

Cedar Lake Park

UPDATE

Summer 2012

Engagement Edition

Volume 24, No. 1

Southwest LRT Will Impact the Park and Trails

The Southwest Light Rail Transit (Southwest LRT) will directly affect Cedar Lake Park and three major trails — Cedar Lake Regional Trail, Kenilworth Trail, and the Midtown Greenway. It is imperative that we closely monitor the design and development of the SWLRT. When appropriate, we need to voice our concerns and share our ideas to protect and, if possible, enhance Cedar Lake Park and the three trails.

The Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County have joined forces on the Southwest LRT project and convened a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to provide input on the planning stages of the Southwest LRT. CLPA has attained a seat on the CAC. At the May 10, 2012 meeting, Met Council and Hennepin County staff provided important updates on the status of the project. Here is a brief report on those updates.

The bonding bill that was just passed by the state legislature did not include the \$25 million requested for the SWLRT. Mark Fuhrman, Director for Rail New Starts, said he was disappointed but not dismayed. Mark said it happened several times on the Central Corridor LRT before the state's portion of the cost was fully covered in a bonding bill. Mark's advice is to keep at it. State legislators need to know the SWLRT's advantages to both the metro area and the state.

The state's portion of the cost of the SWLRT is 10%, which amounts to \$125 million. The rest of the cost is divided between: Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRRA), 10%; the metro area Counties Transit Improvement Board's (CTIB) sales tax, 30%; and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), 50%.

The SWLRT project has FTA



As the Southwest LRT rolls closer, stakeholders and volunteers are engaged in efforts to mitigate its impact.

approval to enter Preliminary Engineering (PE). During this phase 30% of the engineering will be done. It is projected that this will be accomplished sometime in 2013, with the final design phase to be completed in 2014. Construction is projected to take place between 2014 and 2017, with operation starting late 2017 or early 2018.

Fingers crossed. This August **the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is expected to be approved by the FTA** and released for comment by the public. The comment period will be 45 days, with several public hearings. Stay tuned.

The decision to co-locate the freight rail with the LRT and Kenilworth Trail in the Kenilworth Corridor or **re-locate the freight rail may not be made until**

2013. However, we keep getting assured that the Kenilworth Trail will remain in the Kenilworth Corridor.

The current SWLRT design projections have a **fly-over bridge at Cedar Lake Parkway**, an at-grade crossing at 21st street and an at-grade crossing at the intersection of the LRT and Cedar Lake Regional Trail. All three of these intersections are of special concern and will be commented on in the response period of the DEIS. Safety of park and trail users is a major concern at all three intersections. Aesthetics and sound are concerns at all locations.

If you would like to get an **overview of the SWLRT route** and an idea of the scope of the project go to www.SWLRT.org and play the video.
—Brian Willette



JOIN US!





On the Horizon

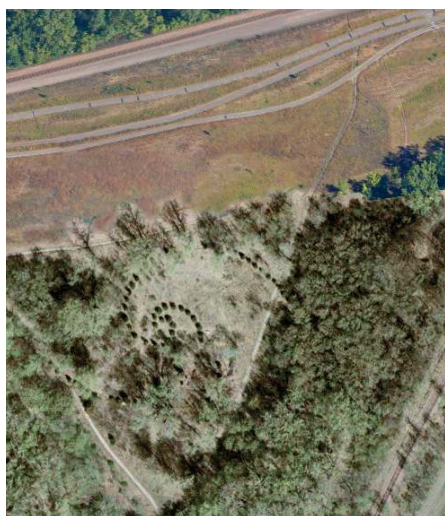
We sure need your help! There is so much going on that impacts the parklands and trails centered at Cedar Lake. The Southwest LRT continues to come closer, downtown Minneapolis development encroaches on the newly opened Cedar Lake Trail. At Brownie Lake major improvements are coming, and the restoration of native landscapes in Cedar Lake Park goes on.

