

Cedar Lake Park

UPDATE

Fall 2002

Mission Edition

Volume 14, No. 3

Founders Create Continuing Mission

Fifteen years ago, people joined together to save a large parcel of land on the north and east side of Cedar Lake. Thus began the Cedar Lake Park Association. A four-point mission statement was created. Since then, we have made considerable progress, turning these statements into reality.



2 Provide opportunities for people to learn to live in community with nature and one another.

Activities such as school/church/corporate outings, Earth Day clean-up, the Stroll and Roll, and bird/plant/history/scenic tours are some of these opportunities.



3 Continue to foster citizen leadership and private involvement in the development and management of the park and trails. The recent installation of the above water pump, five native plant restorations and ongoing buckthorn removal are representative.



1 Create and nurture a park at Cedar Lake with a thriving nature preserve and connecting trails and greenways.

This view of Cedar Lake Park from the sky includes the spirals of the memorial Cedar Grove, started in 1996, as well as the award-winning Cedar Lake Regional Trail, and the Kenilworth Trail.



4 Support similar efforts throughout the metro area and beyond.

Over the years, we have assisted the Midtown Greenway Coalition, Friends of Birch Pond, the Phalen Corridor Initiative, the Southwest (Kenilworth) Corridor, among others.



The Cedar Lake Trail receives an estimated 1,000 visitors each day—people who enjoy its natural setting.



On the Horizon

BY KEITH PRUSSING, CLPA PRESIDENT

The events of the past year have caused many people and organizations to reflect deeply on who they are, what is meaningful to them, and how they can make a greater difference in the life of the community, the country, and the world. For CLPA, this introspection has brought us to closely examine the mission statement created by our founders thirteen years ago. We have found it to be quite relevant to present circumstances.

It is reported that values of prime importance to people today are the desire to contribute, to volunteer their time, resources and talents, to participate in something greater than themselves. Suddenly, things that were thought to be important have become less so.

These are the values that are contained in our mission: nurturing nature, providing opportunities to connect and contribute, fostering citizen leadership, and supporting similar efforts throughout our world. This is what we have been about since a few people had a good idea to try and save a piece of land for a park.

Since then, much has been accomplished, and there is more to do. Thanks for your support in the past, and we welcome you to participate into the future. Our work and play together is important, meaningful, and relevant. Contribute as you can; there are many ways to make a difference.



Gifts

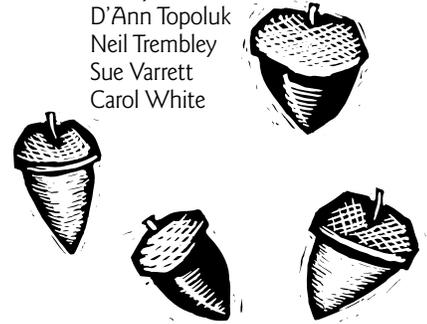
BY STEVE DURRANT, TREASURER

Cedar Lake Park Association gratefully acknowledges recent contributions in the form of money appreciated assets, materials, volunteer time and in-kind services, memorials and other gifts. Since the last *Update*, contributions have been received from:

Mary Adair
 Carolyn Anderson
 Chrissie Anderson
 Fay Atchison
 Lois B. and Jonathan S. Bishop Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation
 Bob and Mrs. Robert Brant
 Frank R. Braun
 Breck School
 Ruth Brin
 Chris Carlson
 Crescent Wind P. C.
 Rick Cucci
 Dan Dailey
 Data Recognition Corp.
 Bob Day
 Curt Dederich
 Peter Durrant
 Steve Durrant

Marcus Dillard
 Evan Ellison
 Richard Erickson
 Ned Foster
 William Frazee
 Anita Hsu
 Peter Hutter
 Ruth Jones
 Don and Lois Kjellman
 Sandy Knable
 Jim McPherson
 Mary McGee
 Miss Jean McIntosh
 Meredith Montgomery
 John Newman
 Prairie Restorations, Inc.
 Keith Prussing
 Virginia Puzak
 Deborah Reynolds
 John Richter

