

“Knee”ly Good Idea!



John Bil, Chief Inspector for DEP’s Bureau of Customer Services, wrote to the Employee Suggestion Program with an idea to provide kneeling pads for Water Use Inspectors as a protection against potential injuries. Inspectors repeatedly kneel on hard surfaces every day, which over time could cause an injury to the knees, and the suggestion has led to the distribution of 150 kneeling pads. Pictured here is Inspector **Kam Lau** using one of the kneeling pads while checking on an Automated Meter Reader in Brooklyn.

You can view your colleagues’ ideas that have been implemented through the Employee Suggestion Program. Visit <http://suggestions> and click on “Suggestions and Responses” to view commonly answered suggestions!

Commissioner’s Corner



Earlier today, DEP made an announcement to encourage community groups, non-profits, and property owners to apply for new funding that is available for green projects through the 2015 Green Infrastructure Grant Program. DEP is engaged in a city-wide effort to soften the impervious urban landscape and help absorb rainwater that would otherwise drain into the combined sewer system and contribute to combined sewer overflows into local waterways. The Green Infrastructure Grant Program provides funding for stormwater management projects, also called green infrastructure, such as rain gardens, permeable pavements, and green roofs on private property. Since 2011 DEP has committed more than \$13 million to fund 33 different projects with private property owners, who have contributed nearly \$6 million in matching funds. More information and the application can be found on the [DEP website](#).

All private property owners served by combined sewers in New York City are eligible to apply for a green infrastructure grant. Grant funding is provided for the design and construction of projects that will reduce or manage a minimum of one inch of stormwater that falls on the selected properties. If selected, DEP will reimburse up to 100 percent of the design and construction costs for the green infrastructure project. Preference will be given to projects that are located in [priority watersheds](#), are cost-effective, provide matching

funds or other contributions, and include ancillary environmental and community benefits such as increased shade, decreased energy use for cooling buildings, increased awareness about stormwater management, and green jobs development. DEP will also accept requests from developers, professional applicants, project teams or other organizations representing real estate, institutions, businesses, or other large groups.

Notable projects that have completed construction include a 43,400 square foot green roof at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, one of the nation’s first blue/green roof combinations at The Osborne Association in the Bronx, a green roof at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House in Manhattan, permeable pavers and rain gardens at Queens College, a New York Restoration Project community garden in Brooklyn’s Gowanus neighborhood, and a green roof at Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School in Brooklyn.

DEP will host quarterly workshops at the Municipal Building at 1 Centre Street in Manhattan to explain the eligibility requirements and the application process. The first workshop will be held on July 8th, 2015 at 3pm in Room 1019. Dates and times of future workshops will be available at nyc.gov/greeninfrastructure.

For more information, [click here](#). In addition, photos of completed projects are available on [DEP’s Flickr Page](#).

Spotlight on Safety

National Safety Month

In the United States, nearly 4 million people suffer workplace injuries each year and in 2013 there were over 4,500 fatalities on the job. Each year, the National Safety Council recognizes June as “National Safety Month (NSM),” to raise awareness of what it takes to stay safe and focus on reducing leading causes of injury and death at work. The theme for 2015 is “What I Live For”—inspired by the idea that

everyone has something they live to see or experience.

Each week during NSM, *Spotlight on Safety* will bring attention to a critical safety issue; this year’s topics include transportation safety, ergonomics, emergency preparedness and slips, trips and falls.

To learn more about National Safety Month, visit the [National Safety Council](#).

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.

29 Years of Art and Poetry



Last week, DEP hosted an awards ceremony for participants in the 29th Annual *Water Resources Art and Poetry Contest*. 1,350 students (grades 2-12) from New York City and Watershed communities were honored for creating more than 1,400 original pieces of artwork and poetry that reflect an appreciation for New York's water resources, wastewater treatment systems, and the importance of water conservation. This year's competition marks an all-time record for student participation and for the first time social media was used to help judges review submissions. In addition, through the art and poetry submitted, students raised the awareness about the importance of maintaining New York City's water supply and wastewater infrastructure. The ceremony included remarks from Reggie Harris, Poets in the Branches Coordinator at the Poets House and was held at Manhattan Community College's Tribeca Performing Arts Center.



Students from 75 schools participated in this year's *Water Resources Art and Poetry Contest* and participants were honored as DEP Water Ambassadors and received a certificate recognizing their contribution. In addition, from the more than 1,400 submissions, a group of judges selected 60 students as this year's Water Champions.

DEP's *Water Resources Art and Poetry* program raises awareness about the importance of clean, high-quality drinking water, and what it takes to maintain New York City's water supply and wastewater treatment systems. The ceremony recognized the students' creative expression of four central themes:

- **Water—A Precious Resource:** To highlight the importance of the quality of our tap and harbor water.
- **The New York City Water Supply System:** To look at the history of the city's drinking water system.
- **The New York City Wastewater Treatment System:** To examine how the City treats more than 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater every day.
- **Climate Change and Water Stewardship: What Can I do to Help?** To bring attention to the value of water and how we can help to protect our environment.

Where Tap Water Begets Wilderness



"Before New York and Boston were baseball competitors, they shared a certain wisdom about the design of their drinking water supplies. Both receive their water, largely unfiltered and un-pumped, from protected watersheds in the hills... Today, the New York watershed protects 1972 square miles of land and the Boston watershed protects another 156 square miles—a combined landmass considerably larger than Yosemite National Park..."

"New York City, particularly, is famous for having developed a progressive compensation for ecosystem services program. That is, programs which principally use economic incentives to encourage land-conservation and watershed

protection by landowners. The ecosystem service sought is the clean water..."

"As the world's population spikes, and more people migrate to urban areas—190,000 a day worldwide—cities have to grapple with their uncomfortable dependence on rural areas for water. Smart water utilities, like those in New York and Boston embrace the human communities that, with the proper incentives, exploit and steward ecosystems sustainably. It's a kind of urban planning that is wisely preparing for climate change and bringing benefits to urban and rural regions alike."

Read the entire article posted on the [National Geographic website](#).

Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 13 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from First Deputy Commissioner **Steve Lawitts** and Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources **Zoe Ann Campbell**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Briskella Garas, Robert Negrón, Robert Ricsin, Jacob Rodriguez, Anthony Williams and Timothy Welsh with BWT; **Thewodros G. Mamo and Manuel Quintela** with Sustainability; **Sarah Acheson** with Archives; **Rachel A. Blackhurst** with BEDC; **Gregory Chernomaz** with BCS; **Shelton A. Minott** with BWSO; and **Craig S. Porges** with BLA.

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