



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6633

public.affairs@mwr.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

For immediate release

June 2, 2015

MWRD sparks environmental conversation during 'On the Table' discussions



Diners come for more than a meal at the *On the Table* event hosted by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) and Chicago Wilderness. *On the Table* is designed to spark conversation about making a more resilient Chicago. At the MWRD Mainstream Pumping Station, Executive Director David St. Pierre asked dinner guests to discuss their ideas on how to manage stormwater.

Protecting trees and managing water were two topics of discussion at separate events hosted by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD).

These crucial natural resources were brought to the forefront when the MWRD participated in the Chicago Community Trust's second annual program, "On the Table," designed to stir up conversation on matters important to the community.

The *On the Table* luncheon was held May 12 at the MWRD main office building, followed by a dinner co-hosted with Chicago Wilderness at the MWRD's Mainstream Pumping Station in Hodgkins.

The luncheon provided a forum for discussing opportunities to green and improve the region's urban tree canopy through philanthropic organization partnerships. The MWRD is considering developing a tree nursery at its 110-acre site at Fisher Farms at the Hanover Park Water Reclamation Plant, and the luncheon served as an opportunity to share ideas and stimulate conversation about restoration plans.

"Trees are a form of green infrastructure that collect stormwater and help reduce flooding," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos.



Guests gather around the table at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) for a discussion on restoring the canopy and planting new trees at the Hanover Water Reclamation Plant during second annual Chicago Community Trust *On the Table* event.

"However, the tree population throughout Chicago and Cook County has been decimated, whether by the emerald ash borer infestation or due to extreme weather," said President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "This luncheon offered the first opportunity to discuss possibilities for growing the urban tree canopy."

Along with Chicago Wilderness, the MWRD also discussed partnerships in planning for intense rain storm events that have become more prevalent in recent years. The *On the Table* dinner featured environmental stewards, engineers, scientists, researchers, water experts, community activists and MWRD officials who discussed how to manage the region's water supply and stormwater concerns. Over dinner, participants shared ideas about how to make Chicago more resilient in the face of these increased rainstorms.

This year's *On the Table* event marked the 100th anniversary of the Chicago Community Trust. Last year's event drew nearly 12,000 area residents to share their ideas on how to improve the region. The intent of *On the Table* is to urge Chicago area residents and their families, neighbors, colleagues and friend to pull up a chair, share a meal and discuss the ways in which they can work to make communities stronger, safer and more dynamic.

###

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.