Patricia and Thomas Scott
 Dorene Scriven
 Sierra Club
 Cher Simo
 Lane Skalberg
 Kristine Smith
 Kathy Steward
 Paisley Svensson
 D'Ann Topoluk
 Neil Trembley
 Sue Varrett
 Carol White



Visit Our Website: www.cedarlakepark.org

BY MEREDITH MONTGOMERY

Those who inherit a cherished legacy have a responsibility to preserve it. Following the organizational principles developed during the original planning process, today's CLPA continues to nurture the land, invites young people and newcomers to explore the park, suggests stewardship activities to preserve the vision, and reaches out to support similar efforts within and outside of the city.

The CLPA website—developed gradually during the last two years—reflects and supports this mission. As a meeting place for those who share the values and vision that shaped the park, the web site provides a place to go for information about the park and its founding, as well as an electronic forum for citizens interested in environmental preservation and restoration.

In the coming months, we hope to present more historic photos and articles, detailed information about animal and plant life within and near the park, and some of the collected wisdom about this and similar preservation efforts. We'd also like to include profiles of enlightened and inspiring citizens who saw the potential to create a nature park in the center of a large urban area. Some day, visitors to the CLPA site may even be able to listen to the sounds of nature within Cedar Lake Park or take a virtual walk on its trails. Anything is possible—let us know what you envision!



The home page.



The maps page.



The photographs page.



The publications page.

Hidden Beach Dynamics: Cultures and Access

BY NEIL G.C. TREMBLEY, SECRETARY

Editor's note: In May 2002, MPRB forestry crews removed buckthorn from approximately 16 acres in the area of Hidden Beach (Upton Woods). Chemical treatment was applied. This summer, groups of volunteers have been hand-pulling buckthorn sprouts, and lopping larger saplings. Enforcement of park ordinances has been stepped up on a 24-hour basis. People continue to use the beach. The change can be quite startling, and the light through the trees, and the long views, are often beautiful.

The situation at Hidden Beach has been determined by historical forces acting on the east side of Cedar Lake for well over a century. The paramount issue is not safety (needed) or buckthorn (noxious), although both are important.

It is about a clash of cultures and access.

Since the 1870s, the east side has experienced three major cultures co-existing, sometimes uneasily, alongside each other. The first is the residents—those who have owned homes (such as the mansion built in the 1880s by retired financier G. F. Warner) on or near the lakeshore.

The second is the railroads, which imposed an industrial infrastructure and locked off large parts of the east side to development. And the third culture is recreational users in the form of boaters, picnickers, hikers, campers, partiers, and transients, among others. Of course, recreational and residential cultures overlap in some instances.

Unwittingly, the railroads created a buffer between the residents and recreational users and transients. While jealously guarding their acres of tracks and shops, the railroad



Hidden Beach 100 years ago. Dingley's dock and boathouse stand where the beach is today.

Photo courtesy of the Minneapolis Collection of the Minneapolis Public Library.

displayed a *laissez-faire* attitude along the northeast shoreline. Indeed, a collection of squatters' shacks lined the northern shore until the 1960s, and the wedge of highland jutting out from the northeast corner of the lake was long known as "Bum's Ridge."

With the build-up of land due to drainage and dumping (Hidden Beach and the entire area south to Burnham bridge was once underwater), the area became an ideal place to dock canoes or get off your bike and hang for a while.

Over the last twenty years a dramatic shift has occurred. The railroad tore up most of their tracks and tore down all their repair shops. With the CLPA spearheading the drive, millions of dollars were raised to incorporate the land to the north of the lake into the Minneapolis park system, and create the world-renowned Cedar Lake trail. As a consequence, the area around Cedar Lake has become an ever more exciting and coveted place to live. Concurrently, recreational activity has increased as users from all over the metro area (and beyond) come to explore and revel in the "wild" and "natural" aspect that has been a signature of Cedar Lake. Most of these are peace-loving

people who just want to soak up the natural atmosphere of this unique jewel of a lake.

