

# **HISTORY OF THE LAKES AND THEIR CULTURAL LANDSCAPES**

## **CHAPTER 2**

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## 2.1 OVERVIEW



Lake of the Isles shoreline. Source: TEN x TEN

This section describes the historical, environmental, and cultural understanding of Cedar Lake, Lake of the Isles, Dean Parkway, the Cedar Lake Regional Trail, and the Kenilworth Channel. It begins with Indigenous legacy, followed by physical change over time, design and planning context, historic significance, and preservation recommendations for the cultural landscape.

Refer to the Lake of the Isles and Grand Rounds: Canal System Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) in Appendix A for more detailed information on site history, changes over time, and its historic significance. The HPP evaluates historic integrity and provides strategies for the preservation of the historic landscape and its features. Of note, this plan and the HPP study area have different boundaries: the HPP study area boundaries encompass the Grand Rounds Historic District: Canal System, which includes the *\*\*Bde Maka Ska-Lake of the Isles Channel*, the entirety of Lake of the Isles Park, and the Kenilworth Channel and Lagoon. The HPP constitutes a portion of the historic investigation associated with the Cedar-Isles Plan and is therefore an adopted part of this plan.

*\*\*Bde Maka Ska is the original Dakota name for Lake Calhoun, renamed in the late 1880s following the forced displacement of the Dakota people. During the planning process for Bde Maka Ska and Lake Harriet, many acknowledged the dark history of John C. Calhoun and discussed changing the name of the lake. The plan ultimately made a recommendation to return the lake to its original Dakota name. Following the plan's adoption in 2017, the MPRB changed the name of the lake back to Bde Maka Ska, as well as the surrounding street names that fell under its jurisdiction.*

## 2.2 INDIGENOUS LEGACY

The region of the project area has been home to Indigenous communities for thousands of years. Despite relentless attempts to remove Indigenous Peoples from Minnesota, the descendants of the earliest inhabitants of this landscape are still present here today and their cultures rely on continued relationships with places of significance.

The land that is now Minnesota is significant to living indigenous people including members of the Upper Sioux Community, Lower Sioux Community, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Prairie Island Indian Community, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin, Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, and other descendants of indigenous peoples who were here before Euro-Americans arrived.<sup>1</sup>

The project area is part of a broader landscape that is very significant to these communities. Places of importance include burial/earthwork sites, village sites, and sacred places. Figure 2.3 shows some of these significant places along the Minnesota and Mississippi River Valley.

Ancestors of today's indigenous communities were well established in Minnesota prior to the arrival of European Americans. At the time of European contact in the late 1600s, many Eastern Dakota peoples lived along and east of the Mississippi River. Today known as the Dakota, the term "Eastern Dakota" originally referred to the four eastern living tribes of the Oceti Sakowin, or the seven council fires. Seven nations from the four cardinal directions make up Oceti Sakowin. The Eastern Dakota refers to the Sisitunwan/Sisseton, the Wahpetunwan/Wahpeton, the Wahpekute, and the Bdewakantunwan/Mdewakanton.

<sup>1</sup> The first four tribes listed frequently refer to themselves as the Minnesota Dakota or Eastern Dakota.



Figure 2.1: J. Nicollet. Map of the Upper Mississippi River, 1843.



Figure 2.2: European settlers noted a Dakota Mdewakanton village, 1839.

These peoples settled in relatively permanent villages within the prairie/forest border along and east of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. Among other practices, these peoples made tools of stone and bone, cooked with earthen pots, made buffalo hunting trips to the plains, buried their dead with grave goods in earthen mounds, and developed deep and complex relationships with the land.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John O. Anfinson, Thomas Madigan, Drew M. Forsberg, and Patrick Nunnally, "River of History: A Historic Resources Study of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area" (National Park Service, 2003), 51.

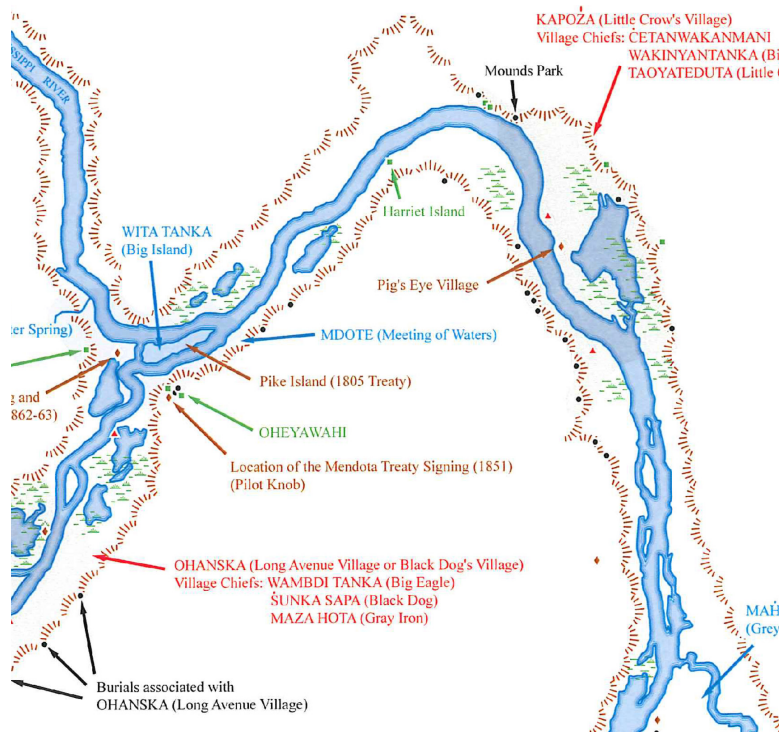


Figure 2.3: Dakota presence in the River Valley. Source: Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community

In pursuit of westward expansion, the United States government undertook a series of actions that stripped indigenous tribes of ancestral land. In Minnesota, this process was initiated in 1805 with a treaty that resulted in the United States government taking more than 100,000 acres of land at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers - known as Bdote to the Dakota. Only two of the seven Dakota leaders present at the signing agreed to sell the land. No amount of money was specified for the "sale" and Dakota people were never paid for the value of the land. The treaty was never proclaimed (the final step in the ratification process) yet the United States considered the land to be sold and began altering the landscape. Subsequently, treaties in 1830, 1837, 1851, and 1858 transferred land rights from the Dakota to the United States, although the terms of the treaties were biased and rarely fulfilled by the government.

