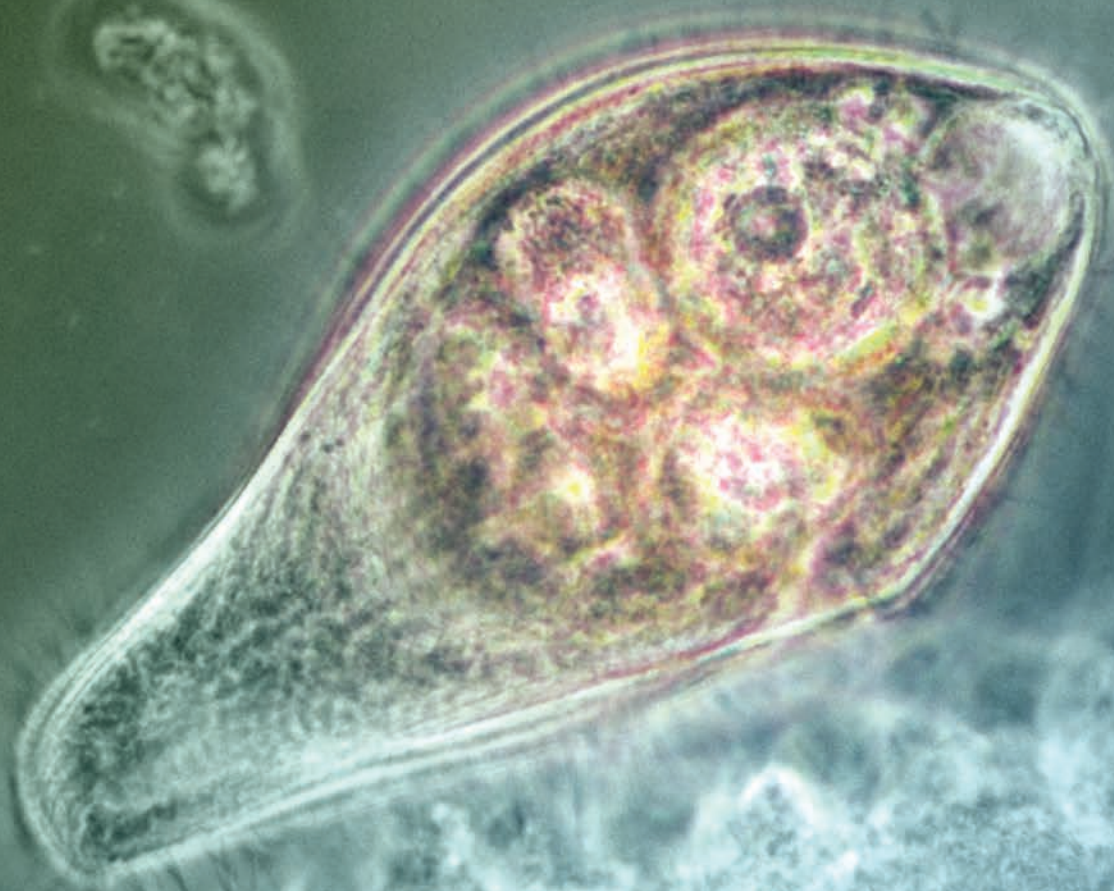




**Metropolitan Water  
Reclamation District  
of Greater Chicago**

# 2026 CALENDAR





METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT OF GREATER CHICAGO

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, independent government agency responsible for protecting the region's water environment. The MWRD accomplishes this by protecting area waterways and the source of drinking water (Lake Michigan), managing stormwater for residents and businesses across Cook County and transforming and reclaiming wastewater in its service area, which encompasses 93.3 percent of the land area of Cook County. As an innovative utility of the future, the MWRD strives to develop groundbreaking technologies to recover and reuse valuable resources that improve water quality and protect the planet.

Established by the Illinois General Assembly in 1889 as the Sanitary District of Chicago, the MWRD's name, roles, jurisdiction, and authority have changed over more than 135 years. The enabling act in 1889 was in direct response to a long-standing problem with contamination of the water supply and nuisance conditions of the rivers. The MWRD reversed the flow of the Chicago and Calumet River systems to stop the discharge of sewage to Lake Michigan and instead discharge it to the Des Plaines River, where it could be diluted as it flowed into the Illinois River and eventually the Mississippi River. Prior to the MWRD's construction of a 61.3-mile system of canals and waterway improvements, the Chicago and Calumet River systems were tributaries to Lake Michigan. These river systems are now tributaries to the Illinois River system. The MWRD constructed seven modern water reclamation plants over the 20th century, releasing clean water into the environment.

From 1955 through 1988, the MWRD was called the Metropolitan Sanitary District of Greater Chicago. To provide a more accurate perception of the MWRD's current functions and responsibilities, the name was changed effective Jan. 1, 1989, to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

**Mission and Responsibilities**

The mission of the MWRD is to protect the health and safety of the public in its service area, protect the quality of the water supply source, improve the quality of water in watercourses in its service area, protect businesses and homes from flood

damages, and manage water as a vital resource for its service area. The MWRD collects wastewater from municipalities in its service area, conveys it to water reclamation plants, provides full secondary treatment, and provides tertiary treatment when appropriate. The MWRD is also responsible for stormwater management for all of Cook County. The MWRD does not treat and transport drinking water to homes and businesses; for information regarding drinking water in your neighborhood, contact your local municipality.

**Services**

The MWRD's seven modern water reclamation plants meet stringent permits in treating residential and industrial wastewater. A pretreatment program guards against hazardous substances and toxic chemicals. Water reclamation plants are strictly regulated pursuant to federal and state requirements. The MWRD routinely monitors industries and nonresidential sources to assure that wastes are disposed of in an environmentally responsible and lawful manner.

Treated water, along with runoff from rainfall, enters local canals, rivers, and streams that serve as headwaters of the Illinois River system. The MWRD manages stormwater in the separate sewer area through a variety of measures to mitigate flooding. This includes 34 stormwater detention reservoirs that the MWRD owns and operates and hundreds of collaborations with local partners to fund stormwater management projects. In the combined sewer area, the MWRD's Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) has significantly reduced basement backups and overflows to local waterways.

Flow within the MWRD's waterway system and the Lake Michigan discretionary diversion flow are controlled by three inlet structures on Lake Michigan: the Wilmette Pumping Station, the Chicago River Controlling Works, and the O'Brien Lock and Dam. The single outlet control structure is the Lockport Lock and Powerhouse.

