

Cedar Lake Park

UPDATE

Winter 1997/98

Volume 10, No. 1

Small masthead change reflects larger conceptual shift:

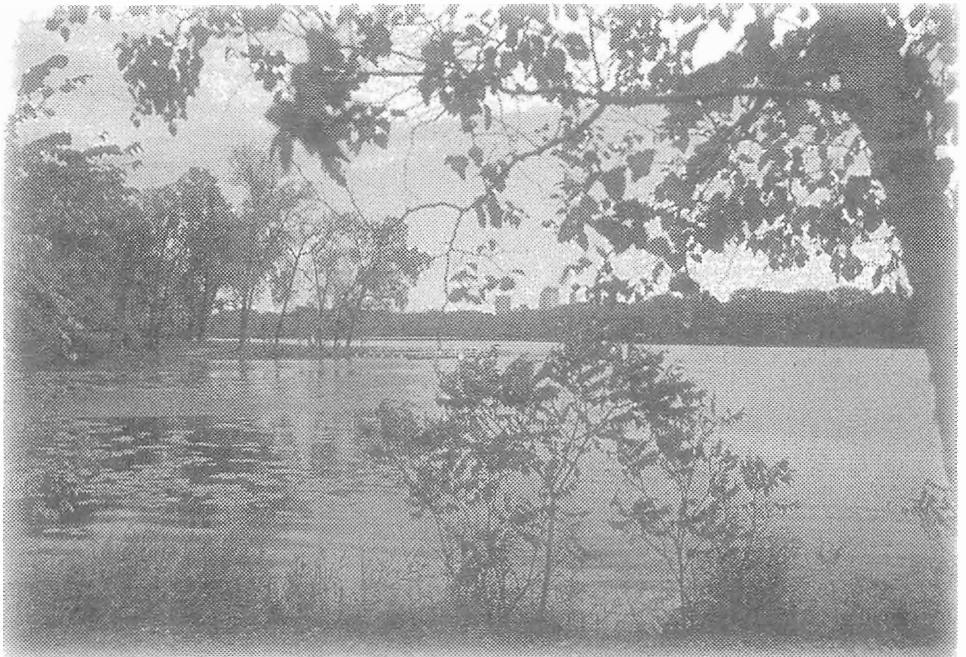
From saving the park, to building our vision

BY JIM McPHERSON

As you can see, the word, "Save," that has headed the Cedar Lake Park Update since its inception, has been deleted. "Save Cedar Lake Park" was also the first name of the Cedar Lake Park Association of 65 citizens who gathered to save the old railroad yards near Cedar Lake as parklands. Thanks to an outpouring of community support during the early '90s, both financial and volunteer, they were able to save the land from development.

Now that the park has been saved, the focus is on restoration and education. It was over a hundred years ago, in 1883, when Minneapolis citizens first convinced the State Legislature to form the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners who conceived the city's first 100-year plan for preserving parklands. The Cedar Lake Park Association has since developed a 100-year Concept Master Plan for restoring and building the park.

This plan reflects thousands of hours of volunteer time — more than 2,600 this year alone — and the Cedar Lake Park Association is committed to working with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) to increase volunteerism in this year



Cedar Lake Park is a unique model for citizen participation in the planning and development of a special place to relax, reflect and nurture nature.

*Watch for your invitation
with the time and place!*

**Annual Meeting
set for January 28**

We look forward to seeing you!

ahead. We are also working to raise funds and consciousness to realize the CLPA's stated vision: "...to restore the lands and waters and create a new community with nature, through which we can transform ourselves, our city and our society."

As we look ahead to the next century and millennium, we can only begin to imagine what lies ahead. However, we have begun to plan for exciting times of transition with more and more diverse people using the park. Our goal is to bring people and nature together in a harmonious community,

Further, our communications are evolving, with new editorship for this newsletter. We would like to thank Laurie Lundy a great deal for her energy, enthusiasm and countless hours as editor. Her work writing and editing articles and coordinating with the printers and the volunteers, who sort and mail out the newsletter, has helped our Association communicate our ideas and objectives. We thank her for her tremendous contribution to Save Cedar Lake Park.



