

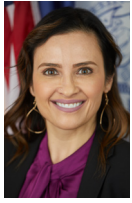
Weekly Pipeline

Mayor Mamdani hosted a group of international mayors on a tour of the new digesters at the **Hunt's Point Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility**.

September 23, 2026



Guest Commissioner's Corner



Beth DeFalco

I am thrilled to share that DEP has appointed three new Borough Commissioners to serve as chief liaisons for community members, stakeholders and elected officials in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. **Taya Mueller** has been hired as Brooklyn Borough Commissioner, **Antonio J. Whitaker** will serve as Queens Borough Commissioner, and **Jennifer Sammartino-Mallen** will serve as Staten Island Borough Commissioner. Taya, Antonio, and Jennifer join Manhattan Borough Commissioner **Martin 'Marty' Fatooh**, and Bronx Borough Commissioner **Eleftheria 'Effie' Ardizzzone** to complete our Borough Commissioner team.

This is a very exciting moment for the Bureau of Public Affairs and Communications (BPAC) and the agency, as we've worked hard to create and fill these roles with such talented professionals. We created these positions because we knew how important it was to

have a strong, dedicated point person in each borough who knows the communities, understands the issues and can make sure DEP is showing up and being responsive.

We constantly receive positive feedback from elected officials, business owners, and residents who value having a dedicated DEP representative for their borough. Borough Commissioners also work closely with community boards, neighborhood associations, environmental stakeholders, sports groups, and cultural organizations to address local concerns. They also coordinate with city, state, and federal agencies to deliver services while advancing key initiatives such as flood-control projects, monitoring air and noise issues, and assisting property owners and DEP customers.

Here is a little bit more about our newest additions:

- **Taya Mueller** — Taya has 27 years of leadership and consulting experience across nonprofit, private, and public sectors. From 2020–2026, she served as District Man-
- **Antonio Whitaker** — Antonio is a 20-year civil service veteran and lifelong New Yorker, born in the Bronx and raised in Queens. He most recently served as Assistant Director for the Bureau of Public Affairs at the NYC Department of Sanitation, and previously held senior roles at the Department of Finance, Department of Education, and City Council. He holds a Master's in Public Administration from NYU's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service.
- **Jennifer Sammartino-Mallen** — Jennifer is a lifelong Staten Islander with more than 20 years of experience in communications, stakeholder engagement, and pub-

lic affairs. She most recently served as Executive Director of Community Media of Staten Island, and previously held senior roles with the Staten Island Borough President's Office, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and Richmond University Medical Center. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from the College of Staten Island.

Please join me in welcoming Taya, Antonio, and Jennifer to DEP!



Staten Island Borough Commissioner Jennifer Sammartino-Mallen



Brooklyn Borough Commissioner Taya Mueller



Queens Borough Commissioner Antonio Whitaker



Manhattan Borough Commissioner Marty Fatooh



Bronx Borough Commissioner Effie Ardizzzone

In the News



As Climate Week gets underway, **Commissioner Garcia** stopped by NY1 yesterday for a conversation with “Mornings on 1” anchors **Jamie Stetler** and **Alyssa Paolicelli** to highlight how DEP is tackling climate change, in-

tense rainfall, and flash flooding. She discussed infrastructure upgrades, nature-based solutions, DEP’s flood preparedness town halls, and steps New Yorkers can take to protect their homes. [Read or watch more.](#)

Planting at Nature Walk



DEP recently partnered with nonprofit Newtown Creek Alliance and volunteers to plant 400 new native perennials at the Newtown Creek Nature Walk. DEP’s Green Infrastructure team from the Bureau of Sustainability was on hand, including Borough Supervisor **Thomas Begley**, Section Chief **Tekla Pontius-Courtney**, Community Coordinators **Neha Harle** and **Gretel St.**

Lawrence, and Maintenance Crew members **Trevor Horgan**, **Roosevelt Jeffrey Jr.**, **Everton Oliver**, **Guy Eppel**, **Dana Williams**, **Joshiah Boxill**, **Lawrence Baker-Urzu**, **Arusha Baker**, **Hao Feng Yuan**, **Cecelia Williams**, **Malachi Julien** and **Kema Johnson**. Environmental stewardship is a win for the community and for maintaining a strong biodiverse habitat for plants and pollinators!

