



Park Notes

A newsletter of the Friends of St. Paul and Ramsey County Parks
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Park Volunteer of the Year and other volunteers honored at anniversary celebration

Deb Robinson was named Park Volunteer of the Year at the Friend's 25th anniversary celebration in recognition of her work in the Como area. The Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom was Deb's brain child and became a reality because of her perseverance. She organized an advisory committee, researched and wrote grant proposals and attended myriad meetings in the community and at the legislature. Robinson participated in the Capitol Regional Watershed District's Como Lake Strategic Planning Process serving on the Como Lake Shoreland Vegetation Management Task Force. Robinson has also helped with the hands-on work of restoring Como Lake's shoreline.

Bruce Adelsman started the website, SkinnySki.com, to publicize information for Nordic skiers. He rates ski conditions at area trails and his listings include directions to Ramsey County trails as well as maps of the trial routs.

Shari Burt began volunteering at Como Park in 1992, primarily at the Zoo as an educator. She is a member of the Primate Enrichment Team which researches and proposes ideas to enrich the physical and intellectual lives of the highly intelligent primates that call Como Zoo their home. The goal of the enrichment team is to encourage the primates to engage in natural behaviors and avoid boredom and tedium.

Phill Goldman also volunteers at Como Zoo where he has applied his talents since 1994. Emphasizing special events, the ZooBoo is his main focus as he is the lead on planning, development and operation of Como's largest annual fund raising event.

Chris Torvi maintains 3 kilometers of Nordic ski trails on Ramsey County open space lands adjacent to Irondale High School and along Rice Creek. The Rice Creek Trail is open to the public and is well used by neighborhood families and skiers who come to the trail from throughout the metro area.. Irondale and Mounds View High School Nordic teams use the trail for practice and races.

Greg Mack honored for twenty-five years of service

Greg Mack was recognized at the Friends 25 Anniversary for his 25+ years of service to park users. He has served as Director of Ramsey County Parks for twenty-two years and he previous worked for Hennepin County Parks.

Mack is a leader on the national, state and local level. He serves on the National Association of County Parks and Recreation and on the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation. He was president of the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association and received the Distinguished Service Award from the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association in 1999.

“There simply couldn’t be a classier guy to work with,” said the Friend’s Peggy Lynch. “It doesn’t matter if it is a tiny local issue that impacts only a few people or a funding issue that impacts the entire park system, Greg approaches it with dedication and professionalism. He knows how to pick his battles and he certainly has a winning record.”

Built on the shoulders of giants

The parks and trails of Saint Paul and Ramsey County are the glorious places they are because of the work of the visionaries of the past. Three of these visionaries were recognized posthumously at the Friends’ 25th anniversary celebration.

Congressman Bruce Vento served the residents of Ramsey County in Congress from 1976 to 2000. He was the leading expert in the congress on parks and public lands.

Samuel H. Morgan was an attorney by vocation and an avid naturalist by avocation. For the last 40 years of his life he dedicated himself to acquiring state and local land to be developed into parks and trails. He was a founding director of the Friends.

Thomas Kelley was a public official in Ramsey County and for the City of Saint Paul from 1966 to 1984. He was a tireless advocate for parks and open space and for protection of the Mississippi River. He was a key advisor during the founding of the Friends.

Leon Lillie receives Public Service Award

Rep. Leon Lillie received the Public Service award at the Friends 25th anniversary celebration for his work on the Cultural and Outdoor Resources Finance Division and Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division. His advocacy for the regional park system benefits the metro area.

Zoning for parks

Soon there will be a special zoning category for parks in Saint Paul. All areas of the city are identified according to their use - residential, commercial, industrial. These zoning categories make it clear where single

Midtown Greenway expansion into Saint Paul

for now, more questions than answers

For more information about the vision for the Midtown Greenway, contact Laura Baum at 651-224-8555 x 21.

Mushroom identification and ecology

family homes, shops, commercial endeavors and heavy industrial activity should be located.

Saint Paul has never had zoning protection for parks. Since there is no ‘park zone’, parks can be zoned residential or even industrial. The new Parks and Recreation Plan adopted by the city Council earlier this year requires that the zoning code be amended to include a new park zoning district. The City will begin working on these zoning code changes in early 2011. The zoning change will make park ownership more transparent and reinforce the no-net-loss policy for parkland in Saint Paul.

Pete Regnier, a representative of the Friends, served on the Parks and Recreation Task Force supporting this change. “This effort took over 20 years but it is a big victory for the Friends and the resident of the City. It will provide additional protection and help preserve parkland in our city,” said Friends’ Executive Director Peggy Lynch.

Residents of Minneapolis are busy loving their 5.5 mile Midtown Greenway and people on both sides of the river think it would be a capitol idea to link the trail across the Mississippi to Saint Paul. To that end the Saint Paul Greenway Committee held a public meeting in August to involve Saintpaulites in advocating for the trail. For now the questions facing the project are daunting:

How will the trail cross the Mississippi River? A 100 year-old rail road bridge looks like an alternative, but it is not redundant, if one part of the bridge fails, it falls down.

Could the Marshall/Lake bridge or the Ford Bridge be adapted?

Is Ayd Mill road a possibility for the location of the Saint Paul portion of the trail? After years of negotiations with CP Rail over securing right-of-way on either side of Ayd Mill, federal money to develop this trail was turned back.

Is there something in CP’s future that could change their position on their right-of-way being used as a trail?

Join mushroom specialist Anna Gerenday for a six-session class as she leads you into the mysterious world of common fleshy fungi. You will learn to identify mushrooms, explore mushroom biology and learn the important role mushrooms play in the environment. There will be two Saturday field expeditions and four classroom sessions beginning Thursday evening September 16. For more information about this adult class, visit the City of Maplewood website at www.ci.maplewood.mn.us/nc

How to remove buckthorn

Buckthorn remains a major threat to the diversity of the urban forest and removal of this invasive small tree is critical. Learn how to identify and remove this pest. Adults and teens are invited to a free class at Maplewood Nature Center 2659 7th St. E. Maplewood, 55119. Registration is required by September 14 at 651-249-2170. This is a perfect class for a leader who plans to work with community members on a buckthorn removal project.

Buckthorn removal at Vista Hills Park

Join other community members on October 2 for a buckthorn removal project in Maplewood. Adults and youth will work from 9:30 - noon on removal and from 12/30- 2pm adults will apply herbicide. Bring boots and eye protection. Registration is required by September 29. Call 612-249-2170.

MnDot to lead Mississippi River Trail project

The Mississippi River Trail is a world-class bicycling route that travels from the headwaters of the Mississippi River at Lake Itasca to the Delta at the Gulf of Mexico in Louisiana. It is a 3,000-mile system of bicycle-friendly roads and multi-use pathways connecting Minnesota with nine other states. The trail is different from exclusively off-road state trails such as the Gateway in that much of the trail is located on road shoulders or low-use roads.

For more information visit <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html>

MnDot will work for the rest of the year through a series of meetings and follow-up bicycle rides to:

- Review the existing Mississippi River Trail route within Minnesota
- Realize a comprehensive set of local resolutions in support of the trail
- Update the entire route through Minnesota
- Post new user-friendly maps on the MnDoOT website
- Develop a signing plan to assure riders that they are still on the trail
- Develop a marketing plan for the future.

Mississippi River Trail Conceptual Alignment