In the digital landscape, we have a website on Facebook. Twitter coming, and a real need for folks to help us spread the message and support the interests of this volunteer citizen group that has created such a remarkable legacy of achievement over a 23-year history. Even better, CLPA continues to thrive, sit at diverse tables and plant native species in the park.

We offer an opportunity for all to make a difference and support Cedar Lake Park and Trails, no matter what your age or abilities. People like you are doing good work right now, connecting to nature and each other. CLPA can be more effective, more influential, and more connected with your help, in whatever form it may take.

We need funds, tools, stewards, technologists, and park and trail lovers to come forward and pitch in. Best of all, we have fun. Please join us. Thanks.

—Keith Prussing



Overlooking the Heart of the Park, one can view the spirals and solar lines of the memorial Cedar Grove. The Cedar Lake Trail is above, and the Kenilworth Trail to the right. LRT will run north/south, east of the tree line, west of the trail.



Contributors

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:



Fay Atchison
Deb Bartels
Joan & John Berthiaume
Win & Mimi Bowron
Debra Brisk
Helen Brooks
Chris Carlson
Dave Carlson
Kevin Casserly
Dorothy & Roger Childers
City of Lakes Loppet

Jeanette Colby & Dave Gutzke
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Anita Tabb
Mary Taylor
Pat Thompson
Kim W. Waldof
Barbara Weingarden
Mark Wernick & Nancy Entwistle
Yale alumni



Long-time CLPA member John Richter (left) was honored at our early April annual meeting by conferring upon him the title of Board Member Emeritus. At the event members voted in the following slate of Board members: Keith Prussing, Neil Trembley, Jim McPherson, Brian Willette, Meredith Montgomery, Stacy McMahon, Steni Prussing and David Klopp

Social Media

Visit the CLPA **website at www.cedarlakepark.org**. There is a wealth of information and photos about the park and trails, including downloadable versions of all our newsletters since the early '90s. Like us on **Facebook at [cedarlakepark](https://www.facebook.com/cedarlakepark)**, and interact with other friends of Cedar Lake. Keep abreast of park and trail activities on Twitter. You will find us **@cedarlakepark**. Finally, we need your help to create and maintain all of this interactivity! If you have web technical skills or enjoy writing content or taking photos or most anything else, we would love to hear from you.

Courtesy on the Cedar Lake Trail

"Hello sir, do you use the trail often?" I slowed down to hear his reply. I was bicycling towards downtown and had just passed over the little bridge east of the Cedar Lake Parkway underpass. It was late March, and I wanted to see if he knew when the ice had gone out on the lake.

"Go back to the suburbs," he growled. I was shocked. Here we were, on a trail funded by local residents, the state legislature, and even the federal government, and he acted as if he owned the trail. Well, I thought, he was right. He did own the trail. And so do I. And you do too. We all own the trail.

As the first federally funded commuter bicycle trail, the Cedar Lake Regional Trail is really a national asset. I've met people from all across the country and even visitors from foreign lands. I'm always delighted to talk to them and overjoyed that they've decided to explore our wonderful trail system.

So I replied to the growler, "Everyone owns this trail and are welcome here. Have a great day!" (That's not actually what I said, but it's what I wish I'd said!)

My favorite ride is the Cedar Lake Loop, which runs through Hopkins and St. Louis Park. On the trail, we are not urban or suburban, we're just users. I love to see people using the trail. There is safety in numbers, and trails that don't get used don't get maintained.

So let's make everyone feel welcome on our trail.
—Neil Trembley

CLPA Hires Alta Planning & Design

Cedar Lake Park Association has hired Alta Planning & Design to prepare drawings and cost estimates for the Cedar Lake Regional Trail's Confluence with the Southwest LRT and the Kenilworth Trail. CLPA will propose these designs to city, county and metropolitan decision-makers as feasible alternatives to the most vexing issues CLPA has identified regarding the Southwest LRT's presence in the Cedar Lake area.