On the Horizon

BY KEITH PRUSSING, CLPA PRESIDENT

The winter solstice has arrived, the year has turned and the light is returning. It is a time for reflection upon the accomplishments of the year past, and they have been many and varied. Internally, the Cedar Lake Park Association has developed and implemented a budgetary process, designed protocols to evaluate and choose projects, upgraded and diversified our data base and created a new and multi-faceted fund-raising vehicle — defining funds as financial, goods and services and volunteer capital.

The Concept Master Plan for the Preservation and Restoration of the Nature Park has been completed and presented to the MPRB. Due to our initiative, a city ordinance will be amended to give trails the same status as roads relative to blockage by train traffic. Our association is represented in the planning process for the Kenilworth Trail, Bassett's Creek Trail, park system dog control and the development of sustainable volunteerism for the park system as a whole. We have been honored by the MPRB through the Volunteer of the Year program.

This is very exciting because the story of Save Cedar Lake Park and the Cedar Lake Park Association offers a model of volunteerism. This allows for the emergence of a new model for our park and the park system that addresses a key question of volunteerism: How, in the absence of crises and grand events, is it still possible to generate commitment, interest and enthusiasm in the enduring service of implementing a vision?

Frankly, it has been quite challenging for this organization to change its focus, from saving something (the Park), to stewardship and restoration. We are an all-volunteer organization, and much hard work has been given to this transition. Thanks to all of you who have participated. I believe that we are being successful and that Cedar Lake Park is becoming a unique sanctuary in the region.



Special Gifts

Cedar Lake Park Association gratefully acknowledges recent contributions for memorials, tributes and gifts to loved ones. Since the last *Update*, the following memorials and gifts were received:

In memory of John Goetz.

Priscilla Allen
 Roger & Dorothy Childers
 George & Anne Flannery
 Jesse Goodman & Nicole Lurie
 Edwin & Mildred Hartwick
 Gordon & Olive Johnson
 William Jones
 Mary McGee
 Arthur & Jane Pejsa
 Rosemary Price
 James & Mary Schwebel
 L.E. & Dorene Scriven
 Mary Streitz
 James Thompson
 R.A. & Margaret Ungerman

In memory of Martin W. Gammelgard, who died on October 22, 1997.

Nick & Virginia Puzak

In memory of Walter & Iris Lundy.

Karen Biza
 David & Mary Lundy
 Richard & Laurie Lundy
 W. Bert Lundy
 Sharon Suerth

In memory of William H. Doepke.

Nick & Virginia Puzak

In memory of Ron Waldham

Dick & Laurie Lundy

In honor of her husband Jack on their 35th wedding anniversary.

Vivian Mason

In honor of Jim & Nancy Proman's special birthdays.

Joseph & Nance Alexander Family

In honor of Peggy Rose's recovery from surgery.

Sigmund & Joye Harris

In honor of Mrs. Richard Vaughan.

Sally Anson

In honor of Mrs. Joan Wurtele.

Sally Anson

Other contributions received since the last Update are gratefully acknowledged

David & Joyce Abramson
 Shelby Andress
 Arlene Baker
 Bob Berkwitz
 Tom & Margit Berg
 Jonathan Bishop
 David & Patricia Borchert
 Keith & Susan Bottge
 Frank Braun
 Sharon Bunnell
 M.D. & Jean Clark
 Bonnie Corcoran
 Daniel Dailey
 Larry and Joy Davis
 Kenneth & Judy Dayton
 Barbara DeCosse
 John & Mary Duffy
 Harriet Dunlap
 EcoTrust
 Hal Gensler
 P.M. & Barbara Gilfillan
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 Mace & Audrey Goldfarb
 Bryce & Donna Hamilton
 Sally Helde
 Sally Heule
 Sarah Hustad

