



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6633

allison.fore@mwrdd.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

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Local photographer features green infrastructure in “Rooftop: Second Nature” exhibit



Photographer Brad Temkin with one of his exhibit pieces which features a green roof high above the Chicago River.



The green roof at the MWRD's Racine Avenue Pumping Station, a building that houses equipment that pumps wastewater to the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant. The structure's total building roof area is 33,000 sq. ft., and approx. 4,500 sq. ft. is structurally-rated to handle the additional vegetative roof loading.

High on the skyline's summit but unknown to most people are vegetative ecosystems, working 24/7 to help cool buildings in the summer and warm them in the winter. But that's not all these green roofs do. These environmental marvels are a form of green infrastructure that the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) supports and promotes to collect stormwater and help to reduce flooding.

A fascination with this approach sparked Skokie-based photographer Brad Temkin to embark on an international quest to photograph these rooftops around the world, beginning in Chicago and travelling throughout Switzerland and Germany. Temkin's work, currently on display at Roosevelt University's Gage Gallery in Chicago, shows prime examples of these efforts to counter the impact of changing weather patterns.

“Rooftop: Second Nature draws poetic attention

to an important new movement to counter the heat island effect caused by city life,” said Temkin. Green roofs reduce our carbon footprint and improve stormwater control, but they do far more. They reflect the conflict of our existence, symbolizing the allure of nature in the face of our continuing urban sprawl.”

MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore attended Temkin's grand opening. “Brad's work draws attention to an excellent tool stormwater management agencies across the county have just recently begun to embrace,” said Commissioner Shore. “We will begin to see more and more green roofs dotting our landscape as we look for ways to reduce flooding.”

The MWRD has installed green roofs on two of its facilities, at the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) and the Racine (*continued*)

Local photographer features green infrastructure *(continued)*

Avenue Pumping Station (RAPS). RAPS is a structure that houses the equipment to pump wastewater to the Stickney WRP. Approximately 4500 square feet of the 33,000 square-foot roof can accommodate the additional vegetative load. Temkin has photographed the RAPS green roof and several other MWRD water reclamation plants and facilities to document the work the MWRD does to protect the local water environment.

In 2004, the state of Illinois designated the MWRD as the regional stormwater authority and today, the agency is working on nearly 100 projects that address flooding, many of which utilize green infrastructure solutions that absorb stormwater effectively and naturally.

“Chicago weather can be harsh as we face extreme temperature swings and intense rainstorms,” said Commissioner Shore. “The vegetative roof benefits both the District by helping to reduce our



(On the far right): Keegan Kaczor and Mollie Bunnell, senior Integrated Marketing Communication majors, discuss green roofs with photographer Brad Temkin at Temkin's exhibit at Roosevelt University's Gage Gallery.

energy costs and the environment by helping to slow stormwater runoff.”

Temkin's work will be on display until May 6 at the Roosevelt University Gage Gallery, 18 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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