

## Meet DEP's First Responders for Concerns



**D**id you know that DEP has an office of Community Partnerships? The unit, which is led by Director **Debra Pucci**, is charged with many tasks—but has two core functions: constituent services and oversight of various local advisory committees. In 2010, Community Partnerships staff attended more than 650 meetings hosted by elected officials, community boards, and various civic and community based organizations.

Community Partnerships staff are often the “first responders” to constituent concerns on behalf of community boards, elected officials, civic groups and citizens who may be experiencing service issues with DEP’s infrastructure or have other questions about work DEP is doing. It’s rarely routine—the staff responds to calls on sewer backups, knocked down and leaking hydrants, odors, flooding, the DEP permit process, water bills and follow through on

(Continued on reverse side)

## Spotlight on Safety

### Snow and Ice Removal Clear out safely

This winter has brought a record amount of snow and ice to our area. Removing these treacherous elements from vehicles, steps, walkways, driveways, and roadways is crucial to getting around safely. The very removal of snow and ice itself can be hazardous. Here are some tips to stay safe.

Potential hazards and precautions:

- Back injuries – Use proper lifting techniques (bend your knees rather than your back).
- Cold - Wear warm clothing and avoid long scarves that can get caught in power equipment.
- Equipment hazards – Understand how to use all equipment

before you turn it on and inspect it prior to use per the manufacturer’s instructions. If you no longer have the operating and safety manual for your piece of equipment, it can usually be located online.

If you use a snow blower:


- Clear the area of debris.
- Direct snow away from people and vehicles.
- Follow manufacturer’s specifications and instructions.

If you use a snow plow:


- Watch out for vehicles and pedestrians.
- Maintain good steering control.
- Approach snow piles at a safe speed.

For the full article, please click here 

## Commissioner’s Corner

In a bustling city like ours, improving the air we breathe can seem like a daunting task; but it is a challenge that DEP takes very seriously—especially because the City’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has confirmed that air pollutants, like fine particles, nickel, nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide, can cause serious health impacts . One of the biggest local sources of fine particulate matter is heating fuel, which spews more soot into the city’s air each year than all cars and trucks combined.



Last week, DEP proposed new heating oil regulations that will phase out the dirtiest grades of home heating oils—known as residual oil Nos. 4 and 6—which are still used in about 10,000 of the roughly one million buildings in the city. By phasing out No. 6 by 2015 and No. 4 by 2030, we will cut fine particle emissions from heating fuel by at least 63%, and dramatically improve public health. These rules were developed over two years by a dedicated team of experts from DEP, the Mayor’s Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability (OLTPS), and the Health Department that included: **Carter Strickland**, **Michael Gilsenan**, **Gerry Kelpin**, **Alyssa Preston**, **Chung Chan**, **Russ Pecunies** from DEP; **David Bragdon**, **Adam Freed**, **Steve Caputo**, **Jared Katseff** from OLTPS; and **Daniel Kass**, **Nancy Clark** and **Kizzy Charles-Guzman** from the Health Department. This tremendous effort included extensive dialogue with environmental, real estate and fuel-industry stakeholders, along with other City agencies. The Health Department estimates that once enacted the regulations could prevent 200 deaths, 100 hospitalizations, and 300 emergency room visits for diseases caused by air pollution each year. **Mayor Bloomberg** summed up the benefits best: “this helps our *PlaNYC* effort to fight asthma, prolong lives, lengthen lifespans and improve quality-of-life.” Read some coverage of the news here  and watch a video of it here . Special thanks to Health Commissioner **Dr. Tom Farley**, who has long made improving air quality a top priority.

I gave a brief sneak preview of DEP’s forthcoming Strategic Plan, and Deputy Commissioner for Sustainability **Carter Strickland** participated in a green infrastructure panel and talked about our plan to control runoff from 10% of the impervious surfaces in combined sewer drainage areas of New York City through green infrastructure investments in order to reduce combined sewer overflows. The plan is moving full steam ahead. Last week we held the first meeting of the new Green Infrastructure Citizen’s Group, a forum for neighborhood participation in shaping and implementing the city’s green infrastructure program. To get communities involved, we announced \$3 million in community-based grants for local projects that can help reduce stormwater runoff before it enters our sewer system. State Department of Environmental Conservation Acting Commissioner **Joe Martens** applauded the new program: “Green infrastructure is an innovative approach to reducing significant amounts of pathogens and contaminants that are contained in stormwater runoff and associated combined sewer overflows ...we applaud New York City’s plans to enhance water quality through direct support for this community-driven environmental protection effort.”

Finally, some good news on a topic I wrote about three weeks ago: turbidity in the lower Esopus Creek. On January 28, modeling indicated that the waste channel no longer needed to be active to help reduce turbidity, so DEP released 1.5 billion gallons of clear water through the channel to flush it out—and the effects have been remarkable. The entire lower Esopus is now running clear, and the levels of turbidity and suspended solids have dropped back down to normal ranges.

Yesterday, I spoke at the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the New York Water Environment Association, a not-for-profit New York organization that promotes sustainable clean water man-

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. 