Clark Johnson
 Bruce Jones & Dee Marks
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 Betty Lillehei
 Peggy Lynch
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 James & Sarai Mickman family
 Don & Pat Moberg
 Maryanne Moren
 Darryl Moses
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 Steve Pratt & Lisa Genis
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 Kathy Steward
 Casey & Elizabeth Streich
 Sarah Sweatt
 Bob Taylor
 Albert & Parker Trostel
 Vivian Veldman
 Irving & Teresa Victor
 Michael & Houry Vitale
 D.E. Waldeland & S.M. Hagestad
 Walter & Elaine Walker
 Mark Wernick & Nancy Entwistle
 Frank Wilkinson

Volunteers help CLPA thrive

Volunteers have again given their time, money, energies and various in-kind contributions to help our association survive and thrive. CLPA could not exist without them, and we want to extend a heartfelt thanks to those who gave so much this year:

Fay Atchison	Paul Deal	Cory Haight-Nali	Chuck Rhines
John Austin	Dan Dolquist	Jason*	John Richter
Larry Baker	Rainer	Bruce Jones	Dorene Scriven
Don Beinborn	Donemann	Ruth Jones	Kevin Sheehy
Mary Beinborn	Steve Durrant	Dick Lundy	Eric Svensson
Mike Birk	Richard Erickson	Laurie Lundy	Paisley Svensson
John Birle	Andy Foster	Langdon Martin	Tom Tennant
Alec Block	Ned Foster	Mary McGee	D'Ann Topoluk
James Block	Frederick*	Jim McPherson	Neil Trembley
Willy Crenshaw	Kevin Gallagher	Chet Meir	Walter*
Pat Curran	Terry Gips	Tim Morris	Carol White
Riley Curran	Kathryn Glessing	Mike Nali	Brian Willette
Dan Dailey	Ben Greiling	Doris Peterson	
Garrett Daun	Ralph Greiling	Keith Prussing	
Bob Day	Tom Greiling	Steni Prussing	

*Those we note here by first name only are those who stopped by the park to help.

Walking in Thoreau's footsteps

BY NEIL C. G. TREMBLEY

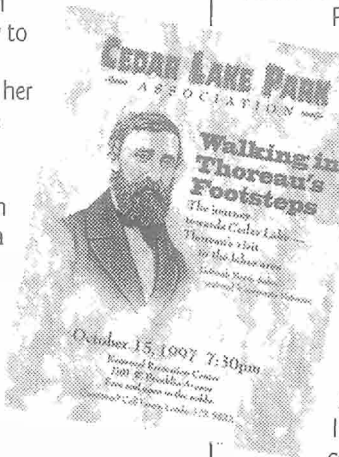
In the spring of 1861, the great writer and transcendentalist, Henry David Thoreau, suffering from tuberculosis, decided to travel to Minnesota in search of a cure to his ailment. During his journey here, he made detailed observations of the flora and fauna in the area and commented on the indigenous population. Thoreau left a remarkable record of his days wandering the lakes district of Minneapolis and the early sites of the Twin Cities.

On Wednesday, October 15, 1997, historian Deborah Morse-Kahn brought Henry David Thoreau's last journey to Minnesota to life, transforming the Kenwood Recreation Center into an historical Center. Using slides, maps, and her transcript, she explained the reason Thoreau came to the area and examined the places he went. She explored the possibility that Thoreau, from his base in St. Anthony, may have trekked west, out from the small bustling town of St. Anthony and Minneapolis, and into the prairie area near Cedar Lake.

Morse-Kahn's description of the ailing but resolute naturalist's time in the area was full of anecdotes and memories from the people with whom he came in contact. Many of the people Thoreau met were profoundly affected by him. There is no doubt that his shadow crossed the lives of many who lived in the area, and his teachings have led our association to follow in his path.

Many of the principles Thoreau held are central to the goals of the Cedar Lake Park Association. He believed that nature is the great teacher of humanity, and that when we are attuned to nature and blend with her rhythms, we are most truly alive and well. If Thoreau were alive today, he would most certainly endorse the core philosophy of Cedar Lake Park, that we must nurture nature as the birthright and heritage for our children.

