NYC Environmental Protection
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Carter Strickland, Commissioner

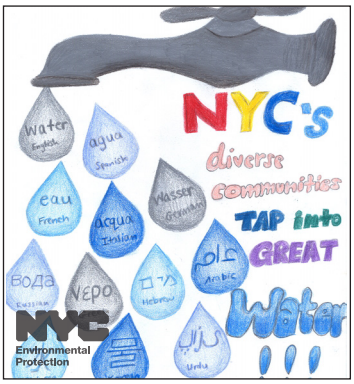
WEEKLY PIPELINE

May 21, 2013

Volume IV • Issue 176

Artists and Poets Grow in New York

Last week, **Commissioner Strickland** hosted an awards ceremony for the 27th Annual Water Resources Art and Poetry Contest at Manhattan Community College's Tribeca Performing Arts Center. More than 1,000 students (Grades 2-12) from New York City and Watershed communities were honored for creating more than 750 original artwork and poetry entries that reflect an appreciation for New York's water resources, wastewater treatment system, and the importance of water conservation. A group of judges selected 35 winners to be this year's Water Champions and each was presented with a certificate of recognition during the ceremony. In addition, **Mayor Bloomberg** issued a proclamation honoring all of the students who participated.



Spotlight on Safety

Bees, Wasps and Hornets

Bees, wasps, and hornets can be hazardous to outdoor workers and they are most abundant in the warmer months. Nests and hives may be found in trees, under roof eaves, or on equipment such as ladders. A sting or bite can cause mild discomfort, pain, and even have a lethal reaction for those workers allergic to the insect's venom. Anaphylactic shock is the body's severe allergic reaction to a bite or sting and requires immediate emergency care.

Workers should take the following steps to help prevent insect stings:

- Wear light-colored, smooth finished clothing that covers as much of the body as possible.
- Remain calm and still if a single stinging insect is flying around. (Swatting at it may cause it to sting.)
- If you are attacked by several stinging insects at once, proceed quickly to a safe area. (Bees release a chemical when they sting, which may attract other bees.)
- If a stinging insect gets inside your vehicle, stop the car slowly, and open all the windows.

As a reminder, according to DEP's Pesticide Management Policy employees shall not apply any pesticide while on the job unless it is being used for their own personal protection.

For more information please click here

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

In the six years since **Mayor Bloomberg** launched *PlaNYC*, the City has taken aggressive steps to reach one of its primary goals: reducing city-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2030. One of the key strategies is DEP's heating oil regulation, adopted in 2011, which phases out high sulfur heating oils, and lowers particulate and greenhouse gas emissions from buildings. This regulation alone could prevent some 200 deaths each year. Still, there is work to do. According to the New York City Community Air Survey, vehicle emissions are one of the leading contributors to harmful air contaminants in our most polluted neighborhoods. The New York City Health Department estimates that soot pollution alone caused more than 3,000 deaths, 2,000 hospital admissions for lung and heart conditions, and roughly 6,000 emergency room visits for asthma among children and adults in New York City annually from 2005-2007.

Reducing illegal vehicular idling is one of the *PlaNYC* air quality initiatives and, in recognition of Asthma Awareness Month, DEP has taken our "Stop Idling" campaign and stepped up enforcement initiatives to city schools and neighborhoods with high volumes of trucks and buses. On May 1, staff began sending informational letters and "Stop Idling" flyers to more than 1,400 Department of Education parent coordinators city-wide in an effort to reduce illegal idling in school zones. In addition, DEP air inspectors distributed literature to hundreds of parents, teachers and bus drivers at elementary schools in neighborhoods with high asthma rates as well as to drivers in areas of the city with a high volume of trucks and buses. And, beginning last week, inspectors were out in these same neighborhoods targeting enforcement of Local Law 5, which limits idling in school zones to one minute. Our goal is to have the cleanest air of any big city in the country and this campaign will help to remind New Yorkers that prolonged vehicle idling wastes gas and money, is harmful to human health and the environment, and is illegal in New York City.

While primarily meant to manage stormwater runoff, cleaner air is an added benefit that our Green Infrastructure Program is bringing to neighborhoods throughout the city. For any of you that work at Lefrak headquarters, or have had the occasion to be here during the last month, you probably noticed the on-going installation of numerous bioswales and greenstreets around the building. In addition to the recent completion of three Neighborhood Demonstration Areas, we are moving aggressively forward with area-wide contracts that will bring thousands of green infrastructure installations to priority combined sewer overflow (CSO) tributary areas. Construction has already begun in the Flushing Bay area (where Lefrak is located) and design is underway for the Bronx River, Gowanus Canal, Newtown Creek, and Jamaica Bay Priority CSO Tributary Areas. We also recently released the 2012 Green Infrastructure Annual Report, which can be viewed in its entirety. I encourage you all to take a walk around the building; the addition of the green infrastructure is managing stormwater and beautifying the neighborhood. As the trees mature, they will also provide shade and help clean the air

Focus on the Field

The two-year-long effort to protect bald eagles that nested alongside a DEP construction site in the Catskills met success this April when the nest produced two eaglets. The eaglets, now roughly 16 inches tall, are expected to take their first flight as early as July.