Following the Treaty of 1837, Dakota people were removed to reserved land. The "ceded" land was opened to Euro-American settlement, leading to the development of cities including Minneapolis.

One of the Dakota names for Lake of the Isles, Wita Tomna, means four islands lake. Although the project area landscape has changed over time, indigenous connections remain for members of tribes. Bodies of water are particularly important spiritual sites for the Minnesota Dakota. As explained in *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota*, "In the beginning, the water—*Mni*—was pure, part of the land, and therefore part of the people. It was the first medicine given to our people because water keeps everything alive. Water that comes from within the earth is pure and as such is considered wakan or sacred."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Gwen Westerman and Bruce White, *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota* (St. Paul, Minnesota: The Minnesota Historical Society, 2012)

## 2.3 PHYSICAL CHANGE OVER TIME

Parks have shaped Minneapolis' history and established its reputation as the City of Lakes. Early in the city's history, citizens were concerned about the city council's limited investment in public parks. The state legislature authorized a public referendum to create a park board and voters approved the formation of the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners (MBPC) in 1883 (this Board was later renamed the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board).<sup>1</sup>

The new board was authorized to acquire land for city parks. To guide this development, the MBPC brought in noted landscape architect, Horace Cleveland, in 1883 to present his plans for a system of parks and parkways throughout Minneapolis. Cleveland's vision eventually grew into the Grand Rounds, a connected series of parks highlighting the city's lakes, rivers, and creeks.<sup>2</sup>

The Grand Rounds has undergone several periods of development and change. They include the parks' initial development (1880s), the expansion of the park system into the Grand Rounds (1890s), Theodore Wirth's leadership (1906-1935), WPA improvements (1930s), alterations by Eckbo, Dean, Austin, and Williams (1970s), and the system's designation as a National Scenic Byway and later ecological improvement projects (1990s-2000s).

Additional information on the development and historic significance of these resources can be found in the draft National Register nomination for the Grand Rounds (available through MPRB) and "Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel Context, History, and Physical Description," prepared for the SWLRT project.<sup>3</sup>

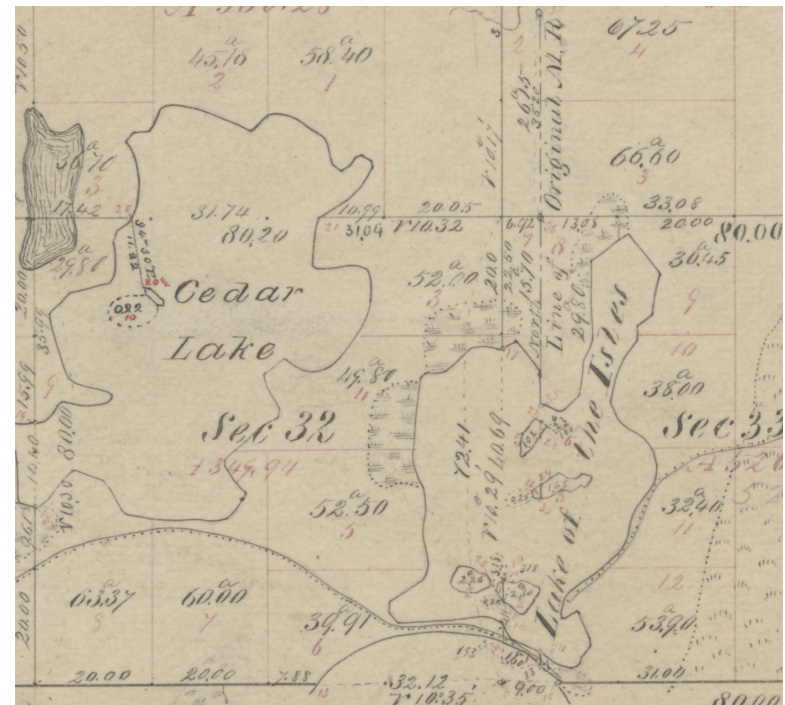


Figure 2.4: Historic Context Map, 1854. Source: Government Land Office

### PRIOR TO PARKS

The development of parks around Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake did not begin until the late 1800s. Earlier in the city's history, the area was better known as a railroad corridor.

The Saint Paul and Pacific First Division, a subsidiary of the Saint Paul and Pacific Railroad (StP&P), constructed a mainline southwest from downtown Minneapolis that ran along the east and south shores of Cedar Lake. Rails were laid in 1867 when the railroad completed a bridge over the Mississippi River. The line crossed the east bay of Cedar Lake on a causeway.

1 The first four tribes listed frequently refer to themselves as the Minnesota Dakota or Eastern Dakota.  
 2 John O. Anfinson, Thomas Madigan, Drew M. Forsberg, and Patrick Nunnally, "River of History: A Historic Resources Study of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area" (National Park Service, 2003), 51.  
 3 Berglin, "Grand Rounds."

In 1871, the Minneapolis and Saint Louis Railway constructed tracks parallel to the StP&P line. In 1882-1883, both railroads rerouted their mainline along the north shore of Cedar Lake for a more direct path west from downtown Minneapolis and constructed a railyard at the northeast corner of Cedar Lake. It included over a dozen spur lines, a car and paint shop, a boiler shop, a machine shop, and a round house.<sup>1</sup> This path along the north shore of Cedar Lake would eventually become the route for the Cedar Lake Regional Trail.

