



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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For immediate release

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International WEFTEC conference showers MWRD with 3 awards for championing clean water



Celebrating three awards at WEFTEC 2017 at McCormick Place were MWRD officials (from L to R): Principal Civil Engineer Mwende Lesler, Managing Civil Engineer Kevin Fitzpatrick, Commissioner Josina Morita, Associate Civil Engineer Meagan Matias, President Mariyana Spyropoulos, Principal Civil Engineer Justine Skawski, Principal Civil Engineer Lou Storino, Assistant Director of Engineering Bill Sheriff and Senior Civil Engineer Bipinbhai Patel.

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) praised the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) with three major awards at the world's largest annual water quality technical conference and exhibition. The 90th Annual Water Environment Federation's Technical exhibition and conference (WEFTEC), which was held at Chicago's McCormick Place from Sept. 30 to Oct. 4, brought together 20,000 water professionals providing extensive educational opportunities and unparalleled access to the field's most cutting-edge technologies and services. WEFTEC also paused to highlight the year's best projects in water innovation, and the MWRD was well represented on stage for three outstanding contributions to the water environment profession.

The MWRD was honored with the WEF Water Quality Improvement Award and the Schroepfer Innovative Facility Design Medal both for the completion of the Calumet System of the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP), and the WEF Project Excellence Award for the completion of a nutrient recovery facility at Stickney Water Reclamation Plant (WRP). In addition, MWRD nominee Elizabeth Brackett, special correspondent for WTTW's "Chicago Tonight," won a top Education Award and was honored with the Media and Public Educa-



WTTW Channel 11 Special Correspondent (second from left) Elizabeth Brackett with husband Peter Martinez, daughter Ilsa Wallich, and MWRD Executive Director David St. Pierre (right) wins the prestigious Media and Public Education Medal at WEFTEC. The 90th Annual Water Environment Federation's Technical exhibition and conference (WEFTEC), which was held at Chicago's McCormick Place from Sept. 30 to Oct. 4

tion Medal for her dogged coverage that has raised awareness for issues impacting local water resources.

"We are delighted to receive these three awards from the Water Environment Federation honoring both operational and design excellence in our work protecting our water environment," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "Thank you to WEF for this honor, our many partners in the private sector and staff who delivered these crucial projects. Both the Calumet TARP system and the nutrient recovery facility will work to improve our waterways at home and downstream."

The Water Quality Improvement Award is presented annually to the water quality improvement program that best demonstrates significant, lasting and measurable excellence in water quality improvement or in prevention of water quality degradation in a region, basin or water body. The Calumet TARP System includes the 7.9-billion-gallon Thornton Composite Reservoir and 37 miles of deep tunnels, resulting in reduced flooding and elimination of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) for the 556,000 people it serves. In addition, the Calumet TARP project has resulted in increased dissolved oxygen levels, increased fish populations, and major increases in fish species. *(continued)*



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WEFTEC conference (continued)

The Schroepfer Innovative Facility Design Medal recognizes excellence in conceiving and directing the design of a project to achieve substantial cost savings or economic benefit, while achieving environmental objectives. The medal is in honor of George J. Schroepfer, WEF's third President, and an educator who stressed the economics in design of wastewater facilities. The Calumet TARP system provides a substantial capital and operating cost savings for each of the 14 municipalities it serves by relieving the burden of constructing and operating individual systems to capture and treat CSOs to comply with regulations. In addition, the Calumet TARP system provides more than \$40 million in annual flood damage savings as a benefit to the service area.

The MWRD, along with designer and builder Black & Veatch and technology provider Ostara Nutrient Recovery Technologies, shared in the honor of WEF's annual Project Excellence Award, which pays tribute to excellence and innovation in the execution of projects and programs in the water sector. The MWRD's nutrient recovery facility at the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant improves water quality of the Chicago Area Waterway System while reducing downstream phosphorus discharges into the Gulf of Mexico.

According to WEF officials, these awards recognize individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to the water environment profession.

"The Water Environment Federation is extremely proud to honor these examples of top-of-industry excellence in operations and design," said Eileen O'Neill, WEF Executive Director.

"We thank our skilled engineers who dedicated themselves to these integral projects and our predecessors who had the foresight to invest in a system like TARP that protects our communities from flooding and our waterways from pollution," said MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita. "We also thank our partners at Black and Veatch and Ostara for driving the nutrient removal technology that promotes resource recovery and improves water quality."

For more information about the WEF Awards, visit <https://www.wef.org/awards>.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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