P.S. A special thanks to Deborah Morse-Kahn for her volunteer work, putting together the lecture, also to all the people who brought food, drink and decorations, as well as helped in setting up. And finally, a big round of applause for Jerry Urbaniak and the staff at Kenwood Recreation Center, whose patience and help were of such value.



BY KEITH PRUSSING

On the ground in the park we have focused on restoration and education, **The Big Woods Project is well along** on the East side of Cedar Lake. It serves as a model for the landscape restoration of the entire park. Daffodils have been planted along Cedar Lake Parkway, with native plantings scheduled for the Spring.

The **Earth Day Clean-up was again a success.** Forestry management practices for the park have been altered with our input. Thus, standing deadwood, vital as habitat, will no longer be cut. Buckthorn continues to be removed.

Our **educational efforts** have included naturalist events, the Thoreau presentation in the autumn, and utilizing the Master Plan to share our accomplishments and vision with any who will listen — public and private.

The **southeast lake shore**, between the channel to Isles and South Beach by Cedar Lake

Parkway, is scheduled for shoreline restoration in 1998. Some 1200 feet of shoreline will be planted in native plant material.

According to Jeff Lee, MPRB lake specialist, "Outcomes of the project include:

- 1) long-term shoreline erosion protection,
- 2) re-establishment of littoral wetland plant communities,
- 3) increase in native plant diversity,
- 4) improvement of lake water quality and
- 5) creation of fish and wildlife habitat.

"The Cedar Lake approach will emphasize the re-establishment of the lake wetland edge plant community. Some minor reshaping of the shoreline slope and revegetation of the slope will also be completed. The Cedar Lake

shoreline budget is \$150,000."

Water quality this year has been reported to be better than has been seen for several years. This quality shows up in objective data, as well as in the opinions of water users. High water levels, such as this year, were last seen in the early '70s and yet were several feet lower than pre-1920 levels. Cedar Lake was largely spared the destruction that Isles experienced, largely due to terrain and the natural state of the shoreline. A pumping operation at the north end of Browning Lake has drawn down water levels through diversion to I-394 tunnels. This operation was successful, and points to the need for better, more coordinated and long-term water-level management.

The **Cedar Meadows Wetland Project**, which last year won a CUE Award, is now full of water. This project was assisted by the CIDNA Neighborhood Organization with NRP funds. This year many many wetland plants have been planted, and it appears that the wetland is aiding water quality. What a wonderful addition to the park.

The **MPRB is convening a Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC)** to consider and develop policies for dogs (and their owners) throughout the park system. The committee, composed of members and appointed by the Mayor, City Council, Park Commissioners, and at large, will begin meetings in January, 1998.

Among other things, they will discuss where off-leash dog exercise areas might be located in the system, and what special needs have to be addressed. According to our Fourth District Park Commissioner Vivian Mason, "It is my hope that this balanced citizen committee will learn from the experiences of other communities, locally and nationally, listen to all sides and come to the board with solid recommendations."



CLPA will have a representative, and these issues are viewed with great importance. Our position, as stated in our Design Principles, is that off-leash dogs are incompatible with wildlife restoration and the Nature Park.

