

# Cedar Lake Park

## UPDATE

Summer 2014

25th Anniversary Edition

Volume 25, No.1

## Greater Cedar Lake Park: A Vision for Green Space



**M**inneapolis loves green space. Its citizens understand its importance in softening the rough edges of urban life. Green space makes a city more human. It adds value to our great metropolis. Green space comes in many forms, such as a park, a creek, a river—or a greenway.

Many greenways begin as old rail corridors refashioned into bicycle and pedestrian trails. But they are more. In connecting neighborhoods and opening vistas, these linear parks enhance the urban experience. Through these green arteries surge the lifeblood of our metropolis. We citizens of Minneapolis cherish our green spaces. We treasure them. But the future of one of our most vital greenway is in dire straits. At present, it lolls along the east side of Cedar Lake. It's called the Kenilworth Corridor/Greenway.

The Cedar Lake Park Association (CLPA) is committed to preserving and protecting the Kenilworth Greenway. CLPA is concerned about the effect the proposed Southwest LRT will have on the Kenilworth Greenway and on

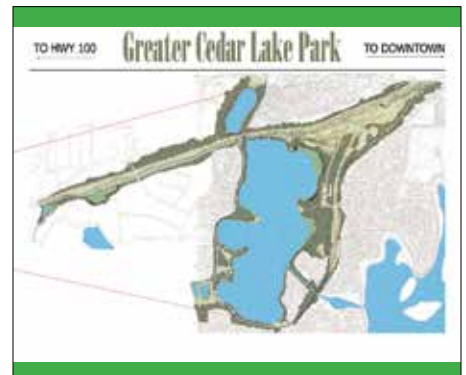
the Greater Cedar Lake Park area. To preserve green space, CLPA proposes this action plan:

### 1. Keep the Kenilworth Corridor public land.

CLPA envisions a time—once the freight rail line is removed—when green space stretches from the base of the Kenwood Bluffs to Cedar Lake. Likewise, park land would run seamlessly from Thomas Ave to Cedar Lake—an area comprising the lake's old East Bay. The city, the park board, and Hennepin County must work together to keep this land out of the hands of private developers and the railroad. There is nothing wrong with development: A park is simply better use of the land.

### 2. Relocate the freight rail line.

The fate of the freight rail line should never have been tied to the Southwest LRT. They are two separate issues. Once the LRT is no longer involved, work can continue to ultimately dispose of the freight rail issue. Hennepin



**The Kenilworth Greenway is located to the right of Cedar Lake.**

County promised to relocate the freight. The county needs to honor its commitment to the people of Minneapolis by continuing to pursue this goal. With the freight line relocated, the work of developing Greater Cedar Lake Park—from the bluffs to the lake—can continue.

### 3. Protect Cedar Lake Park

CLPA is concerned about preserving the integrity of Cedar Lake Park's Prairie and Regional Trail. The breathtaking view from the park into downtown Minneapolis has become an iconic image of the city. Along the edge of the prairie, the Cedar Lake Regional Trail moves thousands of bicyclists and pedestrians every day. CLPA advocates minimizing the human footprint and protecting the natural environment in this area just a stone's throw from the heart of the city. Before, during, and



Looking north in the Kenilworth Greenway.

**Greater CLP...continued on page 3**





# On the Horizon

**W**elcome to the 25th anniversary edition, the first in 2 years, of our Cedar Lake Park Update. It is good to be back. Our long-time editor, Jim McPherson, has retired, and we are deeply grateful for his wonderful editing efforts over many years. We have a new editor, Brittany Kiser, full of enthusiasm and digital skills. We trust you will find this newsletter informative and interesting.

We continue to further our four part mission, which you can find on the back page. The Projects in the Park page describes some of our efforts in nurturing the nature park and the connecting trails and greenways. The Kenilworth Greenway, the prospective route of the Southwest LRT, runs along the eastern edge of the park. Protecting the park experience, watching out for the trails, speaking out for the best design, and envisioning the future "surplus" land as part of the bluff to bluff vision of Greater Cedar Lake Park has seen members serving on advisory committees and lobbying every level of government. So many people are to be thanked for all the effort put into to this project, and on it goes.

You will read about people in community with each other and nature, continuing to steward the park and trails, gently holding the vision conceived 25 years ago. Also, we continue to provide leadership and citizen involvement in the development and management of the park and trails. The recent prairie burn, the trail repairs, the nature curriculum development, the removal of transient camps, and the attention to lake water quality are some examples. Volunteers are everywhere in the park, sometimes at group events, often doing their own thing for the greater good.

