



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Green infrastructure training provided by MWRD and WEF enhances stormwater management and improves water quality



MWRD engineers lead a group studying the permeability of playgrounds and green alleys. The MWRD works with communities across Cook County to install green infrastructure projects that increase stormwater capacity, which mitigates flooding and improves water quality.

Green infrastructure is proving its natural resiliency in the face of steady showers, but it also requires a detailed understanding when maintaining that critical tool for stormwater management.

To instill that education, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) recently joined the Water Environment Federation (WEF) in hosting an immersive training for municipalities, public works departments, contractors and others who are interested in installing and maintaining green infrastructure elements to reduce stormwater from entering sewers and prevent flooding.

“The MWRD is committed to the use of green infrastructure to help reduce flooding while reducing load on the sewer system, and we are pleased to see so many of our community partners join with us to invest in these critical tools,” said MWRD Commissioner Kimberly Du Buclet. “But as green infrastructure spreads throughout our region, it’s also important to have the tools and education in place to maintain these systems. So we were delighted to partner with WEF to host this training.”

Expert trainers from the Washington, D.C. area lead sessions with MWRD engineers to guide professional green *(continued)*

Green infrastructure training provided by MWRD and WEF (cont.)



The Riverside commuter parking lot.



Future rain garden.

infrastructure certification through the National Green Infrastructure Certification Program (NGICP). The week-long NGICP training, held at Stickney Water Reclamation Plant, represents the standard for national certification of green infrastructure construction, inspection, and maintenance workers.

The training prepared participants to demonstrate their competency in the following areas of bioretention (rain gardens, bioretention cells, curb extensions/bulb-outs, bioswales, stormwater planters); rainwater harvesting (rain barrels and cisterns); permeable pavements (porous concrete, pervious asphalt and permeable pavers); green roofs and blue roofs; dry wells; and stormwater wetlands.

As part of the training, the MWRD led the group on local visits to green infrastructure project sites the MWRD has recently completed, including stops to review the MWRD's own permeable parking lots at Stickney and visits to a successful green alley project in Berwyn as well as two schoolyards at Chicago Public Schools (CPS) that benefited from the Space to Grow program. The Space to Grow partnership between the MWRD, CPS, the Chicago Department of Water Management, Healthy Schools and Openlands transforms elementary school playgrounds using green infrastructure. The schoolyards formerly covered in asphalt are converted into beautiful, vibrant and functional community spaces for physical activity, outdoor learning, environmental literacy and engagement with art, while also working to address neighborhood flooding issues and community participation. Since 2014, the partners have completed 15 schoolyard transformations to retain a combined 2.5 million gallons of water per rain event.

"We thank the Water Environment Federation for their leadership on this comprehensive training and look forward to expand-



City engineers and public works employees review a green alley project implemented by the MWRD to learn green infrastructure maintenance responsibilities.

ing our mission in green infrastructure and stormwater management throughout Cook County," said MWRD Commissioner Cam Davis. "Having a skilled workforce to perform the installation, inspection and maintenance for these green infrastructure components will meet a growing demand that we face through the challenges of changing weather patterns and flooding concerns."

For additional information on green infrastructure, visit www.ngicp.org.

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.