



Park Notes

A newsletter of the Friends of St. Paul and Ramsey County Parks
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Pahoua Hoffman and Richard Arey join Friends board

Pahoua Hoffman, a former Tree Trust Youth Conservation Corps member recently joined the Friends' board of directors. Pahoua is an avid biker and brings her concerns about trails and bike safety to the board. She is interested in protecting existing parks and trails and helping to establish new open spaces that will contribute to community engagement. She has a background and interest in marketing and will assist the Friends with the website and other communications.

Pahoua works for Twin Cities Public Television overseeing the station's government relations and government funding efforts. She received her undergraduate degree from the UofM and her MBA from St. Thomas.

Richard Arey is most well known for his tireless work on behalf of biking, but he also served on the first modern-era Saint Paul Parks Commission in 1990-91. He started and served on the Saint Paul Bicycle Advisory Board from 1992 until it morphed into the Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition in 2010. He authored *Twin Cities Bicycling* and *Twin Cities Winter Recreation*. In 1992 he launched the Bike, Bus or carPool (BEBOP!) Challenge which later became the Commuter Challenge that has been adopted by many cities throughout Canada and the US.

Richard's goal with the Friends is to promote better policies, programs and facilities for recreation, especially bicycling. Richard is the chair of the Friends' Marketing committee.

Great River Park

Planning is underway for the Great River Park in Saint Paul including events to involve the community in developing a Master Plan. This is especially exciting since the Mississippi River carves 26 miles of shoreline (both sides of the river) through Saint Paul.

Saint Paul secured state bonding in 2009 to begin planning and implementation to acquire, protect and connect recreational and open spaces along the river front. One of the goals is to establish more connections to

Lilydale Park changes underway

existing neighborhoods in the city. The planning process will identify ways to make existing streets more walkable; identify strategies to overcome barriers such as railroad tracks, bluffs, levees and highways. New access points will be identified to allow the river to become more a part of the daily lives of Saint Paul residents.

The public is encouraged to participate in the planning process. The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 14 from 5:000 - 7:00 pm at the Wellstone Center. Additional meetings will be scheduled during 2011. Contact Don Ganje at 651-266-6425 or Peggy Lynch at 651-698-4543 for information about future meetings.

Those passing through Lilydale Regional Park in recent days may have seen some beginning change, with full details of a new Master Plan still being worked out by a Task Force and city planners. Work crews in mid-October began removing concrete, rebar and other debris from one end of the park that will be crushed and recycled for use as new roadbed fill and capping material in another area of Lilydale. This action, which unfortunately meant the loss of some rivers edge cottonwoods, will allow construction of restrooms and a (hopefully small) picnic area without violating St. Paul's floodplain restrictions. Other plans to be fully determined include realignment and traffic calming measures for Lilydale Road, park gateway and erosion control measures along the bluff, new bike and foot paths, a dog park and limited new parking areas.

Friends of Lilydale Park and others have been arguing for enhancements and interpretive approaches that will also protect habitat and the area's unique natural features. An improvement this fall has been the installation of four benches along the Brickyard Trail running from the bluff area at Cherokee Park down to Pickerel Lake in Lilydale. The benches are the first of ten to be placed in the area under a collaboration of Friends of Lilydale, City Council Member Dave Thune's office and Ramsey County's Active Living Ramsey County program. The benches will aid all users of trails, including the city's new *Hike It* program which debuted in Lilydale this fall.

Friends of Lilydale Park and the Master Plan envision a trail extension via boardwalk across Pickerel lake, which would also allow a fishing pier and establish a needed safe pedestrian connection to the river side of the park. Information on these and other parts of the Lilydale Park Master Planning process can be found at the city's website: <http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?nid=2693> or by calling Friends of Lilydale Park at 651-227-2264. Friends of Lilydale Park can also now be found on Facebook.

Article submitted by Jon Kerr and Grit Youngquist.

Everything you wanted to know about emerald ash borer

How many ash trees are in Saint Paul?

I have noticed the City cutting down trees that seem perfectly healthy. Why is the City doing that?

Why are trees on boulevards spaced so far apart?