CLPA believes that a grade-separated crossing of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the Southwest LRT is best for the trail users and park lovers. Trail users should not have their commute delayed by commuters using the Southwest LRT. And nature lovers should not have their experience marred by the flashing lights and ringing bells of crossing arms coming down every three to five minutes. Both trail users and park lovers will benefit from an underpass. Cross country skiers will be able to cross under the tracks. The same reasoning applies to the 21st and Upton area: a grade-

separated crossing would be preferable.

Steve Durrant and Josh Mehlem will be Alta's principals on the project. Steve Durrant has worked on several Cedar Lake Park projects in the past; he co-chaired the Southwest LRT charette hosted by CLPA and the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood in November 2010. At that time, citizens from the neighborhoods surrounding Cedar Lake Park met with landscape architects to discuss the challenges inherent in the interaction of parks, trails and light rail. A series of conceptual designs were created for key areas within the park impacted by the development of LRT. Alta's charge will be to take the work created at the charette and further develop the designs at the Confluence and at 21st Street.

CLPA believes that creating positive, practical concepts and then tasking professionals to turn these ideas into specific designs with feasible cost estimates is the best way to influence stakeholders and decision-makers and protect Greater Cedar Lake Park.



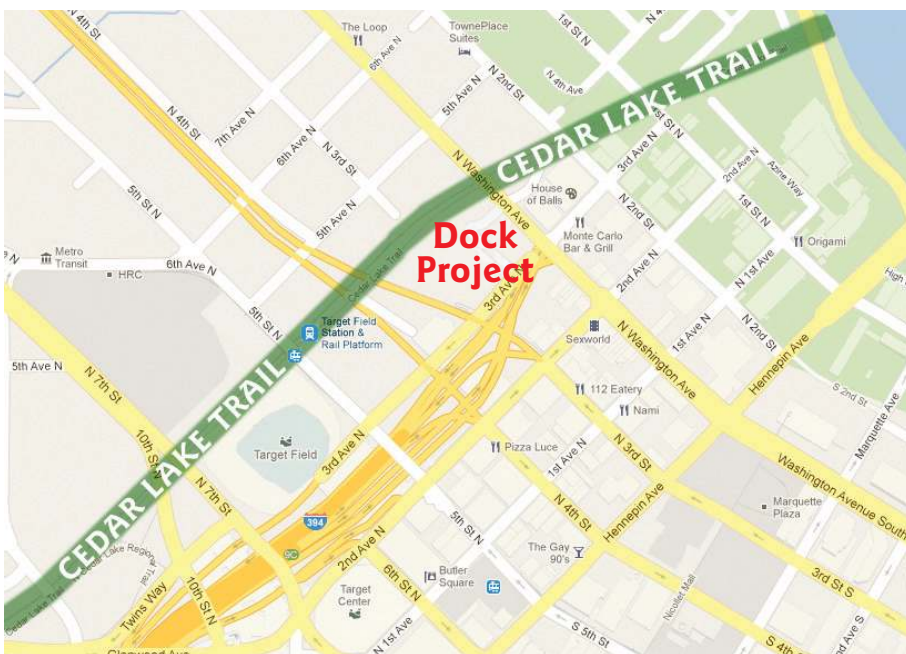
Photo by Meredith Montgomery

Protecting the Downtown Cedar Lake Trail

The Cedar Lake Trail off-road alignment through downtown Minneapolis is just one year open; yet already a serious threat to its existence in the trench emerged in the form of the Dock Project, located in the desirable North Loop neighborhood.

An upscale rental housing development directly adjacent to the CLRT, the Dock will be the first in a developmental series on the parking lots located between the Twins stadium and Washington Ave. Hennepin County officials, on the alert to protect future rail transit projects coming to its Interchange multi-modal station near the Twins stadium, recognized that the initial plans submitted by the developer to the city Zoning & Planning Committee could force the CLRT out of the trench if and when passenger rail to Duluth or Chicago becomes a reality.

