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

WEEKLY PIPELINE

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Where 'Wood' We Be Without These Pipes?

Starting in mid-November and for the next several months, anyone going between Lefrak's high-rise and low-rise buildings will be treated to a fascinating display of New York City history on the third floor: an exhibit of two wood pipes excavated from a lower Manhattan street. The exhibit describes the role wood pipes had in the 1800s in delivering drinking water to New York City residents and to the infrastructure necessary for the city's growth. One of the earliest methods to distribute water was using wood pipes made from logs. Yellow pine was cut into logs and an auger, a corkscrew-like drill, was used to bore through the center. The log water pipes on exhibit probably date back to 1820 when they were installed by the Manhattan Company. Fast forward to August 2006 when during water main replacement work, the two logs on display were discovered and unearthed at Beekman Street between Water and Pearl Streets.

Finding wood water mains was not a surprise, but their condition was. Found during routine utility upgrades, the logs were still connected to each other and in sound condition, despite their age. They had been taken out of commission years before but not removed from the ground. Upon their discovery, the city's lead agency in the construction project, the Department of Design and Construction, consulted with the Landmarks Preservation Commission as to how they should proceed, and archaeologi-

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Spotlight on Safety

OEHS NOV Tracking System: Improving Management Efficiency

Federal, state, and city regulatory agencies routinely issue Notices of Violation (NOV), sometimes referred to as Violation Orders or Notice of Non-Compliance, whenever there is a failure to adhere to the laws that protect health, safety and a clean environment. The US Environmental Protection Agency, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, state and city Departments of Health, NYC Police and Fire Departments—and other agencies—may issue NOVs related to environmental, air, water, hazardous waste, and construction and general safety. Usually NOVs are a result of an inspection, but they may also result from self-reported regulatory conditions (a bypass or other incident).

Since May 2011, the Office of Environmental, Health and Safety (OEHS) has implemented the NOV Tracking System, which tracks all formal NOVs as well as self-reported non-compliance events. The system allows DEP to track trends and remediation progress by bureaus, divisions or facilities—improving the ability to monitor improvements and accountability. OEHS monitors the system data on a monthly basis and quarterly reports and EHS metrics are provided to senior staff and the commissioner for review.

For more information on this system, contact Victor Nyarko, Director of EHS Compliance Systems (OEHS). To read the full article, 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

Because our entire 2,000 square mile watershed is outside of New York City, our agency has unique, long-standing relationships with upstate communities, which are home to most of our water supply employees and infrastructure. Last week, I spent the day in Wawarsing and then Kingston to meet representatives from those communities and to hear their concerns.

Wawarsing is a town in Ulster County that sits above our Delaware Aqueduct. The 85-mile aqueduct, which was completed in 1944 and conveys more than half of the city's daily drinking water, has a leak underneath Wawarsing as well as Roseton. The leak does not immediately compromise the city's ability to supply enough water but has contributed, in some cases, to flooding issues in Wawarsing. Our Water for the Future program will address the two leaking areas over the next decade, but many homeowners seek immediate relief for flooding. To personally assess the impacts, I met with local residents at the Wawarsing Project Advisory Committee and then toured the homes of five residents who have underground seepage issues. The city has recently proposed contributing $3.7 million to match a new state-funded program to buy out homes in designated areas. We also await a U.S. Geological Survey study, due out in a few weeks, which will further clarify the city's responsibility in the area before we proceed with any additional assistance. I would like to thank Wawarsing Town Supervisor **Lenny Distel** and Assembly Member **Kevin Cahill** for accompanying me on the tour.

Then, we travelled to Kingston to meet with County Executive **Mike Hein,** Assembly Member **Peter Lopez,** DEC Commissioner **Joseph Martens,** and representatives from the offices of other elected officials to further discuss Wawarsing and other issues like the Ashokan Release Channel. The release channel is a concrete canal used to release water in a controlled manner from the Ashokan Reservoir to the lower Esopus Creek. For the first time, under a draft protocol worked out with DEC, we are using the channel to maintain 10% voids in the reservoir throughout much of the year in order to help reduce flooding in the event that it rains—a request we have heard repeatedly from the community but that is only now possible due to our better ability to predict storage levels in the reservoirs. While this released water can be turbid following major storms and other events, to not use the release channel would increase the risk of flooding in downstream communities if another storm were to occur when the reservoir was full.

In personnel news, I am pleased to announce that we have promoted **Angela Licata** to the position of Deputy Commissioner for Sustainability after a nationwide search that attracted more than 150 applicants. The position, which I held before becoming Commissioner, was initially created in 2010 to better coordinate our environmental policies through a more unified structure that incorporated several DEP bureaus—Environmental Compliance; Environmental Planning and Analysis; and the Office of Green Infrastructure once it was conceived later that year—under one deputy commissioner. Angela has been with the agency since 1988, and, as all colleagues who have previously worked with her can attest, has a wide and deep range of expertise on a number of environmental issues. We have also selected **Sean McAndrew** to be the Director of the Water for the Future program. Repairing leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct and finding sufficient supplemental water sources to offset the lost supply while it is being repaired is our top capital priority over the next decade, and Sean's 20 years of civil engineering experience, including 15 years at BEDC, make him the right choice to lead this essential program. Congrats to both of them on their new assignments.