While exercising no direct control over water collection systems owned and maintained by cities, villages, sewer districts, and utilities, the MWRD does regulate municipal sewer construction through our

permitting process outside the City of Chicago. The MWRD also owns a network of intercepting sewers to convey wastewater from the local collection systems to the water reclamation plants.

**Facilities**

The MWRD serves 5.19 million residents in a 882.1 square mile area, which includes the City of Chicago and 128 surrounding suburban communities.

The MWRD's 560 miles of intercepting sewers and force mains range in size from 6 inches to 27 feet in diameter, and these are fed by approximately 10,000 local sewer system connections.

TARP is one of the country's largest public works projects for pollution and flood control. Four tunnel systems total 110 miles of tunnels, 8 to 33 feet in diameter and 150 to 300 feet underground.

The tunnels are designed to empty into three large reservoirs to provide storage for the polluted water captured by TARP.

The MWRD owns and operates the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant, considered one of the world's largest water reclamation plants, in addition to six other plants and 23 pumping stations.

The MWRD treats an average of 1.2 billion gallons of water each day but has the capacity to treat over 2 billion gallons in a day.

The MWRD controls 76.1 miles of navigable waterways, which are part of the inland waterway system connecting the Great Lakes with the Gulf of Mexico.

In 2026, the MWRD is set to embark on a new five-year strategic plan outlining objectives, metrics to gauge progress and initiatives that will drive that progress. This important roadmap builds off the previous 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, incorporating both the results of public surveys and the MWRD's mission in protecting public health and the area water environment. Through financial and operational strengths, sustainable and innovative processes, external resources and a thriving workplace, the five-year plan will establish how the MWRD can meet new goals in resource recovery, climate and energy resilience and best position the agency for years to come.

GOVERNANCE



Kari K. Steele	President
Patricia Theresa Flynn	Vice President
Marcelino Garcia	Chairman of Finance
Precious Brady-Davis	Commissioner
Yumeka Brown	Commissioner
Cameron Davis	Commissioner
Beth McElroy Kirkwood	Commissioner
Eira L. Corral Sepúlveda	Commissioner
Sharon Waller	Commissioner

**The MWRD is governed by a nine-member Board of Commissioners.** Commissioners are elected at large and serve on a salaried basis. Three Commissioners are elected every two years for six-year terms. Biannually, the Board elects from its membership a President, Vice President, and Chairman of the Committee on Finance.



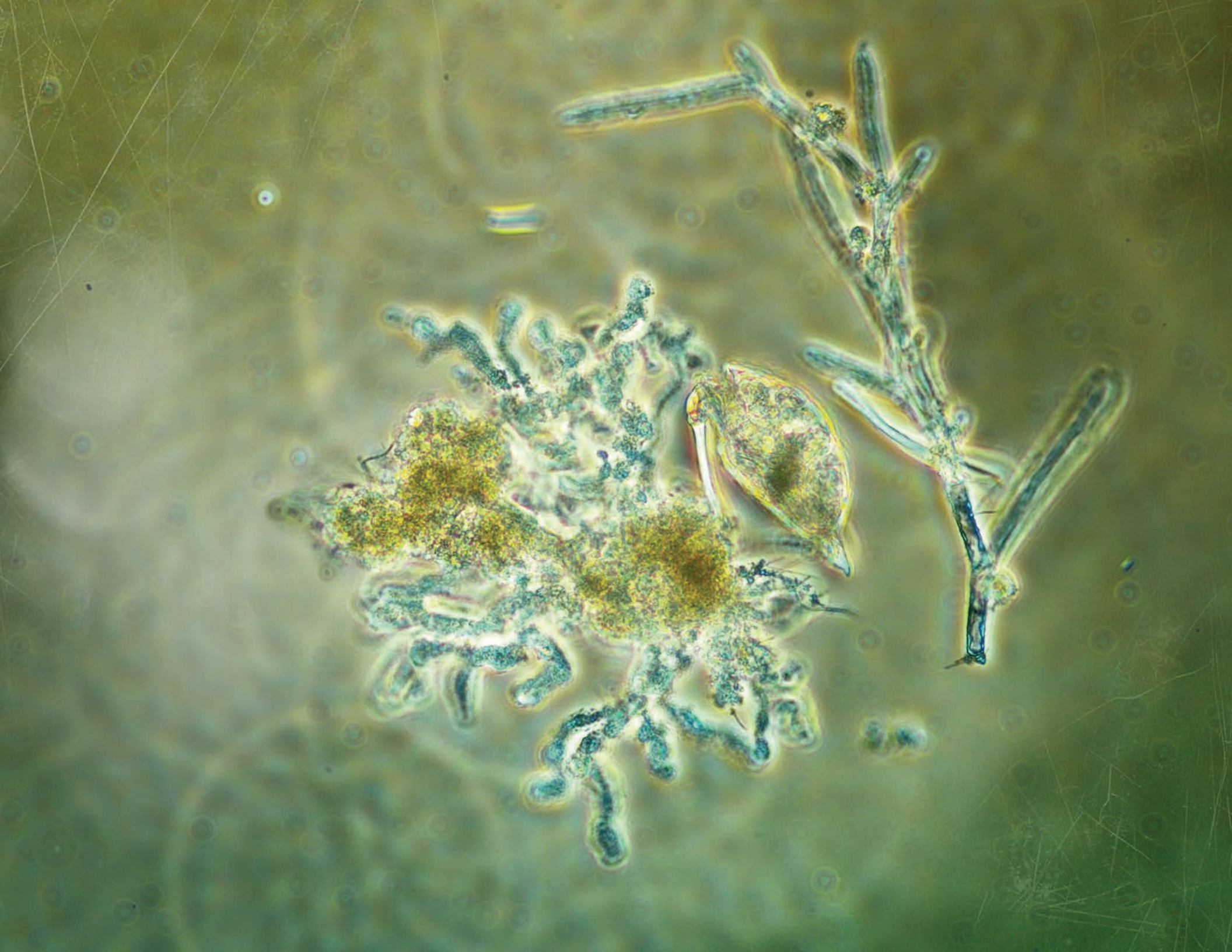
Scan the QR code to learn more about the Board of Commissioners or visit [mwrdd.org](https://mwrdd.org)

WATER RECLAMATION PLANTS



- 1 Calumet Water Reclamation Plant
- 2 Egan Water Reclamation Plant
- 3 Hanover Park Water Reclamation Plant
- 4 Kirie Water Reclamation Plant
- 5 Lemont Water Reclamation Plant
- 6 O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant
- 7 Stickney Water Reclamation Plant



