



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Media Advisory

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Improved Centennial Trail to open with scenic overlook

- **WHO:** Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD), La Grange Lions Club, Cook County Forest Preserves, and Trails for Illinois
- **WHAT:** Bike riders, hikers and outdoors enthusiasts are invited to celebrate and tour the new and improved Centennial Trail with its 60-foot high scenic overlook above the Des Plaines River Valley.
- **WHERE:** Columbia Woods Forest Preserve at Willow Springs and Corcoran Roads, Willow Springs
- **WHEN:** Ribbon cutting at 9 a.m. on Saturday, October 17, 2015. Registration for riders will take place from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the inaugural ride will take place between 9:15 a.m. to 3 p.m.

A new public amenity will be unveiled at 9 a.m. on Sat., Oct. 17 at Columbia Woods Forest Preserve at Willow Springs and Corcoran Roads in Willow Springs. A 60 foot hill accessible to hikers and eventually to mountain bikes has been added to property owned by the MWRD and leased to the Cook County Forest Preserves in which to operate Centennial Trail. While the Centennial Trail opens Saturday, the mountain bike trail on the hill opens in 2016.

The hill was constructed as part of an MWRD project to remove 1.8 million cubic yards of overburden (dirt) from the neighboring McCook Reservoir, a component of the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP). When completed, McCook Reservoir will provide 10 billion gallons of storage to capture combined sewer overflows that discharge to waterways and cause sewer backups. The reservoir will also provide \$90 million per year in flood control benefits to 3.1 million people living in 37 communities. Approx. 500 truck trips per day were needed to haul the overburden.

“We listened to the community and constructed an amenity that will be used for generations to come,” said MWRD president Mariyana Spyropoulos. “In completing this project we were very mindful of meeting the needs of area recreational enthusiasts with the goal of constructing the McCook Reservoir on schedule. I think we have managed to meet everyone’s needs.”

The MWRD considered alternate sites for storing the McCook overburden, but an additional \$9.3 million price tag was not cost-effective. The Centennial Trail site offered a relatively short trip and use of private roads for trucking the overburden, in addition to prioritizing economic, safety and environmental considerations.

During construction, the nearby I & M Trail accommodated trail users.

The landscape architect firm Burns and McDonnell designed the new trail based on the input of trail users at public meetings. Some of the new features include two hills, a hiking trail and rest area. Using the overburden

and MWRD’s Class A Exceptional Quality Biosolids, the hill offers a rare opportunity for Chicago area cyclists to ride up and down a slope that provides sweeping views of the surrounding landscape and waterways. For riders who prefer flat terrain, the trail provides a new and improved route through Columbia Woods.

The Oct, 17 ride is supported between the trail head near Columbia Woods to Illinois Route 83 and back over an eight-mile loop. Centennial Hill will be accessible to hikers and by mountain bike. The first 250 pre-registered riders will receive a T-shirt and other promotional gifts. All riders under 16 must wear helmets. Online registration is available at: www.tinyurl.com/ncwompv.



Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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