

Should You Flush That Wipe?



MATT BERARDI
SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKER

Click on the photo to see Chris Hayes with MSNBC investigate the booming industry of personal care wipes and what all those wipes are doing to America's sewage system.

Spotlight on Safety

Stay Safe – Don't Get Distracted

Did you know that car crashes are the number one cause of unintentional deaths in the U.S. and it's estimated that about a quarter of crashes each year involve cell phones – including hands-free devices? Coincidentally, vehicular collisions have been identified as the leading cause of employee on-the-job fatalities.

In New York State, it is illegal to talk on a hand-held cellphone or text while driving. However, a hands-free device is not risk-free either, as drivers can miss seeing 50 percent of what's around them. As April is "Distracted Driving Awareness Month," help one another to break the distracted

driving habit and "pledge to drive cell free." Employees in a vehicle with a distracted driver also have the responsibility to speak up and encourage co-workers to put down the cell phones.

To combat the threat of distracted driving:

- do not talk on a cellphone while driving
- do not text and drive
- keep the phone out of sight to avoid temptation

To learn more about the fight against distracted driving, visit the [National Safety Council](#) and the [U.S. DOT](#).

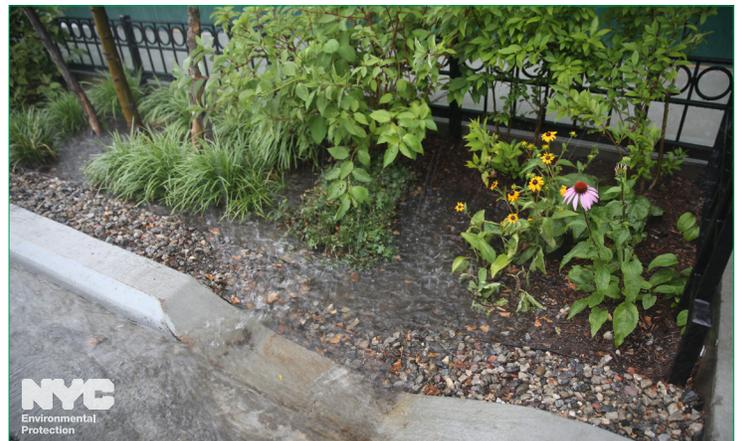
Commissioner's Corner

With the arrival of spring and warmer temperatures, DEP's construction work is heating up as well. Within the next two weeks crews will begin to build approximately 90 bioswales throughout the Gowanus Canal watershed, including the neighborhoods of Boerum Hill, Carroll Gardens, Park Slope and Prospect Heights. When construction is completed later in the summer, the bioswales will have the capacity to absorb nearly 170,000 gallons of stormwater each time it rains. Modeling shows that they will capture approximately 8 million gallons of stormwater every year, keeping it out of the sewer system and helping to reduce combined sewer overflows into the Gowanus Canal.

We have spent the last few years laying the foundation for a dramatic expansion of green infrastructure in New York City and in a [report](#) issued last month, we detailed the performance of three green infrastructure demonstration areas located in the neighborhoods of Bushwick, East New York and Edenwald. These neighborhoods were chosen because the sewers drain to a single pipe where flow meters were installed to measure the amount of stormwater both before, and after, construction of the green infrastructure. Within these defined areas DEP built 70 bioswales along with on-site green infrastructure at the New York

City Housing Authority's Hope Gardens Houses in Bushwick and the Seth Low Houses in East New York. The monitoring shows that the green infrastructure was able to reduce the amount of runoff entering the sewers by more than 20 percent. Across the three demonstration areas, the green infrastructure managed the first inch of stormwater that fell on over 14 percent of the impervious area, which surpassed the goal of capturing the first inch that fell on 10 percent of the impervious area.

In addition to the work in Gowanus, construction of bioswales and stormwater green streets is getting underway in the Hutchinson River, Jamaica Bay, Newtown Creek, Flushing Bay and Bronx River watersheds. In combination with our significant investments in grey infrastructure upgrades, such as the \$210 million rehabilitation of the Avenue V Pumping Station and the \$190 million work on the Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel and Pumping Station, we hope to see continued improvements to harbor water quality. The addition of green infrastructure also brings significant ancillary benefits to neighborhoods, including a greener streetscape and cooler temperatures in the summer. To take a look at the step-by-step construction process of a bioswale and to see a map of the Gowanus area bioswale locations, go [here](#).