The rail authority, along with MN DOT, came to the city and the developers and negotiated a solution that will protect the trail by establishing, with county monies, a transportation easement between Washington Ave and 5th St. CLPA members were involved throughout this process. Special thanks to Commissioner Gail Dorfman for her efforts in protecting the Cedar Lake Trail.
—Keith Prussing





Projects in the Park

Water Safety awareness at Cedar Lake became vitally important in June with the tragic drowning of a teenage girl off the Cedar Point beach. It was a hot day with a strong wind blowing away from shore. Just this season MPRB, as part of a new initiative to make the city lakes more fun, had installed a floating platform for swimmers outside of the roped swimming area. There was no lifeguard. Unfortunately, the young woman misjudged her capabilities and the conditions and went under. A human chain was formed to try to find her, the rescue squad appeared, and she was finally found after 30 minutes, 10 feet under. She never regained consciousness. Please, please, stay within your limits, and watch out for others as you enjoy the lake.

The **Interchange Station in downtown Minneapolis** has been approved by the Hennepin County Board. The projected cost is approximately \$96 million. When completed, it will serve as a multi-modal hub for LRT, commuter and intercity passenger rail, as well as connecting to the Cedar Lake Trail. It will be located near the northwest corner of the Twins Stadium, where already Northstar Commuter and Hiawatha LRT trains come together. In the future, the SW LRT will connect to the Interchange. CLPA continues to be in the loop to nurture and protect the adjacent Cedar Lake Trail.

CLPA continues to participate in the MPRB **Park Stewards program**. This allows for volunteers to continue our efforts in the park in cooperation and coordination with park board staff departments such as Forestry, Operations and Maintenance, Planning, Recreation, and Environmental Operations. Our partnership with MPRB began in 1989 to create, develop, and sustain a nature park at Cedar Lake along with the connecting trails.

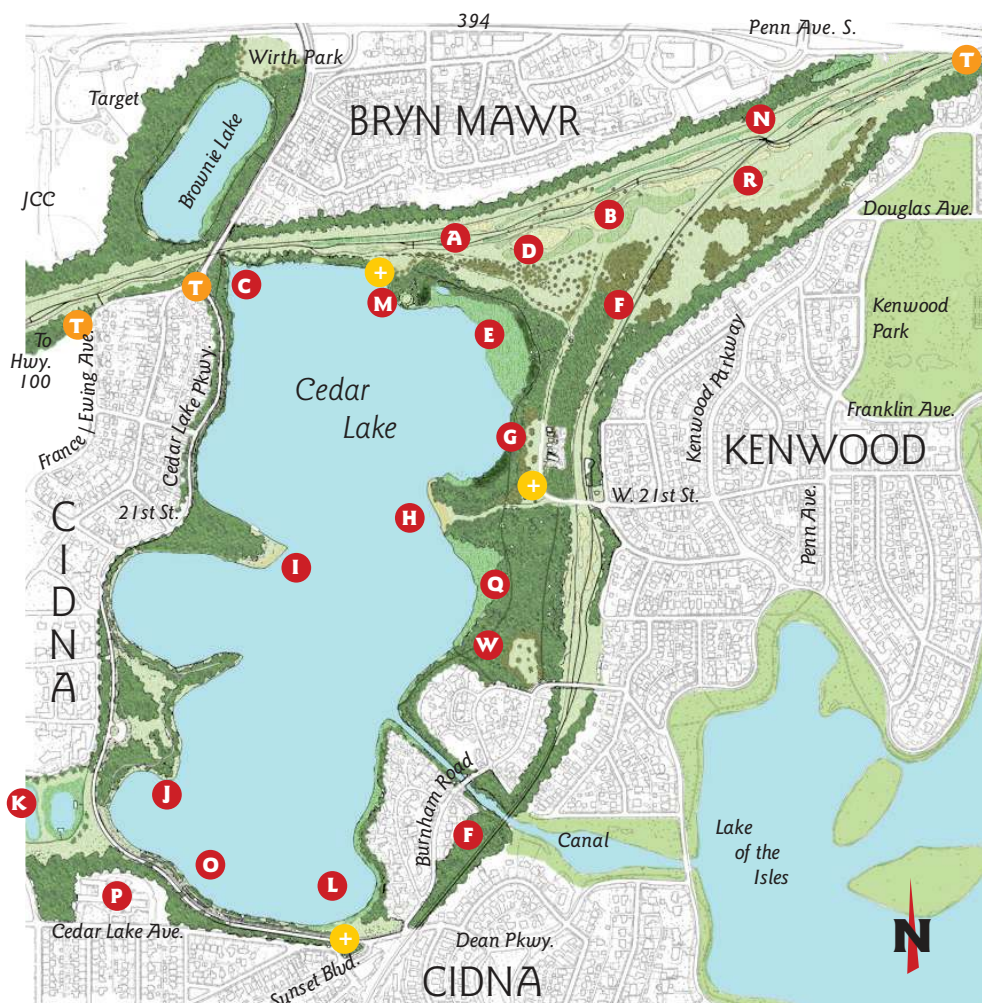
The 2012 **City of Lakes Loppet** cross-country ski extravaganza did not visit the park this year due to the low snowfall. With four days before the race weekend, the organizers decided to move everything to the area near the Wirth Park chalet. Nonetheless, it turned out to be a great weekend, and once again CLPA volunteers partnered with students from area schools to serve hot soup, snacks and energy drink to hungry, depleted racers. It was a great time, and we continue to be happy to participate as a sponsor celebrating