Recently, we received a message from a group in Texas, asking how we achieved what we did. They are looking at a necessary piece of railroad land to complete a trail around a 1600 acre lake. I directed them to our website, where the book of our story can be found, along with a newsletter archive going back to the early days. A great example of supporting similar efforts in the metro area and beyond.

Finally, I have learned about the personal park, determined by each user in their own mind and heart, that often is quite different from one person to the next. What is common, though, is the love that all who come to Cedar Lake Park feel for the land or the waters. All are welcome to work and play with us as we continue to steward your park and trails.

–Keith Prussing



# Resource Development

**Cedar Lake Park Association is looking for "time, talent & treasure".  
Please consider participating in one of the following activities,  
or coming up with one of your own!**

## Governance

We would like you to participate in the governance of the Cedar Lake Park Association by joining our Board of Directors. We are a non-profit association with a four part mission. For 25 years, we have been a volunteer organization that gets things done, and has fun in the doing. Please consider helping run the association by bringing your interests and vitality to the membership! In addition to the Board, we have quarterly steering meetings, open to all, which take place at the Kenwood Rec Center.

**Public Relations including Facebook, Newsletter (Cedar Lake Park Update), [www.cedarlakepark.org](http://www.cedarlakepark.org), Neighborhood & Public Official communications, etc.**

If you have an interest in digital media development and social networking and would like to try out your skill(s) for the benefit of a grateful organization – please let us know! A blog, Linked-In, Tweets, Facebook, emailing updates to members, contacts with the traditional local press (newspaper, radio, television) are ongoing opportunities open to someone who would like to practice or develop their "media" skills. In addition, a phone call or two to members of the Cedar Lake Park "neighborhood" and their elected officials and civil servants – are all possible for the greater good!

## Volunteer Projects in the Park

Every year there are a variety of projects in Cedar Lake Park and the connecting greenways which are organized and attended by active members of the Association and their friends and neighbors. We have permits from both the Park Board and Hennepin County to steward and play. If you would like to participate, please let us know. Many of us have places in the park or trails that we look after. If you have a special area, let us know. We can help. We all can help the park and trails.

## Large Projects in the Park

Our treasury has funds to support consideration of significant projects in the park. There is a visionary concept master plan that was developed in 1996 that has guided our work. Much has been achieved, such as one of the largest urban prairie restorations in the country, or the completion of the Cedar Lake Trail to the Mississippi River. From our earliest days, we have been able to leverage private money to obtain public funds from various federal, state, and local sources for projects in support of our vision. We are open to ideas.

## Fundraising

What would "Development" be without fundraising for Treasure. We are non-profit and tax-deductible. Every contribution matters. [Donate Now](#)

## Networking

Cedar Lake Park Association would love to make more friends in the community. If you would like to host a coffee party, for example, or a Saturday wine tasting soiree – please let us know and we will help you get the word out to your neighbors.

**We have many opportunities for Resource Development. Our members are our greatest resource! Please consider your resources of Time, Talent, and Treasure and share them with the Cedar Lake Park Association! Call Kevin Casserly at 612-805-2700.**



Photo by Meredith Montgomery

**Happy and tired Calhoun Beach Running Club volunteers after a Sunday morning clean up in the memorial Cedar Grove.**

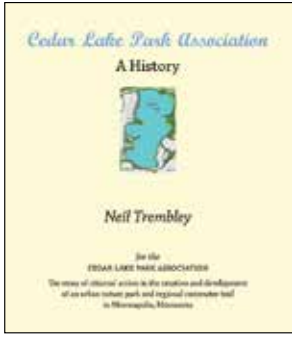
## Social Media: We Need Your Help

**S**ocial media is the platform for connecting people into the community that is the Cedar Lake Park Association as well as all those who love Cedar Lake Park and the connecting trails. Young people all over the world are turning towards websites such as Facebook and Twitter to learn what's going on locally and globally, and to discover what they can do to help and inspire change in others.