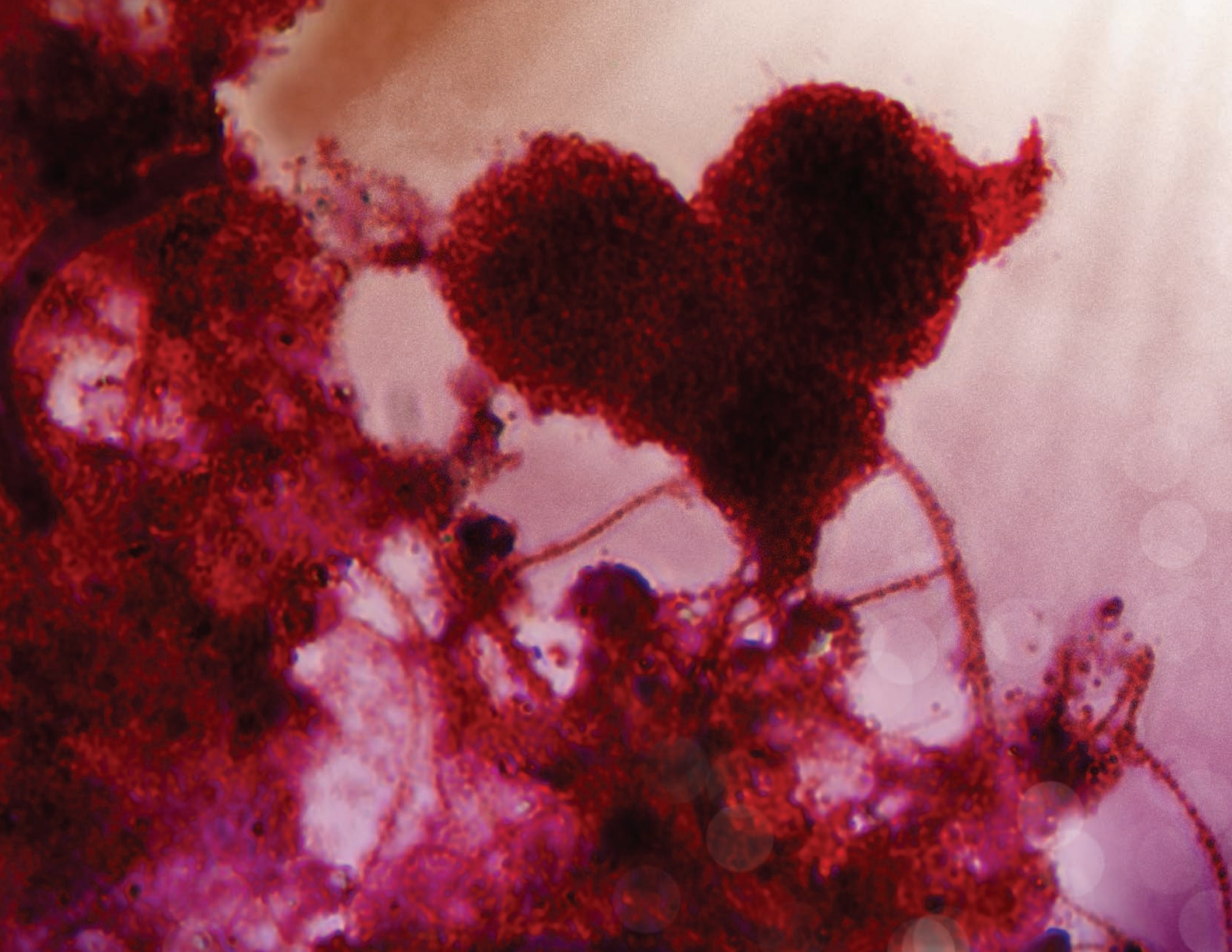


# JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>Go Easy on the Salt</b> Too much road salt can harm our environment. <b>Learn how you can help at <a href="http://mwrld.org">mwrld.org</a> or scan the QR code.</b>			<b>1</b> <b>1939</b> MWRD installs locks at lakefront intakes. <b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>2</b> <b>1900</b> Chicago River reversed; Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal completed.	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
				<b>MWRD Board Meeting</b>		
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2018</b> McCook Reservoir first fill.						
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
	<b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b>			<b>MWRD Board Meeting</b>		
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

▲ Fungal filaments, zoogloeal mass and rotifers are examples of the microflora common in wastewater treatment samples. Not all microbes work to clean the water, but some, such as zoogloea are monitored to assess the microbial environment.





AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH, AMERICAN HEART MONTH

# FEBRUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Groundhog Day			MWRD Board Meeting		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
				Lincoln's Birthday		Valentine's Day
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Presidents' Day	Chinese New Year Ramadan Begins at Sundown	1971 Fulton County Prairie Plan begins.	MWRD Board Meeting		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
NATIONAL ENGINEERS WEEK						



**The Green Neighbor Guide**  
has step-by-step instructions for installing green infrastructure on your property.  
**Download it today in the QR code!**