Why not start inter planting trees right now so replacement trees have a few years to get going before the Ash have to be cut down?

Emerald ash borer (EAB) is beginning what will likely be a devastating invasion into Minnesota's ash forest. The experience in other communities who have faced this invasion is instructive and Minnesota is trying to learn from and use the information from those experiences. The Friends decided to ask the experts about their procedures and what to expect. Here is what we learned from Saint Paul's Forestry section.

We only have an estimate for this, but we think between 30,000 and 35,000 are on boulevards and an additional 125,000 in public open space. There are likely even more than this total number on private property but we really do not know. All true ash trees (Fraxinus species) are susceptible to EAB. Mountain Ash is not a true ash tree and is not vulnerable. Ash trees can be long lived, but any tree planted in the harsh environment of the city boulevard faces many more detrimental factors than those in a yard or open landscape. Many of the trees planted after the Dutch Elm disease thinned our forest are now reaching the end of their natural life and are showing significant signs of decline. Trees in decline are more vulnerable to EAB and should be removed from the landscape.

The city is currently removing declining ash trees on boulevards but not all ash trees. In order to remove all ash trees on public lands at the rate we are currently working it would take about 20 years. If the disease proceeds the way it has in other communities, we expect few ash trees to remain in our urban forest in 20 years.

Boulevard trees are planted 40' apart to allow them to mature to their natural width. Most shade trees have a mature width of 30-40'. Most residential lots in Saint Paul are 40' wide so planting one tree per house works with this spacing and it accommodates the underground utilities. Smaller trees are more closely spaced, 20-30' apart.

Inter planting seems completely logical, it just doesn't work very well in practice. To avoid underground utilities, drive ways, and side walks, if we began planting replacement trees before the ash trees are removed, we will likely end up with many fewer boulevard trees because at the end of the day we still need the trees to be 40' apart. Given a choice between many fewer trees and getting a couple of years jump on replacement trees, we are opting for the former. We really discourage citizens from planting a tree on the boulevard without going through the required permit process which is free and simple. Often well meaning citizens plant trees that are inappropriate to the site. Then, when the tree is established the city is faced with dealing with a problem tree or removing it. Neither is a popular decision. Inappropriate trees include trees that drop heavy fruit on all those below such as walnut trees, and box elder trees which are brittle, have breaking branches and encourage bug infestations. Getting a permit also assures that the tree will not interfere with utilities.

*How should I dispose of
Ash wood?*

Proper disposal of ash wood is the first line of defense against the spread of EAB. Ramsey and Hennepin Counties are under state and federal quarantine for the movement of ANY ash material and ALL non-coniferous firewood. It is illegal to move this material out of these two counties. Ramsey County residents can bring ash wood/debris to the Ramsey County waste sites but they would prefer that Saint Paul residents drop off at one of the two locations in Saint Paul. To find other disposal sites visit the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's web site at www.mda.state.mn.us/en/plants/pestmanagement/eab/ashtreewaste.aspx

I heard that wasps might be released to help control the spread of EAB. Are wasps being released in the metro area? Do they bite?

Will they save our ash trees? Parasitic wasps have been released only in Houston County in Southeastern Minnesota. This is experimental and the sites are being monitored by the US Department of Agriculture. These wasps do not bite and pose no risk to humans. We do not know yet how much of a role the wasps will play in our fight against EAB but we suspect in the best case scenario, the wasps might provide a level of protection for natural stands of ash. The wasps attack the larval stage of the beetle. For the wasps to survive and procreate they need to have an established EAB population to feast on. It is possible the wasps could survive on native borers such as bronze birch borer or other beetles. Much must still be learned before we really know what is possible in the way of environmental control. Right now, the wasps do not appear to be the silver bullet that will save our urban forest. For more information about EAB please visit www.stpaul.gov/eab

Safe Routes to School

The Valentine hills Elementary School neighborhood in Arden Hills now offers a safer route to school thanks to the pathway construction completed this fall. The new pathways allow students to walk to school more safely and it encourages exercise. For more information on the new trails visit www.moundviewschools.org/valentinehills

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