

Cedar Lake Park

UPDATE

Fall/Winter 2003

Water Edition

Volume 15, No. 3

At the Water's Edge

BY NEIL TREMBLEY

Cedar Lake has undergone extensive changes over the last century. In the 1860s, the lake was considerably larger than it is today. There was a huge shallow bay on the East Side of the lake, reaching to Sheridan Ave. from 21st to 26th Streets. The north end of the lake lapped the base of the Bryn Mawr bluffs. To the southwest, the lakeshore went all the way to what is now France Avenue.

In the late 1800s, of all the lakes in the city, Cedar Lake was considered the purest. Several ice companies harvested blocks throughout the winter. Ice blocks were stored in icehouses or shoved on board trains to be shipped to restaurants in Chicago and St. Louis.

The Shoreline Recedes

The shrinking of the lake was dictated primarily by the needs of the railroads, although the park board did play a role. In 1867, the St. Paul & Pacific (a precursor of the Burlington Northern) built its track on an earthen dike from 21st to 26th street, bisecting the eastern bay. Little by little the bay was filled in, mostly with deposits of wood and coal ashes and other refuse. In 1883, James J. Hill decided to build the Minnetonka



Reflections on Cedar Lake last summer

Cutoff across the top of the lake. Another dike was created, and gradually the northern side of the lake was filled in.

In 1902, the first major reshaping of the lake occurred as the lake was lowered by six feet. Indications are that it was lowered to accommodate two rail companies that dominated the northern and eastern edges of the lake: the Great Northern Railroad and the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway.

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A Walk in the Park

BY NEIL TREMBLEY

One hot and sunny August morning, Ruth Jones and I walked the Cedar Lake Park prairie with Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB) horticultural coordinator Mary Lerman. The CLPA had contacted Mary for advice on where to plant wildflowers this fall.

As we walked, Mary quickly assessed the health of the prairie plants and grasses. She noted that the grasses, especially the big bluestem and little bluestem, predominated as they should in this environment. Considering the dry summer we've had, she thought the prairie looked in good shape.



Mary was pleased that the mowing done earlier in the summer appears to have successfully knocked out the yellow clover that threatened to engulf parts of the prairie. The

clover had to be cut at precisely the right time—while it was flowering, but before it had gone to seed—to effectively dampen its future growth. Unfortunately, this was at the same time many of the native-species plants were flowering. Mary assured us that these plants and grasses were unaffected by the mowing and would grow back strong as ever.

On our walk we observed numerous young trees crowding into the prairie, particularly cottonwoods and Siberian elms. Neither are desirable. Mary recommended the Cedar Lake Park Association gather a group of volunteers to lop off these trees. The park board would treat the stumps. (See photos on page 4.)



On the Horizon

BY KEITH PRUSSING, CLPA PRESIDENT

Access to the park and trail in the area of the Cedar Lake Parkway Bridge is changing. The trails along the west side of the lake have been repaved at a wider 10 feet. The dirt path entrance to the park just east of the bridge has been paved. There is a non-motorized section on the west side of the new bridge, providing a safe north/south crossing. There will be a cantilevered path on Cedar Lake Road, connecting to the Ewing Ave. entrance. The non-motorized pavement will continue west on Ewing, and then on France Ave. in Saint Louis Park. Expect to see more people using the park.

Look for the new sculpture bench in the memorial Cedar Grove. This installation honors a commitment made ten years ago. The bench is made of Kasota limestone quarried by the Vetter family in Mankato. The top cut of the formation, it is an interestingly irregular surface. The color is a brown-tan-orange-yellow. It weighs over 1,200 pounds, and is 6 feet long and 9 inches thick. The two legs are 18 inches high, and each weighs 550 pounds. The inscription along the side reads "CEDAR LAKE PARK MEMORIAL GROVE 1996." It is curved in an arc that is harmonious with the two spirals of the grove. The setting features a clear view of the prairie and trail, yet is protected and intimate.

There is a grand vision emerging of a connected buckthorn- and exotic-free area consisting of southern Wirth Park, Anwatin Woods, Bassett's Creek, Brownie Lake, Cedar Lake and the Cedar Lake-Kenilworth Trail corridor. It would include the private property within these bounds. Neighborhoods including CIDNA, Bryn Mawr, Anwatin Woods (www.anwatinwoods.org), Kenwood, Forest Lake, Cedarhurst, and South Tyrol Hills are talking with Hennepin County and the cities of Minneapolis, Saint Louis Park and Golden Valley. MPRB has taken a lead role in coordinating this process, as has this Association. Federal grant applications, requiring matching funds, are being prepared.

Happy Holidays!

