When are they completing the Cedar Lake Trail? I heard it got delayed. What happened?

Many people have expressed dismay over the delay in completing the extension of the Cedar Lake Trail to the Mississippi River. The main reason for the delay is the new baseball stadium. Its footprint looms over the trail. Both Mayor R.T. Rybak and City Council Member Lisa Goodman promised to make sure the Cedar Lake Trail is an integral part of any stadium plan. Twins executives have also touted the trail as a means for people to travel to the stadium. Yet there is concern.

Well, there’s good news. A few months ago, Council Member Goodman and the Cedar Lake Park Association (CLPA) floated a plan to begin the next phase of the Cedar Lake Trail without waiting for the western section (next to the stadium) to be completed. The plan calls for construction of a Minimum Operating Segment (MOS) that would run from the Mississippi River to a trailhead at Washington Avenue: a total of...

Welcome to Summer 2007 in the Park

Hidden Beach is now officially East Cedar Lake Beach, a part-time authorized swimming area with tables, benches, a gravel path and turnaround and buoys. Lifeguards will be present Friday through Sunday, from 12 to 8 p.m. Trees and other vegetation have been selectively removed. Police presence is markedly increased throughout the park. MPRB, motivated by neighborhood concerns, is determined to end outlaw behaviors that have been centered on the Hidden Beach area on the east side of Cedar Lake.

Welcome to Summer 2007. Last month, volunteers planted native forbs and removed invasive leafy spurge in the prairie encompassing the Cedar Lake Trail. In mid-May, dozens of Nona Peterson’s Brownies and Girl Scouts, along with her cadre of parents and other adults, volunteered 150 hours of their time removing buckthorn and garlic mustard in the upland restoration area near the Burnham Bridge.

This past year of 2006-’07 has been rich in volunteer activities in the park and along the trails. The annual fall prairie planting took place on a bright sunny day. A clean-up partnering with the Jewish Community Center in the Western Extension area of the park was fruitful.

We hosted an award celebration in July 06 under the new parkway bridge, honoring CLPA with a Fitness Minnesota award for our promotion and development of the park and trails.

Park Superintendent Jon Gurban, who was hired amid some controversy three years ago, recently received a new three-year contract from the Park Board. As Superintendent, Gurban manages the staff and facilities of the world-renowned Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Welcome... continued on page 3
My Park, Your Park!

BY BRIAN WILLETTE*

What was it like before the world got divided up? Before borders and boundaries? Before fences and lot lines? When I was in graduate school, I volunteered taught Native American boys for a summer in the southwestern part of the country. Although I was the teacher, I learned more from the Native American young people and their elders than they did from me.

One of the key lessons I learned was how to spiritually and psychologically appropriate a place unto oneself. I learned how to own a place—claim it as mine—without buying it or securing a legal deed to it. I also learned that many people can spiritually/psychologically own the same place. And any person can spiritually/psychologically own many places.

There are no limits. The spiritual/psychological ownership is felt deep within, and it gives rise to inspiration. There is a deep connection—a deep sense of belonging. There is also the feeling of being one with those who currently claim it as theirs, those who claimed it in the past and the generations to come who will claim it in the future.

This spiritual/psychological ownership is poignantly celebrated in Woody Guthrie’s song, “This Land is My Land: This Land is Your Land.”

There are three steps to enter into spiritual/psychological ownership. First, claim a place as yours. Second, care for it. And third, enjoy it.

CLPA Donors and Volunteers—January 2006 through March 2007

Dick Adair
Mary Adair
Ron Adams
Matt Allen
Gary Anderson
Sally A. Anson
Dale Antonson
Susan & Lloyd Armstrong
Fay Atchison
Lawrence C. Baker
Rachel Banken
Matt Barkber
Jennifer & Richard Bartholomew
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Keith Prussing
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George Puzak
Frances Reid
Ernest Reinsmith
Louie & Jerry Rnibck
Tom Rice
Martin Richmond
John & Martha Richter
Sandra Riekki

*Brian is one of the co-founders and the first president of the Cedar Lake Park Association.

