



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## MWRD Sustainability Summit highlights green initiatives



*MWRD partners were recognized for taking measures to mitigate flooding and reuse biosolids to improve the structure and porosity of soils. The MWRD presented six awards for biosolids beneficial reuse and nine awards for sustainable landscaping.*

Representatives from municipalities, park districts, golf courses, schools, community gardens, transportation agencies and other green thumbs employing new practices to manage stormwater and utilize renewable resources joined the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) to discuss, network and celebrate achievements in sustainability.

The MWRD hosted its seventh annual Sustainability Summit at its Stickney Water Reclamation Plant on Oct. 22, convening elected officials, public administrators and municipal public works managers with landscapers, stormwater engineers, land managers and master gardeners to provide a forum for exchanging resources and information designed to promote green infrastructure management and resource recovery.

The Sustainability Summit addressed the many environmental measures that the MWRD is taking to mitigate flooding and reuse biosolids to improve the structure and porosity of soils, which allows plants to more effectively utilize nutrients. The MWRD presented six awards for biosolids beneficial reuse and nine awards for sustainable landscaping.

“We congratulate our award winners and thank them and all Sustainability Summit attendees for their commit-



*Participants in the MWRD's Seventh Annual Sustainability Summit toured MWRD's composting operations.*

ment to protecting our communities through long-term environmental stewardship,” said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. “By reusing EQ biosolids and compost locally we are fortifying plant life and reducing carbon footprints by sustainably returning organic materials to our local soils.”

Awards for beneficial biosolids reuse were bestowed to Tom Milas, forestry and grounds manager for the Village of Buffalo Grove, for incorporating biosolids into a native plant nursery; and the Illinois Tollway, which incorporated approximately 23,570 cubic yards of composted biosolids into landscape plant improvements along Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355). The MWRD also presented certificates to the Lansing Garden Club for the use of MWRD's EQ Compost for local plant growth; the Urban Growers Collective for improving growing conditions at vacant lots; the Stone Temple Missionary Baptist Church for the use of MWRD's EQ Compost to support plant growth in an urban garden; and the South Austin Neighborhood Association for the use of MWRD's EQ Compost to support plant growth in a community garden.

Sustainable landscaping awards recognized Omni Ecosystems for its incorporation of wheat prairie roofs as a form of green infrastructure, and Waters Elementary School in the Ravenswood Gardens *(continued)*

## MWRD Sustainability Summit highlights green initiatives, *cont.*



*MWRD commissioners Kari K. Steele, Frank Avila and Barbara McGowan recognized officials with Buffalo Grove (top from left) and the Illinois Tollway for beneficial biosolids reuse and Omni Ecosystems (bottom, from left) and Waters Elementary School for sustainable landscaping.*

neighborhood for developing a rain harvesting system using bioswales, a rain garden and rain barrel. The MWRD also presented certificates to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County for its sustainability and climate resiliency master plan for preserving six nature centers; the city of Northlake for partnering on the completion of the Addison Creek Wetland restoration and streambank stabilization; the Chicago-based Roof Crop for establishing roof farming for stormwater management; the Village of Franklin Park for partnering with the MWRD to incorporate a rain garden at the Mission Press Sustainable Garden; the Village of La Grange for partnering on a new green permeable parking lot to increase stormwater retention; the City of Countryside for establishing native plant landscaping; and Buffalo Grove Park District in restoring local woodland, prairie and wetland ecosystems.

MWRD speakers included President Steele, environmental soil scientists Benjamin Morgan and Dr. Olawale Oladeji on beneficial use of biosolids and engineer John Watson, who specializes in stormwater management and green infrastructure. Guest speakers included Dan Cooper, director of environmental services for the Chicago Park District, Miguel del Valle, general fore-



*From L to R: MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan, 43rd Ward Ald. Michele Smith, MWRD Executive Director Brian Perkovich and Commissioner Frank Avila held one of many intelligent conversations to create a better environment at the MWRD's 7th Annual Sustainability Summit.*

man of floriculture for the Chicago Park District, F. Dan Dinelli, superintendent of North Shore Country Club in Glenview, and Dr. Thomas Wall, senior infrastructure and preparedness analyst for Argonne National Laboratory's Decision and Infrastructure Sciences Division.

“Our annual Sustainability Summit provides us the opportunity to reinforce our goals of resource *(continued)*



## MWRD Sustainability Summit highlights green initiatives, *cont.*

recovery and stormwater management and bring together partners who share in these values,” said MWRD Commissioner Marcelino Garcia. “By creating this forum, we can better learn how various communities and organizations across Cook County are working to make the environment a priority for generations to come.”

After the Sustainability Summit, visitors were given an exclusive look at the process of co-composting biosol-

ids with woodchips the MWRD uses to produce its EQ Compost.

To learn more about the MWRD’s efforts in sustainability in protecting the regional water environment and recovering resources, visit [mwrld.org](http://mwrld.org), and to request EQ Compost, visit [mwrld.org/eq-compost](http://mwrld.org/eq-compost).

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### ***Recovering Resources, Transforming Water***

*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.*