

Twin Lake Shoreline Restoration

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

July 2023

Q: Have Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Commissioners voted or commented on this plan? When?

A: In 2015 a [long-term plan for Theodore Wirth Regional Park](#) was approved by MPRB Commissioners. This work aligns with that plan. It's rehabilitation of the damaged shoreline and slope.

Q: Why not replace the stairs and retaining wall providing stabilization?

A: Stair access is planned to be addressed in later phases of work. This phase focuses on the beach and base of the eroded slope.

Q: What will the beach capacity be after the restoration?

A: No capacity studies have been completed for this area. We know the shoreline and sloped area are exhibiting signs of significant soil erosion and that rehabilitating it will reduce the open area at the lake edge, which is necessary to protect and save the area for future generations.

Q: What harm will take place by delaying implementation for one year? Any risk for delaying the project?

A: The shoreline and portions of the slope are in poor condition with no to little vegetative cover. Waiting to do this project will allow more soil erosion. The proposed schedule is to permit and bid the work over the summer and complete the stabilization work in the fall, outside of the peak use.

Q: Will there be any areas to put out a beach towel or blanket to enjoy the beach?

A: Yes, there will be an open, sandy area between the shoreline buffer and the upland stabilization

Q: When will this project be let?

A: Project work is scheduled to post for Target Market Program bids in August for fall construction.

Q: How do we submit bids?

A: Work will be required to bid through the Target Market Program. Use this link to learn how to sign up to be a Target Market Program bidder - <https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/business-services/doing-business-with-the-city/target-market-program/>

Q: I can't help but think the stones will result in injuries to toes/heads, etc. Can the stones at the shore be removed from the plan to preserve sandy beach-friendly surface for bare feet?

A: The 30-foot wide lake access is a series of flat stones laid out like steps to provide a stable access point while protecting the shoreline from further erosion.

Q: What do you mean by "First Phase" of the project? Transparency please.

A: First phase means that if the shoreline and slope erosion control work is successful, similar techniques will be used to stabilize further up the slope where the failing stairs are located. Restoration begins at the base of the slope and shoreline and will work up the hill.

Q: How will this be staged while also allowing beach access? Can I swim naked while the plants grow behind an orange poly snow fence?

A: Park staff make every effort to complete our construction work, whenever possible, outside of peak park use seasons. That's why this project is scheduled for fall.

During construction, the contractor will control the site, which will likely be closed to park users during the workday. The area should be accessible after work and on weekends. Access will be limited if there are any safety concerns during construction., After construction is complete, the area will be open with planted areas protected by a fence so plants can have time to establish, which is likely to be around three years.

Q: 45 years that I am aware of there has never been plants on the shoreline. It is a lake/beach entering the water is necessary! Can we adjust this work?

A: The design intends to recreate the natural shoreline that exists around most of the lake shore while providing a stable access point into the water. It is important to stabilize the eroded shoreline and help protect the lake and its good water quality.

Q: Can we still use hammocks upslope during construction?

A: Hammocks will be allowed, but only outside of work areas.

Q: Can we still sunbathe during construction?

A: Construction will take place during normal weekday work hours. The site will be closed during that time, but if there are no safety concerns with access during evenings and weekends, this activity should still be possible on evenings and weekends.

Q: Why don't I see stones at any other beaches?

A: Every lake edge condition is different and requires different shoreline stabilization techniques. One example of similar work is along Minnehaha Creek near Minnehaha Falls. Flat limestone rocks were placed to create access to the creek while armoring the creek edge to minimize soil erosion. Some beaches are restored with sand, but they are located along shorelines that have a lower slope and are not susceptible to erosion in the same way as this stretch of the Twin Lake.

Q: Will there be any restoration or extension of the beach shoreline, or are the efforts strictly to preserve what is left of the beach?

A: Restoration work along the shoreline focuses on eroded areas and does not extend north or south.

Q: Will there be kayak or paddle board parking space?

A: Not in this phase, but it could be something added in later phases of construction.

Q: What public safety concerns have you heard about the status quo?

A: Community engagement has brought out a full range of safety comments, everything from, "I think this is a safe area most of the time" to "I don't go to the area because I don't feel comfortable."

Q: What will you do if people destroy shoreline vegetation? There will be resentful individuals.

A: We hope people understand the value in preserving fragile vegetation plant communities and reducing soil erosion. There will still be a place to gather with water access. If plants are vandalized, those areas will be replanted.

Q: Have you been asked to plant buffalo grass and thorny plants at encampment sites on park board land?

A: No

Q: What time in the fall would the work be started? Late September, late October?

A: Work is expected to begin by mid-September and wrap up by the end of the construction season.

Q: Please let me know how to be involved in helping on this project, planting, hauling, whatever needs to be done. I can assist in getting a team of volunteers to help.

A: Park volunteer coordinating staff may organize some volunteer activities and opportunities for this project. Please email Francisca Pass at fpass@minneapolisparcs.org or Cliff Swenson at cswenson@minneapolisparcs.org to learn more.

Q: Can we also reduce phosphorus in the lake? Does this help in that way?

A: There are other organizations, such as the Basset Creek Watershed Management Commission, that monitor the quality of the lake. While this project may not directly reduce phosphorus levels in the lake, reducing erosion along the shoreline reduces the amount of soil particles along the shore that free phosphorus particles are able to bond to and stay in the lake.

Q: Are there other areas in the park system that have been restored like this?

A: There's a long history of using various natural shoreline restoration techniques blended with access points throughout the park system. One area is within the Minnehaha Regional Park, in the – Lower Gorge area. The creek edge was eroding where park users were accessing the creek and large flat stones, like what we are proposing at Twin Lake, were used to provide access and protect the shore from erosion. Another is [at Lake Nokomis](#). A four-year project used native plants to stabilize large sections of the north and eastern

shoreline, with breaks in the plantings to allow for water access. This project's goal is to reduce shoreline erosion while still providing access to Twin Lake.

Q: How will the trees be impacted during this restoration?

A: We are using erosion control techniques that will help to maintain the existing trees. Currently, there are at least 12 trees experiencing stress caused by eroded root systems. No trees are planned to be removed during the restoration.

Q: Why can this beach have lifeguards as other beaches like East Cedar Beach?

A: East Cedar Beach (sometime called Hidden Beach) is located within the Chain of Lakes Regional Park and has been designated in the as an official beach in long-term park plans. The current long-term plan for Theodore Wirth Regional Park designated the area along the east shore of Twin Lake as a natural area, not a beach. There are no plans to create an authorized beach at Twin Lake.

Q: Why is this restoration necessary?

A: The long-term plan for Theodore Wirth Regional Park designates the area as a natural area with lake access, but no major program or park elements added. As stewards of the park, the MPRB has a responsibility to preserve and protect natural resources and areas. The shoreline and slope are in poor condition, so it's the MPRB's responsibility to restore and protect this natural area. Doing nothing will only allow the degraded shoreline and slope to continue to erode.

Q: Can MPRB place portables bathrooms in the area?

A: Portable restrooms require vehicle access to service them. The trail leading to the informal gathering area does not support the size of truck used to serve the portable toilets.