

Cedar Lake Park

UPDATE

Summer 2010

Victory Edition

Volume 22, No. 1

SUCCESS! The Trail Meets the River

BY NEIL TREMBLEY

Part One of "A Case Study" was published in the fall of 2009 CLPA Update (online at the CLPA website). It told how, in 2000, the city decided to re-route the Cedar Lake Regional Trail to the Mississippi River, how CLPA organized support for an off-road alignment. And how we set about garnering support and raising funds.

In the three years since that winter 2000 meeting with Minneapolis Public Works (MPW), the Cedar Lake Park Association (CLPA) had moved forward on multiple fronts. It funded its own trail alignment study. It met with government officials. It reached out to local groups and businesses. It also wrote articles.

In these articles, CLPA stressed the safety of its off-road trail alignment. Staying in the corridor eliminated confrontations with cars, buses, and trucks—confrontations bicyclists and pedestrians always lose. Families could enjoy a safer ride. Safety was a winner issue.

CLPA subtly shifted the language of the conversation. The city had referred to CLPA's study as the 'alternate' alignment. In CLPA's article, 'alternative' alignment became 'preferred' alignment. As support grew, the group ceaselessly exhorted government officials to embrace the vision.

CLPA reached out to local groups like the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee. Member Billy Binder recalled, "I was convinced the City's plan was the way to go, that the obstacles to building a trail in the corridor were too great to overcome. But when CLPA spoke at our BAC meeting, I began to re-assess the situation." As before, CLPA created a groundswell of support.



Standing near the eastern edge of the park, looking east under I-394 into Linden Yard. The Cedar Lake Trail and Southwest LRT will coexist in this corridor. There will be two stations a short walk away.



The LRT trains will squeeze in around bike riders and autos crossing Cedar Lake Parkway, with South Beach and the lake in the background.

LRT Route Decided

BY ADELE HALL, HENNEPIN COUNTY REGIONAL RAIL AUTHORITY

It's official—the SW LRT route in Minneapolis is through the Kenilworth Corridor. The Metropolitan Council approved the route last week. Also announced is a design team that will work with Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and the City of Minneapolis to conduct the station area strategic planning process for the five Minneapolis stations. The stations in Minneapolis will be Royalston, Van White, Penn, 21st Street and West Lake. To get the exact location of stations go to www.southwesttransitway.org.

The Station Planning Team

The selected design team involves five firms: **AECOM** (Steve Wilensky & Dave

Showalter) will lead the team and have extensive experience working on LRT projects, urban design, and transit oriented development.

SRF Consulting (Barry Warner) will bring expertise in local urban design, transportation, and landscape architecture.

KLD Consulting (Kathie Doty) will manage the public involvement process; Ms. Doty has worked on the Southwest LRT project since 2002.

McComb Group (Jim McComb) will conduct the Development Opportunities & Market Assessment.

4RM+ULA will do the graphics/visual representation.

SUCCESS...*continued on page 5*

Light Rail...*continued on page 3*



On the Horizon

BY KEITH PRUSSING

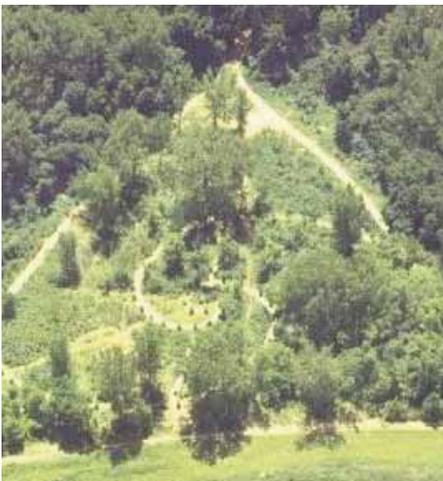
Welcome to our Victory issue. We are still here, and with cause for CELEBRATION! The Cedar Lake Trail will be completed to the Mississippi River in 2010. The culmination of years of effort by so many people, this last segment of the trail will be built below street level through downtown.

