

Cedar Lake Park

UPDATE

Autumn 1999

Look Back/Look Ahead Edition

Volume 11, No. 3

Welcome: Park Visitors Experience Gateway Improvements at Upton Woods

The long-awaited improvements to the gateway area at West 21st Street and Upton Avenue South have been underway all summer. A water pump and a bench have been installed, a small concrete slab for a more permanent biff (toilet) has been laid and the old gates have been removed and replaced in new designs.

Particularly nice is the area at the north end of Upton Avenue, where the deteriorating apron at the top of the multi-purpose corridor has been replaced. Now there is a continuous path through the new prairie along Upton and into the northern park for winter users such as skiers.

There will be prairie plantings by volunteers in this area this fall. Coming is an in-ground storage area for hand tools used by the citizens doing park work, such as planting and buckthorn removal. Also coming is native plant installation in the areas along 21st Street between the railroad and the first gate. This gateway serves as a model for other park entrances such as Ewing Avenue and Kenwood Parkway. Thanks to the Kenwood Isles Area Association (KIAA) for providing the NRP funds for these enhancements.



Welcoming gateways, clockwise from top left, greet visitors at 21st and Upton, down the winding trail to Cedar Lake's Hidden Beach, and a new water pump.



Heart of the Park Projects Continue to Develop

This past spring saw youth crews in the northeast lakeshore area removing debris, realigning the trail, and laying wood chips. Buckthorn and other material was removed and arranged at the edge of the woods between the cinder secondary bikeway and the lakeshore walking trail to create barrier thickets.

These teenagers were in the park for seven Saturdays. They were supervised by the Tree Trust, and funded by Hennepin County Employment Assistance as part of the Conservation Partners grant awarded to CLPA for habitat creation. This is Big Woods II. MPRB forestry crew reestablished the lakeshore corridor in April, and we were integral in the final layout.

By only cutting down trees in a relatively narrow corridor, leaving the larger pieces in workable lengths for landscape timber, and not chipping the smaller material, habitat is developed and preserved, traffic is controlled, and the naturalness enhanced. Moreover, it is

continued on page 5





Decades of Change

BY KEITH PRUSSING, CLPA PRESIDENT

I've been walking in parts of the park throughout the summer, and finding that I'm quite delighted with the way it is all turning out. Understand, the lake and the lands around it were quite rich long before any of us imagined an urban nature park. The history that we have discovered from pre-settlement times—indeed, all the way back to the last glaciation—contains much lore speaking to the vibrancy of natural processes in the environs of Cedar Lake.

What I'm really talking about is what has taken place in the last ten years since the notion took hold to save the park. Recently, I walked the prairie from east to west along the Cedar Lake Trail. I was pleased to notice the abundance of prairie grasses blowing in the wind, flowers scattered throughout, the rolling landscape and people moving fast and slow. Yet, the lake used to extend to the bluffs.

How much has changed in ten years, and yet without a memory of what was, a person would never know how much has changed, and how much work has gone into this evolving landscape.

In the park south of the Upton woods peninsula was once located a Public Works dump, where for decades street and construction rubble was deposited load by load, creating the hilly landscape that the bikers love so well. Dumping was ended over thirty years ago, and the present forest has grown up since that time. Further south, in the flat lowlands below the street and houses, are memories of ermine trapping, fox dens and wetlands.

We established the lake shore trail corridor and moved the bike activity further east. The large logs scattered around have closed trails and jumping areas.

Wind-downed trees that have fallen in the desired direction have been left for barrier and habitat. If you didn't know that there was conscious planning and action in this area, it might seem that there was only natural processes going on.

It is through conscious planning and concerted action that we are implementing the vision, and it is a testament to our successes that at any moment it may look like very little is going on in the park, yet so much has been accomplished. Recently a friend stated that he often forgot how his park experience was only his own, and that many, many other people experience the park in their own individual way.

Every person who uses the park carries a vision of the park in their heart and head, and it is easy to forget there are thousands of us who come to or pass by Cedar Lake. It is also hard to remember what has come before, and that radical changes have occurred throughout the area in the past.