Some are revelers who, with proper education (both by peace officers and by conscientious citizens), can be socialized into respectful use of the place. And some are dirtbags who break bottles and urinate in our neighbors' gardens and need to be busted.

This friction between recreational users and residents boiled over the summer of 2001, primarily due to the sweltering, never-ending

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



A hundred years ago, this main woodland pathway to Hidden Beach was entirely under water, running along the dockline in the top photo.

Hidden Beach

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

heat, as well as the combustible nature of the large crowds of people seeking relief at the beach both day and night. Locals were outraged by the noise, the trash and the vandalism that was a by-product of such a summer. These actions are unjustifiable and regrettable.

But they are not viable reasons for radically changing the paradigm.

The Cedar Lake Park Association is committed to promoting an environment that is open and welcoming to all the citizens of our community. Cedar Lake Park is not a neighborhood park. With its connection to Hennepin County's Kenilworth and Cedar Lake Regional (Hutch Spur) Trails, the park has become a part of an ever-widening metropolitan park and trail system.

CLPA seeks to nurture nature and embrace the cultural diversity and friendly social exchanges so long a part of Hidden Beach's heritage.

While we surely acknowledge the beauty and functionality of the rest of the Chain of Lakes, we respectfully advocate a different vision for Cedar Lake, one that nurtures a more natural environment where people can truly commune with nature.

CLPA has consistently advocated Cedar Lake as a place to go to, not walk around. Instead of a series of concentric asphalt roads, we have encouraged bike/pedestrian corridors with points of access to the lake.

Through member donations of

money and time, thousands of wildflowers have been planted in the prairie and woods. Through the Big Woods projects, CLPA has planted hundreds of trees and shrubs, many near Hidden Beach. We joined in an effort to use natural means to block the encroaching system of mountain trails by strategically placing large trunks across the paths.

We have promoted gradual change in the area, and attempted to minimize human artifacts. While we are sensitive to the concerns of the residents surrounding the park, we will continue to advocate to the park board a plan of action in keeping with our mission, and offer our human and monetary resources to implement it.

Are there special challenges to such a vision? Certainly. Does this abrogate the need to provide security for the people who come to the park? Of course not. With the leadership of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, law enforcement, and the participation of the long-time users and lovers of Cedar Lake (of all ages), we can continue to create, nurture, and enjoy the special character of the area that has enriched our lives.

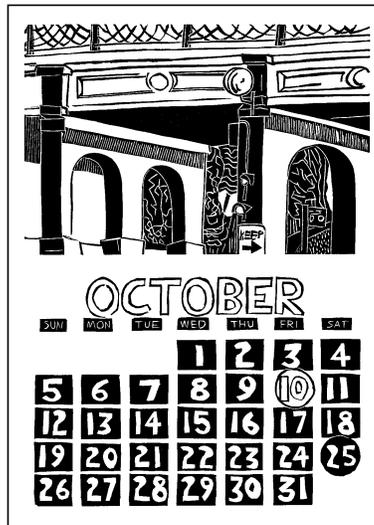
How often I hear a bicyclist or jogger stop by the Cedar Lake trail water pump and exclaim, "I can't believe such a jewel exists in the heart of the city." Such jewels are hard to find and should be cherished for their beauty and uniqueness.

NURTURE NATURE: Please stay on the trails.

Artist designs bridge calendars

Local artist and a long-time supporter of Cedar Lake Park, Richard Stephens of St. Louis Park, produces limited-edition linoleum-block-print calendars.

The Cedar Lake Parkway Bridge is pictured at right. A member of the Artists Cooperative of the Minnesota Center for the Book Arts, Stephens awards a prize for identifying all 12 bridges correctly.



Cedar Lake Pa

Cedar Lake Park is a popular destination for a rapidly growing number of park users.

