



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## Natalie Creek to undergo overhaul; MWRD project to mitigate flooding in Midlothian, Oak Forest



(L-R) Rep. Will Davis (30th Dist.), Midlothian Trustee Kathleen Caveney, Midlothian Village President Gary L'Heureux, MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila, Floodlothian founder Helen Lekavich, MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos, Midlothian Trustee Karen Kreis, MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore and Oak Forest City Administrator Troy Ishler shovel the first pile of dirt to kick off construction on the Natalie Creek flood control project that will reduce flooding for 237 structures and defend residents of Midlothian and Oak Forest from rising waters along Natalie Creek.

Ground was officially broken on a Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) project that will reduce flooding for 237 structures and defend residents of Midlothian and Oak Forest from rising waters along Natalie Creek.

The \$7.63-million flood control project will mitigate the costly effects of overbank flooding along 15,800 linear feet of Natalie Creek by upsizing restrictive culverts, widening the channel at several locations and creating a new stormwater storage basin along the channel. During a 100-year storm event, the improvements will provide flood reduction benefits for 237 structures affected by overbank flooding from the northern end of the Central Park Detention Basin, adjacent to 157th St. and Long Avenue, in Oak Forest to 146th Street and Pulaski Road in Midlothian.

"We are introducing flood control measures that will aid homes and businesses prone to flooding during intense



Representatives from the village of Midlothian, city of Oak Forest, Floodlothians, and Rep. Will Davis (30th Dist.) join MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos, Commissioner Frank Avila and Commissioner Debra Shore for a group photo.

storms," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "Working together with the communities in Midlothian and Oak Forest, we are tackling a changing climate head-on and preparing future generations for the challenges that come with excess stormwater."

Planned construction for the project in Oak Forest will include erosion control, reshaping along the channel, and sediment removal at Laporte and La Crosse Avenues. In Midlothian, the MWRD will renovate a concrete channel, upsize culverts along Natalie Creek at 149th Street near Kilpatrick, Kenton, Kolmar, Kilbourn and Kostner Avenues, improve a conduit outfall grate at 146th Street and Pulaski Road, construct a new detention basin facility in the vicinity of 147th Street and Kostner Avenue and expand an existing detention basin at 149th Street and Kilpatrick Avenue.

"I am excited to witness the Natalie Creek project get underway. Thank you to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, Helen Lekavich and her team for being persistent and true community advocates. Their advocacy lead to this project coming to fruition," said Rep. William Davis (30th Dist.). (continued)

## Natalie Creek to undergo overhaul; MWRD project to mitigate flooding *cont.*



*MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos addresses the crowd of more than 200.*

“Thanks to the new storage capacity for stormwater and improved conveyance along Natalie Creek, hundreds of homes and businesses will now be protected from flooding,” said MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan. “Hopefully, these improvements will erase years of frustration by giving Midlothian and Oak Forest residents’ peace of mind each time it rains.”

“The Village of Midlothian could not be more excited for this long awaited and much needed project to break ground,” said Midlothian Village President Gary L’Heureux. “We are extremely grateful to MWRD for listening to a group of Midlothian residents, who shared their stories of tremendous loss through numerous flooding events and put together a project that will benefit so many here in Midlothian.”

“After three years of intensive work, meetings and collaboration, the Natalie Creek project is finally becoming a reality,” said Midlothian Trustee Karen Kreis. “It has been both an honor and a pleasure to work with everyone at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District as well as the Midlothian residents affected by flooding. What we thought was impossible three years ago is now becoming a reality due to the District’s efforts, and so many of our residents and business owners will benefit from this flood control project.”

“The City of Oak Forest would like to thank the Village of Midlothian and MRWD for partnering on this project where flooding has been a problem for so many years,” said City Administrator Troy Ishler. “We look forward to working with our neighboring community and MWRD on this important project.”

“The resident action group Team Floodlothian reached out to



*Commissioner Debra Shore, Midlothian Trustee Kathleen Caveney, Commissioner Frank Avila, Floodlothian founder Helen Lekavich and MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos hold the official Floodlothian oar.*



*(L-R) MWRD Senior Civil Engineer Khaja Moinuddin, MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila, Rep. Will Davis (30th Dist.), Midlothian Trustee Karen Kreis, MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore, Floodlothian founder Helen Lekavich, MWRD Managing Civil Engineer Joe Kratzer and Principal Civil Engineer Cedric Robertson prepare to celebrate the groundbreaking on the Natalie Creek flood control project.*

MWRD on June 11, 2013 for help,” said Midlothian resident Helen Lekavich. “Decades of devastating flooding had caused repeated and costly damages to many residential properties and businesses in Midlothian. On behalf of hundreds of Midlothian flood victims, I express our deepest gratitude for the highest level of professional dedication and attention to bringing this flood relief project to fruition.”

The project is expected to be completed by 2020. To view the ceremony in its entirety, visit <https://youtu.be/ZoNUEd6mBW4>.

### Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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