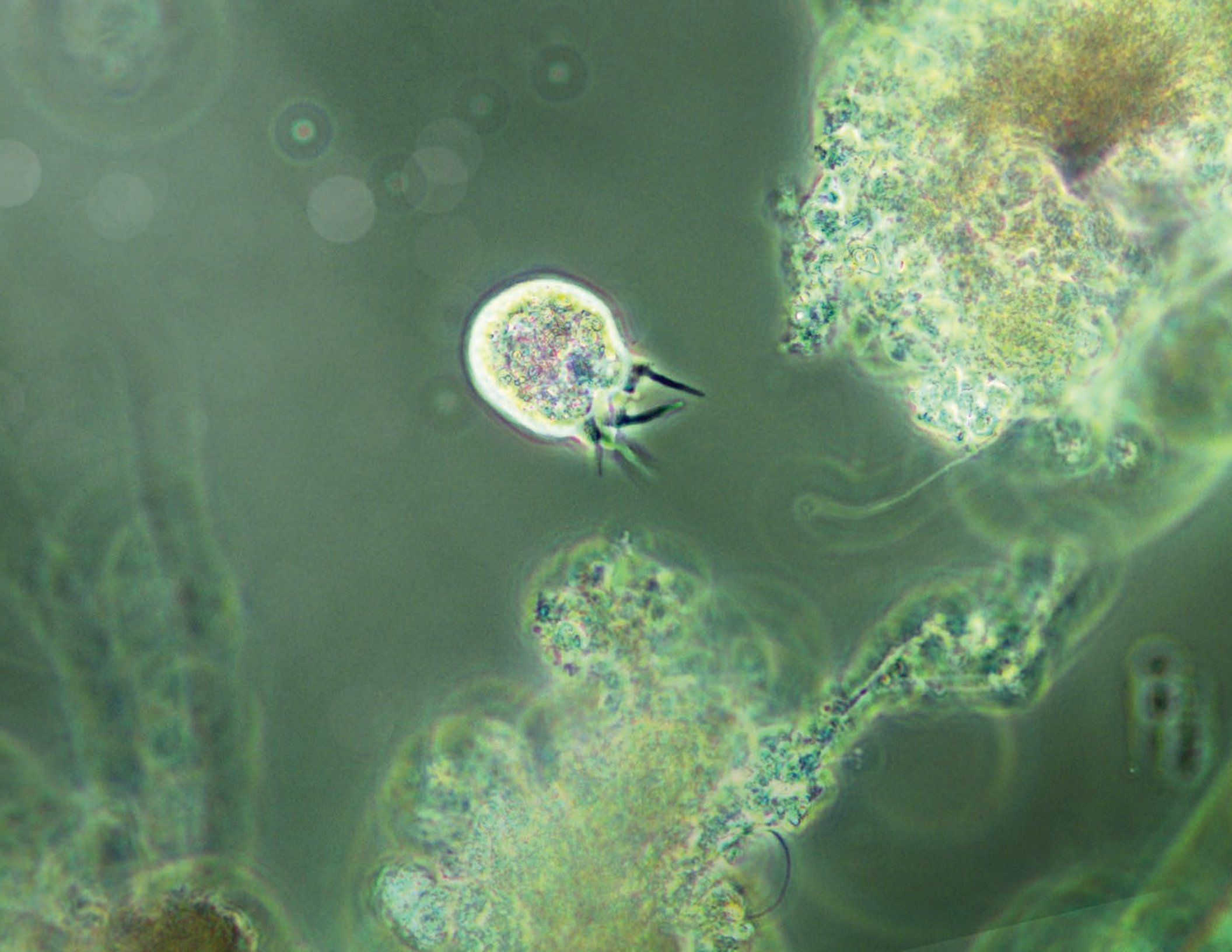


▲ Phosphorus accumulating organisms, also known as PAOs, work to remove nutrients like phosphorus from wastewater systems. They tend to clump together, and in this case, are sending a Valentine’s Day greeting to the MWRD scientists.




▲ The suctorian discophyra (*left*) is a predator of the wastewater microorganism world. They remove suspended organic matter and clarify water by feeding on free-swimming protozoans, using little darts to immobilize their prey.





EARTH MONTH

# APRIL

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
	<b>Restore the Canopy, Plant a Tree.</b> Help replenish the Cook County canopy and prevent flooding. <a href="#">Visit mwrdd.org to learn how or scan the QR code.</a>		Passover Begins at Sundown	MWRD Board Meeting	Good Friday	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Easter				Passover Ends		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Orthodox Easter		Vaisakhi	MWRD Board Meeting			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
			Earth Day Administrative Professionals Day	Arbor Day		
26	27	28	29	30		





▲ A shelled dinamoeba (center) is a feature of normal wastewater treatment microflora. They help clean water by consuming organic matter from wastewater sludge.





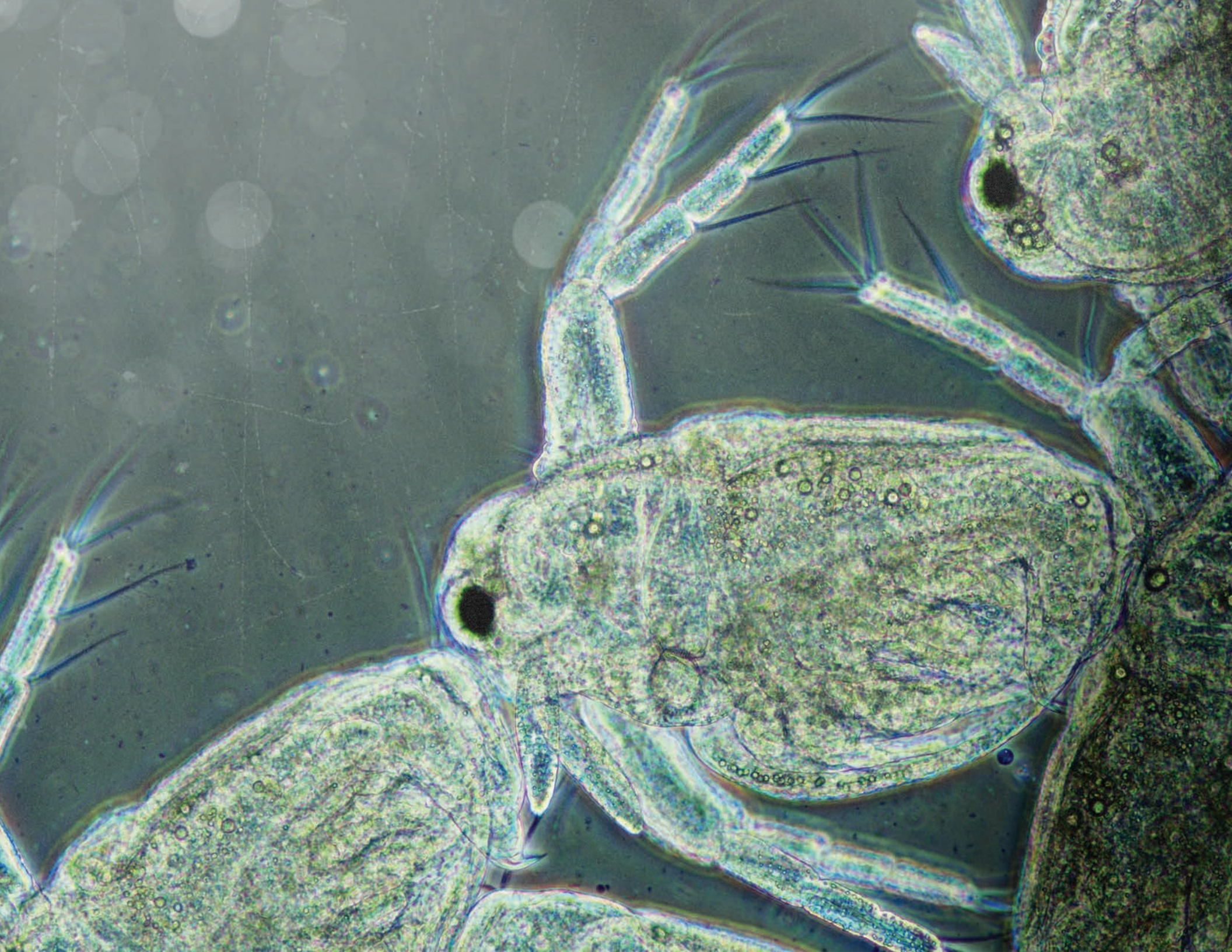
ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH • NATIONAL BIKE MONTH

MAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>Capture and reuse rainwater.</b> Cook County residents can order rain barrels from the MWRD. <b>To order, visit <a href="https://mwrdd.org">mwrdd.org</a> or scan the QR code</b>				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
					<b>Buddha Day</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CHICAGO WATER WEEK</b>						
		<b>Cinco De Mayo</b>		<b>MWRD Board Meeting</b>		
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Mother's Day</b>		<b>1980</b> Kirie WRP commences operations.			<b>National Bike to Work Day</b>	<b>1963</b> Hanover Park WRP completed. <b>Armed Forces Day</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
				<b>MWRD Board Meeting</b>		<b>1939</b> Southwest plant (Stickney WRP) commences operations.
<b>24</b> <b>1985</b> Mainstream Tunnel TARP system begins operating.	<b>25</b> <b>Memorial Day</b> <b>2016</b> Stickney WRP nutrient recovery facility unveiled.	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>31</b>	<b>Eid al-Adha Begins</b>	<b>Eid al-Adha Ends</b>		<b>1889</b> Sanitary District of Chicago established.	

▲ A predatory free swimming ciliate indicates a healthy system. It supports wastewater treatment processes by eating crawling ciliates, which are nicknamed “the cows of wastewater treatment” because they are known to graze on clumps of bacteria.





LGBTQ+ PRIDE MONTH • NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH

# JUNE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		1930 West Side plant (Stickney) commences operations.		MWRD Board Meeting		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Flag Day	1989 Nicholas J. Melas Centennial Fountain comes online to commemorate MWRD's 100th Anniversary.			MWRD Board Meeting	Juneteenth	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Father's Day Summer Solstice						
28	29	30				

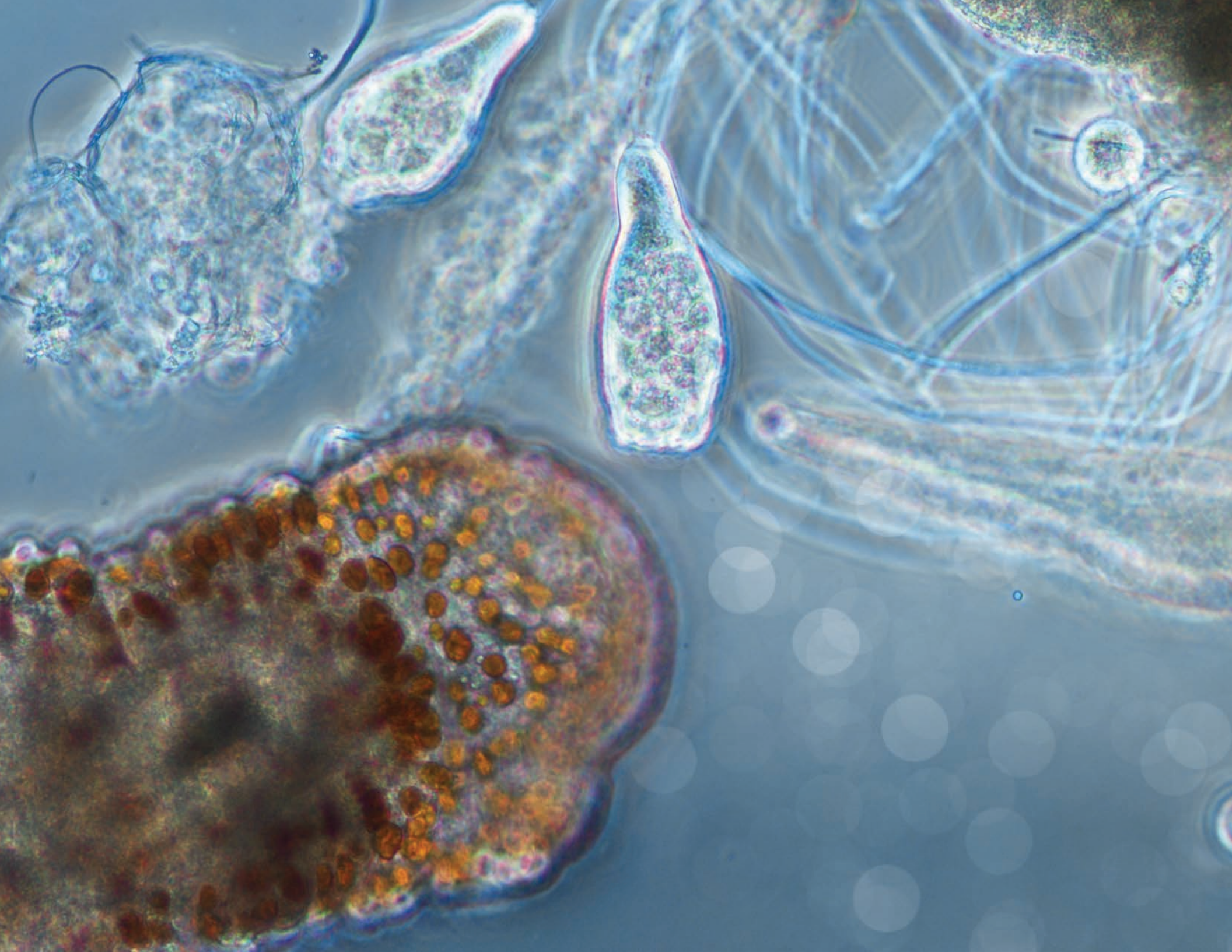


**Conserve water.**  
Reduce your water use before, during and after rainstorms. Sign up for overflow action alerts by scanning the QR code.  
[Learn why this is important at mwrdd.org](#)





▲ The presence of tiny water fleas called daphnia indicates algae in the system, and also indicates healthy treated water as they are sensitive to toxins.





# JULY

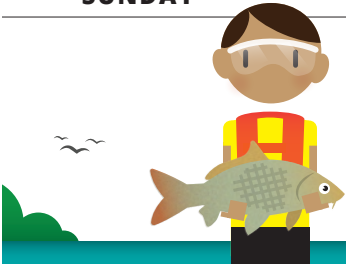

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Stormwater Management</b> Learn how the MWRD works with local governments to address stormwater challenges in Cook County. <a href="#">Visit mwrdd.org or scan the QR code.</a>			1	2	3	4
						<i>Independence Day</i>
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
				MWRD Board Meeting	2015 Disinfection facility at Calumet WRP completed.	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
				<i>National Intern Day</i>		

▲ A bristle worm swims near stalked ciliates and free-swimming ciliates. Bristle worms take a relatively long time to grow and their presence can indicate that sludge is mature and stable, meaning it is decomposed and less reactive and easier to handle.