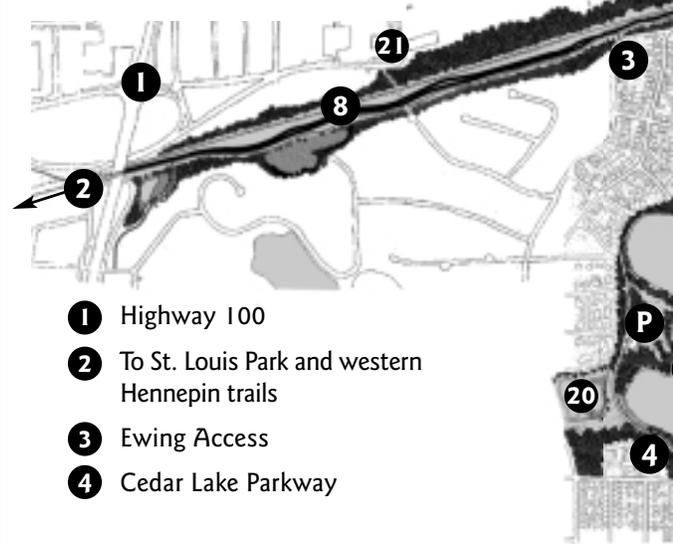
Hikers, bicyclists, bird watchers, anglers, dog owners, swimmers, in-line skaters, canoeists, cross-country skiers, and many others enjoy the special features of the park. The park is designed to harmoniously balance human use with the natural environment, consistent with the principles described in the 1993 Citizen Advisory Committee's Statement of Philosophy.



2002 Edition Map Now Available on the Web

©2002. Cedar Lake Park Association

Western Extension



- 1 Highway 100
- 2 To St. Louis Park and western Hennepin trails
- 3 Ewing Access
- 4 Cedar Lake Parkway



