



# Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

## Press Release

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## Plants, wildlife focus of MWRD land survey

### *Twenty five properties analyzed for biological report*

While the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago is best known for managing wastewater and providing flood control, the organization is also the second largest landowner in Cook County, and many of these properties are attractive to plants and wildlife.

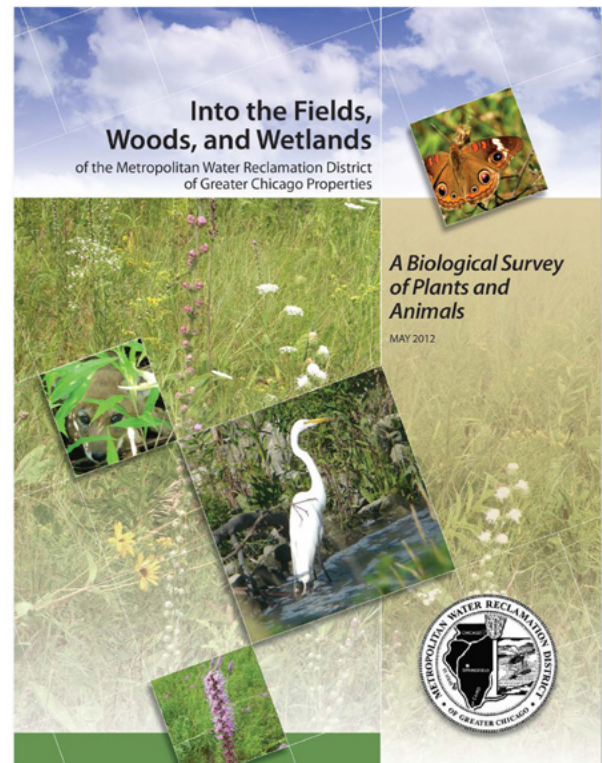
The MWRD's dedication to land preservation was the impetus to begin developing a comprehensive land use policy. MWRD staff and contractors surveyed 25 properties along waterways, near treatment plants, in reservoirs and aeration stations. The goal has been to determine which mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, dragonflies, damselflies, butterflies and plants call the property home. The report is documented in the newly released publication, "Into the Fields, Woods, and Wetlands: A Biological Survey of Plants and Animals," which is now available to the public.

"This baseline study will be used to help us improve the habitats for birds, other animals and plants," said Commissioner Mariyana T. Spyropoulos, chairman of the Monitoring and Research committee. "While we have done a great job of encouraging plants and wildlife to call our properties home, we still have work to do to develop our land use policy. We recognize we are the holder of important properties, and we are committed to being good stewards of these lands."

One of the most important observations was on the parcel of land known as a "prairie remnant" that sits adjacent to railroad tracks at the Hanover Park Water Reclamation Plant. A prairie remnant is terrain that has never been plowed, tilled or grazed and has remained intact since it was first formed. Prairie remnants are rare in Illinois; only one tenth of one percent of land in the state is considered to be undisturbed prairie. Researchers observed 139 specimens of flora and fauna in this one parcel alone.

"It was truly an important finding when the prairie remnant was first discovered in the 90's," said Commissioner Spyropoulos. "It is exciting to know that there are so many plants and animals living on this particular parcel."

In addition to the biological report, a more detailed scientific analysis is also available. Copies of both can be downloaded at [www.mwrdd.org](http://www.mwrdd.org), or by calling 312-751-6633.



*"Into the Fields, Woods, and Wetlands: A Biological Survey of Plants and Animals," is now available online at [mwrdd.org](http://mwrdd.org)*

***Our water environment, take it personally***

*Established in 1889, the MWRD ([www.mwrdd.org](http://www.mwrdd.org)) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.*