1 Mathis, "Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel Context."

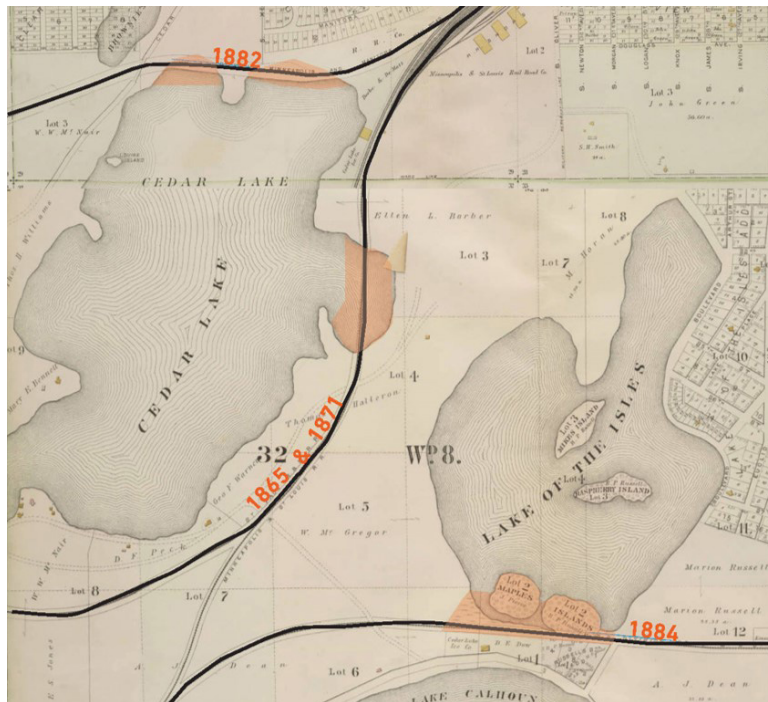


Figure 2.5 Land filled in during the expansion of the railroad lines, 1885.  
Source: Quinn Evans and Government Land Office

In 1884, the Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul Railway (CM&StP) created a right-of-way for its tracks south of Lake of the Isles. The filling process merged two islands with the shore and expanded the amount of land between Lake of the Isles and Bde Maka Ska. The remaining two islands were named Mike's Island (northwest) and Raspberry Island (southeast).<sup>2</sup> Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles were not initially included in the park system because both lakes were marshy wetlands and not immediately attractive as potential parks.

In 1887, Joseph Dean donated Dean Parkway to the Park Board, connecting Bde Maka Ska to Lake of the Isles. However, it took until 1896 to raise the railroad tracks, allowing the parkway to connect the parks in later construction projects.<sup>3</sup>

Park development at Cedar Lake lagged behind Lake of the Isles and other parks in the Grand Rounds. The first parcels of land around the lake were acquired by the MBPC in 1908, and dredging efforts did not begin until 1911. Construction on the canal between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles began in 1911—the canal would officially be named the Kenilworth Lagoon three years later (now known as the Kenilworth Channel and Lagoon). One of the most impactful improvements was the construction of a channel to the northwest to Brownie Lake. When the channel opened in 1917, it was possible to travel by water from Brownie Lake through Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles to Bde Maka Ska. The Park Board purchased a land tract on the northeast shore of Cedar Lake "to obtain complete control of the Cedar shoreline", and finalizing their ownership in 1954.<sup>4</sup>

2 Nord, "Lake of the Isles Historic District"; Mathis, "Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel Context."

3 <https://minneapolisparkhistory.com/tag/dean-parkway/>

4 "Park Board Buys Cedar Lake Tract," *Minneapolis Star*, December 2, 1954.

## 2.4 DESIGN AND PLANNING CONTEXT

### THE CHAIN OF LAKES

When Horace Cleveland began designing parks in Minneapolis and at the Chain of Lakes, his plans were heavily influenced by the City Beautiful movement and picturesque landscape architecture.

Cleveland's plan expanded into a series of connected parks and parkways that became known as the Grand Rounds. In keeping with the landscape architecture philosophy of the time, the Grand Rounds had a highly groomed, picturesque aesthetic with winding parkways, grass lawns, and stylized plantings.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 2.6: Postcard of Lake of the Isles courtesy of local resident

The Minneapolis parks and parkways were modeled on others designed by Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux on the East Coast. The parkways separated vehicle traffic (horse-drawn carriages and, later, automobiles) from pedestrians. Pedestrian paths were built closer to the lake, generally following the shoreline. Trees lined the drives, forming large canopies.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mathis, "Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel Context."

<sup>2</sup> Wirth, Minneapolis Park System, 140; "Cedar Lake Residents Want Stronger Bridge," N.P., June 13, 1916.

MBPC acquired the land around Lake of the Isles in 1886 and immediately began redeveloping the lake into a designed park. In 1888, the first parkway around Lake of the Isles was completed. It followed the original grade of the lakeshore and as a result, the road frequently flooded when the water level rose.<sup>3</sup>

MBPC began a comprehensive dredging project at Lake of the Isles in 1898 to alter the shoreline and change the lake's character from marsh to open water. MBPC also created new circulation paths to enhance connectivity. In 1897, the Board built a 40-foot-wide drive, a 10-foot bicycle path, and an 8-foot walking path across Dean Marsh between Lake of the Isles and Bde Maka Ska Boulevard.

### THE WIRTH ERA

In 1906, Theodore Wirth became superintendent of Minneapolis parks, launching a formative era of park development in the city.

<sup>3</sup> Minneapolis Park Board Annual Report for 1925, in LOI Chronology, Hess Roise.

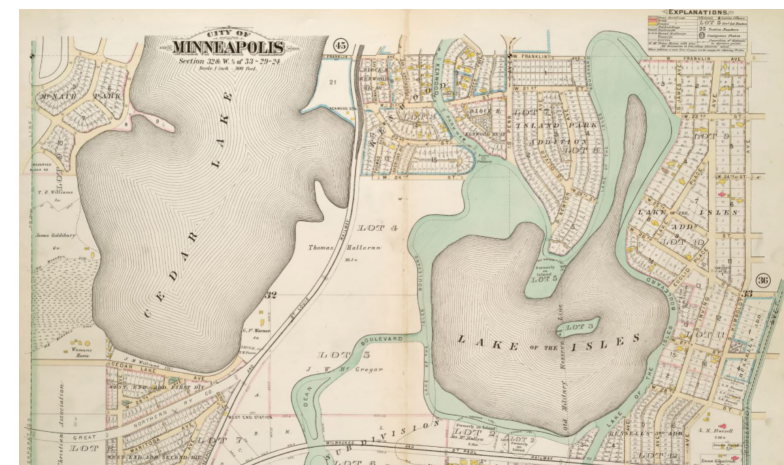


Figure 2.7: Map of Minneapolis showing existing and proposed park areas around Lake of the Isles and Dean Parkway (in blue), 1892. Source: City of Minneapolis

Wirth's first projects included additional dredging at the Chain of Lakes, building and rebuilding shorelines, and constructing canals (used interchangeably with 'channels' in this chapter) to connect the lakes.<sup>1</sup> Wirth included a future Cedar Lake parkway in a report of park

<sup>1</sup> "Park Board Buys Cedar Lake Tract," *Minneapolis Star*, December 2, 1954.