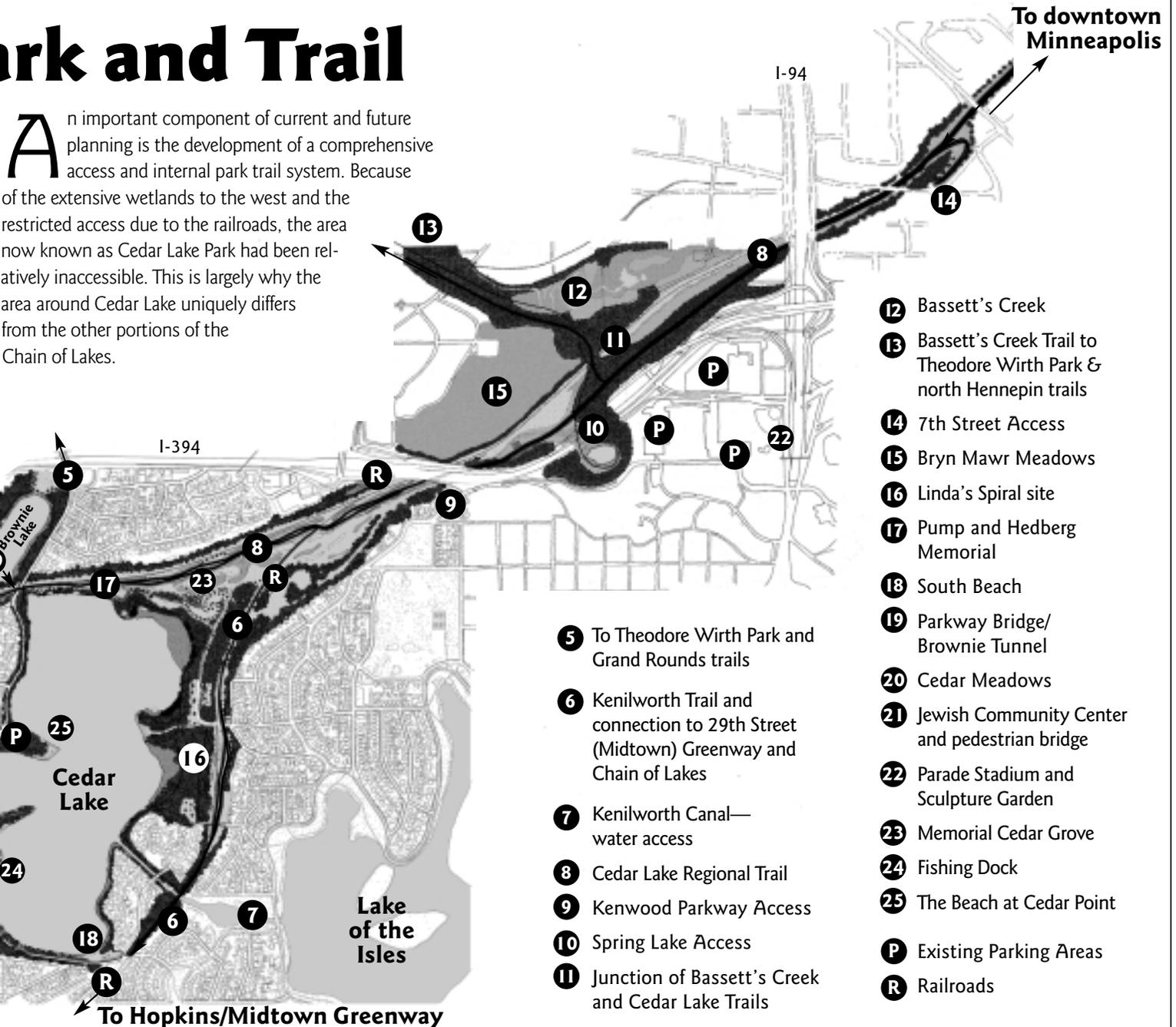
BY KEITH PRUSSING

Fun events this summer included the **Jones-Harrison Stroll and Roll** in September. It consisted of a 5 k run along the Kenilworth and Cedar Lake Trails and a 1 k walk or wheelchair stroll — up the Kenilworth Trail to 21st and Upton and back to J-H. CLPA volunteers assisted at water tables and at road crossings. It was a nice day, and an opportunity for many of the Jones Harrison residents and their families and friends — as well as staff members — to get acquainted with the nearby park and trails.

In July, **40 children from Breck School** in Golden Valley visited the park for a work/play afternoon. They were enthusiastic wormwood pullers, and enjoyed their ramble

Park and Trail

An important component of current and future planning is the development of a comprehensive access and internal park trail system. Because of the extensive wetlands to the west and the restricted access due to the railroads, the area now known as Cedar Lake Park had been relatively inaccessible. This is largely why the area around Cedar Lake uniquely differs from the other portions of the Chain of Lakes.



PROJECTS IN THE PARK

north to the prairie and CLT. We educated them about the park and trails as well as buckthorn and other exotics. They returned happy to their school, carrying buckthorn branches that are now on display in the Breck Nature Center.

A **Friends of the Cedar Grove** group has been formed to provide for the ongoing needs of this special area.

This year's **water quality numbers have revealed that the water at Cedar Lake is a little less clear as compared to the year before**, dropping to an "A-" from an "A". Lake

Harriet is now the cleanest of the in-town lakes. Though the lake continues to be very clean, this drop is cause for vigilance. Further, this year has seen the most extensive milfoil infestation in many years. Coupled with the algae and "goo", large sections of the lake are difficult for boating and swimming. MPRB had been harvesting weeds six days/week for several weeks, but this work is like cutting your lawn: it looks better, and it will grow back. Finally, lake levels have been very high due to the abundant rain, even with the increased capacity in Lake of the Isles, and the gravity drainage out of Lake Calhoun into Lake Harriet.

South Beach restoration activities have been completed. These enhancements, funded by CIDNA, have included native plantings, benches and tables, and new signs. Beach users and the neighborhood are pleased.

