



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD, USACE partners gain a closer glimpse of reservoir protection



From L to R: Joe Savage, business director of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, MWRD Commissioner Kim Du Buclet, Col. Aaron W. Reisinger, commander of the USACE Chicago District, Maj. Gen. Mark Toy, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Great Lakes and Ohio River Division and MWRD Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) recently welcomed a general with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and several top leaders in the USACE to the McCook Reservoir to gain an understanding of a major flood control and water quality project that benefits from a strong working partnership between the MWRD and USACE Chicago District.

Maj. Gen. Mark Toy, commander of the USACE Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, joined Col. Aaron W. Reisinger, commander of the USACE Chicago District, and dozens of USACE leaders to visit McCook Reservoir Stage I. They met with MWRD Commissioners Mariyana Spyropoulos and Kim Du Buclet and MWRD staff to learn how the reservoir is fully functioning around the clock to prevent billions of gallons of water from flooding communities and mitigating pollution from combined sewer overflows entering local waterways after a persistent stretch of spring rains. They also learned how the partnership between MWRD and the USACE's Chicago District has led to the completion of these major projects that improve the quality of life for area residents and the improved health of area waterways.



McCook Reservoir Stage I is a model project that combines resources between partners at the MWRD and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct a system that mitigates flooding and prevents polluted water from entering local waterways.

“We were happy to welcome General Toy and Colonel Reisinger and division leaders from throughout the Midwest to view our McCook Reservoir and see how this model project has allowed us to protect Chicago and 36 surrounding communities from flooding and improve area water quality by capturing more wastewater for treatment,” said MWRD Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos. “We look forward to the completion of Stage II of the reservoir to make an even larger impact.”

The tour was part of a larger training session for USACE officers and division leaders learning about major projects like McCook Reservoir and how the partners overcame many challenges to construct one of the nation's largest public works projects in the MWRD's Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP), which consists of 109 miles and three major reservoirs, with another under construction. Once complete, McCook Reservoir Stage II will hold another 6.5 billion gallons in addition to the 3.5 billion gallons of storage that Stage I currently provides.

The USACE Chicago District and MWRD recently joined together to implement a pilot program to fund the completion of Stage II of the reservoir. The *(continued)*

MWRD, USACE partners gain a closer glimpse of reservoir protection *(cont.)*

pilot program, which has never been used by the USACE before, grants the MWRD \$33.8 million to help complete construction. This lump sum payment to the MWRD came as a result of the Water Resources Development Act of 2014, which evaluates the cost-effectiveness and project delivery efficiency of allowing non-federal interests to carry out construction of projects for flood risk management.

“Thank you to the leadership and partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for their forward thinking and continued commitment to finding relief from stormwater for our communities,” said MWRD Commissioner Kim Du Buclet. “As a local sponsor to these projects, the MWRD appreciates a federal partner to leverage our shared interests in protecting our water environment.”

Spring rains have underscored the need for Stage II and the critical infrastructure already in place. Between Stage I of McCook Reservoir and adjoining tunnel system, the McCook system has filled to capture 5.1 billion gallons of water. That is equivalent to 41 billion water bottles in the system that would be flooding area communities and overflowing into local rivers if not for the reservoir. As



Maj. Gen. Mark Toy and Col. Aaron W. Reisinger with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, meet with MWRD Commissioners Mariyana Spyropoulos and Kim Du Buclet and Executive Director Brian A. Perkovich.

heavy rains subside, excess water is pumped back to the MWRD’s Stickney Water Reclamation Plant to be cleaned and discharged. In its first year, the McCook Reservoir and Mainstream and Des Plaines tunnel systems captured 46.1 billion gallons of water.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.