



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## MWRD christens two new skimmer boats: 'Skim Pickens' and 'Skimmy Dipper'

The Chicago Area Waterways (CAWS) will be cleaner thanks to two new Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) boats that will traverse the waters of the Chicago River.

The MWRD recently unveiled the two new skimmer boats during a boat christening ceremony in the South Branch of the Chicago River alongside Ping Tom Memorial Park, 300 W. 19th St.

"We have a duty to clean our water," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "Our boat christening is both a celebration and blessing, and also more importantly, a pledge to keep our waterways clean and a testament to the work we have accomplished thus far."

The two new skimmer boats operate along the CAWS from mid-April to mid-October and after significant storms year round, unless weather conditions prohibit safe operations. In the middle of the boat is a basket, which is kept at water level to collect debris as the boat trolls over it. The MWRD now has three boats for debris and trash collection. The third boat is a 36-foot debris collection barge with a clam shell for removing larger objects. These two boats will collect smaller debris, ranging from windblown trash to floatables, branches and leaves.

Helping the MWRD Board of Commissioners and staff unveil the boats were representatives from the U.S.



*The Skim Pickens takes to the South Branch of the Chicago River after being christened during a ceremony off Ping Tom Memorial Park. The two new skimmers will each be manned by two crew members from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago to help collect debris from the waterways.*

Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit, Haines Elementary School, Friends of the Chicago River, the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) and the office of Illinois State Comptroller Leslie Geissler Munger.

The MWRD held a contest to name the boats, and out of 150 submissions, "Skimmy Dipper" and "Skim Pickens" were selected, both at the suggestion of Josh Ellis, a director with the MPC. Ellis manages MPC's sustainability initiatives in storm water mitigation and water supply management. "The Metropolitan Planning Council is leading Great Rivers Chicago, an effort by the City of Chicago to envision a bold new future for our rivers, and water quality, aesthetics and ecological integrity are major themes in the public input we've received thus far," said Ellis. Skim Pickens (continued)

# MWRD boat christening marks maiden voyage for cleaner rivers *(continued)*



*U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Chicago's Commanding Officer Ryan Manning (from left) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chicago District Lieutenant Colonel Deputy Commander Kevin Lovell lead the crowd in a boat christening ceremony at Ping Tom Memorial Park.*



*Josh Ellis, director at the Metropolitan Planning Council, and Mariyana Spyropoulos, president of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD), unveil the Skim Pickens and the Skimmy Dipper boats. More than 150 names were submitted for a contest, and Ellis' entrants won the two top honors.*



*Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) President Mariyana Spyropoulos (from left), Friends of the River Executive Director Margaret Frisbie, MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan, MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore, MWRD Commissioner Kari Steele and MWRD Chairman of Finance Frank Avila introduced the Skim Pickens to patrol Chicago Area Waterways at least five days a week and up to seven depending on storms.*



*Haines Elementary School students (front) joined Matt Custardo (back, from left), of the Office of Illinois State Comptroller Leslie Geissler Munger, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Chairman of Finance Frank Avila, MWRD Executive Director David St. Pierre, MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos, MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan and MWRD Commissioners Kari Steele and Debra Shore to celebrate the unveiling of two skimmer boats.*

and Skimmy Dipper are going to do the dirty work to make a cleaner future. I'm very proud that names I suggested will adorn these two new skimmer boats for years to come."

The MWRD controls 76 miles of navigable waterways,

which are part of the inland waterway system connecting the Great Lakes with the Gulf Mexico. These new debris collection boats will provide a vital community service by improving water quality and the recreational experience for thousands of people canoeing, kayaking, boating, and enjoying the waterways.

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## Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

*Established in 1889, the MWRD ([www.mwrld.org](http://www.mwrld.org)) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.*