We as a generation want to help. We are restless, eager, and full of energy. We want to connect and get involved any way we can. The CLPA Board has turned towards Facebook and Twitter to reach a wider audience, promote what we do, share the park itself, and inform what the viewer can do to ensure the future of the park. We encourage you to post your photos of the park that you love and tell us your park stories, past, present and future. **Like us on [www.facebook.com/pages/Cedar-Lake-Park/164773796907970](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Cedar-Lake-Park/164773796907970) and follow us on Twitter @cedarlakepark.**

Help us inform and grow the Cedar Lake Park Community!  
–Steni Prussing





**Cedar Lake Park Association:  
A History**  
by Neil Trembley

**is now available for download!**

The Story of Citizens' Action in the Creation and Development of an Urban Nature Park and Regional Commuter Trail in Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Please visit <http://www.cedarlakepark.org/publications.html> for your **free** copy today!

## Our Story

**I**n 1989, a group of citizens came together to Save Cedar Lake Park and create the nation's first bicycle commuter trail. Now, you can read how it was done. *Cedar Lake Park Association: A History* tells the story behind the transformation of an abandoned rail yard into a nature conservancy and nationally recognized non-motorized transit system.

"As part of CLPA's mission to foster citizen leadership and private involvement in developing and managing parks and trails, we decided to make the book broadly available," said board president Keith Prussing. "People all over the U.S. are trying to get green space projects off the ground, and our story is about the successful development of a private/public partnership that continues to steward Cedar Lake Park and the connecting greenways."

*Cedar Lake Park Association: A History* serves as a timely primer. "Citizen groups like the Cedar Lake Park Association hold government's feet to the fire to get projects

like this done," said former Minneapolis mayor RT Rybak. Beyond describing the arc of this pioneering effort—from concept and fundraising to land acquisition, construction, and maintenance—the book highlights the principles and values that have guided the group in its goal to Nurture Nature.

*To underscore its importance in documenting local history, in 2012 the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grant awarded CLPA \$7,000 to publish a limited edition of the book.*

Numerous photos, original artwork, and maps accompany the narrative and make this book a pleasure to read.

For a free download, visit <http://www.cedarlakepark.org/publications.html>. Here also you can view the Concept Master Plan for the park and trail, as well as our newsletter archive containing over 20 years of the Cedar Lake Park Update.

–Neil Trembley

## Greater Cedar Lake Park: A Vision for Green Space

*continued from page 1*

after construction, Minneapolis city leaders must keep their eye on preserving this environment—especially the area where the park and trail connects to the Kenilworth Greenway.

### 4. Return the corridor/greenway to Parkland.

Funds should be set aside to mitigate the destruction of green space caused by constructing the Southwest LRT. By using landscape architects to plan an integrated design of contouring and planting, we can thoughtfully enhance the Kenilworth Greenway.

The freight and LRT lines may need to co-exist in the Kenilworth Greenway for a time. But conditions change. Railroads consolidate. They vacate redundant lines. Citizens, fearful of contamination and explosions, may demand freight service be re-routed to avoid the city. Nothing is certain, but CLPA remains

committed to relocating the freight rail line. For that to happen, the Kenilworth Greenway must remain in public hands. Once construction is complete, all publicly held land in the corridor should become public green space.

CLPA is not opposed to public transportation or private freight rail service. Both are important. Living in a great metropolis involves balancing competing interests. Despite all its discord, the debate over the LRT and the location of the freight rail line is instructive, because it lays bare basic values: ones that must be harmonized for an urban environment to prosper. The desire for public transport and private freight service must be weighed against the need for our city to breathe. The Kenilworth Corridor is a greenway that enhances the spirit of Minneapolis. It's about green space.

–Neil Trembley

Visit the following webpage for the latest LRT agreement: <http://metro council.org/News-Events/Transportation/News-Articles/Joint-Announcement-by-the-City-of-Minneapolis-and.aspx>



# Projects in the Park

**T**he work at Brownie Lake is largely done. A new pedestrian bridge has been installed, allowing for a safe walk around the lake without going onto the railroad property (see image 1). On the west side, approved mountain biking trails are developing in cooperation with Target. New wastewater lift pumps, along with a new access corridor to the station, are in place. Buckthorn removal has been done throughout, and native vegetation planted. The reconstructed paved trail linking Cedar Lake and Wirth Park is a big improvement. Safety enhancements have been added to the roadway.

**The water quality in Cedar Lake received a 2013 rating of C+,** down from B- in 2012, and way down from the A- that was achieved some years ago after the construction of the settling ponds on the west side, along with the alum treatments. We learned from both the Park Board and the Watershed District that much of the drainage comes from the area of the West End development in St Louis Park. A comprehensive plan to mitigate and cleanse this water has been developed, and is expected to help. Visit <http://www.minnehahacreek.org/project/west-end-redevelopment>.

