Oasis: First Pump on the Trail

The first drinking water has arrived on the Cedar Lake Trail. It is already being used by diverse hikers, bikers and in-line skaters. Located by the Hedberg memorial rock (see map on page 5), the pump is readily accessible to all trail users.

A joint project of the Cedar Lake Park Association and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the well was drilled to a depth of 200 feet. The total cost of the pump and concrete slab is $10,000.

Well Wishes …

The bill for the pump must be paid. We need your help. Address your gift to the CLPA Pump Fund (see page 8). Another pump was installed off the trail, at 21st and Upton, in 1999 with NRP funds.

Trail lovers invited to ride, roll and celebrate the completion of Cedar Lake Trail’s western connection

BY CAROL WHITE

Come join us Saturday, Sept. 15 for a fun ride and roll to a ribbon-cutting ceremony in St. Louis Park celebrating the Cedar Lake’s Trail’s western Hutch Spur connection.

We will meet at noon by the Hedberg memorial on the north shore and ride about five miles to Aquilla Park, at 31st St. and Xylon Ave. The ceremony will start at 1 p.m.

Bring the kids, friends, neighbors etc. to show our support for this long-awaited connection. Call me with any questions at (612) 377-1875.

Eastern Link to River

Meanwhile, the vision of an off-road connection to the Mississippi is still alive for the eastern, downtown end of the Cedar Lake Trail. Due to the diligence of the CLPA, serious consideration has been given to presenting the rail corridor as an alternative to the proposed, on-surface route east of Washington Ave.

There are significant space, safety and property issues in this area. Funding requests for the federal T21 program are being prepared and submitted by the city. CLPA has commissioned preliminary studies of this proposed trail corridor.

Construction of the section between the present trail terminus at Royalston and Washington Ave. is scheduled to begin in 2003. Completion of the CLT is a very high priority for the City of Minneapolis Public Works Department. For more information, contact CLPA at 612-377-9522 or info@cedarlakepark.org.
BY KEITH PRUSSING, CLPA PRESIDENT

When a few concerned citizens began to conceive a vision in 1988, this represented the beginning of stage 1 in the development of this association. It was a period of education, consensus-building, mobilization and action.

The results were extraordinary! Please visit our website for the details of this process as contained in the concept master plan.

Stage 2 commenced in 1995-96, after the completion of the Cedar Lake Trail, as the glory began to fade, and as people began to drift off into their lives. Park-building was the focus, and the implementation of the shared vision has resulted in many wonderful improvements that nurture nature.

Moreover, the excitement and passion of the Stage 1 grand acquisition and design has been consolidated into a working organization able to function effectively in a variety of situations. CLPA became the people to talk to at Cedar Lake.

Where are we now? I believe that Stage 3 is arriving. Unfinished business is being completed. A web presence reaching a wide audience has been established. Relationships are good with MPRB, neighborhoods and other levels of government.

The Cedar Lake Park model of place, people and partnership is being studied for potential regional applications. Where we go from here is being examined by the core group of people who have labored mightily throughout stage 2.

We continue to be an all-volunteer organization, and as such, continually are in need of renewal and rejuvenation. Our mission is alive and important.

There continue to be significant issues to address. Ours is a unique and vital place in the community. Hope to see you in the park, or along the trails.

BY STEVE DURRANT, TREASURER

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

CLPA Donors Since the Last Newsletter

Susan & Lloyd Armstrong
Arlene Baker
Thomas Becker
John & Elaine Bergquist
Lois B. & Jonathan S. Bishop Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation
Ruth F. Brin
Sharon Bunnell
Bob Day
George Doerr, Jr.
John Erickson & Marj Lee
Lorry Falk
Jerome Finken
James Gehrey
Geri Goldberger
Bob Harding & Allan Valgamae
Kit Healy
Linda Huhn & Richard Johnson
Clifford & Thelma Johnson
Phyllis Just
Shirley & Arnold Kaplan
Don & Lois Kjellman
Faye Knowles & Douglas Muirhead
Edward Kosciolak—in honor of Sandra Thorkildson on her birthday
Mary Elizabeth Lahiff
Barbara S. Longfellow
Steve & Cynthia Mueller
Keith & Janey Nelson—wildflowers in memory of Edgar Blasberg
Marcella Nelson
Joan & Dick Niemiec
David & Melisa Pollak
George Puzak—in honor of Peter Durrant
Frank R. Quale
Paul Reyelts - Linda Jadwin Memorial

Thanks to Volunteers!