Focus on the Field

DEP has many facilities around the city and upstate, which provide services to nine million New Yorkers. Each of these facilities requires logistics and coordination to make sure they provide a safe and a comfortable work space for all DEP employees. At the helm of that task is **Sue Dennis,** Director of Facilities Management and Construction (FMC). In her daily routine, Sue faces many challenges to make sure all DEP departments operate smoothly so everyone can perform at the highest level.

Her job requires multitasking at all times. As the head of FMC, Sue is in charge of the asbestos task force, administrative services, construction services, records and archives management, real estate management and facility EHS. That means reviewing and signing new leases, finding office space to relocate employees, and dealing with construction issues to make sure that all DEP facilities are up to compliance. "If it's hot, if it's cold, if it's a printing or a painting job, people call me all the time to ask for many different things," she says. As always, Sue and her team are ready to respond at all times. "We have people who are great problem solvers and they do it with professionalism and courtesy."

Sue said the best part of her job is handling the constantly changing challenges, and keeping ahead of them through open communication channels with the nearly 6,000 DEP employees. For her, FMC is at the nexus of so many areas that affect where people work. "They all require listening and evaluating the needs of an employee and then effectively communicating and responding," she says.

Sue has been part of the DEP family since 2008. She was formerly CEO and Executive Director of the Interchurch Center, the largest non-profit building in the world, which is located in Manhattan. Besides her daily challenges at work, Sue regularly pursues many different interests. Sue loves traveling and cooking Italian food. An avid reader, she is currently engaged in a mystery novel, a book about legends and another about mechanical assembly.

OpXtra

Hats off to Process Engineer **Debra Iachetta** of BWT who submitted the very first OpX proposal to be formally evaluated. On one of the OpX site visits to the Coney Island Wastewater Treatment Plant, Debra noted that the blowers that supply oxygen to the wastewater treatment process run at the same level regardless of the time of day or how much wastewater is entering the facility. Oxygen is added through blowers to help digest suspended material that neither sinks nor floats during primary treatment. Much like bacteria breaks down food during digestion in a human body, in this process good bacteria consume the waste in an oxygen-rich environment before they get heavy and settle out themselves. Supplying too much oxygen when it isn't needed provides no environmental benefit, and yet it does cost a lot through wasted energy. Instead, we will evaluate the possibility of correlating actual oxygen requirements with fluctuations in demand based on the time of day. If it works, this step is potentially replicable at all 14 treatment plants and the energy savings could be significant without any impact on water quality standards or labor.

Blower at the Newtown Creek plant

Aeration tanks at the Wards Island plant

(Where 'Wood' We Be Without These Pipes?... continued)

cal consultants were called in to oversee the rest of the excavation. Excavation in the area of the exposed wood water pipe continued with caution. The construction crew dug the area surrounding the entire length of the log before attempting to remove it.

Once it was fully exposed, the pipe was carefully lifted out, wherein the second log was found connected to the first. Both were part of a longer section of pipe composed of interlocking pieces. The two logs each measured approximately 14 feet in length with an average width of 9.5 inches and a hollowed-out core of six inches. One log had a conically shaped end that fit into the hollowed-out end of the other log and an iron collar that bound the two together. The pipes would then begin their journey to upper Manhattan.

DEP staffers **Steve Askew** and **John McCabe** from the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment were very helpful in arranging for the pipes to be removed and stored at the North River Wastewater Treatment Plant for safekeeping, where they were kept from 2006 to 2011.

In early 2011 **Sue Dennis,** Director of Facilities, Management and Construction Services (FMC), began to prepare the pipes for exhibition. The FMC team included mechanics, carpenters and archival staff. FMC staff, including **Albert Colon, Thomas Murphy, Armondo Cerbone, Giuseppe La Russa** and **Vincent Pulsonetti** transported the valuable relics to Maspeth,

Queens. Professional conservator services stabilized the logs to avoid deterioration and specially treated them as part their restoration for future use. The next step involved designing and building "cradles" for the precious cargo. Conservators reviewed and approved the DEP-designed cradles that were then built by DEP carpenters **Larry Del Grosso, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Bill Garneau, Michael Neal, John Sikula, Howard Spina, Joseph Trimarco,** and **Stephen Vaughan.** The cradles were painted by **Alex Monioudis, Constantine Anton,** and **Sergey Shmulevich.**

Athena Danalakis, Karen Murphy, and **Samar Qandil** from the agency's Archives staff prepared the descriptive panels with background information describing the wooden mains. **Al Jabbar** from BCIA prepared the exhibit panels. The wooden pipes will be featured as part of a travelling exhibit to other DEP locations, including Kingston and Valhalla, to highlight the pipes that serve as reminders of the precious liquid that helped fuel the city's growth into the premier city that it is today.

DEP Blood Drive: Lefrak, 6th floor training room: 12/6-12/8, 7:45am to 1:30pm; Sutton Park, 2nd floor: 12/15, 8:30am to 2:30pm; Downsville Fire Department: 12/21, 9:00am to 2:00pm; Kingston, 51 Albany Avenue: 12/8, 1:00pm to 6:00pm; Grahamsville Parking Lot: 12/29, 10am to 3pm. Please click here to see the email from the Commissioner, and here for the list of blood captains.

DEP Holiday Toy Drive: Please take part in DEP's Holiday Toy Drive by donating new and unwrapped toys, sports equipment or accessories for young people from tots to teens. Please click on the links for in-city and watershed coordinators and donation locations. Final day for collections is December 12. If you have any questions, please contact your bureau coordinators. Thank you.

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