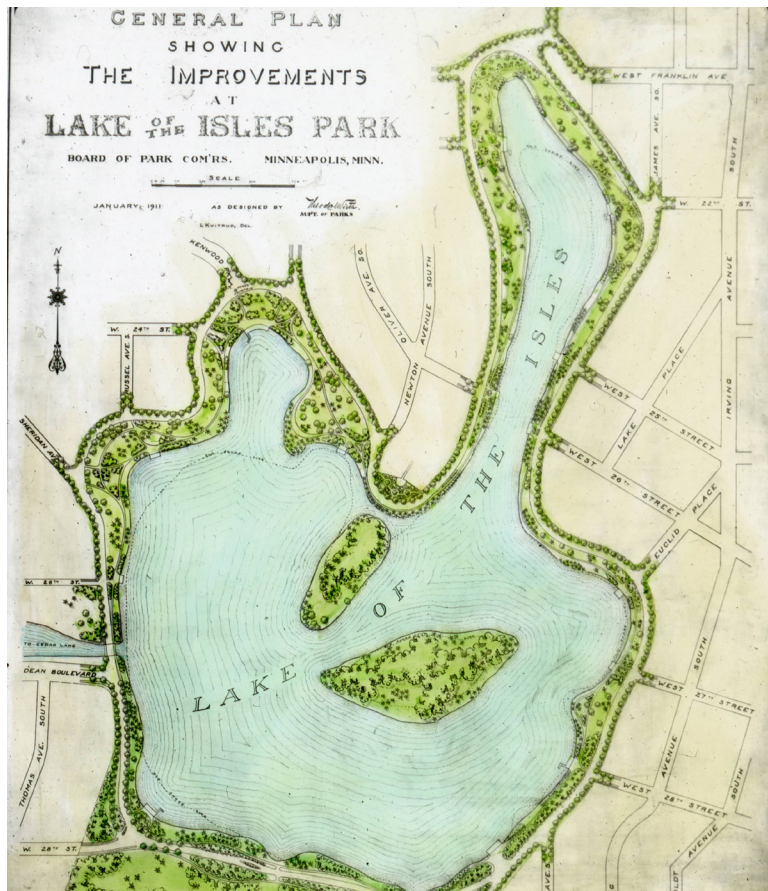


Figure 2.8: Plan for Lake of the Isles, 1911.

priorities. Building a parkway from Lake of the Isles to Sixth Avenue North would "give North Minneapolis the desired direct connection with the park system which that part of the city is more than entitled."<sup>2</sup>

The second phase of dredging at Lake of the Isles was completed in 1911; it removed half a million cubic yards of fill from the lake and excavated "the canal (now Kenilworth Lagoon) from Lake of the Isles west towards Cedar Lake up to the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railway right-of-way." The fill was also used to increase the size of the south island. The project raised the grade of the parkway from one foot above the water level to eleven feet above the level of the lake.<sup>3</sup>

A 1911 plan of Lake of the Isles by Theodore Wirth shows the park's character after this second round of dredging (Figure 2.8). Trees lined the parkways, and trees and shrubs were planted along the walking paths and shoreline creating a fairly dense layer of vegetation. Similarly, the two islands were nearly covered with trees and shrubs, but had a more naturalistic character compared to the defined rows and groupings of vegetation on the shore.<sup>4</sup>

Dean Parkway road and walks were completed in 1915, using fill from dredged Bde Maka Ska<sup>5</sup>.

High-style residential development followed Lake of the Isle's park development. Houses fronting the parkway were built by upper class, white residents.

<sup>2</sup> Roise, "The Cedar Lake Parkway Bridge, In the Context of the Grand Rounds, Minneapolis."

<sup>3</sup> Nord, "Lake of the Isles Historic District"; Mathis, "Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel Context."

<sup>4</sup> National Park Service, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," *National Register Bulletin 15* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995), 44.

<sup>5</sup> <https://minneapolisparkhistory.com/tag/dean-parkway/>

## RACIAL COVENANTS AND REDLINING

Racial covenants are restrictive clauses inserted into property deeds to prevent people who were not White from buying or occupying land. Racial covenants served as legally-enforceable contracts. They stipulated that the property had to remain in the hands of White people and they were tied to the land, which meant that it could be enforced in perpetuity.<sup>1</sup> An example of Minneapolis racial covenant from 1924 in the McNair Park neighborhood states: “No person or persons other than of the white race shall be permitted to occupy said premises or any part thereof”.

During the 1910s through the 1940s, several houses between Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake on the south side of the Kenilworth Channel and Lagoon and on the northwest side of Cedar Lake enacted restrictive housing covenants barring people of color from buying or occupying these properties.

The legal practice of denying mortgages, or “redlining”, took place between 1930 and 1970 throughout the United States. The Home Owners’ Loan Corporation categorized neighborhoods into one of four options: “best”, “desirable”, “declining”, and “hazardous”. These designations were used to evaluate lending risk for home mortgages, resulting in many denied mortgages in “hazardous” areas. The lowest ratings often corresponded to lower income and/or more racially diverse parts of a city and resulted in fewer paths to homeownership and wealth building. Most of the residential land around Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles was classified as “best” or “desirable” and would have been minimally impacted by this practice.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mapping Prejudice,” <https://mappingprejudice.umn.edu/>.

