



The Environmental Justice Report

A publication of DEC's Office of Environmental Justice – April 2015



Department of Environmental Conservation



FEATURED NEWS

DEC CELEBRATES 45th ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY WITH EVENTS ALL WEEK LONG!

Earth Day started as a movement in 1970 by then U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson from Wisconsin after witnessing a 1969 massive oil spill in California. This spill resulted in more than 20 million Americans participating in demonstrations to advocate for a healthy, sustainable environment. Today, this movement has gone global, and communities around the world recognize April 22 as Earth Day, a day to educate individuals, families, communities, businesses and government entities on the importance of sustaining the environment.

As Earth Day brought a heightened awareness of the need to protect natural resources and the environment, several key components were developed in the 1970s. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency were created and the Clean Air Act was enacted, providing the authority for federal and state governments to limit emissions. Sweeping amendments were made to the federal Water Pollution Control Act, which was the predecessor to the Clean Water Act.

DEC is celebrating Earth Day with week-long events around the state. This is an opportunity for residents, including those from environmental justice communities, to participate in various outdoor activities. The schedule of DEC events below can help guide you on how you can get involved and get connected to the environment! Some of the events are news conferences, but they are open to the public. For other Earth Day events, visit: www.earthday.org/2015.



EARTH WEEK SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

| Date | Region | Event | Location & Time |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| April 22, 2015 | Western New York | Trout Stocking on Cayuga Creek and Student Fishing | Location: Como Lake Park Pavilion on Bowen Road along Cayuga Creek Lancaster, NY Time: 10:30 a.m. |
| April 22, 2015 | Western Finger Lakes | Announcement of DEC's New Christoff Land Acquisition | Location: DEC Region 8 Office 6274 East Avon-Lima Road Avon, NY Time: 2:00 p.m. |
| April 22, 2015 | Capital Region/ Northern Catskills | Ribbon Cutting: Rensselaer Plateau Community Forest | Location: 220 Legenbauer Road, Poestenkill, NY (Rensselaer County) Time: 11:00 a.m. |
| April 22, 2015 | Capital Region/ Northern Catskills | Hand Hollow State Forest Grand Opening | Location: Hand Hollow Conservation Area in Hand Hollow State Forest New Lebanon, NY Time: 2:00 p.m. |
| April 22, 2015 | Long Island | Dedication of Ridge Interpretive Trail | Location: Ridge Conservation Area Trail Head Manorville, NY Time: 11:00 a.m. |
| April 22, 2015 | Eastern Adirondacks/ Lake Champlain | Volunteer Stewardship Agreement and Land Purchase Announcement and an Evening Nature Walk | Location: The Fox Tract of the Saratoga Sand Plains Wildlife Management Area, Town of Wilton, Saratoga County Time: 11:00 a.m. |
| April 24, 2015 | Central New York | Grout Brook Fishing Access Site Announcement (NYWORKS project) | Location: Grout Brook Crossing on Glenn Haven Road, Town of Scott, Cortland County. Time: 1:30 p.m. |
| April 24, 2015 | Capital Region/ Northern Catskills | Official State Arbor Day Celebration | Location: Tivoli Park Albany, NY Time: 11:00 a.m. |
| April 25, 2015 | Lower Hudson Valley | "ReClothe NY" Textile Collection – Part of Town of New Paltz Earth Day Event | Location: New Paltz Village Hall, 25 Plattekill Avenue, New Paltz, NY Time: 11:00 a.m. |



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

HOW THE BRONX RIVER ALLIANCE USED DEC'S COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANT TO HELP STUDENTS IMPROVE WATER QUALITY OF THE LOWER BRONX RIVER

DEC'S Office of Environmental Justice offers Community Impact grants up to \$50,000 to community-based organizations for implementing projects that address various environmental and public health concerns.

In the last round of grants, DEC awarded the Bronx River Alliance \$10,000 to help develop a high school environmental science curriculum—the Starlight Park Education Initiative (SPEI)—for ninth-graders at the Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School.

Through SPEI, students can engage in a multidisciplinary unit of study in Starlight Park.

They are continuously learning about the harms and risks that affect their local community, like stormwater runoff and sewage in the Bronx River. Students perform water quality monitoring and testing, use filtration methods, and create and implement different mitigation measures for stormwater runoff. This initiative has given students the opportunity and resources to implement their ideas, test them and develop new theories and ideas to improve the water quality of the river. With the guidance of science teachers, all of the ninth-grade students are involved in this project in some capacity and gain the necessary knowledge to educate their families, peers and neighbors about their work on the river, green infrastructure and environmental sustainability.

"The Starlight Park Education Initiative has been a great way to give students a hands-on learning experience with implementing green infrastructure tools and exploring new ideas to improve the quality of their neighborhood including the Bronx River, interacting with students and teachers of a local school has helped us to motivate young adults and teach them about the remarkable environmental transformation that they themselves are capable of, especially in a heavily urbanized area!"