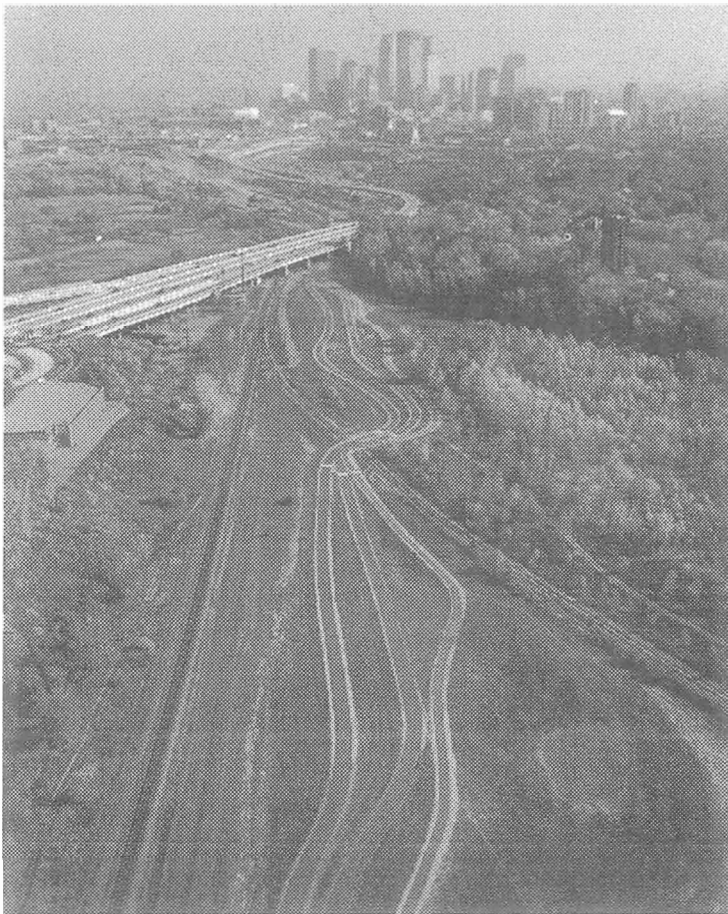
We support the development of off-leash dog running areas in the park system, but in less sensitive areas for wildlife habitat and water quality. We also support owners cleaning up the fecal material of their pets.

Plans are developing to place one or more **osprey/raptor towers** in the park. These towers would be between 65 to 100 feet in height. Osprey need to have a clear 360-degrees of vision to feel safe in nesting. Sites under consideration include the North Shore, the Cedar Meadows and the Upton Woods area. The Audobon Society, Minneapolis Chapter, is an active participant and funds are needed to make this vision a reality. Picture magnificent birds soaring above the lake, then plunging into the water, emerging with silvery fish.

The **Upton Gateway** to the park will be developed in 1998. The Kenilworth Isles Area Association (KIAA) has set aside \$50,000 for this area, and facilities consistent with the same design principles, including an information kiosk, enhanced street lighting, sanitation, a new gate and native plant restoration from the railroad crossing to the corner. This connects with the Big Woods Project area.

Farewell to the Kenilworth Corridor as it has been — going wild — since the mid 1980s, when the railroad shops were dismantled. With the construction projects will come a new landscape and new and increased use. There will be two to six trains a day — with up to 100 cars at a time. They will travel largely during business hours and will move at speeds of no more than 20 mph.

Next, the non-motorized



Renewed railroad activity will impact this gateway area with significant brush cutting and new signage. This will take place in winter/spring 1998, followed by the construction (east of the railroad) of the Kenilworth Bike Trail, a non-motorized set of trails comparable to the Cedar Lake Trail. CLPA is working with KIAA, the MPRB, Public Works, MNDOT, Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority and CN Railroad to ensure that these developments are integrated into the park as much as possible.

trails will open with traffic conservatively estimated at 1,000 trips per day. These trails will link to Cedar Lake Trail to the North with the Midtown Greenway Trail to the South.

With these linkages, as well as Bassett's Creek Trail and the Cedar Lake Trail to the River, a new era in non-motorized transportation will have arrived in Minneapolis. The wide expanse of land north and south of 21st Street is still considered "surplus" land and could be opened for development.

The **Bassett's Creek Corridor discussions**, at present, are at a critical juncture. An

environmental assessment worksheet has been prepared and released offering two distinctly different alignment possibilities: 1) off road in the Bassett's Creek Corridor, 2) an on-road pathway for the northern segment. Our position, following the concept of linear parks, is that the trail should follow the creek.

