



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila, partners celebrate restored riverfront in Horner Park



A ceremonial ribbon cutting ceremony signifies the opening of the restored riverfront along the North Branch of the Chicago River at Montrose Ave. in Horner Park.

Advocates for cleaner water and river recreation united with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) to celebrate the unveiling of a transformed riverfront that will enhance access to the North Branch of the Chicago River on the city's North Side.

On Sept. 15, MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila joined U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (5th), 33rd Ward Ald. Deb Mell, 47th Ward Ald. Ameya Pawar and other partners in celebrating the opening of a restored riverfront along the west bank of the Chicago River at Montrose Avenue in Chicago's Horner Park neighborhood. In addition to an official ribbon-cutting ceremony, canoe rides, and other activities, a Native American serpent ceremony was held to promote the transformation and rebirth of the riverfront. A groundbreaking for a hybrid mound installation that pays homage to the ancestral practice of mound building intends to educate the public about the rich cultural history of placemaking or strengthening the connection between people and the places they share.



Commissioner Frank Avila (center) tells visitors about the work of the MWRD to protect the water environment.

Also participating in the celebration were Patrick Levar, chief operating officer of the Chicago Park District; Lt. Col. Dan Hayden, deputy district commander, United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Chicago District; Margaret Frisbie, executive director of the Friends of the Chicago River; Josh Ellis, vice president, Metropolitan Planning Council and Peter Schlossman, president of the Horner Park Advisory Council.

The Chicago Park District served as the USACE's local sponsor, and the MWRD designated a two-acre parcel of land along the riverbank five years ago. Now that the vegetation is established, the property will be permanently turned over to the Park District.

"As the second largest landowner in Cook County, the MWRD recognizes the importance of allocating a significant portion of this property for public use," said Commissioner Avila. "This project was a perfect opportunity to designate MWRD-owned land for multiple public uses while connecting residents to their water environment." *(continued)*

MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila, partners celebrate restored riverfront *(cont.)*



Chicago Public Art Group, American Indian Center and the Portage Park Neighborhood Association shows plans for a Coil Mound, an homage to the ancestral practice of mound building that strengthens the connection between people and the places they share.

This is the third major project that the MWRD has partnered on in the area. The North Branch dam removal project which will improve access for recreation and wildlife began this summer, and the Albany Park Stormwater Diversion Tunnel was unveiled in July. The tunnel is reducing overbank flooding that impacts 336 structures.



Participants line up for free canoe rides along the Chicago River.

“These projects are a result of effective collaboration between multiple partners,” said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “Not only are we working to improve the area’s future by mitigating flood damage, the river has become an attractive place for nature enthusiasts and wildlife alike.”

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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.