As you move along the new trail you will encounter a different look at Minneapolis, passing under the Twins Stadium, next to the multi modal transit station and the garbage burner, through the North Loop warehouse district, and skirting the edge of the Federal Reserve to connect with W. River Rd. just north of the Hennepin Ave. bridge. All without crossing a road.

Light rail transit is coming. It will share the corridor with the Cedar Lake Trail from the Kenilworth Junction east to downtown. To the southwest, it will parallel the length of Cedar Lake Park to the Burnham Bridge, the canal, and Cedar Lake Parkway. There are studies for stations at Penn Ave., and W. 21st street. We are deeply involved in mitigating the many impacts on the park, users, and wildlife. It is what we have been doing so well since 1989.

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We appreciate you, and continue to need your help.



The spirals of the Cedar Grove.



Gifts

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

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GIVE ONLINE AT www.cedarlakepark.org. All donations are tax-deductible.

Visit Our Website

Go to www.cedarlakepark.org to see what CLPA is about. You'll find:

- This newsletter in **color**
- History of the park and the Master Plan
- Photos taken throughout the park and trail
- Volunteer opportunities
- Historical and aerial photos
- Publications and maps
- People enjoying and nurturing nature
- Blog, links and contacts with others

If you would like to volunteer or contribute to your park, email us at info@cedar-lakepark.org, call (612) 377-9522 or write to: Cedar Lake Park Association, 2000 Aldrich Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55405.



The Planning Process

The station area strategic planning process will begin with a detailed look at each of the station areas and land use planning done to-date, a multimodal access analysis, and a market study which will form the basis for conceptual designs for the station (platform, sidewalks, drop off, etc), a detailed land use plan for a half mile radius around each station, and an implementation plan for each station area.

The plans will build on previous land use studies and inform future rail design and land use decisions. Planning is being done to inform Preliminary Engineering and to anticipate and plan for issues related to access to the stations, land use, market change, and potential impacts. It will allow for a dialogue about the issues, constructive resident and business input into the project, an understanding of potential change, and a unified vision for the stations.

Getting Involved

Public open houses will be held throughout the planning process to distribute information and collect input. Three open houses will be held for the 21st and West Lake Street Stations together, and three open houses will be held for the Penn, Van White, and Royalston Stations together.

A Community Members' Working Group (CMWG) will be convened to: 1. Raise local issues as the site, concept, and implementation plans are formulated 2. Act as liaisons between the station area planning process and their representative group

The CMWG will meet a couple of weeks before each of the public open houses, and an additional time near the end of the planning process, for a total of four meetings. The purpose of each meeting will correspond to the planning process work being done at the time. The group will meet as a whole and break into small groups during the course of the meetings.

CMWG meetings will be open to the public, but in order to best represent the interests and stakeholders near the stations, neighborhood associations, business associations, local organizations, and owners of property immediately adjacent to stations are to appoint a member to the CMWG; this member will serve as the representative and liaison for your group.

CMWG meetings will be held Tuesdays from 6:30–8:00 p.m. on: June 22 (this kick off meeting will likely be two hours in length), August 24, October 26, and December 7 or 14. The location of these meetings has yet to be determined. Again, to get information as it unfolds go the web site cited above.

Cedar Lake Park Association will actively be involved in the station planning process. We must protect the park and trails! Your involvement is also urged. Stay tuned!

For more details go to www.southwesttransitway.org.

Bicycling Magazine rates Minneapolis the #1 city for biking in the country. A remarkable achievement, more so because of our winters. Adding to this is the recent rollout of Nice Ride Minnesota, a system of rental bikes available to pick up and leave at kiosks scattered around downtown, Uptown, and the U of M. This system is successful in Montreal, and is the first in the U.S.