If you would like an electronic version of this newsletter instead of paper, let us know.



Gifts

BY STEVE DURRANT, TREASURER

Cedar Lake Park Association gratefully acknowledges recent 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:

Dale Antonson
Robert & Pamela Berkwitz
Carol Brant
Frank Bruan
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Dale & Lorene Falk
Ned Foster & Laura Tiffany
James Gehrey
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Bob Harding & Allan Valgema
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Richard Lassell
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Sandra Stanley & Kay Ronngren
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Mark Thompson
Parker & Albert Trostel
Kenneth Valley
Mary Vaughan
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Mark Wernick & Nancy Entwistle
Jonathan & Carol Wirtschafter

Thanks to Volunteers



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	Peter Neubeck	

Website Update: A New Look

BY MEREDITH MONTGOMERY

Check out our new web site, now online at www.cedarlakepark.org! Thanks to Mark Simonson, our web designer, the site has a new look and many clever improvements. New features include pages for news, ongoing projects, and online donations. The photo section has new seasonal photos as well as new photos of people working on projects in the park.

CLPA would like to acknowledge Mark Simonson's considerable contributions to the new web site. Mark designed the CLPA Master

Plan document in 1989, created our original web site in 1999, and has been involved in other CLPA projects over the years. We are grateful for the many hours he has spent hiking our virtual park and trail!

Thanks to Mark's efforts and those of other volunteers, the CLPA web site has become more interesting as well as easier to access and update. We invite you to visit our electronic meeting room, a place for education and advocacy on park-related issues. Send your ideas, comments and suggestions to webmaster@cedarlakepark.org.

Bryn Mawr Music Festival Benefits CLPA

Hundreds of people came out in 90-degree temperatures to the third annual Bryn Mawr Music Festival. It was held on Sunday August 17 at the Bryn Mawr Meadows, just off the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and at the southern end of the Bassett's Creek Trail. This event was a fundraising benefit for the Cedar Lake Park Association and the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood, presented by local residents Sue McClean and Associates and Bill Eigen. It was generously sponsored by Tim Olyen of Edina Realty, *City Pages*, and Drive 105. The music played from noon until dusk, and it was a good time.



Bryn Mawr and Cedar Lake Park volunteers (left to right): Ned Foster, Greg Lecker, Mary Conway, D'Ann Topoluk, Greg Klopp, David Klopp, and Ruth Jones share tent space and conversation during the day-long festival.



Music played from noon until dusk.



Festival visitors find refreshments, games, arts and crafts and kids' activities. The treeline in the background is the Kenwood Bluffs, with the CLRT at the base.

Stroll and Roll Succeeds with Participants and Volunteers

More than 120 people strolled, rolled or ran in the Jones-Harrison Residence's fifth annual Stroll and Roll fundraising event.

This event raised several thousand dollars for Jones-Harrison programs.

Volunteers from CLPA helped provide water and well-wishes at various water stations. Carolyn Anderson, Bill Gilbreath and Ned Foster manned the station at 21st and Upton. Steve Pratt, Lisa Genis and David Klopp covered the station where the Cedar Lake and Kenilworth Trails meet. Nicole Hagen and Ruth Jones were stationed at Kenwood Parkway and I-394. D'Ann Topoluk and Catharine Morris did safety patrol at Burnham Blvd. and the Kenilworth Trail.

"It was a beautiful day," said Jones-Harrison Development Associate Deb Dressely. "The residents really enjoyed getting out to see the trails. Thanks to all!"



Having fun on the Kenilworth Trail.



Photos by Deb Dressely



A sunny, 20-degree morning in November finds students from the City of Lakes Waldorf School doing community service work in the park, and having a good time (note the head of a buried student in the center of the picture). The group was warmed by moving many wheelbarrow loads of woodchips and pulling stumps.



Wildflower Planting



Photos by Neil Trembley

In September, a dozen volunteers from Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) in Maple Grove planted over one thousand wildflower seedlings. To promote civic involvement in the community, DRC's president Susan Engleiter and CEO Russ Hagen offer community service leave—with pay—to its employees. This is the fourth year in a row that DRC employees have taken advantage of this progressive policy and participated in wildflower planting in the prairie.

The day picked was one of only two days in the last three months that has seen extensive rain. The volunteers got soaked to the bone as they worked, but all of them stayed to finish up the job. Special thanks go out to Ruth Jones and Carolyn Anderson, who pitched in to organize the soaking of the wildflower seedlings in terrasorb. This treatment, along with the much-needed rain, will help ensure the survival of the plants.

