



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## Chicago Artists Month Art Installation Celebrates Phosphorus Recovery

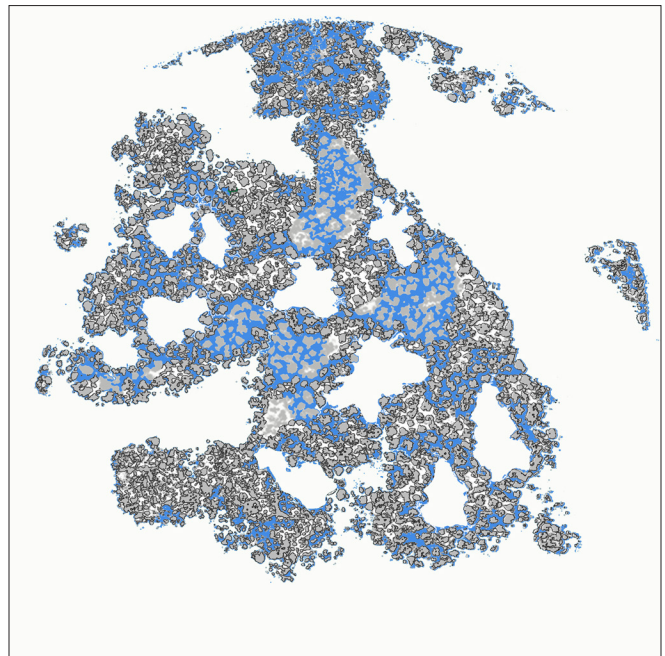
*Artwork builds awareness of critical water-quality issue and innovations in addressing it*

Creative inspiration can come for anywhere. For a group of Chicago artists, it came from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD's) phosphorus recovery process, which will next year begin removing phosphorus from wastewater treated at the MWRD's Stickney Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) and turning it into fertilizer. The resulting artwork, an installation called Cycle P15 that is part of Chicago Artists Month, is designed to be a fun and engaging way to build awareness of a critical water-quality issue, advances in addressing it and actions residents can take to help.

The installation is open to the public and will be on view in the MWRD's lobby at 111 E. Erie on Nov. 2 to 13. The public is invited to play "Cycle P15: Game On!," on Fri., Nov. 13, 4 pm—6:30 pm which will be held in the lobby of the MWRD's 111 E. Erie building.

Cycle P15 is both artwork and a game to play. Twister is among its inspirations, with the floor serving as the game board and colored circles guiding players' next steps. The circles, which contain images representing steps in the phosphorus-recovery process, emanate from an easel, which displays three augmented-reality (AR) artworks. With a free downloadable app, any mobile device directed toward AR artwork will show both an actual object or image and an artist's augmentation of it. The Cycle P15 AR pieces are special stops along the game.

Trivial Pursuit™ is another inspiration, with players advancing in the game by answering water-related questions that both entertain and educate. All of the game elements work together to tell the story of the transformation of phosphorus from a life-giving nutrient to a pollutant, back to a nutrient again.



*An augmented-reality image from Cycle P15: Artist Annette Barbier's interpretation of phosphorus-accumulating organisms, which are microbes that are integral to the phosphorus recovery program. To view the artist's augmentation of this image on your computer screen visit [www.terracompr.com/cyclep15/AurasmaSetup](http://www.terracompr.com/cyclep15/AurasmaSetup) and set up the free app Aurasma on your mobile device. Then follow the directions for viewing the piece—and watch the image come alive.*

The MWRD has several plants that receive waste and stormwater, and its Stickney WRP is the largest wastewater treatment plant in the world, treating 1.2 billion gallons of wastewater it receives daily. Ostara Nutrient Recovery Technologies Inc., the Vancouver company that developed the innovative recovery process, will pay the MWRD \$400/ton. MWRD invested \$30 million on the side-stream process plant retrofit and plans to net \$2 million per year once the facility is fully operational. The Crystal Green will be sold in pellets to fertilizer blender distributors. The pellets are non-water soluble, releasing nutrients in response to acids excreted

# Chicago Artists Month Art Installation Celebrates Phosphorus Recovery *(continued)*

from plant roots as needed, typically during fruit, flower and nut set times.

“The MWRD is moving from a waste paradigm to a resource paradigm and implementing phosphorus recovery as part of that movement,” said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “This operation is a major piece of our work to transform into the utility of the future. It is exciting that artists can see the treatment process as a way to engage the public.”

“When I learned the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events was looking for projects for Chicago Artists Month that focus on Chicago as a place for innovation, I thought of the District’s phosphorus recovery program,” said Cycle P15 project lead Christine Esposito, of Terracom, a Chicago communications firm that connects innovators and helps them collaborate in developing new ways to engage people in pressing environmental issues. “I

thought it could be an interesting fit, as well as a chance to celebrate and build awareness of an exciting development in water quality and resource recovery.”

Along with Esposito, the Cycle P15 team of artists consists of Annette Barbier, Adrienne Ciskey, Eva Baldinger, Daveenah Guise, Alex Congi, with concept input by Eden Ünlüata-Foley. The artists will be on-hand for the Cycle P15: Game On! event.

Cycle P15 is sponsored by Terracom, Ostara, and Black and Veatch, an employee-owned, global leader in building critical human infrastructure in energy, water, telecommunications and government services.

Besides the MWRD, partners in the Cycle P15 project are the IntuiTeens program of Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art. Learn more about Cycle P15 at [www.chicagoartistsmonth.org/cycle-p15](http://www.chicagoartistsmonth.org/cycle-p15) and [www.terracompr.com/cyclep15](http://www.terracompr.com/cyclep15).

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**Recovering Resources, Transforming Water**

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*Established in 1889, the MWRD ([www.mwr.org](http://www.mwr.org)) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.*