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## For MWRD: Shore, Steele and Thompson

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Flooding basements. Clean tap water. Deep Tunnel reservoirs. Sewage disinfection. Asian carp. Whew. Environmental issues involving water quality, drainage and commerce are important to any metropolis — especially one built atop once-swampy lowlands. Which is why the board of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District merits close attention from voters — and not just when deluges of rain overwhelm our flood-management systems and threaten our drinking water.

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Six Democrats are running for three seats on the board. The Tribune makes its endorsements with one eye on the board's selection late this year of a replacement for board President Terry O'Brien, who will depart.

**Debra Shore** has spent an excellent first term advancing conservation priorities, mastering policy complexities and devoting huge amounts of time to a job that, for many board members, is part-time. Her responses to the Tribune's candidate questionnaire, available at [chicagotribune.com/elections](http://chicagotribune.com/elections), offer a quick education in MWRD issues and her visionary approaches for addressing them. Example: Speed the long-delayed completion of Deep Tunnel storage reservoirs by cutting a deal so the Illinois Toll Highway Authority uses rock from those quarries in its massive new construction program. Shore is a bright light in Chicagoland governance and would be a sound choice for board president.

**Kari K. Steele**, a chemist, has a rich scientific background this board needs as it wrestles with necessary, but potentially costly, projects for improving the quality of Chicago-area waters. As an unsuccessful candidate for the MWRD board in 2010, she was prescient in warning us about issues — such as contamination of Lake Michigan by discarded pharmaceuticals that people flush into sewers — that since have become mainstream concerns in conservation circles. Steele, who has worked in Chicago's water purification system and at the MWRD, stresses the need for educational outreach to help citizens understand and advocate for change.

**Patrick Daley Thompson** impressed us first with his crisp and knowledgeable questionnaire responses, and more so during a long, detailed conversation about the intersection of property

development and water management issues. Thompson, an attorney who specializes in real estate and public finance, would be a useful bridge between the MWRD and suburban mayors fearful that proposed stormwater regulations will kill new construction in their communities. Not so, says Thompson, who has the street cred to explain why. Although he bears a resemblance to his grandfather, the late Mayor Richard J. Daley, Thompson shows far more mastery of these MWRD issues than would a mere somebody somebody sent. Thompson is endorsed.

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