Much of the work done in Cedar Lake Park is done by volunteers—both groups and individuals—to whom we are also most thankful. (See volunteer names noted throughout.)

BY MEREDITH MONTGOMERY

Although Cedar Lake Park was created by citizen initiative and maintained as a “wild” park under the auspices of the Cedar Lake Park Association, the Association does not have final authority about what happens in and to Cedar Lake Park. As one of the parks in the Minneapolis park system, Cedar Lake Park comes under the jurisdiction of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB).

The MPRB is a nationally renowned independent board of nine elected commissioners. The board manages a $50M budget, supervises 600 year-round employees as well as 1,500 part-time employees and 5,000 volunteers and manages 6,400 acres of parkland in Minneapolis.

MPRB commissioners help determine local and regional policies concerning land use, environment, historic preservation and water management. This fall, all nine commission seats are up for election. If you live in Minneapolis, you can help choose who makes decisions on the MPRB for the next four years.

Attention Voters!

Voters in Minneapolis will be choosing local government officials in the upcoming primary (Sept. 11, 2001) and general (Nov. 6, 2001) elections. All offices are non-partisan, but candidates are often endorsed by political parties and other groups (such as unions).

This year, all nine MPRB seats are up for election.

Voters will elect three at-large commissioners and six district commissioners. Each voter can cast up to four votes for MPRB candidates: three for at-large candidates and one for a candidate from the voter’s district.

For more information on this important election, see the web sites for the City of Minneapolis (www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/elections) and the MPRB (www.minneapolisparks.org).
What’s Happening in 2001

BY KEITH PRUSSING

It has been a very interesting 2001 in the park and along the trails, with so many kinds of experiences available and more people to share all that the park has to offer. This year so far we’ve had a long, cold winter with lots of snow, a wet, lush spring, a gooey-hot early summer with no rain and a cool August. It’s been green everywhere, and we’ve been able to escape the heat 24 hours a day to enjoy lovely walking and walking.

Fishing has been great at Cedar and Brownie Lakes. Opportunities include the fishing pier at the south point on the western shore, abundant bass along the weed lines near the south and north cattail marshes and muskies in the deeper water and at various shore locations.

A very diverse group of fisher people take advantage of the possibilities for sport, and some people take fish home for the table. Remember that there are consumption advisory limits due to mercury contamination.

There was especially great snowshoeing, skiing and ice fishing in the park this past winter.

St. Louis Park is transferring ownership of a seven-acre parcel of land to the Jewish Community Center. This land is located north of the CLT on the western extension by the pedestrian bridge, near the Golden Valley border in South Tyrol Hills.

The JCC has ambitious plans to expand their operations, including a large parking lot. This process has generated controversy in the neighboring community. CLPA has been concerned about protecting the green buffer along the midtown greenway, Kenilworth, and the Hennepin County/Hwy 7 trails has been completed in the area of Calhoun Village. This important connection allows travel to move smoothly north, east and west.

The Bassett’s Creek Trail received funding from the state for the junctions at the Cedar Lake Trail and the Luce Line extension coming from the west. Controversy is emerging over the proposed alignment of the Luce Line through western Wirth Park in the area of Twin Lake. This isolated area, west of the par 3 golf course, abuts extensive new development in Golden Valley.

Housing is proposed for the narrow peninsula separating Twin and Sweeney lakes. In Wirth Park, there is extensive prairie restoration in the highland area, a swimming area and a network of trails utilized for cross-country skiing and mountain biking. For more information, look at www.northstar.sierraclub.org/wirthpark.

We are the people to talk to at Cedar Lake.

Hennepin County has published a wonderful, free bikeways map of the county, including proposed trails. It can be obtained with a call to the Transportation Department, or downloaded from their website at: http://www.co.hennepin.mn.us.

Conversations are underway with the county concerning the “surplus” land in the Kenilworth corridor. At present, county policy is that any land deemed unnecessary for county purposes can be sold to the highest bidder, unless it can be used for affordable housing. Our position has always been that this land is part of the greater Cedar Lake Park, and so should remain. Other issues include amenities such as water and sanitation in county trail corridors, and native plant restoration efforts utilizing the park model that has been developed.

State Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher was instrumental in the passage of legislation forbidding commuter buses on the Midtown Greenway and the Kenilworth Corridor. Both of these corridors are owned by Hennepin County for transportation use, which we applaud. The key question is what kind of transit. Thanks, Margaret!

In the winter a network of cross-country ski trails emerges. This year provided a particularly long ski season, and the trails were stable for at least two months. There are several problem areas where pavement, rails and other impediments interrupt free passage. We would like to know where they are to see if they can be minimized. We are creating a map of the ski trail network, including the lake surface trails, the western extension, and the connections to other areas. If you are interested, please call.

Hidden Beach has been quite the place this summer, especially during July with the hot, humid weather. It is by far the most utilized swimming area of the three on Cedar Lake. The beach area is a remarkable social scene, with diverse people getting along in a friendly way with little violence. It is much less scary than it looks. However, there are significant problems with late-night parties, impact on the surrounding neighborhood, out of control dogs, and environmental degradation from fires, graffiti and trash.

MPRB foresters have opened up the trail corridor from Upton Ave. to enhance vehicle access and visibility, and law enforcement has had a regular presence.

Finally, we have discovered that one of the spirals extending out from the Cedar Grove to the north comes down the peninsula, through the beach, and out into the lake.

Buckthorn removal efforts throughout the metro area continue to intensify. The U.S. Forest Service has given grants to MPRB to fund buckthorn education and removal on private property. Similar programs are underway in St Paul.

The state is funding a removal project along the Mississippi River bluffs south of the Ford Parkway bridge. Without the removal of seed sources on private land, eradicating buckthorn on public lands is severely handicapped. CLPA has extensively removed buckthorn throughout the park for many years, utilizing volunteer buckthorn brigades and MPRB crews.

There have been volunteer planting events in the park. The Conservation committee of the Minneapolis Audobon Society planted glossy black chokeberry and highbush cranberry along the prairie edge to serve as food for the bluebirds. Other volunteers planted prairie wildflowers as part of ongoing prairie enhancement efforts. This spring, CLPA partnered with the CIDNA neighborhood group to plant trees along the Midtown Greenway. Thanks to all who helped out. In the fall, continued on page 4
Cedar Lake Park is a popular destination for a rapidly growing number of park users. Hikers, bicyclists, bird watchers, anglers, dog owners, swimmers, inline skaters, canoeists, cross-country skiers, and many others enjoy the special features of the park. In order for the park to realize its full potential as a place to harmoniously balance human use with the natural environment, its design is consistent with the principles described in the 1993 Citizen Advisory Committee’s Statement of Philosophy.

The Linda Jadwin memorial has received all of the necessary MPRB approvals. Installation of the 13 rocks of the spiral has begun. Native plantings will take place this fall and in the spring. Look for a dedication ceremony later in the autumn, where you can come help plant.

Water quality in Cedar Lake has again been the highest of all the area lakes. It has been great swimming. MPRB has again been mechanically harvesting milfoil, which only serves to keep certain areas more clear of this pesty weed. However, a benefit of the milfoil is that it outcompetes the algae in many areas; thus enhancing water clarity. The U of M milfoil control study continues on the northeast end of the lake. Look for a report in the next newsletter.

There have been ongoing efforts by groups and individuals to pick up garbage throughout the park. CLPA sponsored the annual Earth Day cleanup in April. Every morning people pick up in the Hidden Beach area. Three large trash bags of bottles and cans were removed from the trail corridor in the Linden Yard area near the Public Works recycling operation. Every piece of litter removed represents an act of stewardship of the park.

Yes, Dogs Can Transmit Poison Ivy!
BY MARY MCGEE

Yes, it’s true: there’s poison ivy in Cedar Lake Park. Despite efforts to remove it or discourage its growth, conditions have conspired to help this sturdy and enthusiastic plant flourish especially well this summer. (See the Cedar Lake Park web site at www.cedarlakepark.org for a photo if you’re not sure what poison ivy looks like.)

A park user who has observed dogs running through patches of poison ivy in the park (and then receiving pats and hugs from humans) wondered whether people can get poison ivy from dogs.

A local dermatologist, Sheldon L. Mandel, M.D., comments:

“Poison ivy dermatitis should really be called ‘allergic ivy’ because that term more correctly gives some indication of the nature of the eruption. When a person or animal brushes against the ivy plant, the fragile twigs and leaves are broken and a thin milky fluid exudes. This is the oily resin responsible for the reaction that occurs when the material comes in contact with the skin, either directly or after it touches clothing or an animal.