City of Lakes Loppet 2004



The City of Lakes Loppet ski race will take place January 30–31. The long course will cross Cedar lake, en route from Wirth Park to Lake Calhoun. CLPA will again manage a refreshment station, staffed by volunteers. Call if you are interested!

Prairie Vigilance



In October, volunteers moved through the prairie removing exotic, non-native trees with loppers and saws. Flags were placed to mark the stumps that required chemical treatment.

Plantings Inventory



Mary Lerman

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is gathering a plantings inventory that will document all of the native trees, shrubs, wildflowers and grasses that have been installed in the park over the past several years. This effort, led by MPRB horticultural coordinator Mary Lerman, is part of a system-wide program to create a database listing the vegetation in all the parks, as well as the city boulevards. This information will allow better management of the plant resources, including the removal of exotics. It is quite impressive to see how much has been planted due to the combined efforts of the neighborhoods, MPRB, and CLPA.



Asters on the prairie

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Supports CLPA

Resolution No. 2003-148

Supporting Finishing the Cedar Lake Regional Trail Connection to the Mississippi River

WHEREAS, the Cedar Lake Regional Trail is an important asset to the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, the Metropolitan Area, and the State of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, completing the Cedar Lake Regional Trail to the river will complete the vision to connect the Chain of Lakes to the Mississippi River; and

WHEREAS, completing the Cedar Lake Regional Trail to the river will form a superb link to the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway; and

WHEREAS, completing the Cedar Lake Regional Trail will connect the Mississippi River to the entire western metropolitan area by linking with the Kenilworth Trail, Bassetts Creek Trail, Midtown Greenway, and Hennepin County Southwest Corridor systems; and

WHEREAS, public safety is the number one reason for keeping the Cedar Lake Regional Trail in the railroad corridor instead of crossing city streets; and



WHEREAS, the financing of this last section of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail in the corridor to link the lakes to the river will be both private and publicly funded.

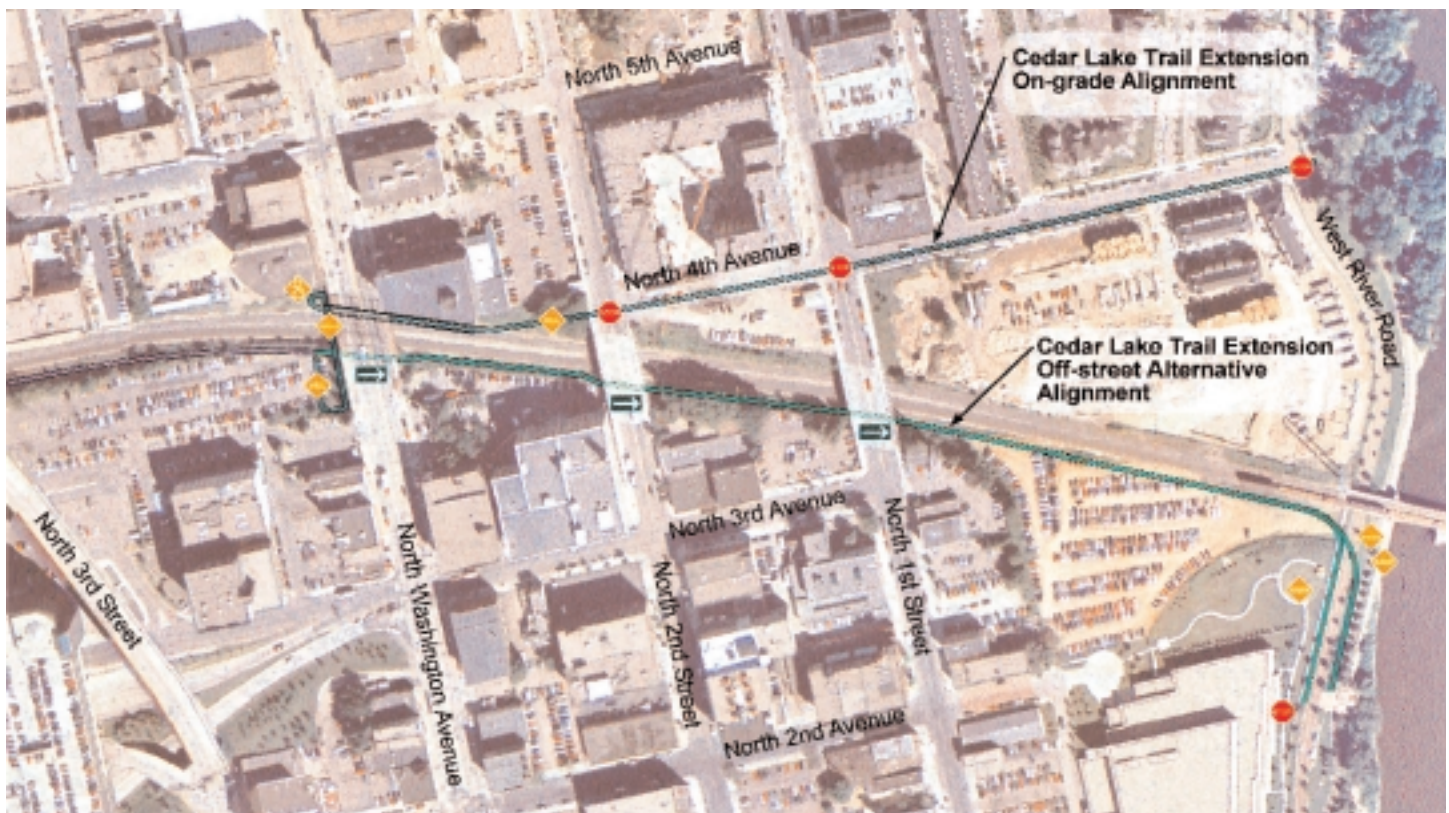
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board hereby supports the citizen's group, the Cedar Lake Park Association, in its efforts to accomplish this vital transportation goal, with the stipulation that the Trail connection occur adjacent to the retaining wall on the Federal Reserve Bank site.