Volunteer Opportunities

There are a variety of ways to volunteer to keep CLPA moving forward:

- Database Management—experience needed with Excel and Access programs. Contact Keith Prussing or Meredith Montgomery for details.
- Plantings—taking place spring through fall. Contact Neil Trembley for dates.
- Leadership—a great way to leave a legacy. Contact Keith Prussing.
- Special Projects—watch our website, or contact us with your ideas.
- Media—contact Jim McPherson about the newsletter.
- Presentation/Tours—contact Keith Prussing.
- Political Activity—contact David Klop or Richard Thomas.
- Group Activities—contact Ruth Jones.

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

Cyber-Awareness

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

Visit Our Website

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

BY NEIL TREMBLEY, TREASURER

• Leadership—a great way to leave a legacy.
• CLP Concept Master Plan.
• History of the park.
• Stories about people enjoying and nurturing nature.
• Media—contact Jim McPherson about the newsletter.
• Presentation/Tours—contact Keith Prussing.
• Political Activity—contact David Klop or Richard Thomas.
• Group Activities—contact Ruth Jones.
All Traffic Keep Right, Except to Pass

BY RON ADAMS,
BIKE TRAIL USER

Here in the cities, we have a wonderful network of trails, but which is plagued by some issues. As a frequent user of the trails, I see things at firsthand that I believe the people in charge of the trails miss. I happen to believe that, as a person on foot walking on the trail, I would not enjoy suddenly finding myself with a mouthful of asphalt. Consequently, whenever I walk a mixed-use trail, such as the Cedar Lake extension, the Uptown Greenway or the Paul Bunyan, I keep to the left, facing the oncoming wheeled traffic.

Some of the informational signage along the trail mentions that “all traffic should keep to the right.” I suppose the key word is “traffic.” If these signs were on streets and highways it would be understood that the signs mean that all trucks, autos, motorcycles and bicycles must keep to the right.

Pedestrians are expected to keep to the left when they use streets and highways so they can see the oncoming traffic and have at least a chance to dodge vehicles with inattentive or distracted operators.

On the mixed use “bike” trails, I personally follow the same rule. When I'm walking, keep to the right. When I'm on foot, keep to the left because I'm no longer “traffic.” I am perfectly happy to step off the trail for oncoming traffic, or to look over my right shoulder before stepping temporarily into the right lane.

Most people walk, jog and run on the right side of the trail, obeying the sign. When biking, I have nearly run into several people on foot in the right lane, and I don't regard myself as a particularly inattentive biker. I certainly am not a speedy biker. With no speedometer, I'm content to keeping the heart monitor between 120 and 125 most of the time, and most bike traffic and occasional skaters pass me by. I do switch on my three headlights, three tail lights and my side light when it is dark or stormy, and I wear reflective clothing. It's really nice to see and be seen. For walking, I have a brightly colored reflective vest, cheaply purchased at a hardware store.

Welcome to Summer
Continued from page 1

There has been no updated comprehensive master plan for the system for many years. Superintendent Gurbau is overseeing this important project and the first draft has been released.

The Brownie Lake area received intense attention earlier this spring after foresters removed buckthorn and other trees, and cut up snags and deadfall on the steep eastern hillside. Heavy equipment left gashes on the landscape, and no silt fences were used. Park users were shocked, and a grass-root response immediately developed, involving dozens of citizens contacting MPRB and other local officials.

It was discovered that several public entities have influence over the Brownie Lake watershed, as well as the private Target Corporation. Water runoff from the large Target parking lots on the west side, happily, will now be modified to correct severe erosion of private and public land, and protect water quality. On the east side, native grasses will be seeded, and hopefully, volunteer stewardship plantings of wildflowers and shrubs will happen.

The year 2006 water quality marks have been released by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, which includes the Chain of Lakes. Unfortunately, the clarity of Cedar Lake has continued its slow decline from excellent, “A,” in 1999, to “B-” in 2006. Only Lake Calhoun has maintained an excellent rating. Brownie Lake received the mark of C+.