CLPA will be sponsoring an ongoing series of educational opportunities in the park throughout 1998. There will be events in the park scheduled on a regular basis, focusing on birds, plants, ecology, other animals, restoration, fungi, archeology, etc. Citizen experts, as well as

"I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker."
—Helen Keller

MPRB staff, will lead these events. This year bird outings were well received and two canoe outings traveling from Calhoun, through Isles, into Cedar, then on to Brownie, took place. Look for further details in the park and in news outlets.

Design plans for the Cedar Grove project will be finalized this winter, so that work can take place in 1998. We expect to install the Memorial Honorary Plaques, establish pathways and entrances, plant trees and wildflowers and integrate the Grove into the larger vision of the Heart of the Park, which will contain a Medicine Wheel and Henge complex, anchoring the vision to the Earth. We have marked the paths of the spiral arms of the grove, and the emerging design is much easier to see.

On the west side of the lake, along Cedar Lake Parkway and the bike/ped trail, there are decrepit and defaced signs and maps. In addition, the plastic trash bags and duct tape covering the pay boards in certain parking areas are unsightly. The **MPRB is in the midst of a system-wide survey of the intrinsic assets of the parks**. These signs and boards are part of the study. Solutions will be identified on a system-wide basis, and upgrades will be made.

Big Woods Project is a big success

The Cedar Lake Park Nature Plant Restoration Project, aka the Big Woods Project, is proceeding successfully. In partnership with the MPRB, a short-grass prairie has been planted with a winding walking trail, complete with a sweeping, scenic view spot.

More than 700 trees, shrubs and wildflowers have been planted in three zones — wet forest, maple-basswood forest and oak woodland. Self-guiding interpretative signage is in development. A nursery area has been sited. Lots of buckthorn has been cleared, using innovative techniques to preserve habitat and minimize visual disturbance. The lake shore trail has been realigned, graded and covered with a thick layer of wood chips. A maze of informal trails has been closed using buckthorn debris.

This project is a work in progress in several ways. First, the shaping of the landscape will continue in the spring, with more planting, plant tending, trail work and land shaping. Second, the project is a



Connecting people and communities through a network of recreational trails is part of CLPA's purpose.

model for the larger park and will serve as the fountainhead for spreading natural landscape restoration.

Third, we are developing a model of sustainable volunteerism suited to an ongoing project that continues into the indefinite future. Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, environmental students from the University and individuals from all over have participated

and are now part of the project. Our aim is to have the development process largely self-guiding so that, after some orientation, people can work when they can. Join us.

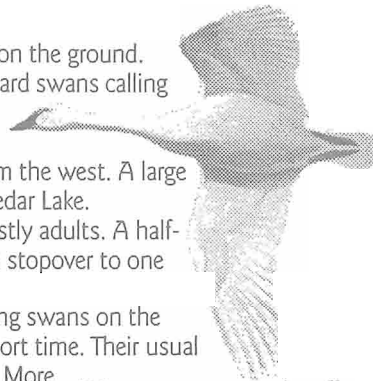
We are very grateful to the MPRB and Hennepin County Youth Employment Services. The latter group of teenage boys and girls have done a great job chipping the trails.

Whistling swans seen on Cedar Lake

BY DON BEINBORN

By mid-November there were two inches of snow on the ground. On the ninth of the month, a snowy Sunday, I heard swans calling outside. The sound persisted so I found our binoculars and hurried down to the lake. It was windy, with the light snow blowing nearly horizontally from the west. A large flock of whistling swans was spread across the center of Cedar Lake. I counted 98, some dark-necked young of the year, but mostly adults. A half-hour later they were gone, probably to their next migration stopover to one of the lakes near Lake Pepin.

Earlier that week, Mary McGee saw a flock of 12 whistling swans on the south end of Cedar Lake. Both groups stopped for just a short time. Their usual stopover is near Alma, Wisconsin, or Winona, Minnesota. More than 15,000 swans may spend several weeks in lakes near the Mississippi. They feed and gather in large flocks for another flight to wintering grounds near Chesapeake Bay.



We see swans occasionally on Cedar Lake, the last time being in 1990.