winter sports for all ages. There is great skiing in the park.

Cedar Lake continued to hold a **"B" grade for water quality** in 2011 as measured by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. Lakes Harriet and Calhoun received "A" ratings; however, Harriet has seen closures for swimming due to *E. coli* contamination this year, while Cedar Lake's beaches have remained open. The Watershed District offers grants to local entities to enhance water quality; we are exploring what opportunities are available.

Wildlife continues to abound in the park. Mammals, snakes, birds, butterflies, insects, fish, and other water creatures can be seen throughout the seasons.

CLPA continues to be certified by MPRB through its Park Stewards program to work and play in the park, implementing the principles contained in the 1996 Concept Master Plan. This program allows us to work cooperatively with various park board staff. We would love your help!



- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| A Cedar Lake Trail | G Big Woods I | M Mound | R Confluence |
| B Prairie | H Hidden Beach | N Burlington Northern RR | W Burnham Woodlands |
| C Parkway Bridge/Tunnel | I Cedar Point | O Memorial Daffodils | T Trail Access |
| D Memorial Cedar Grove | J Fishing Dock | P Jones-Harrison Residence | + Water Pump |
| E Big Woods II | K Cedar Meadows | Q Linda's Spiral | |
| F Kenilworth Trail | L South Beach | | |

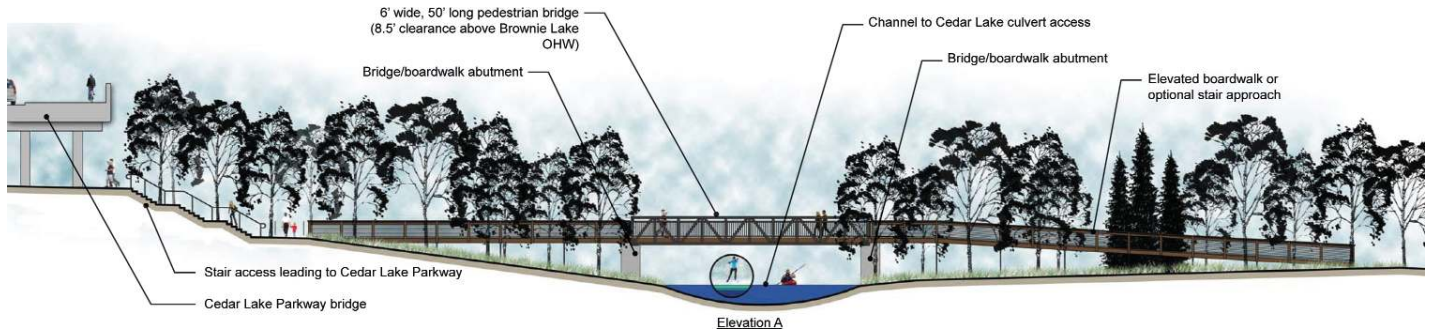
Park Board and Public Works to Improve Brownie Lake

