



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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For immediate release

November 13, 2015

U.S. EPA officials tour MWRD projects, facilities to see local resources recovered, water transformed



Attorneys with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency toured the McCook Reservoir with officials from the MWRD.

A delegation of attorneys from the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA's) national and regional offices recently toured Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) facilities and projects that will improve water quality while recovering and reclaiming valuable local resources. General Counsel Avi Garbow, U.S. EPA, and Acting Regional Counsel Bertram Frey joined other attorneys from Washington, D.C. and Region 5 and MWRD's senior staff for the visit.

"The tour illustrated the vast array of projects that MWRD staff is exploring to protect the local water environment and lead to other opportunities in sustainability," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "We have long been known for our dedication to water quality issues dating back to 1889, but the District is also a leader in resource recovery. We appreciate having the opportunity to show how reclaiming these resources can protect our environment while saving taxpayers substantial money."

The tour stopped by MWRD's Mainstream Pumping Station (PS) in Hodgkins, the Lawndale Avenue Solids Management Area (LASMA) in Willow Springs and the McCook Reservoir.

Descending to as low as 300 feet below ground, the Mainstream PS is one of three stations in the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan designed to eliminate waterway pollution by capturing combined sewer overflows from an area of 375 square miles, preventing backflows into Lake Michigan and providing an outlet for flood waters. Mainstream PS pumps sewer water and stormwater from 31 miles of tunnels to the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant for treatment.

LASMA is home to the MWRD's production of biosolids. The MWRD was recently authorized to use Exceptional Quality biosolids on home gardens. This designation will open up new markets for this valuable soil enhancement product and enables the organization to reduce operating costs significantly. *(continued)*



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The MWRD has improved the product through the blending of wood chips and other organics, resulting in decreased loads being hauled to landfills.

At the McCook Reservoir, the MWRD is creating the world's largest reservoir in two stages. Phase one will be operational by the end of 2017 and will hold 3.5 billion gallons of water. When fully completed, the reservoir will have a total capacity of 10 billion gallons, larger than the existing Thornton Composite Reservoir. Stage 1 of the McCook Reservoir will provide \$98.5M in flood damage reduction benefits and another \$15.6M from Stage 2, for a total of \$114.1M to 3.1 million people in 37 communities. EPA officials were also presented with the latest information on the MWRD's sustainability efforts, including several resource recovery projects including:

- Energy Management — Biogas utilization and supplemental organics
- Phosphorus — Building the world's largest phosphorus recovery facility at the Stickney WRP.
- ANITA Mox Nitrogen removal system — Reduces energy usage by 40 percent, saving 120 million kilowatts per hour annually, the equivalent ener-



The McCook Reservoir, situated along the Stevenson Expressway (I-55) between the Des Plaines River and Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, will reduce pollution in the Chicago Area Waterways System by holding excess water before it can be treated. It will also provide flood relief for a service area more of more than 250 square miles.

gy provided by 15 utility-scale wind turbines or enough energy to supply 4,500 homes.

- Stormwater Management and Green Infrastructure — Partnering with dozens of communities to provide stormwater management projects, acquiring flood-prone properties and working with the Chicago Public Schools to prepare school properties to better contain stormwater.
- Water Reuse — Exploring options for reuse of treated water in Stickney and Calumet industrial corridors.

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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.