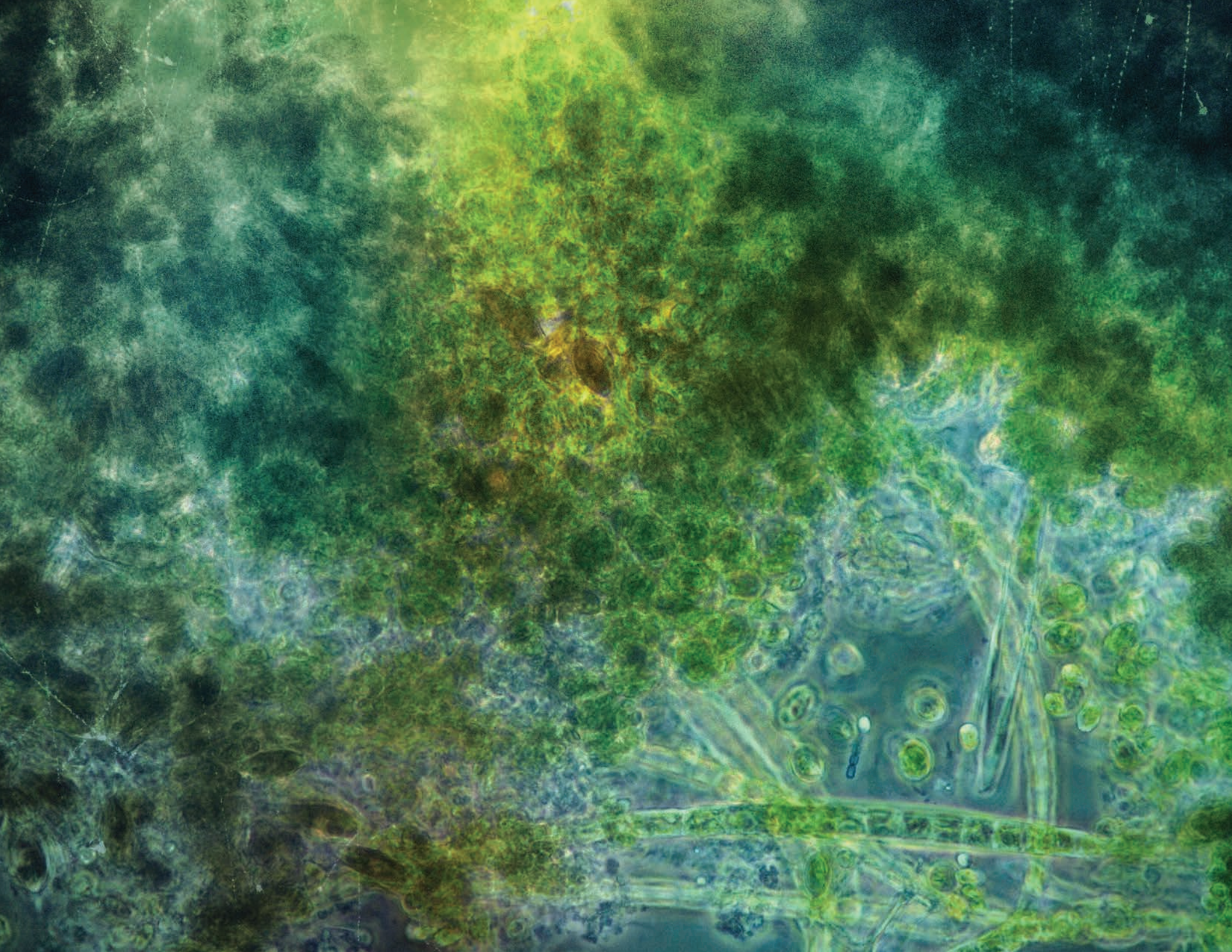


# AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<div>Let's Learn! Visit <a href="http://mwrdd.org">mwrdd.org</a> or scan the QR code for educational resources and to request a speaker.</div> 					1
						8
2	3	4	5	6	7	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
MWRD Board Meeting						
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30		31	<div>1907 Chicago River Main Channel and Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal extension completed.</div> <div>1922 Cal-Sag Channel becomes operational.</div> <div>Lockport Powerhouse and Lock goes online.</div>			


▲ Shelled microorganisms such as this testate amoeba provide biological indicators of operating conditions, such as low-level toxicity or pH changes in wastewater treatment system.



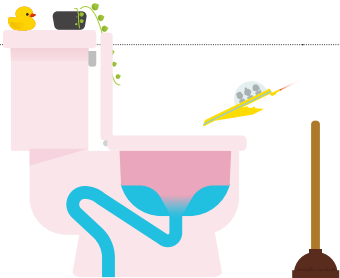


NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH SEPTEMBER 15 – OCTOBER 15 • NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
		2015 Thornton TARP Reservoir completed.	1892 Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal construction begins.	MWRD Board Meeting		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Labor Day 1938 Chicago River Controlling Works opens.				Rosh Hashanah Begins Patriot Day 1922 Calumet WRP completed.	1907 North Shore Channel construction begins.
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Rosh Hashanah Ends		National Hispanic Heritage Month Begins		MWRD Board Meeting	1969 Sewage and Waste Control Ordinance adopted.	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Yom Kippur Begins	Yom Kippur Ends					
27	28	29	30			

