

## K-12 Students Prove Water Testing 'Elementary'



Last week DEP staff hosted more than 50 New York City public school students who were taking part in The Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) a "Day in the Life of the Hudson River" educational event. The twelfth graders, Advanced Placement Biology students from Baruch College Campus High School in Manhattan and fifth graders from P.S. 78 in Long Island City, Queens, took

water samples and made observations of the East River at Gantry Plaza State Park. Students used field techniques to track the river's tides and currents, examined the water's chemistry and recorded data. The Program, now its 10th year, helps prepare students to become stewards of our natural resources. More than 3,000 students at 70 different locations, from Troy to New York City, participated in the hands-on

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## Spotlight on Safety

### Fire Prevention Week

National Fire Prevention Week (October 7-13) commemorates the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 by highlighting the importance of fire prevention. It is sponsored by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

This year's theme – "Have Two Ways Out," focuses on the importance of escape planning and practice. Whether at home or at work, identify two escape routes to be prepared in the event of an emergency and pay attention during fire and emergency planning exercises/drills. In the event that one route is inaccessible, you will be prepared to take an alternative route.

Fire Prevention Week is also a chance to examine work areas to identify potential fire hazards. Do not store too much combustible material in your work area. File paper documents in fire resistant cabinets, off-site archives, or use electronic filing where possible. Check extension cords and surge protectors to insure that they are used properly. Power strips should never be used in series (e.g. a power strip plugged into another power strip) and extension cords should be rated for their use (light or heavy duty).

For more information:  
<http://www.nfpa.org/>

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

New York City has been moving on two fronts to reduce CSO's: upgrading and optimizing the city's sewer infrastructure so that it can process additional flow, and advancing the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan to capture stormwater before it ever enters the sewer system and contributes to overflows.

That said, CSO's will be a reality in New York City for the foreseeable future, and while we continue to make impressive gains in reducing their discharge, providing timely and transparent information to the public is a very cost-effective way to reduce or eliminate potential health threats. Last week, I joined Office of Emergency Management Commissioner **Joseph F. Bruno** to announce that Notify NYC, New York City's official notification system, will issue advisories when heavy rain creates the potential for CSO discharges. The advisories will disseminate information also featured on DEP's Waterbody Advisory webpage, and alert subscribers by text message or e-mail when there is potential for CSO discharges. Notices will also give the projected time that the advisories will end so that the public will know when to resume recreational activities.

CSO's are a combination of wastewater and stormwater, which during heavy rain can overwhelm the sewer system. On average, DEP treats 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater each day, a significant volume that is a testament to the excellence and dedication of BWT staff. This was on full display last week at the national Wastewater Operations Challenge, where our very own North River Harlem Pumptrotters squad represented DEP—the 17th straight year that a



DEP team has reached the national competition. The Pumptrotters earned placement at the national level where they demonstrated their skills in the areas of collections, water quality testing, maintenance, wastewater treatment processes, and worker safety. Developed by the Water Environment Federation, the national challenge is an opportunity to showcase operators' training and safety skills. Much like their namesake in Harlem, the Pumptrotters represented the home team well; please join me in congratulating all of BWT.

We strive to allow for safe, responsible recreation on waterbodies where possible, an effort that infuses our upstate watershed operations as well. We just marked the close of the 2012 boating season, where more permits than ever were issued for the enjoyment of New York City-owned reservoirs. Nearly 1,000 permits were issued—including more than 800 for the Neversink, Pepacton, and Schoharie Reservoirs that were opened to boating for the first time this year. We can all take pride in these remarkable numbers—thanks to the work of our staff across all bureaus, more people than ever are enjoying all that NYC Water has to offer.





## Focus on the Field

Twenty-five years ago, the City faced a serious problem in Staten Island. The area lacked adequate drainage, and the State had designated wide swaths of land as protected wetlands – essentially eliminating the installation of a modern sewer system. At the Department of City Planning, a young and enthusiastic **Dana Gumb, Jr.** was part of the team tackling this elusive problem. Their solution? Use the freshwater wetlands as natural drainage systems to store and filter stormwater.

In 1990, Gumb joined DEP to take this idea—called Bluebelts—from a planner’s dream to a working piece of the sewer system. Since then, he’s risen through the ranks to Chief of the Bluebelt Unit in the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations. He’s overseen every Bluebelt DEP has built—all 62 of them—and has brought both local and national fame to the Staten Island Bluebelts.

“In Staten Island communities are thrilled to hear that DEP is planning and building a Bluebelt because they preserve natural landmarks and community features in a way that is both beautiful and functional,” said Gumb. “It’s exciting to bring



people from Queens, the Bronx, and even other parts of Staten Island—who are skeptical about building a Bluebelt in their neighborhood— to see how a Bluebelt looks and functions within the streetscape.”

As DEP continues to expand the use of Bluebelts, Gumb most enjoys acquiring the land necessary to start a project. “Through the land acquisition process we are preserving the most environmentally vulnerable lands—those most susceptible to flooding and storm surge—and putting them to use to improve the City’s drainage,” he said. “Bluebelts have had phenomenal success in Staten Island, and it’s exciting to solve new challenges as we expand the program to the other boroughs.”

### 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Open House New York Weekend



This past Saturday, DEP employees participated in the 10th Annual Open House New York Weekend, providing tours of the Digester Eggs at the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. The hourly tours included a brief presentation by Plant Superintendent **Jim Pynn**, and a trip to the top of the eggs. Thanks to all the BWT and BCIA staff who helped make this one of the more popular tour destinations, including pictured above BCIA staff members **Shanaz Hussain**, **Kerry-Ann Gordon**, **Denise Hubbard**, and **Nicole Diunte**.

## Milestones

Congratulations to **Lilli Genovesi**, BCIA, and her husband **Darryl** on the birth of their daughter **Julie Ella Genovesi**. Mom and baby are doing great.

### (K-12 Students Prove Water Testing ‘Elementary’... continued)



scientific exploration of the Hudson River Estuary.

Four sampling stations were set up along the East River and the students examined the currents and took measurements of turbidity, pH, salinity, temperature, and dissolved oxygen. The High School students were paired with the fifth graders and taught them lessons about how to properly measure water quality. The students were supervised by classroom and science teachers from their schools and were assisted by DEP Intern **Michele Lapinel**. Lapinel, a student at Towson University, is studying for a degree in Environmental Science. DEP also supplied the water quality testing kits, equipment and worksheets for the event. The data collected by all 3,000 students will be analyzed and posted on DEC’s website.

Heading up the program for DEP was **Kim Estes-Fradis**, the Bureau of Communication and Inter-Governmental Affairs (BCIA) Deputy Director for Education and Outreach. “We have worked with P.S. 78 and Baruch College Campus High School over the last few years and it has been a

great partnership. The students receive hands on science lessons and get a chance to take their skills outside of the classroom and into the real world,” noted Estes-Fradis.

DEP’s Office of Education provides K-12 students and teachers with a wide range of free programs and resources about the city’s water supply, wastewater treatment plants and noise and air concerns. The Office runs programs out of the Visitor Center at Newtown Creek and provides tours of the Nature Walk. They assist teachers with curriculum development, students with research projects, run the Annual Water Resources Art and Poetry Contest and help coordinate education programs and tours of the watershed, amongst many other initiatives.

**Matt Mahoney**, BCIA’s Associate Commissioner noted that “(E)ducating young New Yorkers about the progress we have made in improving the quality of New York’s waterways is a terrific investment. It will help to create the stewards who will ensure that future generations can enjoy all the Hudson River Estuary has to offer.”

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