



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
October 17, 2015

Improved Centennial Trail opens to great fanfare

New scenic overlook offers sweeping views above the Des Plaines River Valley

A new public amenity was unveiled on Sat., Oct. 17 at Columbia Woods Forest Preserve in Willow Springs, along property owned by the MWRD and leased to the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC). Two new foothills accessible to hikers and eventually to mountain bikes in 2016 have been added to the Centennial Trail.



Scenic overlook at the new Centennial Hill along the Centennial Trail in Willow Springs, IL. 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).

The hills were 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 trail users input during three public meetings. In addition to the two hills, a hiking trail and rest area have also been added. Using the overburden and MWRD’s Class A Exceptional Quality Biosolids, the hill will offer 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 newly improved Centennial Trail demonstrates how collaboration and good planning between government agencies can provide both practical and recreational resources to residents and visitors,” said Eileen Figel, Deputy General Superintendent of the FPCC. “The new 60 foot hill that will open next *(continued)*



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
October 17, 2015

Improved Centennial Trail opens to great fanfare

New scenic overlook offers sweeping views above the Des Plaines River Valley (continued)



Newly improved Centennial Trail in Willow Springs, IL. The new public amenity was unveiled on Sat., Oct. 17 at Columbia Woods Forest Preserve in Willow Springs, along property owned by the MWRD and leased to the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC). Two new foothills accessible to hikers and eventually to mountain bikes in 2016 have been added to the Centennial Trail.



Slope of new Centennial Hill along the Centennial Trail in Willow Springs, IL. 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).

season will be an added amenity for outdoor enthusiasts looking for an extra challenge.”

Steve Buchtel, executive director, Trail for Illinois, said “The MWRD’s made good on its promise to return the Centennial Trail to trail users when they were through, and as a bonus turned a pile of rubble into an amazing “above the trees” trail experience. They’re leaving the Centennial Trail better than they found it.”

La Grange Lions Club, Cook County Forest Preserves, and Trails for Illinois sponsored an inaugural Centennial Trail Ride between the trail head near Columbia

Woods to Illinois Route 83 and back over an eight-mile loop.

Todd Combs, past president of the LaGrange Lions Club said, “MWRD and Trails for Illinois have been great partners in sponsoring the Centennial Trail Re-opening Ride which will benefit the many charities the LaGrange Lions support, including individuals needing help with their vision care, annual recipients of a college scholarship, Constance Morris House and several others. And as an avid cyclist, I am thrilled with the way the Centennial Trail has been restored and updated.”

###

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.