What is unique about the last ten years at Cedar Lake is that a collective vision is being implemented for the entire 400 acres of land and water. Hopefully, this vision embodies the vision of each park user enough to please each of us, and keep us engaged in using and supporting the park in ways that are important to the individual and the sum of us all.

We hope that your own park experience continues to please you and continue to invite your participation at Cedar Lake Park.



BY STEVE DURRANT, TREASURER

Cedar Lake Park Association gratefully acknowledges recent contributions for memorials, gifts and tributes to loved ones.

CLPA Donors Since Last Spring

Ted Axt	Burton Grossman	Jim McPherson	Michael and Ruthann Schneider
Carl and Lynn Beihl	Robert Harding	N.L. Newhall	James Schwebel
Thomas and Margit Berg	Reinhold and Sarah Hartman	Kristen Nielsen	Judy and Bob Sherman
Bob Berkwitz	John Heer	John Richter	Patricia and David Shirley
Lois and Johnathan Bishop Foundation	John Herman	Mary McGee	Cheryl Simer
BRW In Memory of Leonard Durrant	Cathy and Mike Holmberg	Jean McIntosh	Martin Skoro
Elaine and Rod Burton	Virginia Humphrey	James McKenna	Kristine Smith
Martin Green and Bonnie Carlson-Green	Linda Jadwin Memorial	Sandra Metzger	Kathleen and Gerald Sorell
Katherine Christianson	Ruth Jones	John and Mona Moede	Stanley Chardonay Vance
Malcom and Jean Clark	Larry and Kathryn Kaatz	Walter and Eleanor Nyberg	David Wahlstedt
Fran Davis	Keith Kajander Fund	Polly Penny	Gary Warner
Barbara Methven	Arnold Kaplan	John Phillips	John and Carol Wirtschafter
De Cosse	James Kirkham, MD	Robert and Mary Provost	Violet Waslien
Barbara Diamond	Donald and LoisKjellman	Keith Prussing	Randy Waslien
James Gehrey	Edward Kosciolk	Nancy and Mahoud Riaz	
	Sandra Lee		

Bluebirds Return for 12th Year

BY MARY MC GEE

Have you noticed the avian population boom along the Cedar Lake Trail? This year's lush vegetation has produced a bumper crop of insects which are food for bluebirds and swallows. Four pairs of Tree Swallows—those with the bluish backs and white breasts—have raised young in the trail nest boxes.

In Mid-April three pairs of Eastern Bluebirds appeared. Two pairs nested along the trail, and one nested at Dayton-Hudson. You may have been lucky enough to see the three young birds from the earliest brood. In July their parents re-nested in the same boxes, and fledglings were expected in early August.

Between July 6 and 9, one nest box was torn open. The whole nest with four eggs was taken away. The parent birds were seen surveying the empty box. The male of this pair is special, for he wears a band and may be one of our own from a previous year. These birds have since nested in another box, and we hope for their success this time.

We call on all bikers, skaters and walkers to be vigilant and help protect our bluebirds from vandals.



Eight Go on Third Annual Birdwalk

On the morning of May 14 Peter Neubeck led a group of eight birders on a three-hour walk from Burnham Woods to the Indian Mound. Good weather contributed to easy sighting, and a large number of spring migrants were counted, among them four vireos and 15 warblers. Barbara Galambos spotted the bird of the day, a Black-throated Blue Warbler. Another treat were the Caspian Terns flying over Cedar Lake. Mary Alyce Kronke recorded 54 birds seen in a very successful day.

BY KEITH PRUSSING

The Kenilworth Trail is now open, with the bridge over the channel between Isles and Cedar among the last things completed. The northern junction with the Cedar Lake Trail created a new look to the CLT, while the southern terminus behind Calhoun Village will join with the Midtown Greenway.

Greenway construction this year will start at I-35 and move west to Chowen Avenue to link with Kenilworth, as well as a Hennepin County trail that runs west to Chaska. A feasibility study is underway, due Sept. 30, as to whether the Greenway could accommodate busses. The Greenway Coalition position is in favor of light rail/trolley, but says that bus traffic would be unacceptable. St. Louis Park anticipates the completion this year of a key trail segment that runs from the western end of the CLT near Highway 100 diagonally across town to Hopkins and beyond.

