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NEWS RELEASE

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MWWMO Awards \$480,000 Grant for Green Infrastructure at Graco Park

New Riverfront Park to Feature Native Vegetation and Habitat, Stormwater Treatment, and Snowmelt System

MINNEAPOLIS — The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWWMO) announced today that it has awarded a \$480,000 grant to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) to enhance development of the new Graco Park along the Mississippi River in Northeast Minneapolis.

Pending formal acceptance by the MPRB, the grant will fund native vegetation and habitat restoration, infiltration basins and other stormwater management features, a low-maintenance pollinator lawn, and a heated sidewalk and plaza snowmelt system. Construction is scheduled to begin next year at the new park, which is located between Boom Island and Hall's Island.

“The unified stormwater and habitat enhancements at Graco Park will maximize the park’s environmental benefits while also providing a wonderful space for the public to access the Mississippi River,” said MWWMO Executive Director Kevin Reich. “We’re excited to continue our partnership with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to protect and enhance the Mississippi River’s ecosystem.”

Under the approved MPRB concept plan, more than 60 percent of Graco Park’s land area will be dedicated to native habitat restoration, including a variety of more than 150 deciduous and coniferous trees, a mix of native prairie perennial plants, a pollinator lawn, and other habitat features.

The restored habitat will work hand-in-hand with the new green stormwater infrastructure at the park. A series of interconnected stormwater basins, planted with native vegetation and scattered throughout the site, will form a stormwater treatment train to capture and clean runoff. These features are projected to capture 99 percent of the park’s stormwater runoff and remove up to 85 percent of sediment and phosphorus that otherwise would have entered the Mississippi River.

The heated sidewalk and plaza snowmelt system will be installed in high foot-traffic areas around the new multi-use community building and leading to the parking area, reducing the need for salt and sand to keep paved areas safe for pedestrian traffic in the winter. The system will use a geothermal heat source already planned for the community building.

The project will expand on the native habitat restoration work completed at nearby Hall's Island, which the MWMO supported with a \$1.5 million grant in 2017.

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About the MWMO

The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) works to protect and improve water quality, habitat and natural resources in an urban watershed that drains directly into the Mississippi River. We are a joint-powers local government unit and one of approximately three dozen watershed organizations in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Our member communities include Columbia Heights, Fridley, Hilltop, Lauderdale, Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, St. Anthony Village, and Saint Paul.

The MWMO encompasses 25,309 acres (39.5 square miles) of fully developed urban lands and waters. We partner with our member communities to invest in green infrastructure that captures, cleans and reuses stormwater runoff. Our team monitors and tracks water quality in the watershed and conducts education and outreach to promote active environmental stewardship among residents.

Learn more at mwmo.org.