A study group, chaired by MPRB member John Erwin, has issued a series of **recommendations to enhance ski and bicycle activities in Wirth Park.** Due to financial constraints, those recommendations that can be implemented at no extra cost will be adopted immediately, while others will require board

continued on page 6

Projects in the Park

continued from page 5

action. In Cedar Lake Park, an unintended consequence of the clearing of the Hidden Beach area has been a marked increase in biking in the wooded areas, resulting in landscape degradation, new trails, and pedestrian/bike conflicts.

The Cedar Lake Regional Trail is closed east of Dunwoody because of the bridge replacement at Royalston Ave. No other right-of-way has been offered to users other than “find your own way.”

Conversations and presentations continue with city and county elected officials regarding the **completion of the trail to the river** in the off-road corridor. We are also talking with the railroad. It will take political initiative to make it so. CLPA continues to prefer this route as holding true to the original vision; i.e., allowing the trail to be completely off-road as it passes through downtown Minneapolis to the Mississippi River. CLPA has commissioned engineering studies showing that this route can be feasible and cost-effective.

The Bassett's Creek Trail is finished and linked to the CLT. Turn north and spiral upwards to the long span over the Public Works recycling yard and the railroads, spiral down to the eastern side of Bryn Mawr Meadows. New blacktop winds along the fields to S. Cedar Lake Road. Be careful in the area near the restored prairie, especially going downhill, as injuries have occurred here. New signs are being installed throughout the corridor. An existing soccer field along Bassett's Creek has been relocated to the Meadows to allow room for the trail. There are nice possibilities to access the creek in this area. The trail comes up to street-level to cross at Glenwood Ave, turning west to connect with the Theodore Wirth trails in the vicinity of J.D. Rivers Gardens. The Con Agra structures, as well as Glenwood Inglewood, are striking in the creek valley. This trail is intended to be the eastern link to the Luce Line trail coming in from Watertown, around the south end of Medicine Lake, through Golden Valley and into Wirth Park. At present, there are routing problems in Golden Valley. Originally, the proposed route followed a rail corridor through the city. Some of the corridor is located within the Golden Valley Country Club, which was not in favor and was able to stop it. An alternative was proposed, but was unacceptable to the city. Negotiations continue.

Hennepin County has removed the rails in the corridor extending west from the Midtown Greenway into St Louis Park. This .5 mi section was purchased by the county to connect with a present trail going west to Hopkins and beyond, in the State Hwy 7 corridor. The completion of this key segment allows for a 13 mile loop starting/ending in Cedar Lake Park.



The green space, pictured to the right of the trails, is part of the greater Cedar Lake Park. Currently, its future is uncertain.

Hennepin County, and particularly Commissioner Peter McGlaughlin and HCRRA staff, created an **11th-hour solution to the preservation of the Dakota rail corridor through the Lake Minnetonka area** from Orono through Mound and beyond into Carver and McCleod counties. The three counties came together and utilized a state law that disallows any rail closing if there is potential freight traffic. Thus, the county is now temporarily in the freight business, and has been able to purchase entirely the section located within county limits. This 42-mile-long corridor will remain in the public domain in its entirety, and will be converted to recreational use.

CLPA has begun preliminary planning activities leading to an appraisal of the Hennepin County lands north of 21st Street, west of Kenwood Parkway, east of the Kenilworth Trail, and south of I-394. These 20-plus acres are the former location of extensive railroad activities, including roundhouses and machine shops. These yards were razed in the 1980's, and the brick rubble continues to be visible. At present, there are freight rail, the paved non-motorized trails, and informal walking trails. HCRRA has no plans for the area, and has drilled a series of test wells this year to determine kinds and quantities of sub-surface pollution. The Metropolitan Council has undertaken a two-year study of transportation possibilities for this southwest transit corridor, including light rail, hybrid electric-diesel buses, regular busways, trolley, freight rail, and non-motorized uses. The land we are interested in is located outside of the core transit corridor, and is unlikely to be needed for transit. The question, then, is what should be done with it, if it is declared “surplus.” CLPA has believed for many years that this green space is part of the greater Cedar Lake Park, and should be maintained as such in perpetuity.