Bassett's Creek Trail is possible this year. The CLT to the river continues to be blocked by a key segment of private property: one row of a parking lot south of Washington Avenue. The River Parkway is complete south and east of downtown. There is a new bikeway on the east side of Lyndale Avenue South between Loring Park and Franklin Avenue.

This network creates all sorts of new linkages and possibilities, and has grown out of the imaginations that led to the saving of Cedar Lake Park.

A citizen's advisory committee convened by MPRB and Minneapolis Public Works began meeting August 24, with three weekly meetings at the Kenwood Rec Center scheduled to follow. This committee is concerned with the new Cedar Lake Parkway bridge, specifically all issues related to the bridge project, rather than the actual bridge itself. Preliminary plans call for a reconfigured France Avenue intersection, and better access to the CLT through Ewing Avenue. Years ago, we recognized the imminent removal of this bridge, and the possibilities that this project would bring forward that could enhance the park and trail. CLPA has an official seat at the table.

It has been a great swimming season at Cedar Lake. Water quality continues to improve, and the clarity is often talked about with delight. More water craft are using the lake, especially kayaks. The journey from Calhoun through Isles to Cedar and Brownie provides a rare urban water experience.



Milfoil, however, seems especially abundant this year, even with the cutting program run by MPRB. Only 50% of the affected areas are permitted to be cut in order to safeguard fish habitat. In the northwest part of the lake are many white floats buoying isolation nets that are part of ongoing studies utilizing predator weevils to munch the milfoil (and nothing else). A lake shore restoration project is underway on the west side near the fishing pier on the middle point. MPRB has been vigorously enforcing the shoreline ordinance along the western lakeshore due to private cutting of lakeshore trees and shrubs to enhance the view. Jones-Harrison was required to do extensive replanting of native species after removing material on park property.

We continue to benefit from the vision of our forefathers who purchased the entire lake shore for park land; Cedar Lake has by far the wildest and most natural shoreline of all the major city lakes. And imagine, the lake used to be six feet higher, extend to the northern bluffs where the CLT is now, and have an outlet flowing northeast toward downtown and the Mississippi River.

There will be a series of neighborhood public meetings this fall concerning the proposed off-leash dog areas. At present, the area is in the Kenilworth corridor north of 21st Street and east of the new trail, and the northern end of Kenwood Park below the water tower by Morgan Avenue South. A citizen's group, Responsible Owners of Mannerly Pets (ROMP) has formed and is spearheading these efforts. ROMP raises funds and informs and educates the general public about the need for these areas throughout the city and the benefits that come from them—to animals, people and the environment.

A walk with the new park superintendent, Mary Merrill Anderson, took place in Cedar Lake Park in late June. Each Tuesday through the spring and early summer found Ms. Anderson, MPRB staff, interested commissioners and private citizens at a different location throughout the park system. The group on this early morning toured the north and east side of the lake, enjoying the bright sunshine and the natural world of the park. The superintendent, who lives up on the northern bluffs, has fond memories of a recent summer in the park when she was involved with a Teen Teamworks youth project, removing rubble and doing trail work along the north shore. The fire circle near the Cedar Grove was dedicated at that time, and the fact of its continued presence made her smile. Discussions occurred among the group as to the quality of the northern lake shore, with security and "more like the other lakes" issues being raised. CLPA spoke to the desire for "wild and natural," and the years of planning and actions that represent the development of the Statement of Philosophy and Design Principles for the park. It was agreed that this is an ongoing process. This walk resulted in the removal of debris piles north of Upton Avenue.

The prairie areas along the CLT have been partially mowed to control the spread of yellow clover and other exotics. Though necessary, the removal of the clover resulted in several calls wondering why the beautiful flowers were cut down. The desirable prairie plants were unharmed, and techniques such as mowing and burning are part of establishing a prairie, as well as ongoing management. Without such things, the open expanses of grasslands would become forest. This encroachment by cottonwood, box elder and elm can be seen throughout the prairie, and it requires



Wildflowers in the Park

Thanks to Scouts and Volunteers for Help with Third Planting

BY NEIL TREMBLEY

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL SHOOP

With the help of Boy Scout Troop 17, more than 1,000 native species wildflowers were planted last spring in the prairie on the north side of the lake. As you take the walking trail east from the rock and the bench, look to the right, past the bluebird houses. There you'll see a swale or depression. On the back rim of the swale the wildflowers were planted. Temporary signs have been placed around the area.

