

Park Notes

A newsletter of the Friends of St. Paul and Ramsey County Parks
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Park activists honored

Karin DuPaul, Karlyn Eckman and Peter Fischer were honored for their commitment to parks at the Friends' annual meeting in June.

Karin DuPaul was nominated by the Friends of Swede Hollow because of her passionate advocacy for the park. In 1978 she formed the Swede Hollow Task Force, a community group dedicated to park issues. In 1982 she founded the Upper Swede Hollow Neighborhood Association and served as its president for 17 years and is now its Vice President. She is now working with the Friends of Swede Hollow to achieve non-profit status for the organization. The Friends work in partnership with the St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation and other groups to improve the quality of the park through cleanups, removal of invasive species, planting native plants and holding events such as hay rides to enhance the enjoyment of the park.

Karin wrote grants to create the Hamm's Mansion Woodland Wildflower Garden in the upper east section of the Park on the site of the old mansion foundation. This section had become neglected, overgrown with buckthorn and impenetrable to visitors. During the last three years the wildflower garden was planted with native woodland species and now has a walking path.

Karin received a grant from the Friends of the Parks to establish a garden on the Mowry Garden Site, in Swede Hollow. The goal is to restore this part of the park to a more natural condition with plants representative of the vegetation that might have naturally occurred on the site.

Karin is a local hero on the East Side, a person whose dedication is changing the face of the community. The Friends of the Parks are proud to recognize her long term contribution as Volunteer of the Year.

Karlyn Eckman was recognized for her work to acquire, protect and promote the stewardship of the Kasota Pond green space and park areas in St. Anthony Park.

Karlyn is the primary organizer of the Annual Kasota Pond Clean-up, a task she began organizing 13 years ago. Each year the effort grows. This year over 60 volunteers collected over 70 bags of litter and waste.

Karlyn is the co-author and primary organizer of the 2003 Department of Natural Resources Conservation Partners Grant. Through the grant Karlyn and several other environmental professionals are planting native vegetation, doing shoreline restoration, removing invasive species and establishing turtle basking and nesting sites. She is organizing volunteers to monitor the pond water and habitat and take a bird census.

Karlyn is a non-stop volunteer working to raise funds, inventory natural resources, protect, conserve and enhance existing natural resources. She is also able to recruit others to the cause, so instead of being just one strong, Karlyn makes it dozens strong by developing tasks that others can help with for just a few hours, or for hundreds of hours.

Karlyn is a one person environmental dynamo whose home base of Saint Anthony Park is a better place because of her efforts. Karlyn joins Karin in being recognized as Volunteer of the Year.

Peter Fischer was honored for his work promoting parks and trails within Ramsey County. Peter has chaired the Maplewood Park Commission since 1996 and has shown outstanding leadership. He worked to pass the open space referendum in Maplewood and chaired the task force which developed the comprehensive park plan.

Leadership from people like Peter is needed in every park system. Maplewood is lucky to have Peter and the Friends are proud to recognize his work.

We all know the value of open space and parklands, ecologically, aesthetically, and for the educational and recreational opportunities they provide. Fortunately, none of the nature centers in Ramsey County are in danger of closing, but Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley is. The Fridley city manager is recommending to its city council that the nature center be eliminated from its 2004 budget, letting its staff of three fulltime and several part-time positions go and cutting all programs. Springbrook Nature Center is a gem with a diverse ecosystems. It is home to over 3,000 different wildlife and plant species! It is important to the region because of its high quality natural site and because thousands of school children and families learn stewardship and to value natural lands through Springbrook's environmental education program and events. In 2002 over 20,500 participated in programs and events, and there were 150,000 total visitors.

Help Save Springbrook Nature Center

You can help:

- Visit Springbrook's website at: www.springbrooknaturecenter.org to learn more about the issues, for addresses of city officials and dates of Save Springbrook events.

Working in Harmony with Nature

- Write a letter to the Fridley mayor explaining the importance of saving Springbrook.
- Attend rallies and other events in support of saving Springbrook.
- Give financial support to the effort to save the nature center.
- Tell friends and family members who live in the Fridley area to contact city council members and the mayor and tell them to save the nature center.
- Help spread the word! *By Scott Ramsay, Friends Board Member*

H.B. Fuller's Willow Lake Corporate Campus and Nature Preserve is a unique blending of office, laboratory and nature. It all began about 20 years ago when Fuller's first product and research development laboratories were built at Willow Lake with the philosophy that its corporate facilities can exist in harmony with the surrounding nature.

Since that time, the site has grown and has been enhanced through a variety of projects. The current site is 290 acres, which includes H.B. Fuller's Corporate Campus and Nature Preserve, plus the Willow Lake Nature Preserve Foundation property, a resource management partnership with Ramsey County. The site boasts many distinct ecosystems including wetlands, lake, prairie, old field, shrub and sedge meadow, oak forest and pine woods. Willow Lake is home to a great diversity of species - more than 135 species of wildlife and 365 types of plants have been recorded thus far. A full time director/naturalist manages the nature preserve, and provides strategic guidance for Fuller's campus development efforts.

Preservation and enhancement of the natural areas is key at Willow Lake. Throughout the site, H.B. Fuller has worked to attain its goal of making sure that the nature preserve remains a vital place of refuge for the many plants and animals that call it home. To that end, there have been many enhancements and resource management projects at Willow Lake including: the addition of 44 bluebird and 21 wood duck nest boxes, which are monitored by Fuller employee volunteers; the planting of native prairie, aquatic vegetation and woodland wildflowers, and major tree planting/ reforestation projects.

Site management also includes major projects to remove invasive species including purple loosestrife, birdsfoot trefoil, spotted knapweed and buckthorn. Innovative projects have been incorporated in Fuller's campus development as well. In the mid 1990s a team of Fuller employees and outside consultants were involved in the planning and construction process for a new state-of-the-art research and office facility which would accommodate the company's growth while minimizing impact on the nature preserve. This included a parking lot ecologically designed to filter runoff before flowing into the site's wetland system.

A cooperative study done with the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District has shown that the innovative parking lot project has resulted in

an amazing 74% reduction in the volume of runoff, and a 70% reduction in the amount of particulate matter! The project has been used as a role model and has been presented internationally to designers and resource managers as an excellent alternative to traditional-style parking lots. This parking lot, and the Corporate Campus landscape plan, utilizes native species to uniquely blend into the surrounding vegetation, eliminate the need for fertilizers and watering, and reduce maintenance time.

Fuller provides its employees with opportunities to enjoy the natural beauty of Willow Lake responsibly so future generations may share in the experience. Employees are also very involved in volunteering their time for natural resource management and enhancement projects such as tree planting, bluebird house monitoring and pulling invasive buckthorn.

Although the site is not open to the general public, preserve staff host a limited number of groups on a reservation basis each year. These groups benefit from learning about the site philosophy, innovative projects or nature preserve management. For example, governmental agency and city staff members have visited to learn about the uniquely designed parking lot. Presentations on the site's floating boardwalk have been provided for a number of city, nature center and design professionals. Willow Lake staff currently work with Mississippi Elementary School's 2nd graders. Each spring students participate in an on-site environmental education program, which is an integral part of their school curriculum.

At Willow Lake Nature Preserve, protection of the preserve is the priority. This will ensure that Willow Lake will be a high quality wildland resource for generations to come. By Dana Larsen-Ramsay, Director, Willow Lake Nature Preserve

**The Friends of Parks & Trails
in Saint Paul & Ramsey County**
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