Beginning at the End
Continued from page 1

about three blocks. At the CLPA annual meeting on January 31, Lisa told the audience that this would be a good way to keep the momentum going.

There are challenges. At the far eastern end, the trail will need to drop down 30 feet from the embankment overlooking the river to connect with the West River Parkway Trail. Further west, private land will need to be acquired to enable the trail to squeeze through the tight rail corridor. This section may prove to be the most expensive and difficult to construct—all the more reason to get going.

The city has used a MOA to move a project forward before. Several years ago the city constructed a trail starting by the Metrodome and running three blocks south along the railroad tracks to the West Bank. At first it seemed ridiculous to have a three-block trail, but soon it became apparent that it was a brilliant way to put a stake in the ground. Now that segment hooks up to the Midtown Greenway.

With construction of the western section of the trail stalled until construction of the new baseball stadium, building at the eastern end of the trail makes sense. Momentum will continue. In the end we will save money, since construction costs are sure to rise the longer we wait. Let’s start now.

- Volunteer your time and talents.
- Donate goods or services.
- Coordinate a group; sponsor an event.
A public meeting was held in May to discuss the discovery of chemicals in Lake Calhoun. It appears they are the same poisons that have been found in Woodbury and Cottage Grove. In these areas, their presence in the water table has been attributed to 3M Corporation’s manufacturing activities over several decades. There is much concern at state and local levels, further study is ongoing, and fish consumption advisories have been issued for the entire Chain of Lakes.

The Cedar Lake Trail has been closed east of Dunwoody Blvd. to the present ending at 12th and Royalston Ave. Construction has started on the Twins Stadium, and it is necessary to reconstruct the trail access to the street, once the other changes, such as bridge removal, are complete. A detour route has been posted with orange signs, and a copy is available at the Hennepin County website.

It will likely be autumn ’07 before this section of the trail reopens. The trail development to the river, described elsewhere in this update, has entered the construction phase, and continues to be evolving. This good news is described elsewhere in this update. CLPA has an archive of wonderful graphics, much of which is in electronic format, of the Cedar Lake Trail, and the park as well. Contact us if you would like copies.

The Southwest Transitway study process has continued over the past year. Buses have been discarded, and light rail routes have been narrowed to three possibilities. Next will come Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) for each route. Two routes bring the train up the Kenilworth Corridor through CIDNA, Kenwood and Bryn Mawr, and through greater Cedar Lake Park. There would be a station in the area of Penn Ave. S. and I-394. The third travels along the Midtown Greenway through Uptown, and turns downtown at Nicollet Ave. S.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each proposed route, and passionate, protective advocates for the status quo of present usage. Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority has been using, over several years, a Policy Advisory Committee format of governance of these studies. Commissioner Gail Dorfman has been a very effective chair, and CLPA, CIDNA, Kenwood and Bryn Mawr have been well represented. Jeanette Colby of Kenwood, jmcolby@earthlink.net, has been tireless in her participation as a spokesperson for the Kenilworth quality of life.

Two related developments are of great importance. First, MPRB is renovating Parade Stadium. Second, the City of Minneapolis is beginning to solicit proposals for the Impound Lot and the Public Works materials and storage areas, which are near the Linden Yards building along the Cedar Lake Trail just east of I-394. Surprisingly, the City owns over 50 prime acres of the lower Bassett’s Creek watershed, and has plans for eco-development of mixed use and civic pride.

MPRB has plans for a grand parkway over the railroad and trail, Van White Boulevard. This will honor the former black city council member and prominent Northsider. The Van White will link North Minneapolis to Downtown and the south in new and important ways with graceful green corridors.

For several years, a citizens’ advisory committee has studied the area and has released a preliminary master plan for the preservation, restoration and development of the Lower Bassett Creek Watershed, which includes much of Bryn Mawr to the Mississippi River. The Creek, which goes underground to the river, may be day-lighted in some areas.

This area also includes the eastern terminus of the Luce Line, formerly the Bassett’s Creek Trail. Construction has brought the trail east of Medicine Lake and through Golden Valley during the past year. A key link remains the route through northwestern Wirth Park. The best route would be along the rail corridor south of the Par 3 golf course. This would spare the Loppet ski trails, the newly-developed off-road biking area and the remote quiet of the area. CLPA is participating in these planning discussions.