Also contributing to the problem is the fact that in the early part of a rain storm, stormwater from Uptown and Lyn Lake quickly reaches Lake of the Isles, raises its level and causes it to drain into Cedar (see image 2).

**The 14th annual prairie planting took place in late May,** a few weeks after the prairie burn enriched the soil (see image 3). Volunteers planted a variety of native species on a beautiful sunny day, and abundant rains came just two days later, ensuring a good survival rate. The location has been marked by GPS. Also, we have been periodically surveying and compiling a plant inventory throughout the prairie, located to the north of Cedar Lake. Contact us for more information.

**Work in the Burnham Woodland Restoration is ongoing,** including the annual Yale Day of Service in May when alumni volunteers and their families come to the area to help out. Located just north of the west end of the Burnham Bridge, the transformation of this area from buckthorn infested to oak woodland has been driven by a volunteer's vision, passion, and many, many hours of work. It is a beautiful thing.



**1** On Brownie Lake looking through the tunnel to Cedar Lake, the new pedestrian bridge is in the foreground with the recent Cedar Lake Pkwy bridge above.



**4** The beginnings of the outdoor education Nature Path in cooperation with Kenwood School and Hennepin County, located near W21st / Thomas ave S.



**2** With Cedar Lake in the background, these settling ponds on the southwest side filter much of the water from the west before it flows into the lake.



**4** Kenwood School kids are happy on the rocks of Linda's Spiral during a recent outing in the park.

Photo by Angie Entreich



**3** After 8 years of waiting and gentle encouragement, this spring saw the controlled burn of the Cedar Lake Park prairie restoration. Fire is a necessary component of prairie management in order to remove non-native and woody vegetation; native prairie plants with their deep roots are unaffected, and nourished by the return of nutrients to the soil. Kudos to Park Board staff!



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**Another volunteer is passionate about cleaning up the various “camps”** that are left in the park by folks partying or living throughout the greater park. She has moved many, many pounds of trash to pick up areas, along with photographing each area and cataloging them on an aerial map. All of this information is being brought to the attention of MPRB and the city, with the goal of creating a safer park.

**The first City Trail Loppet took place on May 18,** and included a looping route along the lakeshore trail and through the woods. We were involved in the planning of this running event, and over 200 runners were able to follow the blue ribbons on a 1 mile course as part of a longer 10 mile run. This low impact event

seemed to work well. “A park unused is a park abused” was one comment we heard.

**Blowdown removal from last year’s summer solstice storm is largely complete.** Evidence of the destruction and cleanup can be found throughout the north and eastern woods. Many trail areas had been closed until we alerted Park Board Foresters to the problem, and they came and did a fine job.

**The summer ruckus at Hidden Beach has caused the creation of a task force** to look for solutions to the problems afflicting the neighborhood. We are participating, well aware of 130 years of working class water recreation on the east side of Cedar Lake.

**Another volunteer project continues along the shore just east of the Cedar Lake Trail bridge over the Cedar-Brownie channel.**

Many years ago, we planted a variety of native trees and shrubs on the flat land between the trail and the lake. Then, a neighbor and his daughter spent the summer before she went off to college removing buckthorn and other invasives. He continues to steward the area on an ongoing basis.

**We have had a permit from the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority for several years to do native landscape restoration** in the area bounded by the Kenilworth Trail, W21st St, Thomas Ave S, and W 25th St. Prairie Restoration, Inc. seeded the southern, open area in native prairie. However, as it became clear that the preferred route for the Southwest LRT was to be the Kenilworth, and that the potential W.21st St station would be located in this same area, we suspended the project, thinking to not waste our resources. In 2013, we decided that we would reactivate the project because we realized that much of the area was unlikely to be affected by LRT, and that we could develop a Nature Path area that could be used by the nearby Kenwood School for environmental education. We met with Hennepin County and Tree Trust. A plan was executed last spring to remove buckthorn and other exotic vegetation from much of the project area, and native trees were marked and inventoried. Spring 2014 has seen the start of the Nature Path, along with the beginnings of outdoor curriculum development. We are excited about this project (see image 4)!

-Keith Prussing

## Features of Cedar Lake Park



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

[Donate Now](#)



**As part of the construction of a new Cedar Lake Parkway bridge, historical text and photo panels were included to provide historical context.** These were actually molded into the bridge abutments overlooking the Cedar Lake Trail. Due to budget constraints, the panels were left blank until our intrepid historian decided to finish the job by attaching poster-sized laminated photos and illustrations. These are easy to produce and are weathering surprisingly well.

