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TESTS OF LAKE WATER CONFIRM A HEALTHY ECOSYSTEM AT PROSPECT PARK

The Department of Parks & Recreation has been informed by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that test results of water samples from Prospect Park Lake were normal and that there was no indication of any substances that could endanger wildlife in or around the Lake. The water samples were collected earlier this week at the request of the Parks Department.

Water from Prospect Park Lake (and elsewhere around the Park) was tested in response to the dumping of animal parts into the Lake on two occasions in March. The disposing of any form of garbage – including animal parts and remains – in parkland is against the law. Violators face criminal prosecution and/or fines. Two recent fires in areas of vegetation near the Lake are also thought to be the result of criminal mischief. In response to these incidents, Parks Department personnel and the New York City Police Department have heightened their surveillance of the Lake and adjacent areas of the Park.

In addition to the aforementioned tests conducted by DEP, students and faculty from the Aquatic Research and Environmental Assessment Center at Brooklyn College have been sampling and testing water from the Lake since late fall of 2009. They also report finding no concentrations of substances harmful to the ecology of the Lake.

To further address concerns about the safety of wildlife in the Park, the Urban Park Rangers will work with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to identify the cause of illness or death in any dead animals or birds found in the vicinity of the Lake. The recent death of a swan removed from the Park by Animal Care and Control is thought to have been the result of injuries the animal sustained during a fight with another swan (swans are highly territorial birds – especially during the spring mating season). Similarly, the remains of a few other animals found in the Park in the last few weeks – including a duck, turtle and possum – are in keeping with the normal course of wildlife mortality in a large, urban Park at the end of a difficult winter.

“Parks and the Prospect Park Alliance are committed to safeguarding the natural environment of Prospect Park,” said Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe. “We thank DEP for testing water samples from the lake that confirmed that there is no indication of substances that would affect or endanger wildlife. We will remain vigilant in guarding against illegal dumping to best ensure a pleasant visitor experience and a healthy ecosystem at the Park.”

“Everyone working at Prospect Park cares very much about the Park’s ecological health,” said Park Administrator Tupper Thomas. “Many staff members have devoted years of hard work to the process of restoring and maintaining the Park’s beautiful, natural environment. Every effort will be made to protect the rich ecosystem of wildlife that calls the Park home.”

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