The impact of illegal off-road biking continues to grow throughout the park. Please be considerate of other park users. Trails closest to the lake are for quiet walking. There are no permitted bike trails in the park, other than the blacktop and gravel corridors. On the margins, away from the lake, there are informal single track and BMX trails. Please ride on these trails. Do not construct more.

In the Memorial Cedar Grove near the northeast lakeshore, volunteers removed buckthorn and other exotics, bush-whacked grasses, and nurtured the 66 trees, keeping open the double-spiral corridors and the solstice lines of the henge. Work took place throughout last autumn, and again during this spring. Unfortunately, we discovered during the winter that up to 10 trees had some of their branches cut cleanly with a saw. Happily, no trees were seriously harmed. Presently the trees are 10 to 15 feet high, with spreads of 5 to 8 feet wide. It is a beautiful area of the park.

Below is a partial rendering of CLPA activities over the past year. These projects are run and executed by volunteers. If anything excites you, contact us via mail, phone, or email to help out. There is always something to do for anyone of any age or abilities: hiking, biking, running, skiing, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, swimming, flowerings, singing, celebrating and reflecting.
Please contribute to preserve your favorite places in the park! Donate financial resources, such as cash, stocks, or bonds.
BY MARY McGEE

Laura Ellison of Bryn Mawr and Carol Ulsen of St. Louis Park took over monitoring the eight bluebird nest boxes last summer. In spite of the weird weather, there were six successful nestings. This was the 19th year there have been Eastern Bluebirds along our trail, which is inside a city. This is not their usual habitat.

Another volunteer, Matt Allen, put up two nest boxes in the prairie area along the Kennelworth Trail, but got no bluebirds. Late this winter I saw a pilated woodpecker on the trail.

Each year there is a frog survey conducted by the DNR throughout the metro area. Until now, the Minneapolis parklands had been considered too urban to have the right kind of wetland habitat to be worth counting. However, due to the efforts of the one City wildlife biologist, aided by volunteers, the first count ever was held this year. The survey area ran from Wirth Park south to Lake Nokomis, and included parts of Cedar Lake Park. Happily, populations of four species of frogs, out of a possible 12, were found in Minneapolis. Anyone who has been near the north or south cattail marshes on Cedar Lake on a spring evening has heard the spring peepers and chorus frogs that have been present for many years.

Deer and their voracious appetites for tender trees and shrubs are an increasing problem throughout the park and trail corridors. Rabbits munch and multiply readily. Free-running dogs continue to disturb people and wildlife, while having a great frolic themselves. Raccoons use the storm sewers as shelter and free passage, and can be seen sleeping high in trees. Eagles, loons and warblers have visited during the spring.

In March, the Chain of Lakes, including Cedar Lake, were designated an Important Birding Area (IBA) by the Minneapolis Audubon Society.

Send us your news or photos of wildlife in Cedar Lake Park.

Photo Ops

Planters from Data Recognition Program take part in their yearly volunteer planting in the park. Photo by Neil Trembley.

Girl Scouts enjoy a break from buckthorn removal in the south park. Photo by Dorothy Childers.

Taking a break from buckthorn removal in the Cedar Grove are volunteers, Cody Strand, left, and Erik Svensson. Photo by Meredith Montgomery.

At our January annual meeting, CLPA president Keith Prussing makes a presentation with Parks Legacy founders Joan Berthiaume and Ted Wirth. Photo by Dorothy Childers.
Loppet Ski Race Adds Cedar Lake Park Section

BY NED FOSTER

For the first time, skiers in the 2007 City of Lakes Loppet cross-country ski race, which runs from the Theodore Wirth Park Chalet to Uptown, were able to enjoy a new two-kilometer stretch of trail that runs through Cedar Lake Park. Routing the Loppet through CLP was first considered in 2004 for the February, 2005 race, which was canceled due to lack of snow. Then, late in the fall of 2005, a slightly longer and "dedicated" ski trail through CLP was cleared and prepared through collaboration between CLPA, the Park Board and Loppet organizers. But the CLP section was again not used for the 2006 Loppet, due to the fact that the newly created trail was still rough and would have needed heavy snow cover in order to be skiable.