The scout troop and other volunteers had to do extensive weeding of sweet clover before the planting. We also immersed the plants' roots in a Terrasorb/water mixture to enable them to withstand the often dry conditions out on the prairie. It was a labor-intensive day!

Among the wildflowers planted were: Prairie Onion, Leadplant, Pussytoes, Prairie Sage, Azure Aster, Silky Aster, Harebell, Northern Bedstraw, Prairie Smoke, Rough Blazing Star, Prairie Phlox and Prairie Violets.

A special word of thanks needs to go to Ruth Jones, who not only spent hours on the phone calling volunteers, but spent that Saturday up to her elbows in the Terrasorb

mixture, dipping the plants and passing them out to the volunteers for planting. Thanks also to Leonard Martinetto and his family for alerting the boy scout troop of our need for volunteers as well as providing guidance and helping hands during the planting.

Of course, our gratitude goes to the volunteers who did such a great job:

Damon Alexander
John Barrick
Martin Barrick
Mary Barrick
Dillon Berntsen
Frank Braun
William Gilbreath
Ann, Sophia and
Alexander Ginis
Kip and Mark Hansen

Per Hansen
Nicole Krueger
Rob and Roddy Lageson
George and Vince Puzak
Emory Richardson
Pat Shirly
Cheryl Simer
D'Ann Topoluk
Neil Trembley
Jeremy Vranek

Photos, below. Top row: Volunteers pause to watch a train go by. Middle row: Terra-sorpers on the bucket brigade; one oxeye daisy; volunteers of all ages! Bottom row: They may look like native wildflowers, but this is a whole bunch of invasive transplants, including crown vetch, sweet clover, and mustard.

ongoing removal by both MPRB staff and citizen volunteers. Look for signs placed at park entrances and along the trail describing prairie restoration. Many people who use the CLT and park have no idea that extensive efforts are ongoing. One group of runners thought that it was "just some land."

An ongoing project of the CLPA has been the gathering and creation of graphic imagery of the park, and making it available to the community. Historical and current photos, maps, interpretive materials, planning documents, and video are among the formats that we possess in hard copy or electronically. Two recent, important additions to our collections have occurred. First, the engineering students at Dunwoody Institute have been doing topographical mapping of the mound area. Due to the heavy tree cover and the steep contours, this area shows up as blank on existing maps derived from aerial photographs. Starting from a monument in the hidden beach area, the students are gathering data and developing a map. This will be a valuable planning tool for the north shore. Second, in collaboration with MPRB, CLPA has developed an access map of the greater Cedar Lake Park area, with entrances, trails, and the surrounding streets clearly shown. These will be posted around in the park, and are available to the community as well.

Meanwhile, real wildlife abounds:

Red-tailed and Cooper's Hawks soaring overhead, fox kits screaming in the night, the musk of mink along the wetlands, bass snapping bugs out of the air in the lily beds, deer crossing the parkway, and great-horned owls being harassed by crows are among the many animal encounters reported in the park. There are also lots of dragonflies to help with the mosquitoes, and a variety of butterflies are sipping flowers in the prairies. At least three kinds of frogs sing in the swamps. Ospreys have been seen, but no nests on the Cedar Meadows platform have been observed.

Information is gathered on an ongoing basis about the flora and fauna of Cedar Lake Park. Due to the green belts that connect to the park from all directions, we experience an especially rich animal and plant ecology. Please call us with any sightings or soundings that are important to you.



CLPA Partners in Progress Survey Most Are Interested in Trails, Connections and Security

BY JIM MC PHERSON, EDITOR
TABULATED BY D'ANN TOPOLUK

In the previous issue of the Cedar Lake Park Update we distributed a non-scientific survey, asking for comments from our readers about what they would like to see or not see in the park. We called the survey Partners in Progress, and the topics of concern came directly from a brainstorming session at the Board of Directors meeting in February. Here is some of what we heard from our readers:

“The most important project should be the connection to the Mississippi.”

