each week, marine scientists take samples at nearly 80 locations to ensure the long

term health of the harbor. Over the past decade, DEP has invested more than \$10 billion in upgrades to wastewater treatment plants and related efforts to ensure that all the wastewater produced in the city is properly treated and, as a result, testing shows that New York Harbor is cleaner and healthier than it has been in more than a century. See more photos [here](#).

## Spotlight on Safety

### Effective Leadership

Last week, the Office of Environmental, Health and Safety (OEHS) partnered with the Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction to bring the second EHS Forum to DEP's Lefrak headquarters. The EHS Forum is convened semi-annually as part of the department's professional development initiatives where speakers present topics on current EHS practices and advancements. Jack Toellner, Senior Safety Consultant for ExxonMobil, presented: **Effective Leadership – Taking**

**your EHS Program to the Next Level.** In speaking to a wide range of DEP staff including EHS personnel, engineers and managers, **Toellner** indicated that an effective safety culture is best established through ongoing collaboration throughout an organization and leaders who set goals, implement a system, take responsibility and relentlessly pursue success.

View the PowerPoint from the speech [here](#) and send any EHS related suggestions, concerns or inquiries to [EHS@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:EHS@dep.nyc.gov).

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

**Paul Rush**, DEP's Deputy Commissioner of BWS, is a guest commentator this week.

June 1 marked the start of a new water supply year, and storage levels at the city's upstate reservoirs were right at the 100 percent target before we begin the drawdown season. That's great news for DEP and its mission to provide a high-quality, reliable supply of water to 8.4 million people in New York City and an additional 1 million upstate residents.

The reservoirs refilled despite slightly lower-than-average precipitation last year. Rainfall and snow last year averaged 43.10 inches across the watersheds, which was 6 percent less than average. The [Daily Water Supply Report](#) shows how we've fared with precipitation in each of the past 12 months. Overall, our supply system is in good shape to meet the high demand of summer and protect against the potential for droughts.

June 1 also marked the start of the second consecutive one-year extension of the Flexible Flow Management Program (FFMP). This program governs releases to tributaries of the Delaware River from our Cannonsville, Pepacton and Neversink Reservoirs. The program of releases is set upon an agreement by New York City and the states of Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. The water released from our reservoirs and others is used to protect natural habitats, support recreational activities, and

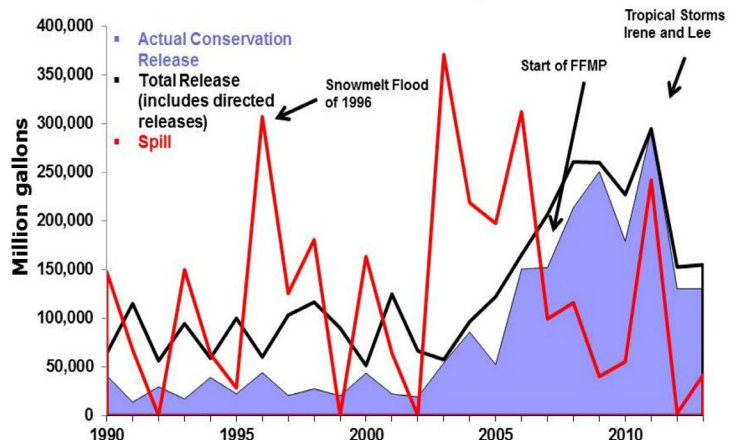


maintain targeted flows that ensure the reliability of water supplies for downstream communities that draw their drinking water from the Delaware River.

Since this program began eight years ago, DEP has committed to managing water in such a way that there is less spilling from our reservoirs. This allows us to make better managed releases that improve downstream fisheries and enhance flood mitigation, while also providing DEP with the opportunity to explore building hydroelectric generation facilities on the release works of these reservoirs.

The chart below shows the significant shift in the total amount of water released compared to the total amount of water spilled on an annual basis since 1990. The relatively steady decline of spilled water, along with the increase of conservation releases, shows that DEP is better managing how and when water leaves our reservoirs.