New birds make the Cedar Lake Park list

More than 130 bird species have been recorded in Cedar Lake Park since a few birders started keeping systematic records about ten years ago. Given the 400 or more species that might be seen in Minnesota, this is a small number. There are no strict rules for keeping a list of birds seen in a park like Cedar Lake. All you have to do is be in the park when you see the birds. As more time passes, we will add to the list.

This year, at least three new species were added. One of the Cedar Lake Park Saturday bird hike groups found a Whippoorwill in May. In September, Red-necked Grebes were seen on the north side of the lake. Though Bald Eagles are often seen on the city lakes, we had yet to record one on Cedar Lake. Then, on the 15th of November, Mary McGee saw one over Cedar Lake.

"Explore your higher latitudes... be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you. Open new channels, not of trade but of thought."

—Henry David Thoreau

We wish you a joyous, prosperous and fulfilling New Year.

Your support is important—

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

CLPA's mission is to create and nurture the nature park at Cedar Lake and the connecting trails and greenways.

Since 1989, CLPA has built a membership of over 3,000 households, developed a successful partnership with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and Department of Public Works, and raised money for acquisition and development.

Editor: Jim McPherson
Designer: Pat Thompson

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Ewing Ave. at west Cedar Lake entrance to be plowed this winter

BY DORENE SCRIVEN

The part of Ewing Avenue at the west entrance to Cedar Lake Park Trails was not plowed last winter. This is the only safe access to Cedar Lake Park from the Bryn Mawr neighborhood. I called our City Council person, Pat Scott, and received this response in her December 4 letter:

"Sidewalk inspectors were notified of the problem areas immediately. Today our office received word that the area has been checked and City maintenance crews now have the Ewing Avenue area on their schedule for the winter."

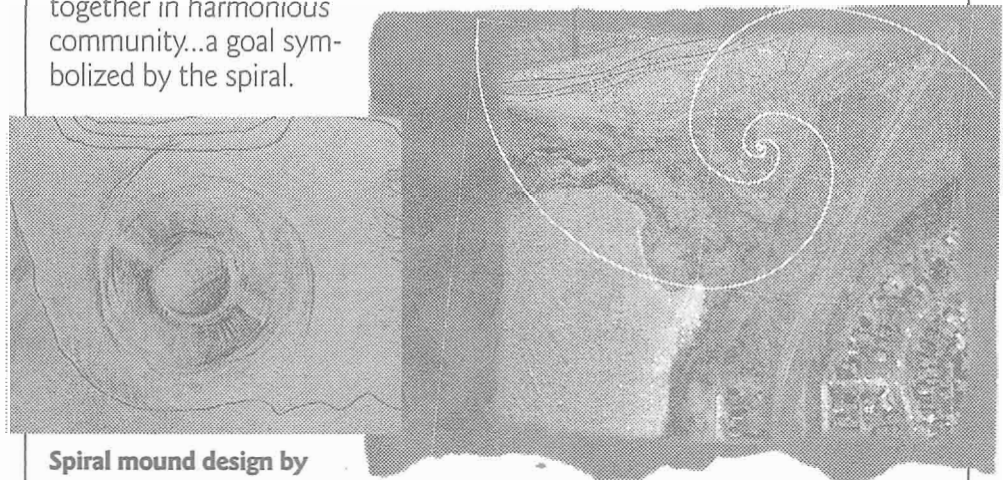
This experience demonstrates that we citizens can continue to make a difference.

Editor's note: The only thing we need now is some snow to plow. At the time of this writing, December 22, there had been hardly any.

Cedar Lake Park Association

OUR VISION for Cedar Lake Park is to restore the lands and waters and create a new community with nature through which we can transform ourselves, our city and our society.

OUR GOAL for Cedar Lake Park is to bring people and nature together in harmonious community...a goal symbolized by the spiral.



Spiral mound design by Diana Balmori on the north shore of Cedar Lake.

Cedar Grove spiral design by Steve Durrant of Jones and Jones.