Adopted by the Park and Recreation Board in formal meeting assembled on August 20, 2003.

Approved:


R. T. Rybak, Mayor


Bob Fine, President

Don Siggelkow, Secretary



WILDLIFE NEWS

The Bluebird Trail

BY KURT KLUSSENDORF

One of Cedar Lake Park's features is a bluebird trail. The "trail" is a series of 10 bluebird nestboxes started by Mary McGee in 1987. This spring, we began working with Mary as what you might call bluebird trail apprentices. It's been a great experience.

We appreciated the incentive to hike Cedar Lake Park frequently. Highlights included watching migrating white-throated sparrows rummage along the ground on a refueling stop. Barb got good looks at a golden-winged warbler along Brownie Lake. We must've heard "the pheasant" nearly every trip, but only saw this beautiful creature once.

Tree swallows also use these boxes. We won't soon forget how protective swallows can be of their nests. While we wanted to check on the nests, these "avian

fighter jets" certainly showed off their flying prowess trying to keep us away.

When the first brood of bluebird chicks was about to fledge, the male nearly sang himself hoarse trying to convince the children to leave the nest. The parents must have been as pleased as any parent when, a month later, these adolescents were seen helping to bring food into the second brood.

Of course the best part has been getting involved with others along the way. Talking to passers-by. Answering questions. And learning the ropes from our mentor. Mary reports seeing two foxes around the Burnham Road area and a large skunk walking down the middle of the street. Also, eagles have been sighted around Hidden Beach.



Bridge Updates



Bridge reconstruction is on schedule, ending in November for the season. Construction will begin again in February 2004, and be completed that year. Though a dusty, disruptive process for neighbors, park users, and vehicular traffic, the new bridge will bring better access to the park and trail, as well as a safer north/south thoroughway between Wirth Park and Cedar Lake Parkway.



Look at the southeast abutment of the new Cedar Lake Parkway bridge over the trail corridor, where text in the concrete describes the history of the area. Replacing the old landmark bridge requires that historical features be incorporated into the new design. CLPA historian Neil Trembley was instrumental in this process.



The St. Louis Park City Council unanimously approved a motion to begin design studies for an access ramp on the south side of the pedestrian bridge (pictured above). It will be located at the end of South Cedar Lake Road. The Jewish Community Center is to the north. This access point will allow safe, all-season, all-ability use of the trail for the Cedarhurst, South Tyrol Hills, and Forest Lake neighborhoods, as well as people passing along the trail. There are concerns about increased auto traffic, and this will be monitored to minimize the impact on the immediate neighbors.



Passing under the bridge on the Cedar Lake Regional Trail.

At the Water's Edge

Continued from page 1

Soon after this lowering, the north and east sides of the lake were crammed with rail lines. What had been part of the lake now became switching yards for the two railroads. In the early 1900s Bryn Mawr neighbors complained the Great Northern was scraping off the top of the Bryn Mawr bluffs to create a new shoreline south of the rail tracks.

One unintended consequence of the lowering of the lake was the altering of the southwest corner. What had been a shallow bay became a lily pond.

In 1911, the park board lowered the lake five feet further so that Cedar Lake could be linked by a channel to Lake of the Isles (as well as Brownie Lake) to create the Chain of Lakes.

So in total, the lake has been lowered by 11 feet: a staggering amount. This has totally transformed the shoreline.

