



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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It might...It could be...It is... flowing to O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant

Holy Cow, O'Brien WRP receives World Series, Wrigley Field flow

Any Wrigley Field beer vendor or Wrigleyville bar owner can tell that sales in recent weeks have spiked to unrivaled proportions during the Cubs' historic trek to the World Series. But what's flowing in the pipes below Wrigley Field can really tell the story.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) treats hundreds of millions of gallons of wastewater at its O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) in Skokie. Stormwater and sewage from Wrigley Field and neighborhoods north of Fullerton Avenue drain into local sewers before traveling north for treatment at the O'Brien WRP. Although treatment plant operators have not seen a significant spike in the amount of inflow or trends in sewer elevation, all hands are on deck as the Cubs play their first home World Series games since 1945 this weekend.

"We are happy to support our Cubs and their fans as they take another step closer to a celebration 108 years in the making," said MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore. "Much like a sacrifice bunt, we at the MWRD are happy to play a role that is not recognized in the stat sheets or score cards. At the MWRD, we are confident we can keep up with the hundreds of thousands of Cubs (and Indians) fans thronging Wrigley Field and Wrigleyville who all deserve good service."

During home games of the National League Division Series with the San Francisco Giants on October 7 and 8, the O'Brien WRP pumped an average of 190 million gallons of water per day. During home games of the National League Championship Series with the Los Angeles Dodgers on Oct. 15, 16 and 22, the O'Brien WRP pumped an average of 211 million gallons per day, thanks in part to Cubs fans and nearly a half inch of rain on Oct. 16. During the first two games of the World Series, the plant experienced another uptick in wastewater treatment with 275 million gallons treated on Oct. 25 and 26, also thanks in part to 1.56-inches of rain on Oct. 26.



Wrigley Field.

Despite the Cubs' pursuit of their first World Series title since 1908, the water flow has appeared relatively stable this October. After all, no one wants to get up to use the bathroom every inning when they are glued to their seat in a nail-biter. Average flows overall this year have been lower at O'Brien due to low rain totals. But when you examine average annual flows since the last time the Cubs were in the World Series, there has been a noticeable surge of fluids to be treated and cleaned.

Constructed in 1928 and originally named the Northside Water Reclamation Plant, the O'Brien WRP (*continued*)

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serves Chicago's North Side and 15 northern suburbs over a 143 square mile area. The South Side's White Sox, conversely, are served by the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant, which also serves Chicago and 46 other communities. New this year, the MWRD introduced the world's largest ultraviolet radiation disinfection system to add another layer of treatment to its process at O'Brien WRP. From entering the drain and sewer, it takes approximately 24 hours for Wrigley Field's waste to be treated and cleaned at the O'Brien WRP, and the World Series games of Oct. 28, 29 and 30 could invite a World Series-size surge in treatment at the plant.

"We are all proud of our hometown heroes," said President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "Our staff at O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant will be working hard to meet the demands of

changing fall weather patterns and the thousands of Cubs fans who will be frequenting the North Side to cheer on the Cubs."

Like the World Series, this historic uptick was over a century in the making. In 1908, the population of Chicago was 2 million. The Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal constructed by the MWRD was only eight years old and wastewater treatment did not even exist yet. However, by 1945, Chicago's population had grown to 3.5 million and the North-side WRP had been constructed to treat the wastewater of residents, businesses and visitors throughout the northern part of the city, including visitors to Wrigley Field. With disinfection facilities added to the O'Brien plant earlier this year, water quality is dramatically improving. Learn more at www.mwrdd.org.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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