<sup>2</sup> Redlining” Maps: The Persistent Structure Of Segregation And Economic Inequality, Bruce Mitchell PhD., Senior Research Analyst and Juan Franco, Senior GIS Specialist, NCRC

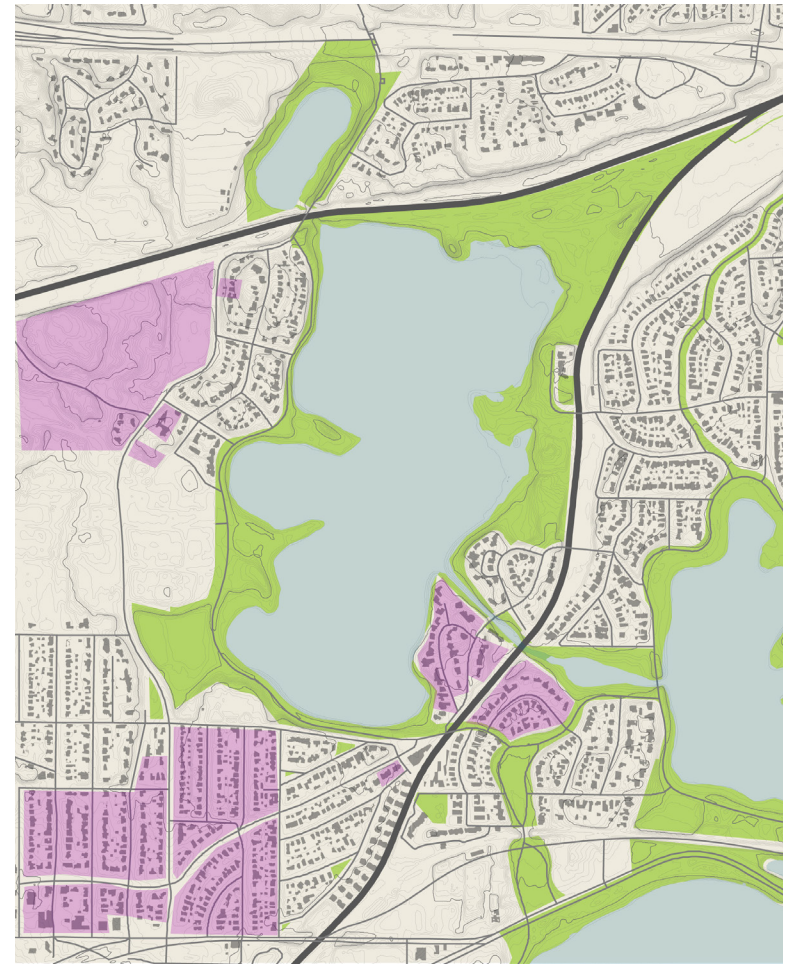


Figure 2.9: Map of Minneapolis showing properties that included racial covenants in purple near Cedar Lake and the Kenilworth Channel, 1892. Source: University of Minnesota, Mapping Prejudice



Canoeist on Lake of the Isles, 1910. Source: Minnesota Historical Society

## CANAL SYSTEM

A navigable water route between the Chain of Lakes had long been part of the vision for the Grand Rounds. In 1907, ice houses between Lake of the Isles and Bde Maka Ska were demolished to make way for a canal (or channel) and lagoon (a widening of the canal) between the two lakes.<sup>1</sup> The canal was crossed by two bridges for Lake Street and Lake of the Isles Parkway.

Construction of a canal between Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake took more planning because MBPC needed to acquire additional land between the lakes. The canal opened in 1913 and the level of Cedar Lake was dropped by five feet to account for the difference between the two lakes. The water-level change modified Cedar Lake's contours by exposing more shoreline, including two peninsulas on the west shore that became picnic grounds and beaches.<sup>2</sup>

In the fall and winter of 1913, the ground on either side of the Kenilworth Lagoon was graded and seeded with grass. The result was sloping banks along the canal's waterline. Within two years, motorboat wakes in the canal eroded the shoreline and wood sheet piling was installed within the canal, creating a hard edge along the water. That same winter, paths 12 feet wide were built on both sides of the canal between Lake of the Isles Boulevard (Parkway) and Cedar Lake Avenue (Burnham Road). Pipe railings were installed along the paths where they came close to the lagoon.<sup>3</sup> These paths are not present today.

Several bridges were constructed at the Chain of Lakes during the 1910s to carry the parkways and railroad corridors over canals. Eventually, six bridges were built and were numbered from south to north. Details about these bridges are included in Grand Rounds Canal System and Lake of the Isles Preservation Plan in Appendix A.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Minneapolis Park Board Annual Report for 1907, in LOI Chronology, Hess Roise.

<sup>2</sup> Roise, "The Cedar Lake Parkway Bridge, In the Context of the Grand Rounds, Minneapolis."

<sup>3</sup> Mathis, "Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel Context."

<sup>4</sup> Mathis, "Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel Context."

### IMPROVING CIRCULATION

In 1916, The Great Northern Railroad Company, in concert with the Park Board and the Minneapolis City Council, constructed a concrete bridge to carry "Cedar Lake Road over the tracks between Cedar and Brownie lakes." Area residents on the west shore of Cedar lake called for the bridge to be sufficient to carry an extension of the Bryn Mawr streetcar line. Significant amounts of fill were brought in to grade the approaches.<sup>1</sup>

In 1924, a bridle path was built along the parkway at Lake of the Isles, reflecting the frequency of horseback riding at the lakes.<sup>2</sup> Minneapolis experienced heavy rains in 1925 and the Park Board began a series of "precautionary measures" that included "4,946 square yards of concrete sluiceways" and curbing along the concrete walks at Lake of the Isles. These measures were intended to prevent future damage to the park areas.<sup>3</sup>

The stretch of road from Dean Parkway to Cedar Lake over the railroad tracks became a part of the Grand Rounds in 1929. The city and the railroad paid to pave the short connection and it was turned over to the park board as part of the parkway system.<sup>4</sup>

Flooding and erosion continued to create problems for park management during this period. In 1935, the water level in Lake of the Isles was lowered by 6 inches to prevent future damage to the shoreline. As a result, sand along the shore became more visible and prominent.<sup>5</sup>