As the water receded, the lily pond at the southwest corner dried up, and a road was constructed along the southern and western shoreline. The East Bay was filled in and later used as a city dump. This dumping played a critical role in the character of the lake.

Water Quality

In the late 1800s, of all the lakes in the city, Cedar Lake was considered the purest. Several ice companies harvested blocks throughout the winter. Ice blocks were stored in icehouses or shoved on board trains to be shipped to restaurants in Chicago and St. Louis.

In the 1960s, this writer remembers hearing that Cedar Lake was the best lake in the city to swim in.

But the dumping that went on during the years between 1940 and 1960 slowly had its effect on the lake. Critical to the lake's purity were the springs that flowed into the lake around its northeast corner. But the dumping and building in that area dammed up the springs. The sparkling fresh water ceased to flow.

Meanwhile the marshland on the southwest corner, which had acted as a strainer for the lake, was gone. And, the runoff from the area, full of dead leaves, fertilizer, and animal defecation, was allowed to drain into the lake. By the late '80s, the lake was in a bad way.

Fortunately, MPRB has been actively trying to rescue the lake. The long-suffering southwest corner has been returned to marsh, and the runoff from the western side, 55 percent of the watershed flows through before it is allowed to enter Cedar Lake. The lake has been



Today there are many different ways to experience the edge of Cedar Lake. These men are enjoying a rest from biking along the west side.



Though no longer harvesting ice from Cedar Lake as it did a century ago, the North Star Ice Company still delivers ice today.



treated with alum to bind up phosphorus to control the growth of algae. And the park board continues to experiment with biologic solutions to return the lake to a more pristine state. But as anyone down at the lake can tell you, it's better, but it's still not great.

Nurturing the Lake

A city lake is sensitive to the conditions of the city. We can be good stewards of the lake by being sensitive to what we do that affects the lake. Here are a few common sense activities we can pursue:

- Clean up after our dogs,
- Use lawn fertilizer sparingly,
- Bag up and dispose of leaves, tree limbs,

and other growth around the house,
• Finally, let government officials know how important clean water is to us.

An urban lake cannot treat itself. Citizens must be active in controlling the events that can affect the beauty and health of the lake. Let's nurture Nature.

*To see this Update
in color,
check our website:
www.cedarlpark.org*



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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, Fall/Winter 2003

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

CALENDAR

CLPA Steering Committee

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

Winter Solstice

On or about December 21

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, January 28, 6:30–9:00 p.m.,
Jones-Harrison Residence

City of Lakes Loppet

Friday–Saturday, January 30–31
www.cityoflakesloppet.org

Your support is important—

All donations are tax-deductible.*

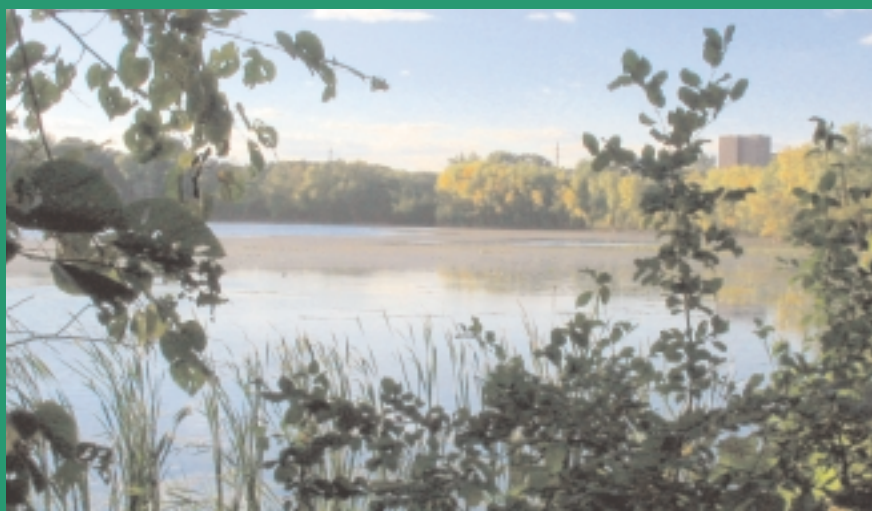
*Come to the park, enjoy its beauty,
become a steward. Other ways to help:*

- Volunteer your time and talents
- Donate goods or services
- Coordinate a group or sponsor an event
- Donate financial resources, such as cash, stocks, or bonds
- Leave a legacy by including a bequest in your estate planning, or purchase a memorial or honorarium for a loved one

Donate online

(www.cedarlakepark.org) or by mail

* To the extent allowed by law.



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.