—Kathalene Lamboy, Bronx River Alliance

The Office of Environmental Justice Community Impact Grant has helped the Bronx River Alliance continue to advance its mission to protect, improve and restore the Bronx River corridor so that it can be a healthy ecological, recreational, educational and economic resource for the communities



through which the river flows. DEC will be offering another round of grants this year for organizations helping environmental justice communities—those that are minority or low income. Projects can include: community gardens, tree plantings, education and curriculum development, urban farming training, habitat restoration, water quality monitoring, air quality monitoring, green infrastructure training and more. To receive updates on when the request for applications will open, sign up on DEC's homepage at www.dec.ny.gov, or, if you are currently a grant recipient and are already in the New York State Grants Gateway System, you can check there for updates. All grantees must be prequalified in the Grants Gateway before submitting an application. To prequalify, visit: www.grantsreform.ny.gov (or call 800.820.1890 for assistance)

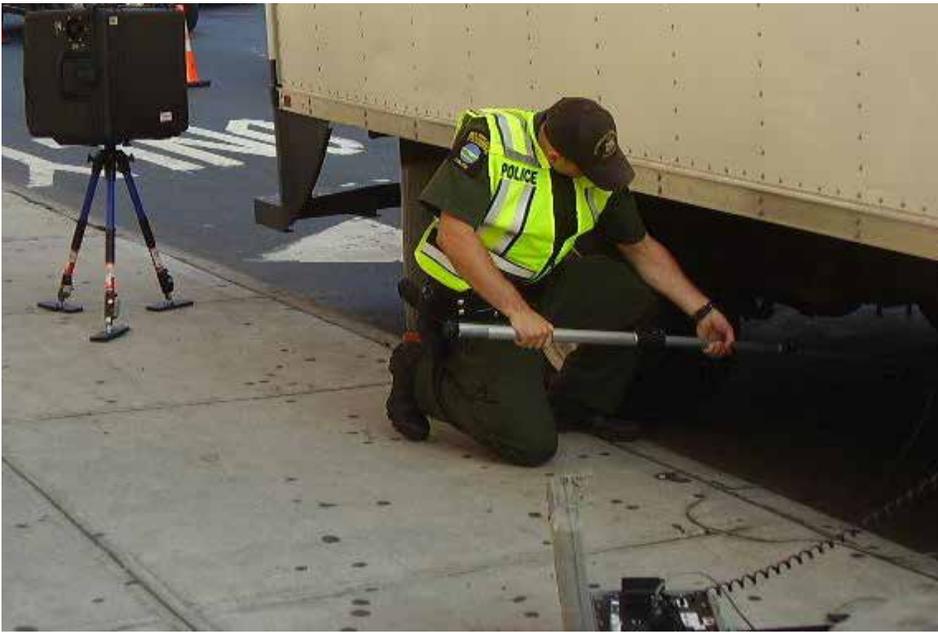
LOVE MY PARK DAY- PARK CLEANUP - SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 2ND

I Love My Park Day is a statewide event that improves and enhances New York's parks and historic sites, bringing increased visibility to the entire park system. Volunteers will celebrate by cleaning up winter damage and debris on park lands and beaches, planting trees and gardens, restoring trails and wildlife habitat, removing invasive species and working on various site improvement projects.

Nearly 90 parks and historic sites will participate this year, from Hempstead Lake State Park to Niagara Falls. The annual event is sponsored jointly by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and Parks & Trails New York.

Participating in I Love My Park Day is a great way to give back to these special places and explore the best of New York's outdoor recreational opportunities. Volunteer, and find a park near you: www.ptny.org/ilovemypark/.





OPERATION ECO-QUALITY. COMING TO A NEIGHBORHOOD NEAR YOU!

Quality of life is a precursor to good health, and the environment is a part of that discussion, as noted by Dr. David Rivers, associate professor, Medical University of South Carolina, during the recent 2015 National Environmental Justice Conference & Training Program in Washington, D.C. The DEC Office of Environmental Justice and the Division of Law Enforcement help to address quality of life issues that may impact public health through its Operation ECO-Quality Program.

Operation ECO-Quality is a strategic partnership between DEC and the community that focuses on preventing small to mid-sized regulated facilities from violating New



York State's Environmental Conservation laws that may negatively impact the health of residents in environmental justice neighborhoods and the environment. The program focuses on a three-pronged approach: outreach, consultation and enforcement.

DEC's Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs), Office of Environmental Justice and regional staff work together by conducting enhanced outreach with community leaders and residents to get a better understanding of issues faced by minority and low-income neighborhoods. Then, they go to neighborhood facilities like auto body shops, dry cleaners and gas stations to educate them on how to achieve greater compliance with state laws. ECOs return periodically to ensure that facilities have fixed any outstanding problems. Also part of the enforcement process, ECOs patrol areas with heavy diesel truck traffic and inspect trucks to ensure proper emissions standards. Officers will issue tickets for violations such as truck idling, emitting smoke with

an opacity that exceeds standards, not having functioning emission control apparatus, not having an up-to-date emissions inspection, etc.