**Delaware Releases and Spill 1990-2013**



## Focus on the Field



When employees at the Grahamsville Laboratory need some help—a report filed, a time sheet corrected, an office supply ordered—they know exactly who to ask. Computer aide **Jona Hamilton** has been handling those tasks and others for the past 20 years. And because her duties run such a wide gamut, Hamilton explains her role perhaps better than anyone. “I do whatever needs to be done,” she said.

Whatever needs to be done is a lot. Hamilton compiles data and submits reports for several of DEP’s upstate wastewater treatment plants. She does the same for quarterly drinking water reports that are sent to regulators. And she also compiles data related to testing for special investigations, such as spills of potentially hazardous materials across part of the upstate watershed. If that wasn’t enough, Hamilton also maintains the standard operating procedures for the field and lab staff, acts as the timekeeper for roughly a dozen of her colleagues, and manages the inventory of office supplies.

“Jona’s positive interaction with all the staff and her ability to quickly and effectively handle data management, reporting, and

administrative issues are critical to keeping the Grahamsville Laboratory operating smoothly,” said **Steve Schindler**, director of water quality.

Hamilton grew up in a central Minnesota town dominated by dairy and grain farms. She fell in love with upstate New York when she visited with her aunt, uncle and cousins in the 1970s. But her move to become a New Yorker didn’t start out so smoothly. Before heading east, Hamilton had lined up a job at a state-run psychiatric center in Middletown, N.Y. During her three-day drive from Minnesota, the psychiatric center closed and Hamilton’s job was gone before she arrived. So she worked in a florist shop, then in a rehab center for the disabled, and a few doctors’ offices before joining DEP.

Hamilton is perhaps best known—and appreciated—for her benevolent spirit. At work, she helps to organize blood drives, toy collections and food donations. She cares for several of her elderly neighbors, simply because they watched her daughter and brought her vegetables when she first moved here decades ago. She’s also a member of the food pantry and thrift ministry at her church.

Hamilton is an avid quilter, and has been known to give small quilts to co-workers who have newborn babies. She and her husband, **Doug**, are also proud members of the Catskill 3500 Club, which required them to hike each of the 35 peaks in the Catskill Mountains that are above 3,500 feet in elevation. That accomplishment is pretty good for a “flatlander” from Minnesota, she said.

## Blood Drive

The Greater New York Blood Program is experiencing a serious shortage due to a fall-off in donations. To help ensure that blood will be available to those who need it, DEP is hosting a blood drive at the below locations and times.

**Downsville Region Area:** Downsville Fire Hall, 6/11, 9:00am to 2:00pm; **Lefrak:** 3rd Floor Cafeteria, 6/11 and 6/12, 7:45am to 1:30pm; **Kensico/Highland Regions - Sutton Park Area:** Sutton Park-2nd Floor, 6/19, 8:30am to 2:30pm.

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

## Extra, Extra!



DEP’s 14 wastewater treatment plants, and the 1,300 men and women who operate them, play an essential role in protecting public health and New York City’s local waterways. Click the photo to see a video about the history of the Tallman Island Wastewater Treatment Plant, located in the College Point neighborhood of Queens, which recently celebrated its 75th Anniversary.

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

## Keep Truckin’...



With the citywide installation of Automated Meter Readers (AMR) substantially complete, the work load of the Bureau of Customer Service’s (BCS) field staff has shifted from primarily inspections to more technical based AMR repairs. This requires vehicles with additional cargo capacity as the necessary meter replacement equipment and tools must be brought to

each job. Working with staff from Environmental, Health and Safety and Fleet Services, it was determined that a light-duty vehicle would best meet the needs of the BCS field staff and 21 new Ford Transit Connect utility vehicles are now being rolled out. The trucks are fully stocked with shelving, drawers, bins and containers, which will help the bureau maintain its inventory and more efficiently meet the needs of DEP’s customers. See more photos [here](#).

## Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 10 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Chief Financial Officer **Steve Lawitts** and Deputy Commissioner of Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

**Sudeep Deb**, **Jinson Pathrose**, **Jithin Varghese** and **Kelly Wu** with BWT; **Larissa Dudkin** and **Eric Lochner** with BEDC; **Erick Benitez** with BWSO; **Cynthia Cortes** with BCS; **Eric Landau** with BPA; and **Zachary Mallory** with BPS.