



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## Chicago Wilderness milestone earns MWRD distinction

The Chicago Wilderness (CW) came home to one of the organizations that founded it 20 years ago to celebrate its distinguished record of service and commitment to conservation over the last two decades.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Board of Commissioners presented a resolution at its May 19 meeting to CW on its 20th anniversary.

“To see Chicago Wilderness grow over the past 20 years and spread its message of environmental stewardship throughout the region is a testament to everyone who has been a part of this wonderful initiative and to the passion our region has for protecting our natural resources,” said MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore, who was the founding editor of Chicago WILDERNESS magazine and played a key leadership

role. “I am proud to see the imprint this organization has made on our region’s ecology, wildlife and biological diversity around the many places we enjoy and call home. As one of the founding members that helped launch Chicago Wilderness, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago is delighted to present this resolution and continue supporting Chicago Wilderness in its efforts to care for our planet.”

On hand to receive the honor were Arnold Randall, general superintendent of the Forest Preserves of Cook County, chairman of the CW Executive Council and member of the CW Trust Board, and Michelle S. Carr, state director of The Nature Conservancy in Illinois, who is also a member of the CW Trust Board and Executive Council.

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The MWRD Board of Commissioners presented a resolution to Chicago Wilderness (CW) on 20 years of ensuring a resilient region. On hand to recognize this achievement were (front, l to r): CW Executive Council Chair Arnold Randall, general superintendent of the Forest Preserve, MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan, CW Trust Board member Michelle Carr, Illinois state director of The Nature Conservancy, MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore, MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos and MWRD Executive Director David St. Pierre; and (back, l to r) MWRD Commissioner David Walsh, Commissioner Michael Alvarez, Commissioner Cynthia Santos and Commissioner Kari Steele.

## Chicago Wilderness milestone earns MWRD distinction *(continued)*

“I want to congratulate Chicago Wilderness on their 20th Anniversary and for being a leader in the Midwest, acting as a voice for open space,” said Chairman Randall. “Government agencies like the Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District play a crucial role in managing land and provide essential services to residents. With the perspective of Chicago Wilderness, we have a coalition of organizations working to better improve our natural resources and the quality of life in our region.”

Founded on April 10, 1996, CW is a regional alliance leading strategy to preserve, improve, and expand nature and quality of life in parts of northeast Illinois, northwest Indiana, southeast Wisconsin and southwest Michigan. From the 34 founding members who launched CW out of an unprecedented partnership of public and private organizations 20 years ago, the CW consortium has since grown to more than 200 member organizations and a Corporate Council. Together with its established staff, membership organizations, Corporate Council and Executive Council, CW is working to protect, restore, study and manage the precious natural ecosystems on more than 545,000 acres of protected lands for the benefit of people and nature. CW’s many member organizations represent a wide variety of knowledge and expertise that span all facets of conservation. From invasive species removal and land regeneration to childhood education and volunteer action, CW efforts significantly contribute to regional resiliency and economic vitality.

“Chicago Wilderness has been, and continues to be, the driver of innovative collaborations that protect and highlight nature’s value and its many services to the Chicago region and beyond,” said Michelle S. Carr. “The collaboration stands as a model of best practice for cities globally as they coordinate and prioritize precious natural resources”

With a 20-year legacy of collaboration, CW is building on an exceptional body of regional work that includes: a biodiversity recovery plan; green infrastructure vision; regional plans of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, and Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; a climate action plan for nature, education and outreach programs, and committee work that addresses CW’s various issues.



*MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore and her fellow commissioners presented a resolution to Chicago Wilderness Executive Council and Trust Board members (l-r) Michelle Carr, Illinois state director of The Nature Conservancy, and Arnold Randal, general superintendent of the Forest Preserves of Cook County. The Chicago Wilderness recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, thanks in part to its current leaders and dedicated staff and Commissioner Shore, who helped launch the organization to preserve, improve, and expand nature and quality of life in parts of Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan.*

Over the last 20 years, the Chicago Wilderness alliance has produced many valuable resources and tools, including an Atlas of Biodiversity, a Biodiversity Recovery Plan, Chicago WILDERNESS Magazine, the Chicago Wilderness Climate Action Plan for Nature, a Green Infrastructure Vision for the Region, and a Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights, among others, while engaging citizen scientists, increasing funds and staff devoted to restoration and stewardship, and making the practice of ecological restoration widely accepted by land management agencies.

The MWRD was quickly drawn to the CW for its aspiration to protect and restore the biological diversity and ecosystem health that is essential to a resilient region, healthy people and a robust economy. Lands owned by the MWRD include vital habitat for terrestrial and aquatic species, including bald eagles, osprey, and other rare plants and animals and offer opportunities for restoration and recreation.

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**Recovering Resources, Transforming Water**

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