



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD, Openlands guide rain barrel owners with installation video

In support of ongoing efforts to prevent flooding, improve water quality and promote the use of green infrastructure, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) partnered with Openlands to produce a video demonstrating how to install a rain barrel. The MWRD offers free rain barrels to Cook County residents as well as community groups and organizations.

Disconnecting downspouts and installing rain barrels will keep clean water out of the sewer system and help reduce basement backups and flooding. Roofs comprise 41 percent of the impervious surface in Cook County, and many of these rooftops are directly connected to sewers via downspouts. It is important to reduce the volume of water entering the sewers, especially during rain events, when the system can become overwhelmed with water. Rain barrels capture some of this water for beneficial reuse by homeowners; such uses include watering houseplants, lawns and gardens or washing cars and tools. To see the video, visit <https://youtu.be/ZKD3bqI1tpE>.

“We’ve prepared this video to help anyone interested installing a rain barrel,” said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “Viewers can follow these steps to learn a simple, efficient and safe process for installing a rain barrel. This gives homeowners the opportunity to do their part to eliminate flooding by reducing the amount of water entering the sewer system.”

Ultimately, the goal of MWRD’s rain barrel program is to provide communities with an effective way to reduce stormwater load in the sewer system, thus reducing basement backups, pollution and flooding, all issues important to Openlands, a Chicago region conservation organization.

“Openlands has always worked with communities to help them care for their local environment, and



Gabriela A. Naveda, who is a member of Openlands' community engagement team, guides viewers through the rain barrel installation process. The barrels are being distributed through the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

we have a long-standing partnership with the Water Reclamation District to introduce green infrastructure solutions across the metropolitan region,” said Jerry Adelman, president and CEO of Openlands. “We also want individuals and neighbors to see that they can embrace a sense of ownership when it comes to preventing flooding, reducing the impacts of climate change, and caring for their environment.”

Gabriela A. Naveda, community greening associate with Openlands, provides step-by-step directions to viewers in the video to ensure proper installation of the rain barrels.

“Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to provide eco-friendly benefits to a household and to a neighborhood,” said Naveda. “This video demystifies the process of installing a rain barrel, making it more likely that people will want one for their own home. This thoughtful action can unite neighbors around the multiple benefits of rain barrels that include reduced local flooding and green, healthy communities.”

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MWRD, Openlands guide rain barrel owners with installation video *continued*

The 55-gallon, frost-proof barrels are constructed using recycled materials and come in four colors. Each is delivered with an elbow connector, overflow hose and printed instructions. The MWRD has distributed more than 9,000 rain barrels over the past year and has partnered with municipalities and non-governmental organizations. To learn more about acquiring or

installing a rain barrel, visit mwrld.org or call your local Cook County municipality.

“Everyone working together to solve the devastating flooding issues we have experienced in Cook County can result in a resilient Chicagoland,” said President Spyropoulos.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwrld.org) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for used water treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.