The lakeshore trail, between the Mound and the Cedar-Isles Canal, runs .61 mile. It provides an intimate experience of the lake, woodlands, and marshes, passing by Linda's Spiral, Hidden Beach, and the Sunset Bench.

A Perfect Day for Spring Planting

BY NEIL TREMBLEY

After four days of rain, the Cedar Lake Park Prairie was in perfect shape for planting. Friday, May 14 dawned cool and clear, a glorious day for planting. Data Recognition Corporation, for the 10th year in a row, supplied a group of eager planters. They were joined by two CLPA members: Cynthia Mueller and Curt Dederich, who volunteered their time to work and play in the park.

First, the crew spent time eradicating invasives. They pulled Wormwood and bagged it for removal. The resulting holes were perfect to plant the one thousand native-specie plugs provided by Prairie Restoration, Inc. While most of the crew planted, Curt and Elma Saunders went out with this writer and lopped hundreds of invasive Russian Elms and Cottonwoods.

During the time spent out in the prairie, nature put on a grand show with Eastern Bluebirds flittering around and migrating Loons honking overhead.

Below is a list of the wildflowers we planted that beautiful day.

Liatris aspera - tall blazing star
Phlox pilosa - downy phlox
Aster urophyllus - arrow-leaved aster
Campanula rotundiflora - harebell
Amorpha canescens - leadplant
Allium stellatum - autumn onion
Anemone cylindrica - thimbleweed

A hearty Thank You to our volunteer planters:

Bridgit Ramberg
Aaron Ramberg
Ann Treece
Denise Esner
Laura Tisdell
Lorrie Insisiengmay
Chad Bjorklund
Elma Sanders
Linda O'Leary
James Fogarty
Donald Sharp
Joan Collins
Cynthia Mueller
Curt Dederich
Neil Trembley



Water Quality

Cedar Lake water quality was up for 2009, reports Tim Brown, Manager of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) Environmental Operations. Last year was a very dry year and lack of runoff due to rainfall was the main reason for this uptick. Cedar Lake's overall water quality has steadily improved since 1996, mainly due to efforts to treat runoff, such as creating the Cedar Meadows pond complex on the southwest corner of lake.

The MPRB assesses a wide range of indicators throughout the year at Cedar Lake and derives five water quality measures from the data: Aesthetics, Habitat Quality, Water Clarity, Public Health, and Recreational Access. For 2009 Cedar Lake rated "excellent" for Aesthetics, Habitat Quality, Public Health, and Recreational Access; and "good" for Water Clarity. Details of the indices and the data can be found in the MPRB's Water Quality Report for 2009 at: www.minneapolis.parks.org/documents/caring/WaterResourcesReport2009.pdf



Cedar Lake usually has a high density of aquatic plant life. In many areas, the lake's depth is less than 15 feet—a depth where aquatic plants thrive. While these plants are crucial for animal habitat and water quality, they can be an obstacle for recreation, especially invasive Eurasian Milfoil. In 2009 Cedar Lake also had a high density of filamentous algae. The density of the algae can block sunlight and crowd space needed by other varieties of plant life. To maintain good recreational access to the lake, the MPRB annually removes some of this algae—along with invasive Milfoil—during the summer months.

Tim noted that the aluminum sulfate (alum) treatment performed by the MPRB in 1996 initially helped improve water clarity, but the effect was limited due to the normal life span of such a treatment and Cedar Lake's relative shallowness. Today the impact of that alum treatment is probably not a factor in the observed water quality.

Projects in the Park

The **Kenilworth Trail corridor**, marked F on the map, has been selected as the locally preferred route for the Southwest Transitway. Presently active heavy rail will go away, and two sets of light rail tracks will be laid, requiring a 72' wide corridor. Proposed stations near the park are close: Hidden Beach (H), and Penn Ave/I-394 N.