Social Media Highlight



At DEP, every week is **#ClimateWeek**! We’re hard at work on resiliency projects across NYC that will help our communities prepare for the changing climate.



Be sure to like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [X](#), and [Instagram](#).

Greenpoint Floodkit Town Hall



DEP last week joined Council Member **Lincoln Restler** and Assembly Member **Emily Gallagher** to host a flood preparedness town hall at the John Ericsson Middle School in Greenpoint. The event provided residents with flood preparedness kits — including barriers, sump pumps, water sensors and drain plugs — and shared vital information on how to protect homes and businesses. Deputy Commissioner **Beth DeFalco** of the Bureau of Public Affairs and Communications (BPAC) outlined the different types of flooding, DEP’s infra-

structure toolkit, and offered practical steps people can take to safeguard their properties. On hand to speak with residents were newly appointed Brooklyn Borough Commissioner **Taya Mueller** (BPAC), Acting Deputy Commissioner **Mike Farnan** and Acting Assistant Commissioner **Jerry Fragias** (Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations), and Deputy Commissioner **Angela Licatta** and Assistant Commissioner **Melissa Enoch** (Bureau of Sustainability). Special thanks to the many DEP staff whose hard work made this event possible.

Green Playground in Queens



Last week, DEP joined with the Trust for Public Land, School Construction Authority, Council Member **Shekar Krishnan** and community members celebrated the ribbon cutting of a new community schoolyard at P.S. 69 in Jackson Heights, Queens. DEP contributed \$1 million to the project, which includes a synthetic turf athletic field designed specifically to capture up to 260,000 gallons of stormwater annually.

By soaking up rainwater where it falls, the new playground will help reduce flooding on school grounds and in the surrounding neighborhood and limit sewer overflows into the East River and New York Harbor during rainstorms. The new schoolyard features nature-based play elements, shaded seating, improved drainage, and green infrastructure that helps manage stormwater and reduce extreme heat.

STW Welcome Aboard!



On Monday, 28 new sewage treatment workers attended orientation at the 26th Ward Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility in Brooklyn and received an overview of the agency from our HR Generalist **Harold Kim**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Jonathan Bell, George Lauro, Matthew Shendler, Arthur Mavis, Kiara Smith, Vincent Manning, John Campasano, Christopher

Vega, Alfredo Linares, Omar Anderson, Glen Joseph, Jonathan Shalumov, Timothy Ellis, Robert Ferland Jr., Christopher James, Eric Richardson, Anthony Novellino, Antonio Agnello, Kevin Ali, Christopher Rodriguez, Jennie Saldana, Christos Triantafilopoulos, Mason Porretto, Christopher Staszewski, John McCambridge, John Coleman, Matthew Marston, Frank Kormornik, BWT.

New Fleet Safety Features



Mayor Mamdani's Executive Order 19 requires active safety and speed-limiting technologies across New York City's municipal fleet. Designed to prevent severe traffic injuries and enhance pedestrian safety, all DEP drivers operating retrofitted vehicles must understand how these systems function during daily operations. The new technologies include Intelligent Speed Assistance

(ISA) for non-emergency vehicles, which restricts acceleration beyond posted local speed limits. DEP already has more than 100 vehicles equipped with ISA. In addition, all new non-emergency trucks are being fitted with Pedestrian Turn Alerts, which makes audible verbal warnings when a truck is turning or moving in reverse, further protecting pedestrians and cyclists.

Global Leaders Tour Hunts Point



From left to right: Deputy Commissioner Angela DeLillo; Barcelona Mayor Jaume Collboni, Helsinki Mayor Daniel Sazanov, Mayor Mamdani, Rome Mayor Roberto Gualtieri, and Chief Operating Officer Tasos Georgelis.

