

## Special Guest *Commissioner's Corner*



**Paul Rush**, DEP's Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Water Supply, is a guest commentator this week.

Keeping the watershed clean is an integral part of keeping New York City's delicious drinking water pristine. Cleanup efforts can be a herculean task and I am pleased to share that DEP

had a record 418 volunteers from across the Catskill and Hudson Valley collect more than two tons of trash and recyclables during this year's [Reservoir Cleanup Day](#), making it the largest cleanup event since DEP began hosting them four years ago.

The Oct. 1 event comprised cleanup efforts at eight water supply reservoirs, including Ashokan, Cannonsville, and Pepacton reservoirs in the Catskill Mountains, and at East Branch, Kensico, Lake Gleneida, Muscoot and New Croton reservoirs in the Hudson Valley. In total, volunteers including school



groups, environmental advocates, business leaders, local nonprofits and watershed citizens collected more than 300 bags of debris and recyclables. The haul weighed a total of more than 4,500 pounds.

The breakdown of collected debris included: 4,948 plastic, glass and metal beverage containers, 1,196 cigarette butts, 952 food wrappers, 707 bottle caps, 485 plastic grocery bags, 792 cups and plates, 522 take-out containers, 278 yards of fishing line, 42 balloons, 26 tires, and 2,271 shards of foam, glass or plastic.

The results were a significant increase from last year's cleanup, at which 264 volunteers retrieved

more than 3,300 pounds of debris. In many cases, debris collected at the sites had blown onto the reservoir property from nearby roadsides, had washed up along the shores from past storms, or was left behind at access areas used by the public for fishing and boating.

I want to thank the volunteers for their commitment to cleaning up our reservoirs and protecting our shared natural resources. The cleanup results also highlight that there are still too many people carelessly disposing of their garbage. DEP is committed to teaching more people about outdoor ethics and the principles of leaving no trace when recreating on our lands and waters.

## Spotlight on Safety

### Seasonal Flu

Seasonal influenza, or the flu, is a specific and serious respiratory virus, primarily spread through droplets that are released when infected people sneeze or cough, but can also be transmitted from touching affected surfaces. The flu can lead to complications such as pneumonia and can be life-threatening especially among those who are very young, elderly, pregnant and with certain underlying health conditions. Typical symptoms include: high fever, aching muscles, sore throat, dry cough, fatigue, runny or stuffy nose, headache, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Here are some every day tips that you can take to prevent the spread of germs:

- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

- wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- avoid close contact with sick people
- avoid sharing phones, computers, equipment, or supplies
- use disinfectant wipes/spray to keep surfaces clean
- if you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine

Free flu shots are being given at various [DEP locations](#) and are also available at many pharmacies, and at your doctor's office. It takes about 2 weeks for the vaccine to kick in, so get your vaccination as soon as possible.

For more information, visit the [CDC](#) and [OSHA](#) websites.

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.



## Kudos Corner



Congratulations to the Jamaica Sludge Hustlers for coming in second place at the National Operations Challenge held Oct. 2 and 3 at the Water Environment Federation Technical Exhibition and Conference (WEFTEC) in Chicago. The team of **Ettore Antenucci**, **Robert Ferland**, **Anthony Petrone**, and **Yu-Tung Chan**, along with coaches **Joe Atkins** and **Howard Robinson**, battled it out against an international field of 37 teams competing in five events, including collection systems, laboratory, process control, maintenance, and safety. Just two years ago, the Sludge Hustlers finished 28<sup>th</sup> out of 40 teams. This year, thanks to lots of hard work, training, and dedication, they finished only 20 seconds out of first place—placing higher than any NYWEA Metro or DEP team has ever done before. “The team worked really hard and I am very proud of how well they performed on the national stage,” said **Pam Elardo**, Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment. “This performance speaks not only to their skill in the field, but also to the pride we as an agency hold for clean water and protecting the public health.”

## In the Community: Hunts Point



Staff from the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment and the Bureau of Public Affairs and Communications recently hosted several community organizations on an informational tour of the Hunts Point Wastewater Treatment Plant. Participating were representatives from the Bronx River Alliance, Rocking The Boat, The Point, Bronx Community Board 2, and the Parks Department's Bronx Borough Commissioner's Office. The group visited the generators, aeration and sludge pumping systems, tanks and other new technology installed during the recent [\\$280 million upgrade](#) to the facility that has helped reduce nitrogen discharges from the plant into the East River and Long Island Sound.

## New Green Playground Opens on LES



DEP recently joined NYC Parks Commissioner **Mitchell J. Silver**, FAICP, Borough President **Gale Brewer**, Council Member **Margaret Chin**, fifth graders from P.S. 134 and community members to cut the ribbon on one of the first neighborhood playgrounds in Manhattan to be fully reconstructed under the [Community Parks Initiative](#) (CPI). The [improvements to Sol Lain Playground](#) were funded by a \$3.6 million allocation through **Mayor de Blasio's** Community Parks Initiative, NYC Parks' Parks Without Borders program, and DEP for green infrastructure improvements to absorb stormwater and improve the health of the East River. This work included the construction of a storm chamber, permeable pavements and planting beds with shrubs, small trees and perennials that are able to capture up to 45,000 gallons of stormwater with each rainfall.

## Welcome Aboard!



Today, 27 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from **Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**, Deputy Director for Human Resources Management **Herb Roth** and HR Specialist **Grace Franco**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

**Terence Bethea** with BCS; **John Hossain** and **Kateryna Ponomarenko** with BEDC; **Louise C. Potter** and **James M. Roche Jr.** with BWS; **Lorenzo J. Albanese**, **Ernest Behnke**, **John A. DiBartolo**, **Carmelo Del Bono**, **Alvin D. Ferguson**, **Matthew Galanaugh**, **Jack Guan**, **Sk Ariful Islam**, **Blasé Marchese**, **Jennifer Norton**, **Oluwatoniloba Okuwobi**, **Joseph L. Spano**, **William Stapleton**, **Gregory Tolwinski Jr.**, **Edwin Torres**, **Jimmy Velez**, **Stefan T. Voglio** and **Jason M. Wickenhauser** with BWSO; **David Glass** and **Kenya R. Lewis** with BWT; **Alex J. Miden** with CDBG/BIB; and **Seshardi N. Aiyar** with CFO/OIT.

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