Some like the idea of having park pictures in a calendar and supporting volunteerism. Some want to see a CLP web site, publicity and more social opportunities. Others, though, have dog walking issues.

Given the informality of this survey, we can only suggest that most of the readers responding—though we may vary on the order of priorities—agree with many of the issues and ideas we’ve raised.

This is obviously an ongoing process, and we look forward to an update in a future issue in the next century, millennium! (It’s hard to just think of it as another new year.)

“Keep Brownie Lake in its natural state.”

While many agree we should finish the trail and make the trail connections, most are against having concessions on the trails. Many do, however, want the park and the watershed cleaned up and support wild flower and memorial plantings.

A number of readers agree we should continue with the restoration of the Mound and Hidden Beach, as well as the Big Woods projects.

“I hope the Hidden Beach restoration does not mean clear-cutting trees.”



Cedar Lake Park Conservancy Area.

Continue the Earth Day Celebration Year 'Round

BY MARIA OLSON

On April 17, 1999, residents around Cedar Lake celebrated Earth Day by participating in a watershed cleanup. Two dozen neighbors and volunteers came down to get started at the 25th and Cedar Lake Parkway registration site.



An Earth Day clean-up in the woods April 17.

A total of 1,300 volunteers participated at 15 sites along the watershed.

Many bags of trash were collected. Also a big thanks to those who help informally by picking up trash with every visit to the park.

Please leave your trash in or by the green trash cans for the park board staff to pick up if you are unable to take it with you. Large items will need a special call for pick up. Picking up trash in your neighborhood also helps keep the watershed clean. Mark your calendar for next spring while keeping the spirit all year 'round. Thanks again, volunteers, for coming through!

Heart of the Park

continued from page 1

significantly less expensive than more ordinary forestry practices.

Particularly nice is the area of the sunset bench, where the trail is now 25 feet behind the bench, and the eroded trail sections closed. This fall will see plantings of native trees, shrubs, and forbs throughout this area.

Forestry will return to remove material in the area of the Cedar Grove. Then, Big Woods II plantings will take place, continuing on into the spring. If you want to nurture nature, give us a call, or join in if you encounter people working.

The design of the memorial Cedar Grove continues to develop. Entrances aligned with the cardinal directions are being established, and solar and lunar orientations marked. Soon a beautiful rock with a plaque will be set.

Of nearly 70 cedar trees planted so far, only a few have not survived, and they are being replaced. Our friends at Dunwoody have established nearly 300 UTM coordinate points on the double spirals, accessible by GPS receivers and with radial arms of nearly 800 feet. These locations are available for trees, or other markers if more appropriate.

As selective, thoughtful, and respectful shaping of the landscape in this Heart of the Park area precedes through Big Woods II and the Cedar Grove projects, we hope that you are, and will be pleased. Note: there is extensive poison ivy throughout the northern park, especially along the secondary bikeways, and the eastern lakeshore near the end of Upton Ave.



A momentary rock tower rises out of the water of Cedar Lake.

Cedar Lake Park ASSOCIATION

2000 Aldrich Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55405
(612) 377-9522

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

INSIDE

President's Note	2
Special Gifts	2
Bluebirds	2
Projects	3-4
Wildflower Planting ...	4
Survey Results	5

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 other city, county, regional and state agencies, and raised money for acquisition and development.

Editor: Jim McPherson
Design: Triangle Park Creative
© 1999 Cedar Lake Park Association
(612) 377-9522

Help Us Celebrate Cedar Lake Park!

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

CALENDAR

CLPA Steering Committee

Second Monday of each month, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Kenwood Recreation Center. You're always invited to participate.

St. Benedict's Volunteers

August 27.

Walk in the Park

September 18. Meet at 21st and Upton, 11:00 a.m.

Fall Equinox

Tuesday, Sept. 23, 6:52 a.m.

Wildflower Planting

September 25, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Call Neil for direction at 377-0264.

Big Woods II

Ongoing, through Fall '99.

Upton Plantings

Sept./Oct. Call for details.

Your support is important—

Send your tax-deductible contribution TODAY
to Cedar Lake Park Association
2000 Aldrich Avenue Minneapolis, MN 55405.



Celebrate the last seasons of the ~~century~~ millennium

OUR VISION

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

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