The **Mound area**, M, is the highest point on the northern lakeshore. Here, the Loppet cross country ski trail comes off the lake, running east along the prairie to just south of B, where it turns south into the woods. The trail continues to the Hidden Beach area, where it returns to the lake. The 2010 races were a great success, and once again CLPA managed the end of race food stop. Partnering with students from Providence Academy, we served over 2000 participants.

The **Jones-Harrison Residence**, on the hill between K and O, graciously hosted our 2010 Annual Meeting. Moved from the cold of January to the warmer April, friends and supporters gathered to learn about CLPA activities, elect a new Board of Directors, and enjoy fellowship and good food.

The **Burnham Woodlands** restoration project, W, continues, having logged over 3000 volunteer hours since 2005. It is a good example of our model of landscape conversion in action, with the ongoing removal of invasive shrubs and forbs, freeing up the native vegetation. Seeds are also scattered throughout. Along with Big Woods I, G, and II, E, projects such as these can always use your help, and represent our ongoing commitment to the nature park at Cedar Lake.

There are **three beaches** to swim on Cedar, located at L, I, and H. There are thirst-quenching water pumps located by the Mound, M, near Hidden Beach, H, and at South Beach, L.

The **memorial Cedar Grove**, D, continues to mature. The cedar trees, laid out along two spirals, have grown to nearly 15 feet tall, and are visible from the air. One can walk the spirals, or sit contemplatively on the Kasota limestone bench. A henge has been created, with marks for the winter and summer solstice sunrise/sunset, and the cardinal directions. This year, we will have all of the names of the honorees and donors placed on our website, along with photos and text describing this important part of the park.

Hennepin County prairie lands, N, were partially burned this spring. We have had a series of meet-

ings with HCRRA staff about mowing, and have created maps that clearly show what areas are not to be mowed, reducing the lawn-like look from Sentence to Serve mowers, and enhancing the prairie.

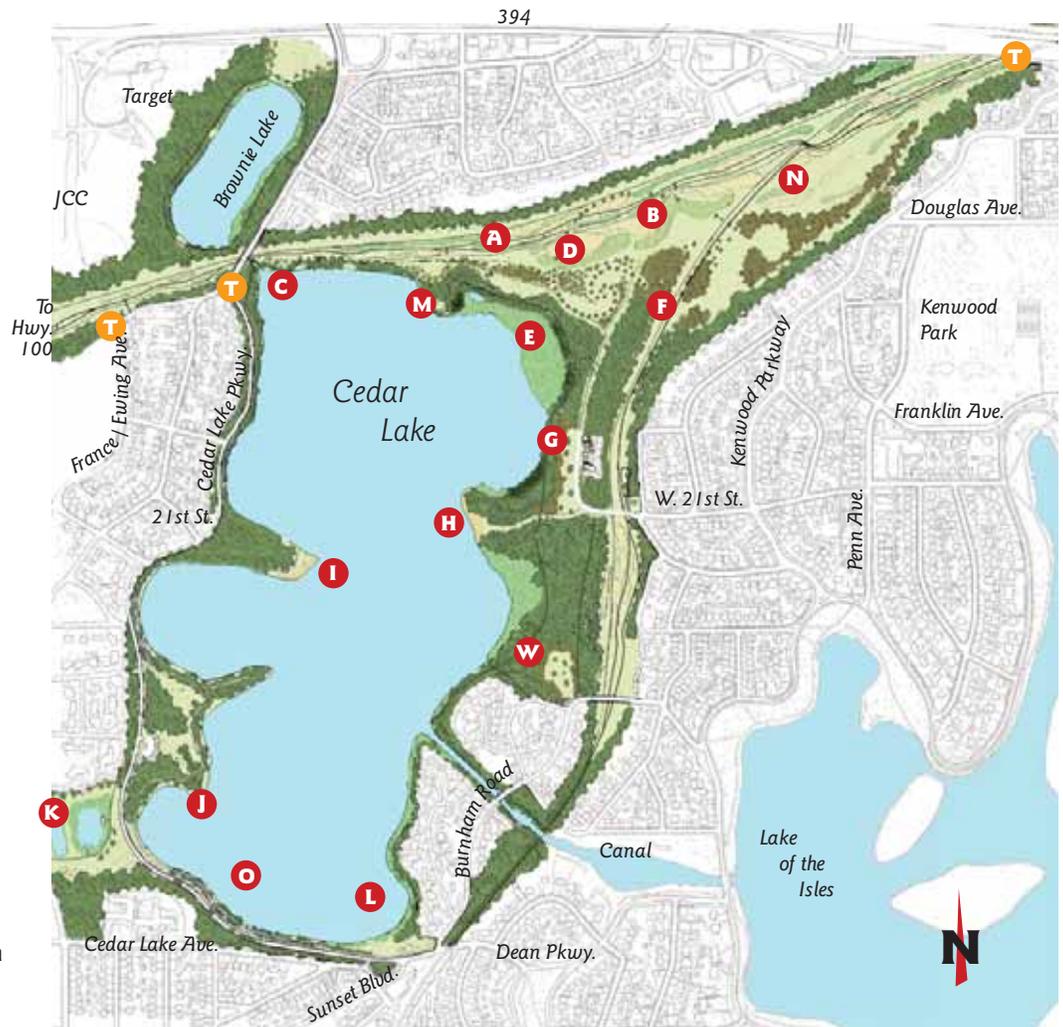
There is **poison ivy** throughout the park. Please be alert, and remember that dogs can come home with the oil on their coats.