Further, rather than allowing revegetation predominantly by exotics, we would like to manage it according to the principles of native landscape restoration used in the public

domain. We need to know its dollar value. Hence, the appraisal is very important.

Three buckthorn removal projects are underway by the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority. Two small areas in the CIDNA neighborhood, one along 29th Street (Midtown Greenway), the other near Park Siding Park, are being cleared to further the campaign against buckthorn and to allow for native plant restoration. At Park Siding, there will be substantial private investment in new plant materials. The third project area is much larger, and started at the instigation of CLPA. Located at the south west corner of 21st Street, east of the railroad and Kenilworth Trail, the project area runs south in the trail corridor to the MCT bus stop at Thomas Ave. It will be done in multiple phases over several years, starting with buckthorn removal. Next, other exotics, such as Siberian Elm, will be removed, and then native flora plantings will build on what is already living there. The result will be enhanced visibility of the trail corridor and the crossing at 21st St. This work will continue the improvements to the Upton Gateway area that have been underway for many years.

An estimated 80 hardwood trees have been planted along the CLT corridor. Largely oaks, elm, and maple, these trees were located according to the plans that were drawn up when the trail was designed and built in 1995. Originally, it was envisioned that the prairie area would be savannah, meaning scattered trees amidst the grasslands. At the time, there were insufficient funds to allow for such tree planting in the final trail budget. MPRB learned that there were surplus trees for the asking at the Ed Karbo tree nursery off Marshall Ave. in NE Minneapolis. Ed Karbo is an 80 years-plus man who started planting trees on a vacant lot several decades ago as a way of creating materials to be used in community reforestation efforts in his local neighborhood. His efforts have resulted in the growing and planting of hundreds of trees throughout the city.

Wildlife News in the Park

Another Good Bluebird Year—Our 16th

BY DORENE SCRIVEN

Despite a late start due to a prolonged cold spring, three pair of Eastern Bluebirds began nesting in April. In spite of several failures, eventually there were three successful broods and a total of 14 young birds fledged.

Those aerial acrobats, the Tree Swallows, followed their usual pattern of nesting in the boxes close to the bluebirds. Thanks are due to Dorene Scriven, Keith Gunderson and Sandra Riecki who assisted Mary McGee in monitoring the 14 nest boxes in four locations: the Cedar Lake Trail, the Kenilworth Trail and at the Target property.

Highly unusual, but spotted several times in several locations: a wild turkey! Also being seen more frequently than over the past few years: a red fox, and, occasionally deer wandering into the park from the Golden Valley herds.

Some special nature events included the annual spring birdwalk led again by Peter Neubeck. On a beautiful morning in May the group of six birders saw 60 species. Highlights were a Caspian Tern, Green Heron, a Northern Waterthrush singing and very visible on a low perch. Last of all, the group got an unusually good look at a Mourning Warbler.

And on June 1, a group met Don Beimborn



Healthy fox populations have returned to Cedar Lake Park and the surrounding area.

at Upton Avenue and walked through the woodlands identifying wildflowers. It was too early for all the prairie to be in bloom, but now the beautiful prairie plants are at their best in years.

One of our best prizes, completely unexpected, was a vision of Laurie Lundy, one of the original prime movers and organizers of CLPA, emerging from the woods, in town for just a few hours!

Many people love the park and treasure and respect this gem of nature. But some come for

the sole purpose of letting their unleashed dogs run wild off the paths and through the wetlands and into the lake. When they ignore and violate the City's laws and Park regulations, all wildlife is threatened.

If you do not want to see a pile of turkey feathers, a red fox ripped to pieces, a deer chased until it is hit by a car or train, a Canada Goose or Wood Duck with a broken neck, whose young without parents will die, then help us to find ways to discourage this abuse of the park, a sanctuary for all forms of life.

