



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Ring in the new year with resolve to improve water environment

In just a few days, 2011 will be a memory. If you haven't made any resolutions for 2012, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) has seven suggestions to help jump-start your list:

#1 Resolve to conserve water. When washing your hands or brushing your teeth, turn the water off until needed. Fill washing machines and dishwashers completely before starting the laundry or dish washing cycles. If you are washing dishes by hand, turn the water off while rinsing and instead, fill one sink with rinse water. In addition to saving thousands of gallons every month, you will be saving the energy that is used to process, pump and heat the water.

#2 Resolve to minimize use of water during rain events. Chicagoland has a combined sewer system which means that stormwater and sanitary flow go into the same pipe during storms. Reduced residential water use during rain events allows maximum room for stormwater to enter the sewers and could prevent flooding in your neighborhood.

#3 Resolve to dispose of unwanted pharmaceuticals in an environmentally-friendly manner. Sewage treatment facilities are not designed to process medications that have been flushed or poured down drains. Instead, seek out organized pharmaceutical collection programs where unwanted over-the-counter and prescription medications can be properly disposed.

#4 Resolve to always pick up pet waste. Aside from serving as a food source for rats and other disease-spreading pests, the waste contains organic matter and bacteria which can make its way to our waterways and threaten human health and wildlife. It only takes a moment to secure the waste in a bag and discard it into the garbage.

#5 Resolve to discard or recycle litter. It is important that inlets leading to the sewers remain free of debris in order to prevent flooding.

#6 Resolve to pick up lawn waste. Grass clippings, leaves, flowers, twigs, brush and tree limbs can block sewers, clog drains and cause area flooding.

#7 Resolve to incorporate green infrastructure at your home or office. There are many ways to help minimize flooding and reduce the amount of water running into sewers: disconnect your downspouts and establish a rain garden, buy and set up a rain barrel, or install pavement composed of recycled, porous material to help water filter into the ground.

"It is never too late to think about ways to protect our precious waterways," said MWRD Executive Director David St. Pierre. "A new year is a great time to take stock of how our habits can be improved. One positive action multiplied by five million Cook County residents can result in big environmental improvements."

Information about ways to protect the waterways is abundant. Resolve to learn more. It's our water environment... Take it personally.