1 Wirth, Minneapolis Park System, 140; "Cedar Lake Residents Want Stronger Bridge," N.P., June 13, 1916.

2 Minneapolis Park Board Annual Report for 1924, in LOI Chronology, Hess Roise.

3 Minneapolis Park Board Annual Report for 1925, in LOI Chronology, Hess Roise.

4 <https://minneapolisparkhistory.com/tag/dean-parkway/>

5 Mathis, "Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel Context."

### WPA IMPROVEMENTS

During the Great Depression, MBPC faced a funding shortfall and maintenance at city parks was deferred. The city completed several projects with the help of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to address pressing concerns at its parks. The WPA also built rustic stone retaining walls in the Kenilworth canal between the railroad trestle and Burnham Road and laid new rip-rap around the bridges and shore, creating a 2,400 cubic foot retaining wall. Other WPA projects in the canal included resurfacing, sodding, and seeding the banks. In 1936, the WPA constructed new timber breakwaters on both sides of the lagoon between Burnham Road Bridge and Cedar Lake.<sup>6</sup>

6 Mathis, "Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel Context."



Kenilworth Channel, 1936. Source: Minnesota Historical Society

At the Bde Maka Ska-Lake of the Isles Channel, WPA crews excavated the portion of the channel that passes under the Lake Street Bridge in 1937. Rip-rap was installed in the channel, and concrete and limestone retaining walls were installed in 1940.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Architecture History Form No. HE-MPC-01823, "Lake Calhoun-Lake of the Isles Channel," 2008, Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, Saint Paul.



Aerial photo of project area, 1953. Source: Borchert Map Library, University of Minnesota

## LATER CHANGES

The 1940s and 1950s were fairly stable decades for this portion of the Grand Rounds. By the 1960s, some of the parks' original infrastructure was in need of replacement. In 1961, Bridge No. 6 (see Figure 2.11 on page 30) was replaced with a new single-width railroad bridge, which was rehabilitated in 2015.

During the 1950s, the Park Board acquired an additional tract of land on the northeast shore of Cedar Lake, part of the board's "program to obtain complete control of the Cedar shoreline."<sup>2</sup> In 1961, two new walkways were installed around Cedar Lake, and the western parkway and shoreline were stabilized in response to deteriorated edges.<sup>3</sup> In the late 1960s the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners (MBPC) became the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB).

Recreational needs were changing during this period and placed different pressures on the Grand Rounds. One of the most significant stressors on the system was that the parkways had become commuter routes and were no longer used primarily for recreation. The MPRB hired San Francisco landscape architecture firm Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams (EDAW) to study the Grand Rounds and make recommendations for improvements.<sup>4</sup>

In 1971, EDAW completed its planning study of the Grand Rounds.<sup>5</sup> Following these recommendations in the early 1970s, Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles Parkways were narrowed. Parking bays were also constructed along the parkways. At Lake of the Isles Parkway, traffic patterns were changed to convert the formerly two-way road

<sup>2</sup> "Park Board Buys Cedar Lake Tract," *Minneapolis Star*, December 2, 1954.

<sup>3</sup> Minneapolis Park Board Annual Report for 1961, 36, Hess Roise Project Files.

<sup>4</sup> Berglin, "Grand Rounds."

<sup>5</sup> Mathis, "Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel Context."

to one-way. Bicycle paths were also separated from walking paths as part of this circulation overhaul.<sup>1</sup> In 1978, MPRB completed improvements to Lake of the Isles and Dean Parkways, including red-tone pavement, cube-shaped streetlights, and new signage.<sup>2</sup>

New signage designed by InterDesign was placed throughout the Grand Rounds during this period. Most were rustic-style wood signs with routed and painted lettering.

In 1989, the Cedar Lake Park Association (CLPA) began organizing and raised money to purchase abandoned sections of the railroad corridor. In close collaboration with the Park Board, the CLPA was able to secure land for the Cedar Lake Regional Trail. More than 1,300 residents contributed to the purchase. In 1995 the first sections of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail opened, running from Royalston Avenue in downtown Minneapolis, past Cedar Lake, west to Hwy 100. Today, it is an important regional connection for walkers and bikers to access the lakes and other regional trails.

In the 1990s and 2000s, some of the original vegetation schemes were changed as a result of storms and to address flooding and water quality concerns. Many trees along Kenilworth Channel and Lagoon were lost in the 1990s and new trees were planted, although not always in the same locations. As a result, many of the distinctive clusters of evergreen trees on the north shore of the lagoon were lost and replaced with deciduous trees. In 1998, a heavy flood damaged shoreline vegetation at Lake of the Isles, and a windstorm took down several trees.

In the 2000s, MPRB undertook a multi-year project aimed at addressing flooding, improving water quality, and replacing vegetation. Nearly 150 shrubs were planted along Kenilworth Channel and Lagoon as part of this project, and cattails were added

<sup>1</sup> Berglin, "Grand Rounds."

<sup>2</sup> Mathis, "Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel Context."



Cedar Lake Regional Trail. Source: TEN x TEN



Vegetation along Kenilworth Lagoon. Source: TEN x TEN

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to the northeastern and southwestern corners of the lagoon. This work was done in partnership with local community members and organizations. MPRB also installed stone slabs on the north and south shores of the lagoon to formalize lake access. At Lake of the Isles, MPRB undertook a shore stabilization project that included replacing paths, restoring upland plantings, and constructing new view points along the shoreline. Some of the original community recommendations, such as upgrading lighting, additional benches, and signage improvements were not completed.

In 2015, the Burnham Road bridge over the Kenilworth Channel and Lagoon was largely replaced. The project included removing and rebuilding the superstructure and parts of the abutments.

In 2021, the MPRB completed a shoreline stabilization project that replaced the failing WPA wood walls that line both sides of the Kenilworth Channel and Lagoon between Burnham Road (Bridge No. 6) and Cedar Lake with naturalized shoreline, plants, stone, and soil. The project did not receive any federal funds and was not subject to Section 106 review.