On Saturday, as world leaders began gathering in New York City for the United Nations General Assembly, **Mayor Mamdani** hosted a group of mayors on a tour

of the new digesters at the Hunt's Point Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility, which are part of a \$394.5 million project that is in its final stages.

Bluebelt Hosts BioBlitz



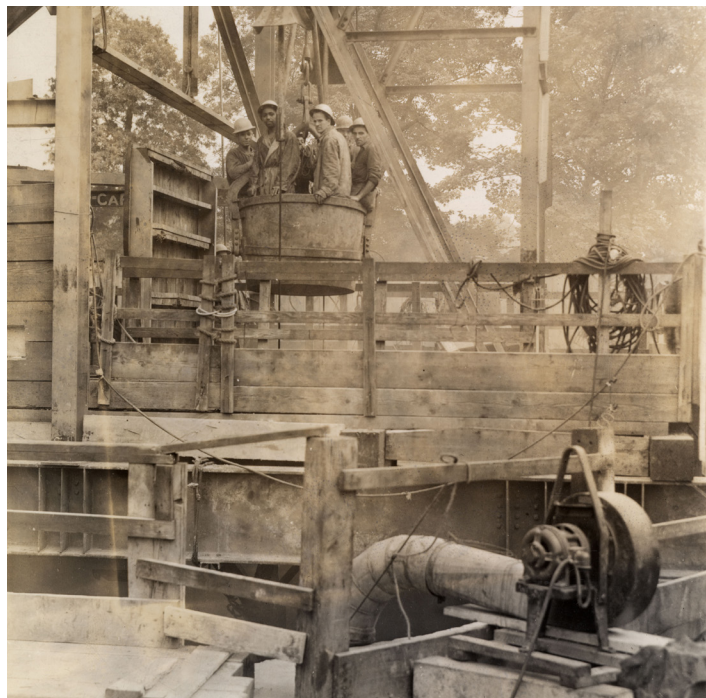
DEP hosted its annual BioBlitz this past Saturday at the New Creek Bluebelt. Staff from the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations' Bluebelt division joined experts from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and NYC Parks to lead guided walks for 40 participants, including students from St. Clare's School, around Osprey Pond near Olympia Boulevard. Several species not previously identified at the site were found, including gizzard shad and silverside fish, along with sightings of a juvenile bald eagle, osprey, red-tailed

hawk, and Dekay's snakes. Data collected was logged in the [Inaturalist](#) app to highlight the ecological benefits of the stormwater wetlands and inform future planting plans. Special thanks to all the DEP staff who spent their Saturday at New Creek including BWSO's **Sangamithra Iyer, Rob Brauman, Megan Edic, Sam Melton, Marilyn Lopez, Michael McGroarty, Michael Wiggberg** and **Anthony Limone**; as well as BPAC's **Akilah Lewis** and **Jean Schwarzwaldner**, and BWT's **Camille Stewart** and **Lucy Riccardi**.

We Welcome Your Feedback

To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: newsletter@dep.nyc.gov.

Out of the Archives



Take a trip down this Delaware Aqueduct shaft during excavation in 1937, when buckets by the time the workers' group portrait was taken on September 17. You can view more images, equipment, and excavated material in and out. The [DEP Archives on Flickr](#).

Seeking New Tech Solutions



DEP and the Partnership Fund for New York City have kicked off the fourth annual Environmental Tech Lab (ETL) competition—a public-private effort to find new tech solutions for the nation's largest municipal water and wastewater system. This year's ETL challenges focus on making DEP's work smarter, faster, and more sustainable, with opportunities in

Planning, Data & Field Operations, Asset Condition & Failure Prevention, and Resource & Energy Recovery. Applications for the three challenges are now open, and interested companies can submit proposals until October 23, 2026. Learn more about the program, this year's challenges, and applications by visiting the ETL [website](#).