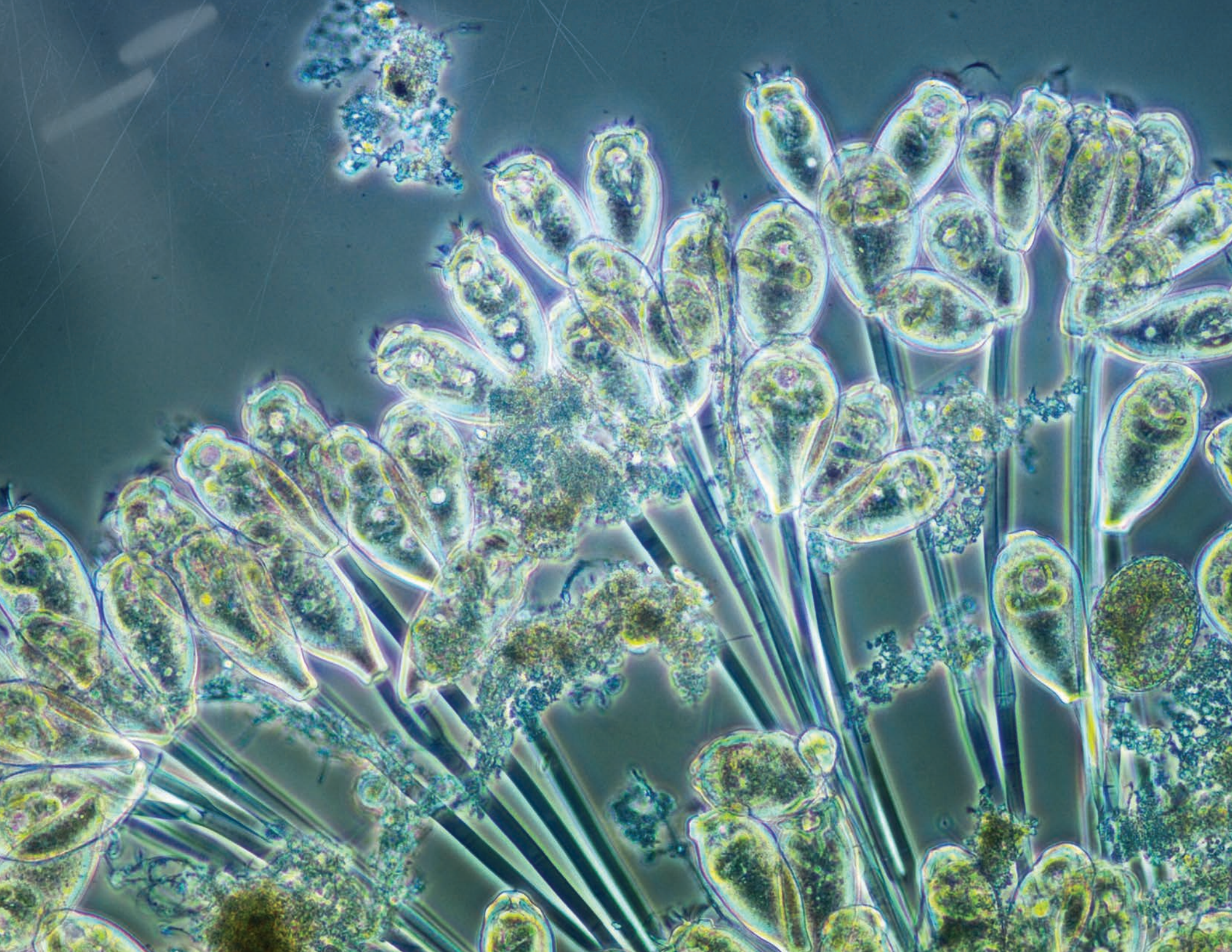
WEFTEC  
TO SEP 30  
WEFTEC.COM



Where Does IT Go?  
Watch the animation and download the book at [mwrld.org](http://mwrld.org) or scan the QR code.



▲ Colonies of algae support wastewater treatment processes by absorbing phosphorus, nitrogen and other nutrients.





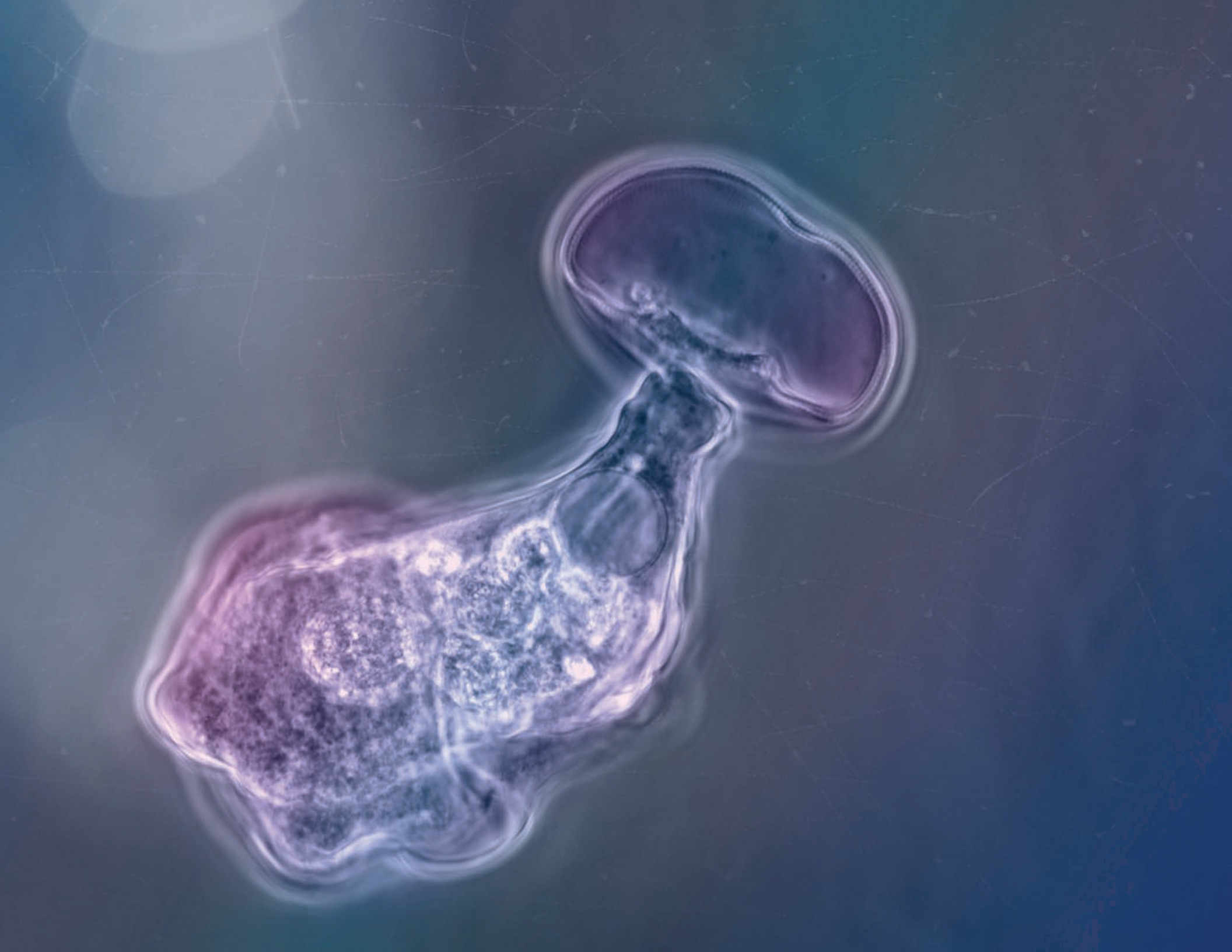
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

# OCTOBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<div>Save the Monarch</div> <div>Milkweed, a native plant to the Chicago region, provides food and shelter for Monarchs.</div> <div>Visit <a href="http://mwrdr.org">mwrdr.org</a> or scan the QR code</div>		<div></div>	<div></div>	<div>1</div> <div>MWRD Board Meeting</div>	<div>2</div>	<div>3</div> <div>1928 North Side Sewage Treatment Works (later renamed O'Brien) WRP completed.</div>
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	<div>Indigenous Peoples' Day</div> <div>Columbus Day</div>			<div>National Hispanic Heritage Month Ends</div> <div>MWRD Board Meeting</div>		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
				<div>1955 ASCE names Chicago Sewage Disposal System one of seven engineering wonders of U.S.</div>		
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	<div>1972 Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) adopted.</div>					<div>1990 Majewski Reservoir construction begins.</div> <div>Halloween</div>



▲ Stalked ciliates support wastewater treatment processes by eating suspended organic matter and unicellular organisms. Their presence indicates a stable wastewater environment.





NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

# NOVEMBER



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Daylight Saving Time Ends		Election Day		MWRD Board Meeting		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Diwali	National STEM/STEAM Day		Veterans Day			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
				MWRD Board Meeting		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
1961 Lemont WRP commences operations.		2004 Illinois legislature names MWRD stormwater authority for Cook County.		Thanksgiving Day 1907 Lockport Powerhouse delivers first electric current to Chicago. 2015 Thornton TARP Reservoir first fill.		
29	30					
1910 First water flows into North Shore Channel.				<b>Go behind the scenes.</b> Take a live virtual or in-person tour or watch it on demand. <a href="#">Visit mwrld.org or scan the QR code.</a>		

▲ Amoebae are naturally present organisms that support successful wastewater treatment process and water clarity by consuming organic matter, bacteria, and settling solids in WRP tanks; this one is shedding its shell.





# DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
				MWRD Board Meeting	2017 Stage I of McCook Reservoir unveiled. Chanukkah Begins	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Bodhi Day MWRD Annual Board Meeting				Chanukkah Ends
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
			1975 Egan WRP completed.	MWRD Board Meeting		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	Chanukkah Ends Winter Solstice			Christmas Eve	Christmas Day	Kwanzaa Begins
27	28	29	30	31		
				New Year's Eve		

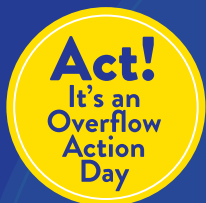
**The Environment is Our Office.**  
Learn about working at the MWRD, and explore our online employment center at [mwrld.org](http://mwrld.org) or scan the QR code.  
**Join Our Team!**

▲ Tardigrades, also known as water bears, remove organic matter and bacteria from wastewater. This photo shows the molted cuticle (skin) of a water bear that has been discarded with eggs inside. The skin protects the eggs of the tardigrade until they hatch.



**WATCH  
FOR THIS  
BADGE**

**OVERFLOW ACTION DAY** alerts remind you to reduce water use before, during and after rainstorms.



**Delay  
showers  
and baths**



**Wait to run the  
dishwasher or  
washing machine**



**Turn water  
off while  
brushing**

**THEN TAKE  
ACTION!**



To sign up to receive email or text alerts, scan this QR code or visit **mwrdd.org**.

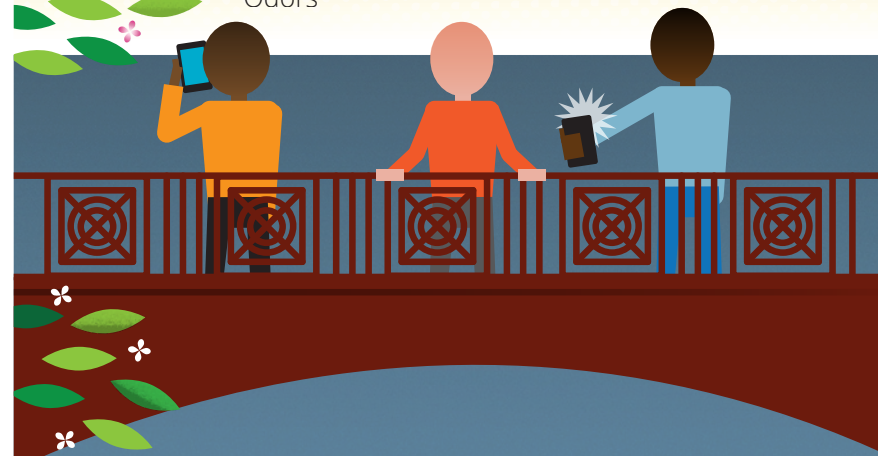
## REPORT AN ISSUE

**Help protect our waterways and sewer system.**



**You can report:**

- Waterway blockages
- Suspicious dumping
- Odors



**Use the MWRD Citizen Incident Reporting (CIR)  
form by scanning the QR code.**

## KEEP DRUGS OUT OF OUR WATER SYSTEMS.

Never flush medications down the toilet or a drain. Instead, use one of our safe collection sites. Collection boxes are located near the main gate at three water reclamation plants (WRP) and in the lobby of the Main Office Building in Chicago.

### **Main Office Building**

100 E. Erie St., Chicago  
Open Monday - Friday  
9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### **O'Brien WRP**

3500 Howard St., Skokie  
Open seven days a week  
9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### **Calumet WRP**

400 E. 130th St., Chicago  
Open seven days a week  
9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### **Stickney WRP**

6001 W. Pershing Rd., Cicero  
Open seven days a week  
9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information and a listing of medication collection sites located throughout Cook County, scan the QR code.

**On the cover:** Microorganisms play a vital role in the MWRD's water reclamation processes. Gravity, air and microscopic "bugs" provide the backbone for biological treatment processes at MWRD water reclamation plants (WRPs). Many types of microorganisms help to remove and break down waste and contaminants, while also reducing nutrients in the water. Staff in the MWRD labs ensure our treatment processes are functioning efficiently and effectively by analyzing samples from various stages of treatment at all of our WRPs. Our scientists take a closer view under a microscope of this hidden yet critically important ecosystem that sheds new understanding of our water. The MWRD's 2026 calendar celebrates these amazing organisms that help us treat wastewater and monitor water quality in our systems.

For additional copies of this calendar, email the Office of Public Affairs at **public.affairs@mwrdd.org**