More than 300 shrubs, ten trees, and hundreds of plugs were planted along the Kenilworth Channel and Lagoon as part of this project. Aquatic plants were installed below the ordinary high water elevation along the entirety of the channel.



Kenilworth Channel following completion of the restoration project, 2022

## 2.5 HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

### GRAND ROUNDS HISTORIC DISTRICT

As a part of the Grand Rounds Historic District, Cedar Lake, Dean Parkway, and Lake of the Isles are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) recognizes districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that meet at least one of four significance criteria and possess integrity.<sup>1</sup>

As described in the National Register nomination, “The basis of the Grand Rounds are its natural features, including lakes, creeks, woodlands, riverbanks, and wetlands, as well as constructed features such as parks, playgrounds, parkways, trails, golf courses, athletic fields, picnic grounds, canals, and lagoons.”<sup>2</sup> The Grand Rounds exemplifies urban park development during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and links all areas of Minneapolis with a comprehensive and unified park system. It is also significant for being the highest achievements of Horace Cleveland and Theodore Wirth, two nationally prominent landscape architects.

The Grand Rounds Historic District’s “period of significance” runs from 1887 to 1978, meaning that all changes to the Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles parks enacted before 1978 are considered historic. The District was intensively surveyed in 2014-2015. Contributing and non-contributing features were identified at this time.

Non-contributing resources were constructed after the period of significance, which ends in 1978. Some properties are also individually eligible to be listed in the National Register; these are indicated by the notation “NRHP.”

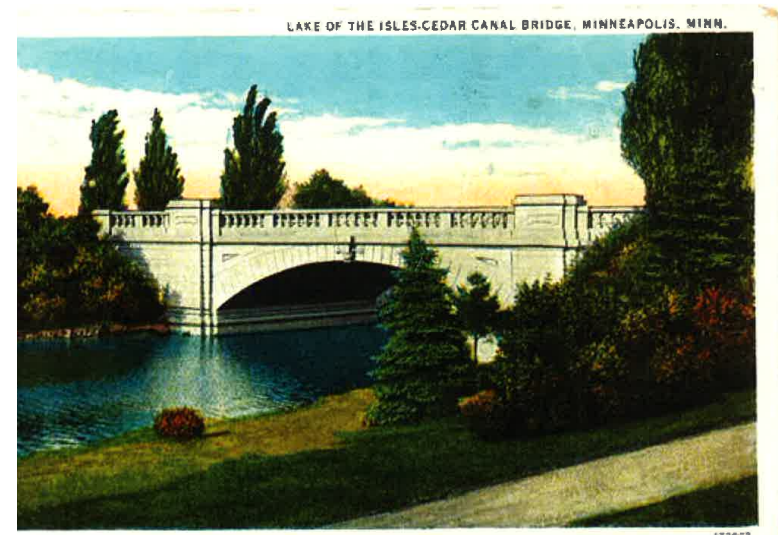


Figure 2.10: Postcard of bridge over the Lagoon courtesy of local resident

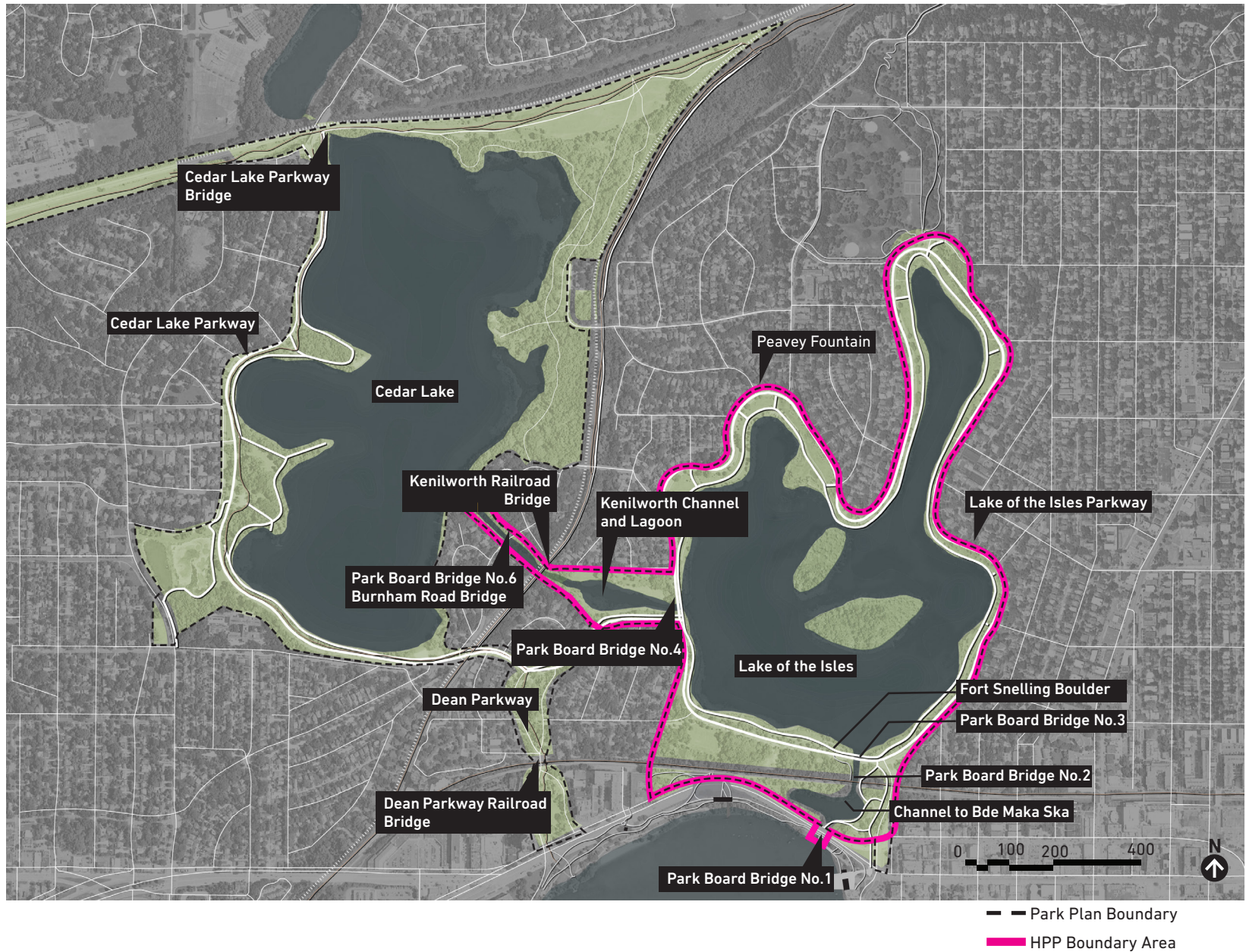
<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” National Register Bulletin 15 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995), 44.

