



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: March 15, 2018

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SUBJECT: World Water Day program highlights conservation and sustainability efforts at Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District

MADISON, Wis. – In celebration of [World Water Day](#), Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District will host a special program and tour focused on water conservation, wetland restoration and sustainability on Thursday evening, March 22.

Reserve your spot now by visiting www.madsewer.org/worldwaterday. The event is free and open to the public with a tour of the district's sustainability award-winning facilities and presentations on wetland and habitat restoration efforts.

"This year's World Water Day is focused on exploring nature-based solutions to the water challenges of the 21st century – a call to action we take very seriously," said Michael Mucha, chief engineer and director of Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District. "Our mission is to protect public health and the environment. We do that by using natural processes to recycle wastewater and reclaim valuable energy, nutrients and treated water for return to area surface waters."

Participants will learn about efforts to restore 140 acres of wetlands that now host more than 200 bird and waterfowl species. The district-owned ponds and marshy areas are part of the Capital Springs State Recreation Area and serve as an important rest and food stop for migrating birds.

The area served as a storage lagoon for biosolids produced at the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant until the early 1980s. The lagoons were decommissioned in 1994 and reconstructed between 1999 and 2001 to provide for wildlife habitat and recreation.

As part of operations to ensure additional capacity in the event of heavy rainfall, the district lowers water levels in the lagoons during spring and fall. This has the benefit of creating mudflats that are attractive to shoreline, marsh and water birds. While many species such as sandhill cranes already have returned this year, the weeks ahead will bring numerous warblers and other species.

Featured speakers at the district's World Water Day program include Paul Nehm, retired operations director for the district, and Clare Carlson, naturalist program coordinator for Capital Springs. The presentations will cover the history of the lagoons as well as the bird watching and other recreational opportunities now available on the 3 mile network of trails within the district's [Wildlife Observation Unit](#). The unit was established in 2001 as part of the district's commitment to conservation principles and the local environment.

The March 22 event also will feature optional tours of the district's new LEED Platinum certified Maintenance Facility and the struvite harvesting plant, which removes phosphorus from the wastewater stream for shipment out of the watershed.

The World Water Day event kicks off with a tour check-in starting at 5:15 p.m. in the district's new Maintenance Facility, accessible through Gate 3 at 1610 Moorland Road. The tour of the Maintenance Facility and struvite operation will occur rain or shine so appropriate dress is recommended. Visitors who prefer to attend just the presentations by Nehm and Carlson should arrive in time for a 6:30 p.m. start.

Event Details

What: World Water Day Program

When: Thursday, March 22; facility tour check-in at 5:15 p.m.; program at 6:30 p.m.

Where: Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District Maintenance Facility, enter using Gate 3 at 1610 Moorland Road

Featured speakers: **Paul Nehm**, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District retired operations director; **Clare Carlson**, Capital Springs naturalist coordinator

RSVP: www.madsewer.org/worldwaterday

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Established in 1930 to protect the lakes and streams of the upper Yahara watershed, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District today serves 26 Madison area customer communities covering some 184 square miles and 360,000 people. The district owns and operates 141 miles of pipe and 18 regional pumping stations that convey approximately 41 million gallons of wastewater to the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant each day. Organized as a municipal corporation, the district is a leader in sustainability and resource reclamation; its rates are established by the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District Commission.