Watch for developments around Brownie Lake over the next two years. A thoughtful and dedicated citizens' advisory process (CAC) convened by MPRB to study the Brownie Lake area has come to a conclusion with the approval by the Board of a comprehensive plan in early March 2012.

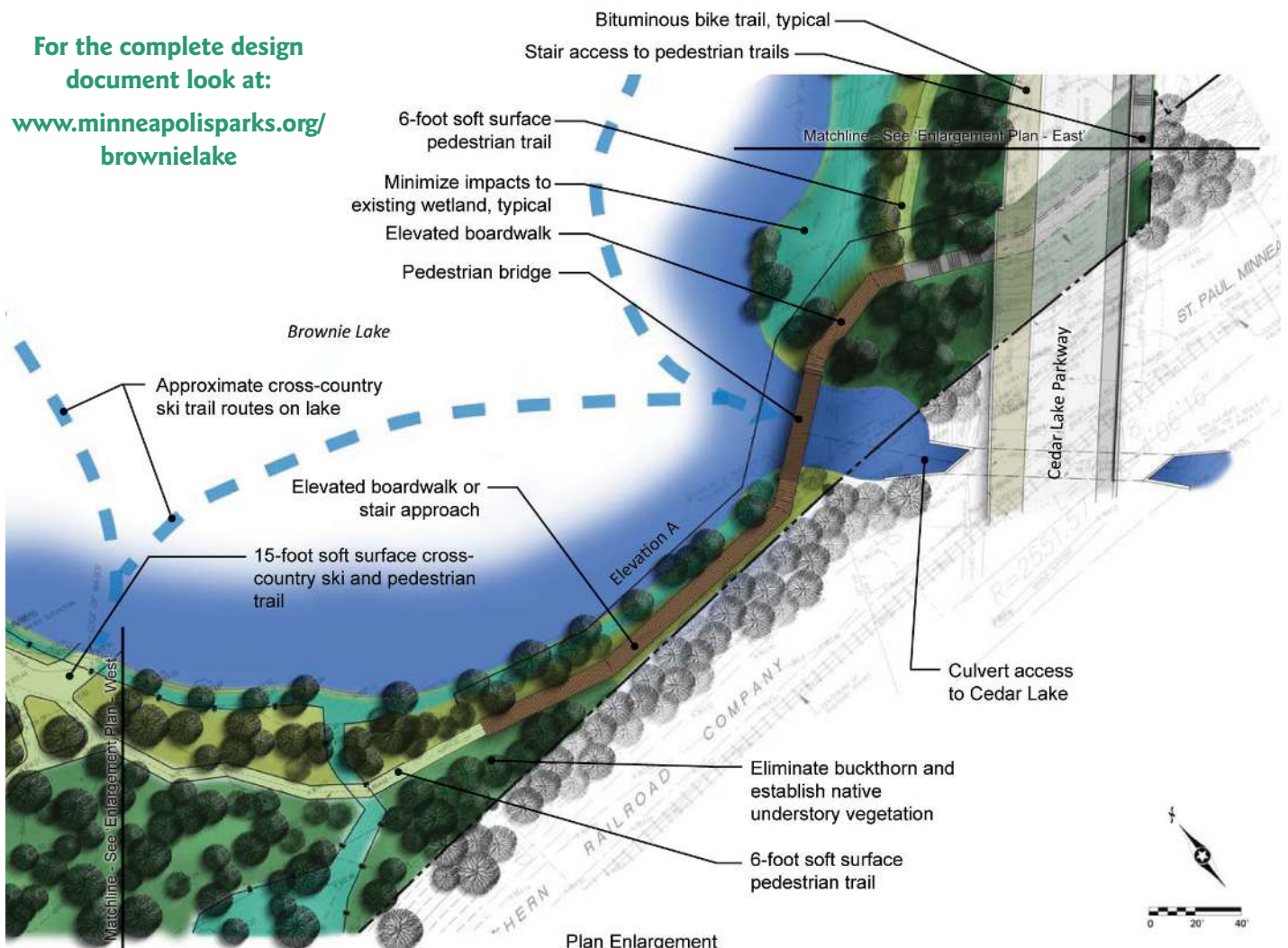
Funded by Legacy Amendment monies along with Met Council Regional Parks funds, enhancements include repairing the bicycle/walking paved trail between I-394 and the Cedar Lake Parkway bridge, removal of massive unused culvert pipe around the lake, and a path from lake level to the bridge above. Further, Minneapolis Public Works will be