The resin should be washed off as soon as possible. An animal such as a dog running through weeds could then act as a carrier, and should be bathed. The noxious material can stay on clothing or a dog’s coat for over two weeks.”

Website Update
BY MEREDITH MONTGOMERY

Over the summer, we have added more maps to the Cedar Lake Park web site (www.cedarlakepark.org) and a “Links to Resources” page. There are new images on the site, including some enlightening historical photos!

In the coming months we plan to include more stories about the fascinating history of Cedar Lake Park. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions. Send email to webmaster@cedarlakepark.org.
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 to 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.

Mary McGee Wins MPRB Outstanding Volunteer Award

BY MEREDITH MONTGOMERY

Longtime CLPA supporter and volunteer Mary McGee this year received an Outstanding Volunteer Award from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. McGee, who has also been active in the Minneapolis chapter of the National Audubon Society, the Bluebird Restoration Program and the League of Women voters, has served over the years on a number of Park Board committees having to do with wetlands and water quality.

She comments, “I’ve lived close to Cedar Lake Park for about 70 years and seen it through all its phases. I’ve been monitoring Park Board activities for 50 years!”

Throughout her life, McGee has devoted countless volunteer hours to preserving Minneapolis’ land and wildlife habitats, including Cedar Lake Park.

Fauna Report

BY MARY MCGEE

A wild red fox has been reported along the western stretch of the Cedar Lake Trail. In the past there were several fox dens in the park, but the increase in human and dog activity has made their existence more hazardous.

White-tailed deer have become so numerous in the area that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board will join with St. Louis Park and Golden Valley to develop a deer management plan for control of the increased population. Please do not feed the deer.
Minnesota’s Prairie Revival

Interest in the prairie that carpeted Minnesota not so long ago has been spreading across the state. A resurrection is occurring in Minnesota. More and more land is being seeded—from back yards to road sides to farm fields—to reconstruct tall grass prairie. The interest may be practical, such as preventing soil erosion on a slope. It may aim to win back wildlife. Or it may be for nothing more than capturing the amazing assortment of colors, shapes and heights that changes every two to three weeks on the prairie from April through October.

Others want to know most about the little virgin prairie left, about bluestem, tick-trefoil and pale purple coneflower among the hundreds of plants abundant in Minnesota before settlers replaced them with row crops. Nostalgia runs deep for these remnants, often found near railroad tracks or old cemeteries. A parcel exists near the Twin Cities International Airport.

A “prairie passage” is being created along Interstate 35, from Texas to Canada. Iowa’s Department of Transportation is planting native grasses and wildflowers that love heat and need little upkeep. The I-DOT has other big plans for prairie along highways across Iowa, with 25 to 30 projects at close to 100 acres each planned for next spring and summer.

In Minnesota, MNDOT has an extensive roadside prairie corridor program. Gas, electric and communications rights-of-way have been planted.

All this is amazing when you think about it. What the pioneers set out to destroy, with much success, is now prized. This is Minnesota’s heritage, after all. Until the mid-1800s, the tall grass prairie was mostly as it had been for thousands of years. Native peoples setting fire to it to create better conditions for game helped the prairie flourish. They kept the forest at bay.

Just 150 years ago, the western one third of Minnesota was in prairie. Now, though no state inventory exists, original prairie is estimated to take up less than one-tenth of 1 percent. Some virgin prairie is in state preserves. Other prairie is in private hands.

Public and private prairie restoration efforts are ongoing throughout Minnesota. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has been restoring prairie and oak savanna in various sites. Prairie areas in Cedar Lake Park include the Cedar Lake Trail corridor, in the Upton Woods and the north end of Brownie Lake.

While virgin prairie is very diverse, with 250 to 300 species, reconstructed prairie often has no more than 25 to 30. The prairie seed business is booming.

The list of those tending to prairie in Minnesota is getting longer all the time. Whatever the inspiration, Minnesota is becoming more enchanting for it.

Based on an article, “Iowa’s Tall Grass Revival,” by the Des Moines Register Editorial Board / July 29, 2001. Iowa and Minnesota share similar situations and perspectives on their prairies.

