



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6633

public.affairs@mwr.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

For immediate release

October 21, 2015

Improved Centennial Trail opens to great fanfare

New scenic overlook offers sweeping views above the Des Plaines River valley

A new public amenity was unveiled on Sat., Oct. 17 at Columbia Woods Forest Preserve in Willow Springs, along property owned by the MWRD and leased to the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC). Two new foothills accessible to hikers and eventually to mountain bikes in 2016 have been added to the Centennial Trail.

The hills were constructed as part of an MWRD project to remove 1.8 million cubic yards of overburden (dirt) from the neighboring Mc-

Cook Reservoir, a component of the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP). When completed, McCook Reservoir will provide 10 billion gallons of storage to capture combined sewer overflows that discharge to waterways and cause sewer backups. The reservoir will also provide \$90 million per year in flood control benefits to 3.1 million people living in 37 communities. Approx. 500 truck trips per day were needed to haul the overburden.

"We listened to the community and constructed an amenity that will be used for generations to come," said MWRD president Mariyana Spyropoulos. "In completing this project we were very mindful of meeting the needs of area recreational enthusiasts with the goal of constructing the McCook Reservoir on schedule. I think we have managed to meet everyone's needs."

The MWRD considered alternate sites for storing the McCook overburden, but an additional \$9.3 million price tag was not cost-effective. The Centennial Trail site offered a relatively short trip and use of private roads for trucking the overburden, in addition to prioritizing economic, safety and environmental considerations. During construction, the nearby I & M Trail accommodated trail users.



The Centennial Trail in Willow Springs opened to great fanfare Saturday. Cutting the ceremonial ribbon were (L-R) LaGrange Lions Club Past Pres. Todd Combs, Trails for IL Exec. Director Steve Buchtel, Willow Springs Administrator Bill Murray, MWRD Exec. Director David St. Pierre, Congressman Dan Lipinski, and MWRD Pres. Mariyana Spyropoulos.

rain, the trail provides a new and improved route through Columbia Woods.

"The newly improved Centennial Trail demonstrates how collaboration and good planning between government agencies can provide both practical and recreational resources to residents and visitors," said Eileen Figel, Deputy General Superintendent of the FPCC. "The new 60 foot hill that will open next season will be an added amenity for outdoor enthusiasts looking for an extra challenge."

Steve Buchtel, executive director, Trail for Illinois, said "the MWRD's made good on its promise to return the Centennial Trail to trail users when they were through, and as a bonus turned a pile of rubble into an amazing "above the trees" trail experience. They're leaving the Centennial Trail better than they found it."

La Grange Lions Club, Cook County Forest Preserves, and Trails for Illinois sponsored an inaugural Centennial Trail Ride between the trail head near Columbia Woods to Illinois Route 83 and back over an eight-mile loop.*(continued)*



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New scenic overlook offers sweeping views above the Des Plaines River valley (continued)



Scenic overlook at the new Centennial Hill along the Centennial Trail in Willow Springs, IL. The hill was constructed as part of an MWRD project to remove 1.8 million cubic yards of overburden (dirt) from the neighboring McCook Reservoir, a component of the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP).



Slope of new Centennial Hill along the Centennial Trail in Willow Springs, IL. The hill was constructed as part of an MWRD project to remove 1.8 million cubic yards of overburden (dirt) from the neighboring McCook Reservoir, a component of the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP).



Newly improved Centennial Trail in Willow Springs, IL. The new public amenity was unveiled on Sat., Oct. 17 at Columbia Woods Forest Preserve in Willow Springs, along property owned by the MWRD and leased to the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC). Two new foothills accessible to hikers and eventually to mountain bikes in 2016 have been added to the Centennial Trail.



Riders enjoy the newly improved Centennial Trail.



Congressman Dan Lipinski enjoys the newly improved Centennial Trail.

Todd Combs, past president of the LaGrange Lions Club said, "MWRD and Trails for Illinois have been great partners in sponsoring the Centennial Trail Reopening Ride which will benefit the many charities the LaGrange Lions support, including individuals needing help with their vision

care, annual recipients of a college scholarship, Constance Morris House and several others. And as an avid cyclist, I am thrilled with the way the Centennial Trail has been restored and updated."

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.