Focus on the Field



Anecdotal signs abound, including the increasingly common sightings of whales, seals and other wildlife in New York Harbor. The fact that local waterways are becoming cleaner and healthier is also confirmed by DEP's regular water quality sampling. With more than 12 years of service under his belt, the Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction's (BEDC) **Stanley Joseph**, an Accountable Manager in the bureau's Wastewater Capital Program, takes great pride in the role he and his colleagues have played in protecting New York City's environment.

Joseph was born in India and came to the United States with his family when he was three years old. They settled in Jackson Heights and Joseph attended St. Francis Prep High School in Fresh Meadows. After graduating from Manhattan College with a degree in chemical engineering, Joseph worked for a manufacturing company in New Jersey which focused on plating chemistry. He worked there for six years and served as a plant engineer where he was exposed to many aspects of engineering practices which continue to inform his work at DEP today.

In 2003 Joseph joined DEP as an associate project manager with BEDC and contributed to several critical wastewater capital projects including the construction of the Paerdegat Basin Combined Sewer Overflow

facility and the rehabilitation of the historic Avenue V Pumping Station in Gravesend. Since 2004 he was also working on the design for the upgrades to the Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel and Pumping Station and he became the accountable manager for the project in 2013.

The roughly five-year, \$190 million project included draining the 1.2 mile long, 12-foot diameter tunnel and repairing its brick lined interior. Three new submersible turbine pumps were also installed to bring up to 252 million gallons of fresher water to the head of the Canal each day from Buttermilk Channel. In addition, the capacity of the adjacent wastewater pumping station was enhanced and a litter control device has been installed at an outfall at the head of the Canal. Combined with the imminent construction of green infrastructure and the high-level storm sewers coming to 3rd Avenue, the upgrades to the Gowanus facilities are expected to dramatically improve the health of the Canal. Based at the Gowanus facility, Joseph interacts with members of the community on a regular basis and he reports that he often hears how much cleaner the Canal has become in just the last year.

"The Gowanus Canal is very important to the communities that surround it and we have made it a priority to regularly engage with residents and keep them up to date on our work," said

(Focus on the Field... continued)

Joseph. "By keeping open lines of communication we have formed a strong partnership that has really contributed to the success of the project."

"Managing major civil construction projects in New York City requires immense coordination and the ability to resolve issues quickly," said BEDC Portfolio Manager **Kevin Clarke**. "Lucky for us at DEP these are two of Stanley's many strengths and he has

leveraged them to complete the Gowanus project ahead of our Consent Order milestones.

Joseph now resides on Long Island with his wife and three children, ages 12, 9 and 6. Spring is softball season in the Joseph household and he may end up coaching three different teams. The entire family also enjoys cheering on the Yankees and the Dallas Cowboys, a nod to his wife's Texas roots.

Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 13 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from First Deputy Commissioner **Steve Lawitts**, Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter** and Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Joseph Aryee, **Saba Jote** and **Ahasanur Rahman** (not pictured) with BEDC; **Abraham Mingo Bellony**, **Roberto J. Morales** and **Dhruvil A. Patel** with BWSO; **Sergiy Bulbakh** and **Wendy J. Samuel** with BWT; **Kazi M. Huq** and **Debra J. Knappenberger** with BWS; **Melissa L. Enoch** with the Commissioner's Office; **Andreas Ruiz de la Pena** with Sustainability; and **Yashpal Singh** with BCS.

Volunteer Opportunity

New York City is taking a historic step by providing free, full-day, high-quality pre-K to all 4-year-olds and your help is needed to ensure that it's truly a universal program. All are invited to join the Pre-K for All Outreach Team which includes a two hour shift during which you will help guide families through the application process. A Day of Action will be held in all 5 boroughs on Saturday, April 18th from 10am to 4pm. Can you help? [Click here](#) to learn more and to sign up.

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