



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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For immediate release

August 3, 2022

## MWRD Kari K. Steele welcomes USACE Major General Heitkamp to TARP

*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - MWRD partnership helps advance McCook Reservoir*



*(L to R): U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Chicago District Acting Deputy District Engineer Jonathan Aya-ay, USACE Chicago District Project Manager Michael Padilla, USACE Chicago Division Commander and District Engineer Col. Paul Culberson, MWRD Assistant Director of Engineering Kevin Fitzpatrick, President Kari K. Steele, USACE Deputy Commanding General Major General Richard Heitkamp and MWRD Executive Director Brian A. Perkovich stand beside McCook Reservoir Stage I, capturing up to 3.5 billion gallons of water to protect the region from flooding and water pollution.*

Leaders with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) welcomed Major General Richard Heitkamp, deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in Washington, D.C., to view the progress on significant flood control projects that are protecting the Chicago region and the infrastructure behind them.

Major General Heitkamp and Col. Paul Culberson, commander and district engineer of the USACE, Chicago District, were greeted by MWRD President Kari K. Steele, Executive Director Brian A. Perkovich and Assistant Director of Engineering Kevin Fitzpatrick at McCook Reservoir and at the Mainstream Pumping Station. The reservoir and pumping station are two of the integral parts of the MWRD's Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) working to protect area waterways and



*MWRD President Kari K. Steele welcomed USACE Major General Richard Heitkamp to view Stage I of McCook Reservoir from the east rim. In the background to the west is McCook Reservoir Stage II, being excavated to hold an additional 6.5 billion gallons of storage capacity.*

Lake Michigan from pollution and reduce flooding in combined sewer areas.

“We enjoyed our visit from Major General Heitkamp and Col. Culberson to see how our partnership has advanced critical flood control and water quality improvement projects to protect our region and become a model for infrastructure improvements across the country as we battle the effects of climate change and flooding,” said President Steele. “We appreciate the Army Corps for their leadership and service and thank them for their partnership working to mitigate flooding and protect our water resources.”

The partnership between the MWRD and USACE Chicago District has been critical to the completion of TARP. Thanks to the support of the USACE, the MWRD received a lump sum payment of \$33.8 million in 2019 to assume responsibility for the design and construction of remaining elements of the McCook Reservoir Stage II.

*(continued)*

## MWRD welcomes USACE Major General Heitkamp to TARP, *cont.*



*About 300 feet below ground, the MWRD and USACE leaders toured the Mainstream Pumping Station in Hodgkins. The station pumps water up from the MWRD's Mainstream Tunnel System which consists of 31 miles of tunnels, 13 to 33 feet in diameter and 240 to 300 feet below ground. It extends from Wilmette on the north end to McCook on the southern end. The ring represents the tunnel's diameter of 33 feet.*

Unmatched in size throughout the world, TARP is comprised of four large tunnel systems over 110 miles in length and three giant reservoirs designed to reduce the amount of water pollution by holding untreated water until it can be cleaned at MWRD water reclamation plants. The McCook Reservoir currently has capacity to hold more than 3.5 billion gallons with another 6.5 billion gallons of storage available once complete. The Mainstream Pumping Station is one of three TARP pump stations. Sewage and stormwater entering the tunnels through drop shafts are carried to the station, where the flow is pumped to the MWRD's Stickney Water Reclamation Plant.

Major General Heitkamp serves as the Deputy Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C. As such, he is second in command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has more than



*Since becoming operational in late 2017 through June 2022, Stage 1 of the McCook Reservoir has captured more than 88 billion gallons of combined sewage. That is 88 billion gallons of water that would have overwhelmed local communities and polluted waterways.*

36,000 civilian employees and 800 military personnel who provide project management and construction support to 250 Army and Air Force installations, and technical and construction expertise to more than 110 countries.

As the USACE Deputy Commanding General, MG Heitkamp is responsible for policy and programming in support of USACE's project management, construction support and engineering missions executed around the world. He plays a critical role in contingency operations supporting national defense as well as civil works and emergency response programs in support of national security. Heitkamp also advises the Chief of Engineers on real estate and engineering matters and programs related to the approximately 90,000 engineer Soldiers within the Regular Army, National Guard and Reserve.

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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).*