



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD, partners celebrate completion of Arrowhead Lake Flood Control project that removes homes in Palos Heights from flood plain



In the photo (L-R): Palos Heights 1st Ward Ald. Donald Bylut, and 2nd Ward Ald. Jack Clifford, Palos Heights Mayor Robert Straz, MWRD President Kari K. Steele, FPCC General Superintendent Arnold Randall, State Senator Bill Cunningham (18th District) and MWRD Commissioner Chakena D. Perry cut the ribbon on the Arrowhead Lake Flood Control Project that has removed 70 homes and structures from the flood plain and improved trails and forest preserve amenities.

Palos Heights residents and visitors to the Forest Preserves of Cook County's (FPCC) Arrowhead Lake will benefit from work completed by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) to mitigate flooding and protect the water environment. On Friday, May 13, President Kari K. Steele, MWRD Commissioner Chakena D. Perry, Palos Heights Mayor Robert Straz, FPCC General Superintendent Arnold Randall, State Senator Bill Cunningham (18th District), and Palos Heights 1st Ward Ald. Donald Bylut and 2nd Ward Ald. Jack Clifford cut the ribbon on the Arrowhead Lake Flood Control Project that has removed 70 homes and structures from the flood plain and improved trails and forest preserve amenities.

The \$1.6-million project increases storage capacity by more than 13-million gallons to protect homes and save residents money on flood insurance. To learn more,



MWRD President Kari K. Steele addresses the audience against the backdrop of an enlarged Arrowhead Lake.

visit <https://mwrdd.org/arrowhead-lake-flood-control>. Watch the full ribbon-cutting ceremony <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMRWYehlkbk>.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map was officially revised in March to recognize that the structures were removed from the FEMA Zone A flood plain in Palos Heights. The benefiting residential area is located just north of the forest preserves between Harlem Avenue to the west, Edgewood Road to the north, Forestview Road to the east, and 131st Street to the south.

“We are proud to make this investment to protect the Palos Heights community from excessive stormwater and give them peace of mind and cost savings for homeowners who were previously forced to pay mandatory flood insurance due to the threat of 100-year storm events that are occurring more and more often and causing devastating flooding,” said President Steele. “Thanks to the collaboration with our *(continued)*”

MWRD, partners complete Arrowhead Lake project, *cont.*

partners at the Cook County Forest Preserves, the city of Palos Heights and the Cal-Sag Watershed Planning Council, we will now have protection from flooding as well as new trails and an improved forest preserve to attract visitors to beautiful Arrowhead Lake.”

As part of the \$1.6-million project, the existing dam and outlet culvert were demolished and replaced with a new concrete dam, outlet culvert and spillway. The additional stormwater storage is 40 acre-feet or 13,034,057 gallons, providing much needed flood storage for neighbors north of the lake.

“It’s a great day for the City of Palos Heights, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County,” said 17th District Cook County Commissioner Sean M. Morrison. “Working together for the benefit of the community helped make this project a reality. The increased flood storage and resulting benefits for our residents is a fine example of the positive results that can come from government entities working together.”

“With MWRD’s investment in new infrastructure and the creation of more than 13-million-gallons of storage capacity, we will help protect nearby residents from future storms,” said Commissioner Perry. “Thanks to our partnership with the City of Palos Heights and Forest Preserves of Cook County, we’re proud to deliver a flood control project that presents cost savings to homeowners and enhances attractive spaces to visit at Arrowhead Lake.”

“This project illustrates our shared commitment with the city of Palos Heights and Cook County Forest Preserves to manage stormwater and think resiliently when it comes to our future land use opportunities,” said MWRD Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos. “Here at Arrowhead Lake, we can store more water but also improve recreation in the forest preserve. We hope visitors will enjoy these new upgrades.”

Coinciding with the stormwater capacity improvements, the MWRD raised a bike trail on the north and



Area residents show fish caught in the lake.

east sides of the lake, resurfaced 2,675 feet of a multi-use pedestrian path with new asphalt and regraded and restored an eroded bank at the south side of Arrowhead Lake with native seed, plant plugs and trees.

“This project is approaching 40 years in the making, and it was not until the MWRD started the Cal-Sag Watershed Planning Council meetings and began developing the Detailed Watershed Plan to study the area and work with Palos Heights residents that we began to resolve these flooding issues and flood insurance costs,” said Mayor Straz. “We want to thank the MWRD and our residents for their commitment to staying in their homes and the investments they have made in our community.”

“Not only will this project address issues of flooding and improve infrastructure in Palos Heights, it will also help keep flood water off the local Forest Preserves’ trails,” said General Superintendent Arnold Randall. “Additionally, this project has restored a section of the Arrowhead Lake’s eroded shoreline and added a new trail access point from the community into the preserve. Our thanks to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago for taking the lead on this great collaboration.”

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at mwrld.org.