Their births were a special triumph for DEP watershed maintainer **Peg DiBenedetto**, who—along with her regular duties—was charged with monitoring the nest according to federal regulations after the eagles built their home alongside the Gilboa Dam in 2011. The bald eagles' arrival presented unique challenges—especially because a $400 million restoration of the Gilboa Dam had already begun. The eagles built their nest of tree limbs and hay along a construction road, just above a parking and staging area for heavy equipment.

Because bald eagles are protected by two federal acts, DEP attained a permit that allowed construction to continue. Restrictions were implemented within 330-foot and 660-foot perimeters of the nest. For instance, essential construction vehicles could drive through the perimeter, but they could not idle or work within the protected zone. DiBenedetto enforced the restrictions and monitored the nest year-round.

"One of the things I took to heart was that the permit restrictions were there for a reason—for the safety of the eagles," she said. "It's been really wonderful, from a wildlife perspective, that the construction workers have paid such careful attention to the eagles."

Hurricane Irene presented new challenges in 2011 when flood water destroyed swaths of the Catskills, including the access road at Gilboa Dam. DEP received special permission to rebuild the road the following year, and DiBenedetto watched the eagles steadily through a scope to ensure the increased activity did not put undue stress on them. The eagles built a second nest that April, but later abandoned it for the original nest. They produced two eggs this past winter and both hatched sometime around April 10.

The eagles now routinely perch on high branches around the worksite and swoop over the Schoharie Reservoir and Schoharie Creek, diving to catch fish and deliver them to the eaglets.

The success at Gilboa underscores an impressive comeback for bald eagles since the 1970s, when they were at the brink of extinction largely because of the effects of pesticides. Thanks to

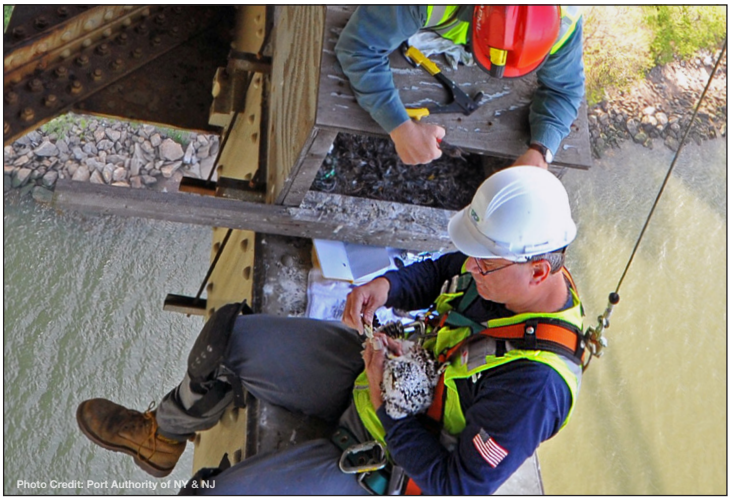
the efforts of wildlife enthusiasts like DiBenedetto, bald eagles have flourished along city-owned reservoirs. There are 29 documented bald eagle nest sites on city-owned property upstate, including 15 that are confirmed as active. During this past winter, wildlife experts counted 55 bald eagles living around the Cannonsville Reservoir alone.

Welcome Aboard

Last month, 11 new employees attended orientation with Deputy Commissioners **Steve Lawitts** and **Diana Jones Ritter** and Assistant Commissioner **Persis Luke**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Farag Eshak, Nicholas George, Gulnara Rakhmatullayeva, and **Veronica Wolak** with BWS; **John Castiglione, Neil Meyer,** and **Michael Pontisakos** with BWSO; **Natilia Climov, Muhammad Rahman,** and **Anna Reynus** with BWT; and **Maurice Blair** with BCS.

Press Box



This Job Is For The Birds!

Earlier today, DEP's **Chris Nadareski** tagged four baby peregrine falcons who recently hatched at the George Washington Bridge. Peregrine falcons were once an endangered species, but they are now thriving in the five boroughs. There are 16 falcon pairs nesting on New York's bridges and buildings, and each spring new falcon chicks hatch. The falcons started disappearing from the area in the 1950s and 1960s, the result of the introduction of pesticides that harmed their reproductive cycles. Since the 1970s, efforts have been made to bring the population back.

Click here to see the video from NY1

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