Wildlife—such as deer, fox, turkey, badger, muskrat, and mink—abounds. The Bluebird Project continues. We are looking at possible sites for a Chimney Swift tower.

Experiencing the park while on the water is a delight. You can launch a kayak or canoe from both the east and west shores, or

rent at Lake Calhoun and travel through Isles. Be sure to go through the tunnel to Brownie Lake. Long distance swimmers enjoy the lake in the early morning.

The **Kenilworth “surplus” lands** face an uncertain future. The Regional Rail Authority will be looking at uses for the property that is not needed for light rail. North of W. 21st Street and west of I-394 is presently a *de facto* part of greater Cedar Lake Park, and could be utilized for transit-related economic development. One proposal is storage lines for Northstar Commuter Rail cars laying over during the day.



- A** Cedar Lake Trail
- B** Prairie
- C** Parkway Bridge/Tunnel
- D** Cedar Grove
- E** Big Woods II
- F** Kenilworth Trail
- G** Big Woods I
- H** Hidden Beach
- I** Cedar Point
- J** Fishing Dock
- K** Cedar Meadows
- L** South Beach
- M** Mound
- N** Burlington Northern RR
- O** Memorial Daffodils
- W** Burnham Woodlands
- T** Trail Access

We've Been Workin' on the Railroad

BY PHILLIP QUALY

The Cedar Lake Park Association and United Transportation Union (UTU) are working together to conceptualize and capture attractive and relevant community history for the proposed Southwest Light Rail stations that will be located near Cedar Lake Park. At this time, the proposed station locations include Lake Street, 21st Street, Penn Avenue and Van White Boulevard. The theme for our collaborative effort is to honor the history of Labor, Commerce and Community that built our Minneapolis neighborhoods.

The UTU represents railroad conductors, switch persons, and yardmasters and represented the railroad workers who worked at the Cedar Lake Yards from the 1920's to mid 1980's when the yards were shut down. UTU continues to represent railroad workers who operate trains passing through the area, Amtrak, and North Star Commuter Rail Crews. The UTU holds a remarkable collection of videos, photos, documents, seniority rosters with the names of railroad workers, and other collections from the last century. The union wishes to share these archives with the communities of new riders who will benefit from rail transportation.