# Park and Trail Photo Gallery: Experiences, Places, and Projects

Photo by Neil Trembley



**Butterfly weed with butterfly**



**Watch out, turtle crossing on trail!**

Photo by Neil Trembley

Photo by Neil Trembley



**For the 14th year in a row, volunteers from Data Recognition Corporation and members of CLPA planted native-species wildflowers in the Cedar Lake Park Prairie. This year we planted on May 30, 2014.**



**Bicyclists enjoying the lush green canopy over the trails.**

Photo by Meredith Montgomery

## In Memorium

We are sorry to have heard about the passing of Mary Ellen Dayton.

Mrs. Dayton, along with her husband Wallace, were ardent conservationists and instrumental in the saving and development of Cedar Lake Park.

We are grateful.



**A stylized view of the Memorial Cedar Grove, located in the Heart of the park off the northeast corner of the lake. We will have a video tour on our website later this year, as well as names of honorees and donors.**



**Big Bluestem**

Photo by Neil Trembley

# Volunteering in the Park



Volunteers work in the park on a beautiful morning.

For the sixth year in a row alumni of Yale University came to southern Cedar Lake Park to work on CLPA's Burnham Woodlands Restoration project. On a beautiful Saturday morning in May, they removed invasive buckthorn, pulled garlic mustard, learned about local ecology, nourished community and cleared a storm-closed central trail. The effort was part of the annual Yale Day of Service, and a good time was had by all.

## Volunteers Always Welcome!

### Discover what makes CLPA great...

[info@cedarlakepark.org](mailto:info@cedarlakepark.org)

call 612-377-9522

[www.facebook.com/pages/Cedar-Lake-Park/164773796907970](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cedar-Lake-Park/164773796907970)

twitter: @cedarlakepark

[www.cedarlakepark.org](http://www.cedarlakepark.org)



### Then participate!

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.

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

## Cedar Lake Parkway Bridge Planters

When the Cedar Lake Parkway Bridge was rebuilt about a dozen years ago, it was designed with four large planters alongside the stairway on the southwest corner of the bridge, leading to the Cedar Lake Regional Trail. Somehow there never seemed to be a clear plan for who would be responsible for planting and maintaining these amenities. Weeds began to sprout the first year, and then varied volunteer shrubs and invasive trees, such as box elder and mulberry, took hold. It was apparent before long that the "survival of the fittest" was resulting in an eyesore and tree roots that would endanger the concrete foundation in time.

Eventually (maybe after ten years) I decided to email the City and the Park Board to determine which government body was responsible for the planters. I offered to plant day lilies from my yard if the weeds, shrubs and trees were removed. I got responses from Lisa Goodman's (City) office and Anita Tabb's (Park Board) office. Anita said that Park staff could coordinate with me. The planters were

cleared, so I dug up about 250 day lilies from my yard and planted them. During summer 2013, I weeded regularly and in the fall the Park Board provided wood chips for mulching. Going forward, there will be a little bit of ongoing maintenance, such as weeding to retain moisture and inhibit some weed growth.

During every step of the way, I had the pleasure of speaking to some passers-by who asked what I was doing. So consider getting out and meeting people, while doing some good in the world, getting a bit of exercise and breathing fresh air!

—Bruce Jones

## A New Steward is Needed!

Come Join us as a Member of the CLPA!

Bruce Jones is a long-time member of CLPA. In 1999, he served on the Minneapolis Public Work's Cedar Lake Parkway Bridge Citizen Advisory Committee. Bruce has recently retired, and he and his wife are moving to Texas.

**Congratulations, Bruce, and THANK YOU!**

## Thank you, Bruce!



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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.

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## CLPA Update, Summer 2014

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

## Calendar

**Ice out on Cedar Lake**  
April 3, 2013

**Vernal Equinox**  
March 20, 2014

**Ice out on Cedar Lake**  
April 13, 2014

**Yale Day of Service**  
May 10, 2014

**City Trail Loppet Run**  
May 18, 2014

**14th Annual Prairie Planting**  
May 30, 2014

**Summer Solstice**  
Summer began in the Northern Hemisphere, June 21, 2014 5:51 a.m. CDT

**Met Council/Minneapolis LRT agreement**  
July 7, 2014

**Running Club Cedar Grove Service Day**  
July 27, 2014



The perfect tools for a fun Friday spent digging, building, and splashing!

### 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.