Sitting on the Shore of a Vanished Bay

This gentleman, believed to be one of the Wallof brothers, is looking over the old East Bay of Cedar Lake, toward the Burnham Bridge. Before 1903 the whole area southeast of Hidden Beach was a part of the lake. In 1903 the lake was lowered four feet to accommodate the railroads; in 1911 it was lowered another seven feet to equalize the water flow for the canal connection with Lake of the Isles. (The remnants of the shoreline are still clearly visible as you look east of the new Kenilworth Trail.) From 1930 to 1960 the dried up bay became the city dump “filled” by garbage and debris from torn-down buildings and torn-up roads. Abandoned and covered by dirt, then reclaimed by nature, this area has become the mounds we now know, beloved by bikers.
At Long Last:
A Cedar Grove/Wildflower Memorial

BY NEIL TREMBLEY, 
CLPA SECRETARY

For several years the CLPA steering committee has struggled with balancing the need to fulfill our obligation to members who sent in funds for the Cedar Grove and wildflower plantings; and our desire to honor one of CLPA’s fundamental principles to “minimize human artifacts in the park.”

Part of the Cedar Grove/wildflower funding is earmarked to provide signage honoring loved ones for whom the wildflowers and Cedar trees were planted. But signage in the form of a memorial rock or pole is a human artifact. How can we resolve this conundrum?

Meanwhile some members have lamented the lack of benches in the prairie/Cedar Grove area of the park. Senior citizens as well as families with small children long for places where they can rest.

Well, at long last a solution appeared. One of our members contacted Richard Hansen, a sculptor, university professor and landscape architect, who agreed to create a memorial piece that could serve as a bench/resting area as well as a memorial. Such a useful yet artistic creation would be in keeping with the precepts that guide our organization.

Mr. Hansen plans to work on the project when he will be in town this winter. Installation will be in spring 2002. CLPA will like to invite all concerned to a dedication ceremony to take place next year. As the time comes closer, we will inform all those concerned about the date and place.

Visit Richard Hansen at www.rhwatermarks.com

Birding News
BY MARY MCGEE

The annual spring bird walk in Cedar Lake Park took place on May. 9 at 7 a.m. Peter Neubeck, the leader, and six avid birders spotted 37 species of resident and migrating birds. We will be looking forward to the second annual winter bird count in the park. (Date to be announced on the CLPA web site)

Bluebird Report

Each spring bluebirds have been returning to Cedar Lake like the swallows to Capistrano. Back in 1986, under the supervision of Dorene Scriven of the Audubon Bluebird Recovery Program, and with the help of Jim Fagrelius of the Park Board, I set out to try to get Eastern Bluebirds to come to the park area along the north shore of Cedar Lake (well before there was a Cedar Lake Trail). Now, after 15 years I get help from volunteers to monitor the 12 nest boxes in the area. Thanks are due to Keith Gunderson and Sandra Riekki, Barbara Carufel, Tom and Phyllis Mahan and Barbara Longfellow.

This year a pair of bluebirds arrived a little late due to the lingering snow banks. But May 1 they had eggs in a nest box along the Cedar Lake Trail. Since then they have raised two broods successfully, producing 10 young. Another pair of bluebirds chose to use one of the nest boxes on the grounds at Target (Prudential). They also raised two broods. It is unlikely that the birds will be seen around the nest boxes but they may still be in the general area until October.

Tree swallows, often mistaken for bluebirds, have dark blue backs and white breasts and are flying constantly over the prairie catching insects in the air. They also used nest boxes along the Cedar Lake Trail and at Brownie Lake and raised a number of young.
CLPA Update, Fall 2001

If you’re seeing this CLPA Update for the first time: Call to let us know if you want to be added to our mailing list: (612) 377-9522.

CALENDAR

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

Hutch Spur Connection Ride & Roll
Saturday, Sept. 15, meet at noon by Hedberg memorial. Call Carol at (612) 377-1875.

Wildflower Planting
Friday, Sept. 21, call Neil Trembley at (612) 377-0264.

Autumnal Equinox
Saturday, Sept. 22, 6:05 a.m. (CST)

Annual Meeting
Wednesday, Jan. 23, 2002. (Board of Directors nominations close December 1, 2001).

Fall Bird Migration
(Not just warblers!) September through October

For more activities
Call CLPA at (612) 377-9522. Email us at info@cedarlakepark.org. Or check our web site: www.cedarlakepark.org.

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.

Tufted Tortoise temporary sculpting at Hidden Beach by Erica.