"There is a tremendous legacy from these abandon rail yards that built our Minneapolis neighborhoods. Generations of residents walked to work to the mills, lumber yards, machine shops and produce houses that were serviced by these rail yards," said Phillip Qualy, UTU State Legislative Director. In 1993, Qualy presented a historical narrative with over 100



Railroads created much of the present park lands around Cedar Lake. The Bryn Mawr, west Kenwood and west side of the lake were developed to house railroad workers.

slides to the Save Cedar Lake Park Association. UTU members then raised over \$500 for a memorial to the dignity of labor. "For example, the Bryn Mawr neighborhood was largely comprised of railroad families who worked for the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad which had its yard and shops on the east side of the park".

We welcome all persons to contribute any photos, including family members in photos, or documents they may have from the old days

in western Minneapolis. "We wish to pass on a sense of the dignity of Labor so that future generations of light rail riders and the greater community can see the faces and locations that built this great city".

Please send in any photos, stories, to the Cedar Lake Park Association, via email info@cedarlakepark.org, or USPS to: 2000 Aldrich Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55405.

Volunteer Opportunities

CLPA is a volunteer organization. We accomplish all that we do through the dedicated efforts of ordinary people like you who believe in our mission.

We need your help in a variety of areas, such as digging in the dirt in the park, database and website management, media production such as our newsletter, community outreach, fundraising and networking with the public/private sector.

Without you, we are not able to succeed. Please help us make a difference, and have fun along the way.

To volunteer or contribute to your park:

Email info@cedarlakepark.org

Call 612-377-9522, or

Write: CLPA, 2000 Aldrich Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55405

SUCCESS *continued from page 1*

As before, that support caused government agencies to look at the project in a new light. Part of that light came from the warehouse district.

The trail, whichever alignment was picked, would run through the Minneapolis Warehouse District. Once a quiet backwater of dilapidated brick buildings, by 2003 the warehouse district was booming. As developers renovated old warehouse space and erected fashionable housing units, sleepy old 4th St.—where the City planned to route the trail—had become a crowded thoroughfare lined with upscale condos. Those new homeowners were not too happy about a bike trail going past their doorways, but they were excited about trail access. An ally had appeared.

In the spring of 2003, CLPA stepped up to the federal level. A meeting was arranged with U.S. Representative Martin Sabo. At the meeting, CLPA pitched a \$3.4 million proposal for property acquisition and trail construction. Congressman Sabo quickly scanned the proposal, asked a few questions, and said he

would get back to us. The congressman's stoic features and laconic language did not fill the group with confidence, but his chief-of-staff Louis Moore (an avid bicyclist) was optimistic.

Later that month, CLPA approached State Representative Margaret Anderson-Kelliher in search of matching state funds. News of the Sabo meeting kindled state interest in the project. In May, Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin expressed his support. Since the county was a major player—owning much of the public land in the corridor—its support was crucial. It became clear: If federal money could be secured, state, and county monies would follow.

That June, the group went back to see Lisa Goodman. An intuitive politician, she had been following CLPA's crusade with interest. Seeing the groundswell of support, and the real possibility of federal funding, she embraced the 'preferred' alignment. With her support, the city council directed MPW to rework its plans using the CLPA trail alignment. The trail was back in the trench.

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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, as well as with state, regional and federal agencies.

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

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CLPA Update, Summer 2010

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CALENDAR

Ice Out of Cedar Lake

March 28, 2010

CLPA Annual Meeting

April 8, 2010 and April 2011

Fall Equinox

September 23, 2010, 3:09 a.m.

Loppet Trails Day

Saturday, October 20, 2010

Annual Fund Drive

November 2010—Please contribute

Cedar Lake Trail Opens

November 2010

Winter Solstice

December 21, 2010, 11:38 p.m.

CLPA Steering Committee

Second Monday, 7:00–9:00 p.m. at the Kenwood Recreation Center. You're invited.



The Cedar Lake Tail corridor to the river can be visualized passing east under the skyline, framed by the Twins stadium sign on the right and the early 20th century Ford factory tower on the left.

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.**