In a water and wastewater system of 6,600 miles of water mains and 7,400 miles of sewers (some of which date back more than a century), infrastructure sometimes needs repairs. And sometimes the hustle and bustle of New York City means that our neighbors make more noise than they should or a boiler emits more exhaust than is healthy for the surrounding community. This is where Deputy Director of Community Partnerships **Effie Ardizzone** excels. A member of the Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs team, Effie makes sure that the needs and concerns of every community—ranging from water main and sewer main breaks to flooding to noise complaints—are heard and addressed. She also meets proactively with communities to talk about upcoming DEP projects and how

construction and the end result will affect the neighborhood.

Effie defines resolution as being able to fix what's wrong, often by contacting the best person or group at DEP to handle a situation. But even in complicated situations or long-term projects where permanent solutions are elusive, she makes sure that DEP and partner city agencies do what they can, when they can. "We check all options because it is important to be able to offer people concrete information," she says. To do this, she works regularly with the Department of Transportation, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Sanitation, and other agencies and participates in standing inter-agency taskforces that strategically align each agency's work so that it is as efficient and cohesive possible.

Effie has worked at DEP for six and half years but brings her experience from working for a State Senator each time she meets with a community group or elected official. "I understand what an elected official is looking for on behalf of a constituent," she says, "You don't just send an email without a follow-up. This job takes passion and patience."

In her free time, Effie enjoys swimming and reading.

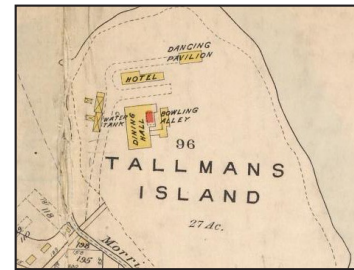
## Beyond New York



San Francisco has introduced its own version of a Water-On-the-Go fountain. The seven metal boxes, which are called "refilling stations," are located at various sites around the city. The design of the refilling stations will make it easier to refill a reusable water bottle. The tagline for the project: "Don't fall into the plastic water bottle trap. Drink tap!" To read more about this initiative, [click here](#).

Q. While it is true that the Bronx is the only borough in New York City that is not on an island, when these three wastewater treatment plants (Coney Island, Wards Island, and Tallman Island) were built was it on actual islands with those names? Perhaps they were never islands, or they were landfilled by then.

A. All three were once islands. In fact, Wards Island, which is under the RFK Bridge, is still an island, though it is now connected with Randalls Island. Tallman's Island was separated from College Point by Morris Creek, as shown in the adjacent 1909 map. The creek was later filled in and the treatment plant, named Tallman Island, was constructed in 1939. At around the same time, sections of Coney Island Creek, which separated Coney Island from the mainland, were being filled in so that the beaches could be accessed by drivers on the new Belt Parkway, thus connecting Coney Island to Sheepshead Bay. While our treatment plant is named Coney Island, it actually isn't located there, but rather on Knapp Street in Sheepshead Bay. It got its name from a rudimentary 1890s treatment facility that was on Coney Island.



### (Meet DEP's First Responders for Concerns... continued)

major capital improvement—there are myriad issues that reach their desk every day. **Denise Hubbard**, the unit's Brooklyn representative agrees, "Our work is never boring. We can be researching a service request one minute, and then we can be knocking on doors to let folks know about a water main break like the one that occurred last year on Kings Highway."



Navigating these issues often involves many steps, requiring staff to liaison on behalf of the complainant with DEP's bureaus and sister agencies. Resolving a complaint requires site visits with DEP field staff, initiating dialogue with relevant government agencies and coordinating meetings with the affected boards, community, and elected officials. Each Community Partnerships staff member is assigned to a specific borough, allowing for uniformity, fluency on issues and a point of contact for stakeholders.

This unit also works on large capital projects that may have impacts on the community. The Newtown Creek and Hunts Point Monitoring committees, both longstanding groups, were convened as a result of a DEP facility upgrade. These advisory committees provide recommendations about activities associated with the treatment plant upgrade in order to mitigate potential impacts to the surrounding communities. The committees comprise volunteers and have represented an

example of a strong partnership between government and citizens that has exceeded expectations in providing a template for future alliances with the community.

The Office of Community Partnerships also works with other bureaus at DEP on a variety of projects, like the recent formation of a new citizens group on the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan headed up by the Bureau of Environmental Planning and Analysis. The plan sets forth recommendations to reduce combined sewer overflows. The Green Infrastructure Citizens Group will be convened to provide citywide public input on the implementation of the plan. The group will be headed by a steering committee and will serve in an advisory role. DEP is confident its experience with government and community partnerships will provide the parameters for rich dialogue and contributions that will assist with influencing the pathway for a greener and sustainable future for all New Yorkers.

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



### NYC Simplicity Idea Market

Have you visited the NYC Simplicity Idea Market yet? More than 1,400 people from eight City agencies are already participating on the Idea Market and 182 ideas have been submitted! If you don't have an idea of your own to send in yet, you can still visit the website [and](#) review some of the ideas already submitted, vote for the ones you like, or give comments. Please remember to look on the back of your employee ID badge for your employee ID number to create an account on Idea Market.