MPRB and CLPA Talk About Fallen Trees

BY MEREDITH MONTGOMERY

It's hard to miss the huge new windfall just south of Hidden Beach access trail. Toppled during an early morning storm in mid-August, it received the bright orange "X" for removal a few days later. In response to a note from CLPA, Mike Schmidt, MPRB Assistant Superintendent for Operations, visited the park to assess safety and liability issues and decide what should be done about the trees.

Mike and two of his staff—Forestry Director Ralph Sievert and District 1 Supervisor Randy Windsperger—met with CLPA representatives at the site of the fallen trees. The meeting provided the first opportunity to explore how MPRB will handle deadfall in and around Hidden Beach since the extensive removal and chipping of buckthorn and other exotics and woody debris that took place in May.

The 18-inch-diameter, 70-foot-high cottonwood that split and crashed to the ground and the trees and bushes that fell beneath it are a gift to this area of the park for several reasons. It is important that they stay intact on the site to provide habitat for small animals, insects, plants and fungi, as well as to restrict bicycle traffic. In addition, natural areas must have decaying material of all sizes and ages. There is



an aesthetic involved.

However, the size and position of the fallen logs invite children of all ages to climb on and around them. This causes MPRB to be concerned about liability.

A thoughtful discussion among those present focused on ways to reduce liability while preserving the natural deadfall. The conclusion was that the fallen trees and debris could remain where they are, although the large adjoining cottonwood needs to be taken down before it, too, falls. MPRB crews will make a few cuts to lower the higher logs closer to the

ground but will leave brush, branches and leafy debris alone. Little if any of the material will be removed from the park.

Because large numbers of elm trees must be removed throughout the city, work on the windfall probably won't take place until mid-October. MPRB will let CLPA know beforehand when work will begin.

CLPA is pleased that MPRB was willing to visit the park, assess the situation and its dangers honestly, and continue to accommodate its tree-removal policies to the design principles for the nature park.

2000 Aldrich Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55405

(612) 377-9522

www.cedarlakepark.org

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #2543
MPLS., MN 55401

INSIDE

Our Thanks to 2
Hidden Beach Dynamics . . . 3
**Projects in the Park,
Map 4-6**
Park Wildlife 7
Fallen Trees 7
Events Calendar 8

Cedar Lake Park Update is published seasonally by the Cedar Lake Park Association (CLPA).

Since 1989, CLPA has worked with individuals, neighborhoods, corporations, foundations, churches and schools.

We have successful partnerships with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and other city, county, regional, state and federal agencies.

Editor: Jim McPherson
Design: Triangle Park Creative
© 2002 Cedar Lake Park Association

(612) 377-9522
info@cedarlakepark.org
www.cedarlakepark.org

Printed on recycled paper made of 50% recycled/10% post-consumer waste.

CLPA Update, Fall 2002

If you're seeing this CLPA Update for the first time, contact us if you want to be added to our mailing list.

CALENDAR

CLPA Steering Committee

Second Monday of each month, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Kenwood Recreation Center. You're invited to participate.

September

Migrant birds passing through

October

Peak of fall colors

November

Lake typically freezes, eagles may be seen

December

Winter solstice, December 22, ski trails emerge

January 2003

Annual meeting

For more activities

Call CLPA (612) 377-9522. Email us at info@clpa.org. Or check our website (www.cedarlakepark.org).



Cedar Lake Park Association Mission

- 1. Create and nurture a park at Cedar Lake with a thriving nature preserve and connecting trails and greenways.**
- 2. Provide opportunities for people to learn to live in community with nature and one another.**
- 3. Continue to foster citizen leadership and private involvement in the development and management of the park and trails.**
- 4. Support similar efforts throughout the metro area and beyond.**

Your support is important—
All donations are tax-deductible.*

** To the extent allowed by law.*