



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6626

allison.fore@mwr.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

For immediate release

October 28, 2022

Ten years of embracing environmentalism and collaboration at the MWRD's annual Sustainability Summit

For the 10th annual year and back in person, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) reconvened a learning exchange in sustainability and water resource protection, commemorating the best in sustainable landscaping, resource recovery and the 100th anniversary of the MWRD's Calumet Water Reclamation Plant (CWRP) and Cal-Sag Channel.

The annual Sustainability Summit grows the MWRD's network of community leaders, water professionals and environmental experts to educate and engage partners and stakeholders on how they can sustainably manage water and recover resources effectively.

"We have been hosting this program now for a decade, and while the speakers may have changed, the goal remains the same: to provide an opportunity to learn about sustainable resources available from the MWRD and others, connect and exchange knowledge," said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. "Those of us here at the Sustainability Summit share a common value—to protect the waterways and the environment. By working together, we can reduce our carbon footprint and ensure a better world for future generations."

The MWRD hosted its 10th Annual Sustainability Summit on Oct. 21, at the Ford Calumet Environmental Center at the Chicago Park District's Big Marsh Park on the South East Side. Here in this idyllic backdrop of the Calumet River and Big Marsh Park, in the shadows of the MWRD's CWRP, the MWRD unveiled its first ever Calumet Partnership Council.

The goal of the Calumet Partnership Council is to serve as a liaison between the CWRP and the neighboring community, ensuring the MWRD is a responsive neighbor and inclusive partner. The Council will provide a channel for two-way communication between the community and the MWRD. Members will serve a minimum two-year term and meet quarterly.



L to R: MWRD President Kari K. Steele presents the Biosolids Beneficial Reuse Award to Village of Alsip Public Works Director Michael Fraider and Alsip Mayor John D. Ryan for Alsip's new boat launch, during the MWRD's 10th Annual Sustainability Summit at the Ford Calumet Environmental Center.

The MWRD is seeking to create Community Partnership Councils for each of its seven service areas where MWRD water reclamation plants are located. The new endeavor is a product of the MWRD's ambitious 2021-2025 Strategic Plan that places emphasis on community engagement and other strategies.

Speakers included MWRD Senior Environmental Soil Scientist Dr. Theresa Johnston, Cook County Farm Bureau Director of Governmental Affairs and Public Relations Bona J. Heinsohn, MWRD Principal Civil Engineer Rich Fisher and retired MWRD Executive Director and author Richard Lanyon, who spoke on the 100th anniversary of the Calumet Water Reclamation Plant and Cal-Sag Channel both completed in tandem in 1922.

The event spurs intelligent conversations on issues impacting the water environment while also honoring the best in resource recovery, sustainable *(continued)* l a n d -

Ten Years of Sustainability Summit, *cont.*

scaping and green infrastructure. Among the award winners, the MWRD honored the Village of Alsip and Chicago Region Trees Initiative for the new Alsip boat launch revitalizing an asphalt lot into a fertile and attractive space with MWRD biosolids to invite the community to the Cal Sag-Channel, making it accessible and protecting it from urban runoff and other sources of pollution.

The MWRD also honored the Village of Elmwood Park and the Village of Brookfield with Sustainable Landscaping Awards for green infrastructure installations that help manage more stormwater while improving public spaces.

“We welcome our new members of the Calumet Partnership Council, congratulate our award winners from the 10th Annual Sustainability Summit and thank all who attended,” said MWRD Commissioner Eira Corral Sepúlveda. “Due to your commitments to our environment and partnership, we are building a better future for our natural resources and protecting our planet.”

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The audience listens as MWRD Senior Environmental Soil Scientist Dr. Theresa Johnston gives an overview of biosolids and compost use as a sustainable practice and current partnerships at the MWRD's 10th Annual Sustainability Summit on Oct. 21.

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.