upgrading the sewage lift station pumps on the east side. This station lifts wastewater from the west side of Cedar Lake as far south as Sunset Boulevard near South Beach.

CLPA has had a seat at the table, and we think it is a good plan. For more info: www.minneapolisparcs.org/brownielake

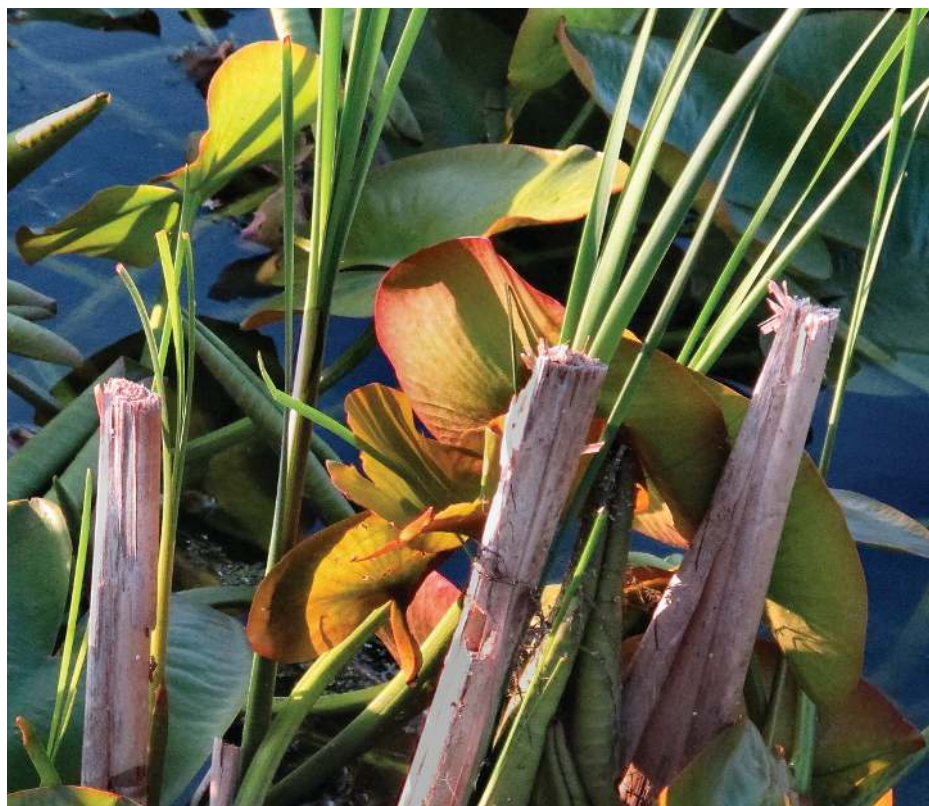


For the complete design document look at:
www.minneapolisparcs.org/brownielake





Gallery: Places in/on the Park and Trail



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A redwing blackbird enjoys a perch in one of our many trees; canoeists on nearby Brownie Lake; water lilies; humans and birds share the trail; the lake is a mirror on a spring afternoon; a volunteer from Data Recognition Corp. plants a native flower; bicyclists on the trail. Photos by Meredith Montgomery.



