



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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For immediate release

May 3, 2018

Buffalo Creek Reservoir Expansion is underway as MWRD, USACE, Buffalo Grove, Wheeling and LCFPD shovel first soil



(L-R) Buffalo Grove Village President Beverly Sussman, MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore, MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan, MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos at the lectern, MWRD Commissioner Martin Durkan, MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila, US Army Corps of Engineers Commander Colonel Aaron Reisinger and Wheeling Village Manager Jon Sfondilis.

Officials with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Village of Buffalo Grove, Village of Wheeling and Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) broke ground on a project that will alleviate flooding while at the same time improve public recreation spaces at Buffalo Creek Forest Preserve.

Along with the important flood control improvements planned, the project will incorporate other aesthetic and environmental enhancements: wetlands will be created and restored; hundreds of new trees and shrubs will be planted; upland prairie will be restored west of Schaeffer Road; two tributaries entering the reservoir will be restored; one tributary will be stabilized. Public access improvements include new pedestrian boardwalks and raised trails, and an expanded parking lot. In addition, the Buffalo Creek Reservoir will be expanded to store an additional 58.6 million gallons and relieve area flooding.



(L-R) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Commander Colonel Aaron Reisinger, Buffalo Grove Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Roger Sosa, Buffalo Grove Village Manager Dane Bragg, Wheeling Village Manager Jon Sfondilis, MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore, MWRD Commissioner Martin Durkan, MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila, MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan, MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos and Buffalo Grove Village President Beverly Sussman.

“The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is excited to see this regionally important flood damage reduction project get underway and supports future efforts working with local, regional, and state partners in continuing to build similar projects throughout the Des Plaines River watershed,” Col. Aaron Reisinger, Commander, Chicago District, said.

Buffalo Grove Village President Beverly Sussman has lived in the village for 47 years, working in a variety of capacities, serving as a village trustee and becoming president in 2015. As a village pioneer, she watched the population increase from 12,000 in 1971 to almost 50,000 residents today. The increase in population resulted in new challenges in managing stormwater in Buffalo Grove and downstream communities.

“This project represents a long standing relationship and an ongoing cooperative effort between the Village of Buffalo Grove, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District and the Lake County Forest Preserve District which began in 1973,” said President Beverly Sussman. “Through the cooperative ef-

Buffalo Creek Reservoir Expansion is underway *(continued)*

forts of the parties, the effects of flooding on our respective communities and regional stakeholders have been reduced. The completion of this project will further reduce the effects of flooding and provide a safe and healthy environment for many years to come.”

The Buffalo Creek project will include public access improvements, enhance the preserve’s natural features and expand the reservoir’s volume by excavating more than 300,000 cubic yards of material. As a result, Buffalo Creek Reservoir will be able to hold an additional 58.6 million gallons. This will remove 107 structures from flooding impacts. More than 2,000 structures along Buffalo Creek and the main stem of the Des Plaines River will also receive some form of flood reduction benefit. Through a collaborative process with the LCFPD and Buffalo Grove, the project design incorporated LCFPD’s planned improvements while offering increased stormwater protection for Buffalo Grove and surrounding communities.

“We appreciate that our counterparts in Lake County are engaged in this partnership to help relieve flooding on the Cook County side of the border,” said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “Flooding doesn’t recognize boundaries, so it makes economic sense to work together so that residents living in the area of our state receive benefits, whether they enjoy the Lake County Forest Preserves as an amenity or as a stormwater management tool.”

In an effort to relieve flooding during rapid development of the northwest suburbs during the 1960s and 1970’s, the MWRD, the Lake County Forest Preserve District, and the Village of Buffalo Grove entered into an agreement in 1973 to acquire the Buffalo Creek site. The MWRD completed construction on the original reservoir in 1983, including an earthen dam, concrete spillway and 48-inch outlet pipe. A second agreement led to an expansion of the reservoir in 1988, creating the upper pool, as well as modifying the emergency spillway.

In 2011, the MWRD published the Lower Des Plaines Detailed Watershed Plan, identifying further expansion of the reservoir to help flood prone areas.

During preliminary engineering, the MWRD developed five different sized reservoir expansion alternatives, and worked with the Army Corps to determine each alternative’s economic benefits. The chosen design utilizes an additional 180 acre-feet of storage, which the USACE determined would reduce future flood damages by more than \$26 million.

Lake County Grading Company was selected to expand the reservoir which will be completed in 2020. Following construction, the MWRD will establish native plantings on site for the first three growing seasons. Monitoring and maintenance will take place to ensure the survival of native species at the site. Concurrently, MWRD will also undertake five years of monitoring and maintenance on the two reaches of stream restoration along the Buffalo Creek Main Stem and the West Unnamed Tributary.

“Wheeling is pleased to be among the downstream beneficiaries of these improvements, and proud to be participating in this event, much as we were pleased to welcome our own downstream neighbors at the groundbreaking of the Heritage Park Flood Control Facility six years ago,” said Wheeling Village Manager Jon Sfondilis. “That project has brought extraordinary aesthetic and recreational benefits to our community, and I’m confident that this one will achieve similar ends.”

“This project is clearly a quadruple win for flood control, recreation improvement, wetland restoration and intergovernmental cooperation,” said Illinois State Senator (30th) and Assistant Majority Leader Terry Link.

To see video of the press conference, please visit <https://youtu.be/r4NFmvXuSPE>

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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