<sup>2</sup> Berglin, “Grand Rounds.”

Property Type	MAJOR FEATURE	Contributing/non-contributing individually eligible (NRHP) or
<b>CEDAR LAKE INVENTORIED FEATURES</b>		
Site	Cedar Lake	C
Structure	Cedar Lake Parkway Bridge	NC
Structure	Cedar Lake Parkway	C
<b>LAKE OF THE ISLES INVENTORIED FEATURES</b>		
Object	Fort Snelling Boulder	C
Site	Kenilworth Lagoon	C
Site	Lake of the Isles	C
Structure	Lake of the Isles Parkway	C
Object	Peavey Fountain	C
Structure	Park Board Bridge No. 1 (Bridge No. 90449)	C - NRHP
Structure	Park Board Bridge No. 2 (Bridge No. 93809)	C - NRHP
Structure	Park Board Bridge No. 3 (Bridge No. L5722)	C - NRHP
Structure	Park Board Bridge No. 4 (Bridge No. L5729)	C - NRHP
Structure	Kenilworth Railroad Bridge, Pedestrian Bridge (Being replaced as part of the SWLRT project, previously Park Board Bridge No. 5)	C
Structure	Burnham Road Bridge (Bridge No. 27508). Recently constructed	C
<b>DEAN PARKWAY INVENTORIED FEATURES</b>		
Structure	Railroad Bridge	C
Structure	Dean Parkway	C

Table 2.1: Inventoried Features at Cedar Lake, Lake of the Isles, and Dean Parkway from the 2014-2015 NRHP nomination process

Figure 2.11: Inventoried Features within the Park Planning Boundary. HPP Boundary Area as defined by the mitigation agreement between the Federal Transit Authority and the Metropolitan Council: Bde Maka Ska-Lake of the Isles Channel, the entirety of Lake of the Isles Park, and the Kenilworth Lagoon and Channel



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## POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE TRADITIONAL CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Cedar-Isles project area is a portion of a broader cultural landscape that is potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a traditional cultural property (TCP), Indigenous cultural landscape (ICL), or Tribal cultural landscape (TCL), for its association with Minnesota Dakota communities.

While the Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) in Appendix A identifies potential significance, neither that plan nor this plan will provide the comprehensive evaluation needed to determine eligibility.

Representatives of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux (Dakota) Community, Upper Sioux Community, Lower Sioux Community, and Prairie Island Indian Community participated in the planning process through a tribal listening session in October 2020 and an on-site field visit in May 2021. They have continued to share feedback and inform the creation of both the HPP and Cedar-Isles draft plan.

The tribal representatives relayed that visiting the lakes continues to be important for community members, sometimes to gather plants or to spend time in nature. They indicated that restoration of indigenous plants and improvement of environmental quality, especially water quality, are their major concerns. For additional information on feedback, refer to Chapter 3, Community Engagement.



Cedar Lake hillside. Source: TEN x TEN

## 2.6 GUIDANCE FOR PLANNING AND DESIGN WITHIN A HISTORIC PROPERTY OR CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

### CHANGES WITHIN A HISTORIC PROPERTY

The United States Secretary of the Interior (SOI) provides guidance for four types of approaches for change within historic landscapes: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction. The Standards also include “Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes” to provide a framework for applying these options to complex landscapes like those at Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake.

Of these four types, Rehabilitation was the selected approach for the previously identified and potentially eligible historic resources within the project area. Rehabilitation allows repairs, alterations, and additions necessary to enable a compatible use for a property, as long as the portions or features which convey the historical, cultural, or architectural values are preserved.

Rehabilitation allows construction of new elements addressing current needs, including work needed to improve environmental condition, provide public access, reintroduce vegetation, and integrate new, compatible uses. Design of new elements needs to be carefully integrated with historic features, without creating a false sense of history. New elements and repairs are designed to be differentiated from historic features

### IMPACTS TO THE PLAN

Within the guidance provided by the SOI, there are specific Rehabilitation standards, described in more detail in Chapter 4 of the Historic Preservation Plan (Appendix A).<sup>1</sup>

There are a number of changes proposed in Chapter 5 of this plan and these recommendations for improvements to water quality, natural resources, circulation, amenities and program are all compatible with the Guidelines for Rehabilitation. The plan recommendations

<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes <https://www.nps.gov/crps/tps/landscape-guidelines/rehab/special.htm>

for adding rain gardens, increasing shoreline buffer, enhancing existing natural areas and increasing the littoral edge build on recent changes by MPRB to address flooding, improve water quality, and restore upland planting. Specifically, under SOI Guidelines “Special Considerations - Environmental”, projects are allowed that reclaim or re-establish “natural resources in a manner that promotes the highest degree of environmental protection, while preserving significant historic features, viewsheds, materials and finishes.”<sup>1</sup> There are similar provisions under “Guidelines for Circulation” and “Guidelines for Special Considerations - Accessibility” to allow for adjusted circulation, amenities and program, given they are compatible with “preservation of historic character of the landscape.”<sup>2</sup>

This Historic Preservation Plan (Appendix A) presents general recommendations to guide long-term management of Lake of the Isles and the Channels as well as the potentially eligible traditional cultural property associated with the Cedar-Isles plan project area.

<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes <https://www.nps.gov/crps/tps/landscape-guidelines/rehab/special.htm>

<sup>2</sup> National Park Service, The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscape <https://www.nps.gov/crps/tps/landscape-guidelines/rehab/circulation.htm>

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