



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## Summer Float Party highlights clean water accomplishments



*The team from McCabe and Jenny on the Afternoon Mix 101.9, including Casey McCabe and Jenny Valliere, floated downstream the North Branch of the Chicago River to show their support of the Friends of the Chicago River Summer Float Party.*



*(L to R): MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita and son Kai Collins joined Friends of the Chicago River Executive Director Margaret Frisbie, U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley and 40th Ward Ald. Andre Vasquez and hundreds of floaters, flamingos and ducks for the Friends' Summer Float Party.*

More than 200 floaters and 100 volunteers descended on the North Branch of the Chicago River to participate in the Friends of the Chicago River's (Friends) Summer Float Party to experience the benefits of clean water thanks to the commitment and innovation of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) and advocacy of Friends and other partners.

MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita joined Friends Executive Director Margaret Frisbie, U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (5th) and 40th Ward Ald. Andre Vasquez to support floaters as they drifted downstream south about two miles from the boat and canoe launch at River Park, at 3000 W. Argyle St., to the WMS Boat-house at Clark Park, 3400 N. Rockwell St.

"This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act which catapulted clean-water priorities forward across the country," said MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita. "So, it's only fitting that we open up the river to the public for the Summer Float Party. As a commissioner, I'm proud of the progress

we are making – working together with Friends of the Chicago River and so many others – to restore and respect our rivers for people and wildlife."

Commissioner Morita joined Friends to launch the "Big Jump" and "Big Float" event in recent years to commemorate advancements in clean water from the South Branch of the Chicago River at Ping Tom Park to the North Shore Channel at the Dammrich Rowing Center in Skokie. This year, Friends invited more floaters from across the region to experience the river and celebrate the river system's renaissance.

"When Friends of the Chicago River was founded in 1979 it would have been inconceivable to float down the river on inflatable chickens and giant unicorns, but not anymore," said Frisbie. "Thanks to decades of hard work and advocacy by Friends, elected officials, government agencies, and our many partners, the Chicago-Calumet River system is healthier and more accessible for recreation than it has been in over 150 years."

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## Summer Float Party highlights clean water accomplishments, *cont.*



*Floaters and safety volunteers in canoes enjoyed the water, scenery and celebrated improvements in local water quality at the Friends of the Chicago River's Summer Float Party on the North Branch.*

As a great blue heron watched from the shore opposite the newly restored Horner Park, a procession of inner tubes, floating loungers, inflatable toys and even a kiddie pool filled with four adult men paddled and floated their way down the river.

“Recreation could not have been imagined when the MWRD constructed more than 60 miles of local waterways more than a century ago to reverse the

flow of the water and protect public health and keep drinking water and waterways safe,” said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. “The work provided drainage for the Chicago region and conveyed wastewater before wastewater treatment ever existed. Now, over 100 years after the first MWRD treatment plant began cleaning water, additional advocacy and engagement from Friends have helped gather momentum for cleaner water.”

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

*Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at [mwrld.org](http://mwrld.org).*