



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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For immediate release

October 11, 2018



## WEF awards the MWRD with Project Excellence for McCook Reservoir



The Water Environment Federation (WEF) honored the MWRD with the Project Excellence Award for the McCook Reservoir Stage I. On hand to celebrate this national milestone were Principal Civil Engineer Lou Storino (from left), Director of Engineering Catherine O'Connor, Commissioner Frank Avila, Commissioner Debra Shore, Principal Civil Engineer Carmen Scalise and Assistant Director of Monitoring and Research/WEF President Tom Kuntz.

A flood mitigation and water quality improvement project unrivaled in size throughout the world has earned the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) a heralded award at an international conference.

The MWRD's McCook Reservoir was selected by the Water Environment Federation (WEF) Board of Trustees as the 2018 recipient of the WEF Project Excellence Award. The distinguished honor was presented to MWRD commissioners and staff during a ceremony on Oct. 2 at the annual Water Environment Federation Technical Exhibition and Conference (WEFTEC) held this year at the New Orleans Convention Center.

"Congratulations to the engineers and contractors and our predecessors with the Board of Commissioners at the MWRD who foresaw a vision to combat flooding and protect our water environment through the creation of Stage I of the McCook Reservoir," said MWRD



MWRD commissioners celebrated the opening of Stage I of the McCook Reservoir last December, proclaiming a new day of protection and improved area water quality through the storage capacity of 3.5 billion gallons of water.

President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "We share this award with our partners at the United States Army Corps of Engineers and contractors at Vulcan Materials Company and Kiewit and the many contractors who took part to deliver a massive project that will make a major impact on our quality of life in Cook County."

Benefitting 3.1 million people living in Chicago and 36 suburbs, McCook Reservoir Stage I captures and stores water before it can be sent by gravity and pumped from TARP to MWRD water reclamation plants to be cleaned and released to waterways. Since coming into service at the beginning of 2018, the reservoir has captured 20 billion gallons of water.

The McCook Reservoir is an essential part of the MWRD's Tunnel and Reservoir Plan to prevent flooding and pollution from combined sewer overflows. Stage I of the reservoir has 3.5 billion gallons of storage capacity and provides an estimated \$114 million per year in flood reduction benefits, while also capturing untreated water that previously overflowed (*continued*)

## WEF awards the MWRD with Project Excellence, *cont.*



*The MWRD Board of Commissioners and executive staff celebrate national awards bestowed to the MWRD at Water Environment Federation Technical Exhibition and Conference (WEFTEC).*



*Stage I of the McCook Reservoir benefits 3.1 million area residents and now many more will hear about its impact after the Water Environment Federation bestowed it with a Project Excellence Award.*

into waterways during storm events. Stage II of the reservoir, due for completion by 2029, will be able to hold an additional 6.5 billion gallons. When complete, the four TARP tunnel systems and three huge reservoirs the tunnels flow into will have a capacity of more than 20 billion gallons.

“Thank you to the Water Environment Federation for acknowledging the many hours of work that went into creating the McCook Reservoir, and the difference this project is making in improving our water environment,” said MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila.

Commissioner Debra Shore agreed. “This award is a tribute to MWRD’s vision, hard work, and expert engineering.”

When it is completed, McCook will surpass the MWRD’s Thornton Composite Reservoir as the largest reservoir of its type in the world. The reservoir will be so large that more than 11 Soldier Field Stadiums could fit inside it, and is nearly deep enough at 300 feet to stack another 11 on top of that. To create Stage I of the combined sewer reservoir, the MWRD removed 9.4 million



*The McCook Reservoir Stage I filled in June, demonstrating a fully operational system retaining water that formerly discharged to the Chicago Area Waterway System or ended up in basements of homeowners and businesses. Another 6.5 billion gallons of capacity will become available through Stage II.*

cubic yards of overburden, enough to fill the Merchandise Mart eight times over.

The MWRD was one of only two honorees for the WEF Project Excellence Award, along with a water reuse project from Pasco County, Florida.

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### Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

*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.*