



Neighborhood Newsletter

Hi Neighbor!

Do you know what critical work takes place in the buildings located at 130th Street along the Little Calumet River? The hardworking men and women of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) work around the clock to treat wastewater, manage stormwater, improve our waterways and protect the source of the region's drinking water, Lake Michigan. We would like to make you aware of the latest information and resources that strengthen our community.



Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic

We are continuing to monitor information about the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). We are following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Illinois Department of Public Health as we continue to provide water reclamation operations and stormwater management services 24 hours a day. Our Calumet Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) can clean up to 430 million gallons of wastewater in one day before sending it to the Little Calumet River as clean water.

Odor Control Update

Reducing odors from the wastewater treatment process is one of our top priorities. Our staff routinely monitors for odors at 24 locations at the WRP, and findings are summarized and published at www.mwrd.org. We are also investing in new filter systems that will capture and treat the odors from wastewater entering the Calumet WRP's screening process. Odors will be removed via a biological process. These new odor control facilities are anticipated to be fully operational by summer of 2021. However, we also need to hear from you if you notice an odor in the community. Please immediately report odors on our Incident Reporting system on our website or by downloading our app on iTunes. You may also report other issues such as waterway blockages or suspicious dumping into sewers or waterways. You can also call us at (800) 332-3867 to report these types of issues.



Visit www.mwrd.org and click on the "Incident Reporting" icon to report odor, water pollution, waterway blockages, or other incidents.

Hard-working herd eats to maintain landscaping

This summer we welcomed 65 goats and sheep to the Calumet WRP to help us manage overgrowth and invasive species, maintain our native prairie landscaping (NPL) and reach places that are inaccessible by mower. The herd's work is important as we are able to reduce our use of herbicides and power mowers. The 12 acres of NPL help us manage stormwater and improve local water quality, but it also requires significant maintenance, and we are pleased to report that the goats and sheep were up to the task.

No Wipes Down the Pipes!

To protect your plumbing and municipal pipes, please do not flush anything other than the three Ps. Toilet paper is designed to break down easily. Paper towels, tissues and wipes can potentially clog your plumbing or the municipal sewer in your neighborhood and contribute to basement backups and area flooding. Check out our new video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/2CbnYdRetD4> and other videos on our MWRD channel. Fats, oils and greases can also have a harmful impact on your plumbing and local sewers when disposed down sinks and drains. Allow used cooking oil or grease to cool to room temperature. Then, pour it into a container, such as a can, jar or heat resistant plastic, and cover it securely before safely discarding it into the trash, and help us prevent blockages from forming in the sewers.



Thornton Composite Reservoir

Now five years old, the Thornton Composite Reservoir is continuing to make a difference in the quality of life for thousands of residents through the reservoir's ability to mitigate flooding and protect local waterways from pollution. Constructed in the Thornton Quarry, the Thornton Composite Reservoir provides 7.9 billion gallons of storage to benefit more than 556,000 people living in Chicago south of 87th Street and 13 south suburban communities. Since becoming operational, the gigantic reservoir has prevented more than 38 billion gallons of combined sewage from entering the waterways, by capturing the flow before it is treated at the Calumet WRP. This has led to cleaner waterways and increasing populations of fish and other wildlife.



Thornton Reservoir

Stormwater Management Update

Managing our region's stormwater can be a tremendous challenge given record rainfall and intense storms that can flood our basements and streets. Every year we reach out to local governments so we may partner on local infrastructure projects to improve drainage systems and green infrastructure projects that capture water before it enters the sewer pipes. These water management projects store and/or evaporate stormwater, thereby mimicking the natural water cycle. Green infrastructure solutions soak up more stormwater, mitigate flooding and create attractive spaces that utilize permeable pavement and natural landscaping to provide environmental and community benefits.

Through our annual call for projects, we are partnering with local municipalities and public agencies to install green infrastructure throughout southern Cook County; for example, alleys in Chicago's 10th Ward on the Southeast Side and projects in Blue Island, Ford Heights, Calumet Park, Midlothian, Palos Heights, Lansing, Burnham, Chicago Ridge and at a school in Thornton (District 154). We are also exploring options to fund green infrastructure through Chicago's Calumet River Gateway Garden. On the Far South Side, the MWRD has invested significantly in the Space to Grow program to transform the schoolyards of several Chicago Public Schools into vibrant places to play, learn and capture stormwater. Our Space to Grow schools include Harold Washington Elementary School, 9130 S. University Ave., Ashe Elementary School, 8505 S. Ingleside Ave., Schmid Elementary School, 9755 S. Greenwood Ave., Grissom Elementary School, 12810 S. Escanaba Ave., and Fernwood Elementary, 10041 S. Union St. We are excited to partner with our neighbors on more community stormwater management projects.

While we work on these important projects, we have a new resource available to help you manage stormwater at home. The "Green Neighbor Guide" features tools and ideas that can help you get started on stormwater management projects that you can install on your property. Whether it is a rain barrel or a rain garden, you can reduce flooding and basement backups at home. To access a copy of the publication, please visit <https://mwrdd.org/stormwater-management-1> or call (312) 751-6633. We also have resources on our "Flood Prevention 101" web page and encourage neighbors to grow more native plants, like milkweed, to soak up more stormwater and help save our monarch butterfly population through our new partnership with the Illinois Monarch Project.

You may also minimize flooding and basement backups by reducing your water use before and during storms. Be on the lookout for "Overflow Action Alerts" on our website and social media. Please avoid running your dishwasher, washing machine, or even taking a shower if you know there is an impending storm. This helps to reduce the amount of water flowing down drains and provides the sewage collection system with as much capacity as possible. This will also help protect our local waterways.

Community Use of MWRD Land

The MWRD leases large parcels of land to local park districts for a nominal fee. As a large landowner, the MWRD prides itself on developing meaningful land-use opportunities that promote recreation, like at the Cal-Sag Trail for which the MWRD dedicated land to attract visitors and create access to the Cal-Sag Channel. We have also been in discussion with agencies who are interested in environmental restoration and future land-use opportunities.

Jobs at the MWRD

Did you know that we have over 1,800 employees and over 200 job classifications? Explore career opportunities and sign up to receive future examination notifications at <https://mwrdd.org/careers>.

STEM learning from home with the MWRD

If you are interested in learning more about protecting your water environment, check out our extensive resources at mwrdd.org/education and enhance your e-Learning activities.

Despite these uncertain times, our employees are working to make our community a better place to live. If you have any questions, please call (312) 751-6633 or email public.affairs@mwrdd.org. You may also follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

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