During early summer of 2006 the CLP section of the trail was graded and seeded, providing a better, more groomable surface for skiing, with even modest snow cover, such as existed this year. This set the stage for the debut of the CLP section for the 2007 race. The new trail section proved popular with Loppet skiers, who prefer skiing through woods and prairie to the monotony of frozen lakes. After crossing the north edge of Cedar, the Loppet course enters CLP just north of the Mound. It then follows the prairie east, wraps around the end of Bum's Ridge, and returns west, meandering up and down through a section of woods previously primarily used—unofficially—by mountain bikers. It then crosses the prairie along Upton Avenue before heading down to East Cedar Lake Beach and back out onto Cedar Lake.

One of the benefits to CLP users is that this trail is groomed all season long, snow cover permitting, providing skiers a link from the lakes of South Minneapolis to the 20+ kilometer ski trail system of Wirth Park. In warmer seasons, this trail section also provides a pleasant stroll through a forest of large cottonwoods. Race organizers nearly eliminated this section again this year, but a group of 8 to 10 volunteers helped move snow from the lake surface onto the course. There have been complaints that snowmobiles used in this process may have caused minor damage to some natural areas of the park. CLPA has requested that the Loppet use more care in the future to limit the impact of the snowmobiles on the park by restricting them to the ski trail at all times, even if it means a slightly longer run.

Top skier and race volunteer Zach Handler said, "I...think the brand new section through Cedar Lake Park is a real improvement. It provides a classic view of the Minneapolis skyline, and two short hills to allow racers a good opportunity to make a last strategic move before the finish across the lake. All of this is great for the race, but in my opinion the real benefit to the ski community and the city is that we have an outstanding trail system that we can ski all winter long without driving a long way to access."

CLPA is recognized as a Partner Organization for the Loppet and continues to provide volunteer support to the Loppet. Following the race, in a food tent near the finish line, CLPA volunteers set up and served much-appreciated hot soup and cookies to a thousand ski racers.

Continued on our web site.

Remembering Martha Richter

BY NEIL TREMBLEY

One of our community’s dearest friends is gone. Martha Richter, a long-time resident of the Cedar Lake area, has passed on. Martha and her husband of 51 years, John Richter, were an integral part of the neighborhood and of the Cedar Lake Park Association for decades. While John has always been out front prodding his fellow citizens to do what’s right, Martha provided the soothing balm of grace and hospitality.

Many a time would Martha open her home to volunteers, providing lemonade and conversation to weary planters and buckthorn pullers. Even when the Richters moved out to Golden Valley a few years ago, Martha still kept roots in the area, attending events at St. Mark’s and providing cheer at community gatherings. Our condolences go out to John in this difficult hour. Martha will be missed.

Martha pictured in 2004 with her husband John.

I took these pictures as the skiers climbed the hill at the end of Upton Ave. S. on the east side. At 15 below, with a -40 wind chill, my shutter (RebelXT) got a little sluggish. These guys finished in the top 50 or so of 473 skiers. Photo and caption by Dawn Luoma.
CLPA Update, Summer 2007

If you’re seeing this CLPA Update for the first time and want to be added to our mailing list, please contact us. If you would like an electronic version of this newsletter instead of paper, drop us an email at info@cedarlakepark.org

CALENDAR

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

Ice Out of the Lake
March 26, 2007

Summer Solstice
On June 21, beginning at 1:06 p.m.

Great Swimming
All Summer

Re-opening of the East Cedar Lake Regional Trail
Autumn 2007

Fall Planting
Contact Neil Trembley for details.

Loppet Volunteers Day
October, 2007

CLPA Annual Meeting
January, 2008

Hello to Summer!

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.

This superb view from the top of the mound looks south toward Jones-Harrison Residence. Enhancing this vista is a component of the proposed mound renovation.