The Office of Environmental Justice is expanding Operation ECO-Quality into more neighborhoods this year to help reduce environmental burdens. If you would like to see this program in your community, contact the EJ hotline at: 866-229-0497.

NEW YORK STATE'S CHANGING ELECTRICITY SYSTEM

New York State is undertaking a suite of large and small changes to its electricity system, from how power is generated and transmitted to how consumers and utilities interact. Environmental justice communities could benefit directly and indirectly from many of these changes. The central piece to New York's set of initiatives is the "Reforming the Energy Vision" (REV) proceeding at the Public Service Commission.

REV is New York's approach to addressing a growing national problem. Centralized electricity systems are increasingly expensive to maintain, vulnerable to extreme events and designed to encourage increased energy use, not energy efficiency. REV has six objectives: to give electricity customers more control; to animate new markets for cleaner, less expensive technologies; to increase system-wide efficiency; to ensure a diverse mix of energy sources (so that we're not dependent on any one resource when prices fluctuate or the system changes); to ensure system reliability and resiliency; and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions linked to climate change. Ultimately, the REV proceeding seeks to change the underlying business model so that electric utilities are rewarded for conserving energy and implementing new approaches that can save consumers money and cut pollution, such as through shared community solar, community choice aggregation and



microgrids. Implementation of the REV policy will also mean far greater reliance on distributed energy resources across the state, including renewable energy and energy-efficient resources developed by communities.

REV is well underway, but it's a long process, and there will be opportunities for consumers and communities to learn about the changes that are happening and provide comments. For information, visit the NYS Public Service Commission (www.dps.ny.gov), or contact Eleanor Stein (Eleanor.Stein@dps.ny.gov).

TIPS EARTH DAY ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TIPS

Earth Day is Wednesday, April 22, but every day is Earth Day at DEC! There are plenty of ways you can help the environment right now. Check out the tips below, and share them with your family and friends!

PREvent waste before you reCYCLE! What is PREcycling?

- Stopping waste before it happens
- Preventing waste at its source
- Reducing the amount of waste produced
- Making less garbage

Did you know in 1996, New Yorkers disposed of more than 17.7 million tons of solid waste? It is becoming more expensive to safely dispose of our wastes. Recycling helps, but it is not the whole solution!

If you're not PREcycling, you're wasting resources!

Be an Environmental Shopper. Look for...No Packaging

- Buy in the bulk food section.
- Buy fruit and snacks loose instead of in packages.
- Bring your own canvas or reusable bags to the store.



Minimal Packaging

- Look for concentrates.
- Look for larger sizes of products.
- Look for Reusables & Refillable Packaging
- Look for Refillable milk and soda containers

PREcycling SAVES MONEY!

At Home...

Choose the reusable alternative to disposable products.

- A cloth towel instead of paper towels
- A reusable razor instead of disposable razors
- A mug instead of paper or plastic disposable cups
- Washable plates or china instead of disposable plates
- Cloth napkins instead of paper napkins.
- Rechargeable batteries instead of disposable batteries

Donate used clothing and appliances to charities.

At Work...

- Make double-sided copies.
- Circulate, instead of distributing individual copies of memorandums, letters and magazines.



Periodically review mailing lists, and remove duplicates.

- Consolidate mailings whenever possible.
- Use e-mail whenever possible.
- Get off unwanted mailing lists.
- Bring reusable dishes, mugs/cups and silverware to the office instead of disposables.

Reusing office supplies is a great idea!

At School...

- Use both sides of paper.
- Save and reuse boxes, mailing tubes, and Styrofoam "peanuts."
- Reuse three-ring binders, manila folders, pocket folders, report covers and other school and office supplies.

- Use reusable dishes, cups/mugs and silverware in the cafeteria.
- Take "reusable lunches" to school (take your lunch in a lunch box or canvas bag, plastic sandwich holder and reusable drink container).

Contact us:

DEC Office of Environmental Justice
625 Broadway, 14th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-1500
518-402-8556 | justice@dec.ny.gov
EJ Hotline 1-866-229-0497

OEJ Staff:

Lisa King DeJesus — *Acting Director*
Michelle Moore — *Environmental Analyst*
Jeff Gregg — *Indian Nations Affairs Coordinator*
Karen Engel — *Green Infrastructure Coordinator*
Rodney Rivera — *Special Assistant*
Lisa Kranick — *Grants Coordinator*
Amanda Levit — *Excelsior Service Fellow*

Sign up for updates and follow us on social media!

Sign up today on DEC's homepage to receive e-mail notices from the Office of Environmental Justice about grants, initiatives and other news from DEC! dec.ny.gov.

 DEC on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/NYSDEC>

 DEC on Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/NYSDEC>

Designed by the Office of Communications Services 2015