Volunteers: Planting and Pulling

On May 18, volunteers planted more than a thousand native flowers in the Cedar Lake Park prairie. CLPA members Neil Trembley, Steni Prussing, and Curt Dederich worked with ten employees from Data Recognition Corp. (DRC).

For the last 13 years, DRC employees have helped to plant more than 14,000 flowers and grasses in the prairie. A special thank you to Heather Arabenella, Dana Byers, Annette Chamberlain, Joan Collins, Jason Colvin, Morgan Dempsey-Nicholls, Nhia Lee, Vicki Lehman, and especially Laura Tisdell (who helped organize the outing).

On our plant list were butterfly weed, harebell, prairie larkspur, prairie onion, rough blazing star, showy goldenrod, slender penstemon, stiff tickseed, western spiderwort and yellow coneflower.

Yale Day of Service: A Morning in the Burnham Woodlands

On May 12th, 17 volunteers affiliated with Yale University descended on Cedar Lake Park: removing invasive species, learning about local ecology and building community. The effort was part of the annual Yale Day of Service, where current and future Yale students, faculty, and alumni around the world devote their Saturdays to serve their communities.

This year the Yale Alumni Association of the Northwest organized three sites throughout the Twin Cities, with CLPA's Burnham Woodlands Restoration project once again being one of the more popular destinations. The volunteers—which included four high school seniors accepted to the Class of 2016—were treated to an in-depth orientation by Ruth Jones who informed the group about the most pervasive invasive plants, the recent success in their partial removal and a dose of local history.

By the end of the day mounds of uprooted buckthorn and garlic mustard had been created. The volunteers left knowing that their hours of hard work had left Cedar Lake, and themselves, better than when they arrived. Once again the Yale Day of Service imbibed volunteers with a renewed connectivity to each other, our City's wonderful parks, and to their fellow Yalies around the world.

—Max Musicant, Yale School of Management

**Help us nurture the park and trails,
now and forever.**

**To find out how, contact
info@cedarlakepark.org
or call 612-377-9522**

**www.facebook/cedarlakepark
twitter:@cedarlakepark**



On a hot spring day, DRC employees help plant native-species flowers and grasses in the Cedar Lake Park prairies. Contact us to see the results of a recent prairie study.



Yale students dig in to pull buckthorn and other invasive plants.

Cedar Lake Park Association

A History



Neil Tremblay

for the
CEDAR LAKE PARK ASSOCIATION

"The story of citizens' action in the creation and development
of an urban nature park and regional commuter trail
in Minneapolis, Minnesota."

Cedar Lake Park Association to Publish a History

By Neil Tremblay

The Story of Citizens' Action
in the Creation and Development
of an Urban Nature Park and
Regional Commuter Trail
in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Work Continues—Forthcoming This Fall



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Cedar Lake Park Update is published periodically 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.

Editor: Jim McPherson

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CLPA Update, Summer 2012

If you want to be added to our mailing list, or would like earlier editions of this newsletter, please email info@cedarlakepark.org

Calendar

CLPA Steering Committee

Second Monday, 7 to 9 p.m. at the Kenwood Recreation Center. You're invited.

Ice out on Cedar Lake

March 24, 2012

Annual meeting

April 3, 2012

Summer Solstice

Summer began in the Northern Hemisphere, June 20, 2012, 6:09 p.m. CDT

Autumnal Equinox

September 22, 2012

Annual Fund Drive

November 2012. Please contribute.

Winter Solstice

December 21, 2012

City of Lakes Loppet

February 2-3, 2013

Vernal Equinox

March 21, 2013

Annual meeting

April 2, 2013



Photo by Meredith Montgomery

A summer day looking across to Cedar Lake's Hidden Beach.

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.**