



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD's Buffalo Creek Reservoir claims top engineering feat



From L to R: American Society of Civil Engineers Illinois Section (ASCE-IL) President Sandra Homola presents the 2022 ASCE-IL Sustainability in Civil Engineering Achievement Award to MWRD Managing Civil Engineer Joe Kratzer, Hey and Associates Senior Landscape Architect Tim Pollovy, MWRD Principal Civil Engineer Justin Kirk, Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) Planning Manager Kevin Kleinjan, LCFPD Landscape Architect Michael Haug, Hey and Associates Principal Engineer Patrick Lach and Hey and Associates Senior Project Scientist Jeff Mengler on Oct. 13, at the Sheraton Grand Chicago Riverwalk.

A new stormwater management project from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) that protects downstream Buffalo Grove neighbors from flooding and attracts visitors for its enhanced trails and natural spaces is now claiming a top local engineering award.

The American Society of Civil Engineers Illinois Section (ASCE-IL) honored the MWRD and consultant engineers from Hey and Associates with the 2022 Sustainability in Civil Engineering Achievement Award for the Buffalo Creek Reservoir expansion project. For more views of Buffalo Creek, visit the MWRD's YouTube [channel](#).

"We were thrilled to formally cut the ribbon on this critical project over the summer, and now see an in-

stant response from the engineering community and the people it serves downstream and the many visitors to the forest preserve enjoying this new vibrant scenery," said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. "We thank the ASCE Illinois Section for recognizing this project, our engineers and consultant engineers from Hey and Associates who designed it, our contractors at Lake County Grading Co., and the community support of our partners at the Village of Buffalo Grove, the Lake County Forest Preserve District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chicago District and Village of Wheeling."

Through a collaborative process, and in partnership with the Village of Buffalo Grove, the MWRD design combined a new trail system and seven new boardwalks, enhancement of the preserve's *(continued)*

MWRD's Buffalo Creek Reservoir claims top engineering feat, *cont.*

natural features, and a 180-acre-foot expansion of the reservoir's volume, accounting for nearly 60 million gallons in additional storage.

An estimated 107 structures are now protected from various flood recurrence intervals and over 2,000 structures along Buffalo Creek and the main stem of the Des Plaines River are receiving some form of flood reduction benefit, thanks to the work of Lake County Grading Company which constructed this project in just over 2 years.

"As we adapt to a changing climate and intense rainfall, it is encouraging to have the support of project partners and the recognition from the ASCE Illinois Section to promote sustainable planning and engineering projects that protect and improve our communities," said MWRD Commissioner Kimberly Du Buclet. "From reclaiming water, recovering resources, and designing stormwater management projects and policies, we strive to incorporate sustainability in all aspects of our work."

In 1973, the MWRD, Lake County Forest Preserve District and the Village of Buffalo Grove agreed to acquire land and construct the original Buffalo Creek Reservoir. The reservoir was intended to provide flood protection for the rapidly developing communities of Buffalo Grove and Wheeling. Construction on the original reservoir was completed by 1983 and it was expanded in 1988.

But expansion became an option again in 2011, when the MWRD published a study identifying projects that



To complete the expansion of Buffalo Creek Reservoir, water had to be drained during excavation. Construction crews created a haul route and diversion ditch and went to work on removing an island and lowering the west pool of the reservoir. The site was restored with native prairie, terraced wetlands and a naturalized shoreline. In total, 850 trees and 200 shrubs were planted.

could reduce flooding within the Lower Des Plaines River Watershed. At the same time, the Lake County Forest Preserve District was also considering a planned improvement project. Since the Forest Preserve District was already planning work to expand trails and parking, the agencies agreed to work together to construct the public access improvements while incorporating MWRD's planned reservoir expansion.

Public access improvements include the addition of 1.7 miles of trails, new pedestrian boardwalks, raised trails, two scenic overlooks and an expanded parking lot to accommodate 30 additional parking spaces. To learn more about the project, visit <https://mwrdd.org/buffalo-creek-reservoir-expansion>.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at mwrdd.org.