Theodore Wirth Golf Course History and Timeline

1889 – First 64 acres were acquired for the park, then named Saratoga Park

1890 – Saratoga Park was renamed to Glenwood Park

1901 – The Minnesota Golf Association was founded

1906 – Theodore Wirth became the Superintendent of Parks for Minneapolis.

1909 – The board designated the name Glenwood Park for the new grounds and officially changed the name of the newly acquired Keegan's Lake to Glenwood Lake.

1916 – The first golf course at Glenwood was constructed and opened, nine years after it was first mentioned noted in a park board report. The first course was only nine holes and featured clay tees and sand greens.

This original course was designed by Charley Erikson, who worked for the Minneapolis Park Board in landscaping for a few years. Erikson was a member of the Twin Cities Greenkeepers' Association, was considered the "go to guy" for turf issues in the Twin Cities, and was also the greenkeeper at Minikahda from 1900 to 1942. In fact, Erikson was on the executive committee that selected Donald Ross for the Minikahda remodel around the time Wirth was built.

1919 – The Glenwood course was extended to 18 holes and a second course of only six holes was opened at Columbia Park. That year Wirth also proposed for the first time that the golf course needed a suitable club house instead of the two temporary shelters that had been constructed.

1922 – Construction of the club house began. It was built in two stages, with a second story added in 1923. Wirth, who was a native of Switzerland, recommended the Swiss Chalet architecture for the club house.
1923 – Wirth persuaded the board in 1923 to ban the use of spiked shoes on the golf courses. It is not known when that decision was reversed.

1924 – Wirth wrote in the 1924 annual report that hundreds of golfers had been turned away from the Glenwood course and the expanded Columbia course. The inability of the two courses to accommodate all the golfers who wanted to play led that year to contracts to acquire Armour (Gross) Golf Course and Meadowbrook Golf Course.

1925 – Wirth suggested that the greens at Glenwood be upgraded from sand to grass and that an irrigation system be installed on the fairways, but the upgrade did not occur for a decade, likely due to restrictions in the budget.

1935 – The greens were finally converted to grass through federal work relief projects.

1935 – Theodore Wirth retired as the Superintendent of Parks for Minneapolis at the age of 72.

1938 – The park, parkway and lake were all renamed for Wirth.

1953 – Between 1953 and 1979, hole 12 was moved and changed from a Par 3 to a Par 5.

1958 to 1962 - The Park Board added a par three course, which was designed by Larry Packard.

1968 – The park board hired a golf course architect to redesign the back nine of the larger course in relation to the parkway realignment.

1994 – The front 9 are remodeled by Garrett Gill.

1998 – The Chalet at Wirth Park was updated extensively.

2004 – Bronze statue of Theodore Wirth surrounded by statues of playing children were installed between the parkway and the club house.

The statues were a gift from the Minneapolis Parks Legacy Society.
Theodore Wirth’s Original Intent

The proposed changes to the Theodore Wirth golf course attempt to reflect Wirth’s vision and original intent to increase ease of public access to park land and support a wider range of uses by “freeing up” land by shifting the golf routing without negatively impacting golf. Furthermore, the recommended changes to the golf course are designed to reflect the time period in which the course was originally created, while responding to current public needs.

Wirth’s belief that parks should be available to and used by the public is evidenced by the fact that he oversaw the largest expansion of Minneapolis park land (parks, golf courses, flower gardens, and boulevards) from 1,810 acres to 5,241 acres during his 30 years as Minneapolis’ Superintendent of Parks (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_Wirth). In addition, he “beautified” the acquired land for a variety of purposes, to meet the needs of children as well as other segments of the population. In line with this original intent, the current proposed changes to the golf course will increase residents’ opportunities for accessing park land for a wider range of uses, such as walking, biking, running, bird and nature watching, cross country/Nordic skiing, and snowshoeing.

The Golden Age of Golf Design

The original nine-hole golf course at Theodore Wirth Park, then called Glenwood Park, was one of the first public courses in Minnesota. It was designed by Charley Erikson in 1916, with an additional nine holes to follow in 1919 in response to public demand. The original 9-hole course had a construction budget of only $500.00, which was inexpensive, even for that time period. It was built in just a few short months; very fast considering the mechanical equipment used for construction in 1916, consisted of horse-drawn and steam power. This makes one wonder what Erikson would have designed had he not encountered such tight parameters. Although Erikson is not known to have designed other golf courses, one clue to what he might have done given greater resources comes from his involvement in the nearby Minikahda Golf Course. Erikson worked there for over 40 years as greenskeeper and was on the selection committee that chose Donald Ross for redesign work during a similar time period. As one of the most well known golf course designers from the “Golden Age of Golf Design” (1910-1937), Ross is widely respected for how his designs respond to the land, with very little earth moving, and his many natural looking bunkers visible from the tee. As Ross said himself:

“I like them very much as they usually have a natural appearance and are nearly always open to view, a desirable thing in all bunkers.” (Source : http://www.golfcoursearchitecture.net/Article/Donald-Ross/1437/Default.aspx)

The proposed changes to the Theodore Wirth golf course reflects this time period, and “Golden Age” golf designers like Ross, by responding to the land in a way that improves the strategy of the course through the use of additional bunkers, all visible from the tee, and a forced carry over existing waterways. As a result, this course is able to increase strategy and challenge without needing to simply increasing distance, a more current technique today.
Responding to Current Needs with the Original Intent in Sight

A number of changes have been made to the course at Theodore Wirth Park in the near 100 years since it was built. In fact, there is a clear history showing the park and the golf course in particular responding over the years to embrace opportunities or accommodate needs of the day. Whether adding to park acreage, increasing from 9 holes to 18 holes within just a few years, converting the greens in the 30’s, moving hole 12, adding a Par 3 course, redesign of the back nine, or remodeling the front nine in the 90’s - change has been a continued theme at Theodore Wirth Park and is also not uncommon on other courses.

In addition, as we can see from Wirth’s record of increasing park lands and making repeated improvements to the golf course at Wirth during his tenure, Wirth was hardly an advocate of stagnation. The park land can, and we believe should, continue to respond to changing public needs and demand. Although not increasing overall park land acreage, the proposed golf course changes respond to current public needs by improving the mix of uses and land available to support those varied uses at Theodore Wirth Park. Of course, since “[m]ore people play golf in Minnesota per capita than any other state in the union.” (Source: http://www.golf.com/courses-and-travel/minnesota-golf) golf is seen as one of those important uses and should be maintained and improved as a result.

Specifically, our proposed changes will:

- Add strategy and playability into the overall course consistent with the design approach of Ross and other architects of his time;
- Introduce a practice area and academy, which will help introduce the game to a wider audience, appeal to outreach programs that grow the game like the 1st Tee program, and allow golfers to warm-up prior to playing.
- Re-locate holes 12, 17 and 18; taking this opportunity to significantly improve the experience for golfers on these holes;
- Remove tubing from hole 10 by providing a new area for this and other winter sports uses in the area holes 17 and 18 are proposed to be moved from;
- Address issues related to overall maintenance and turf health concerns;

As demonstrated in the proposed golf plans, the proposed changes will improve the golf course and Theodore Wirth Park overall in a way that reflects Wirth’s original intent for Minneapolis park lands and remains true to the time period in which the course was originally built.
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NARRATIVE
Responding to Current Needs with the Original Intent in Sight

A number of changes have been made to the course at Theodore Wirth Park in the near 100 years since it was built. In fact, there is a clear history showing the park and the golf course in particular responding over the years to embrace opportunities or accommodate needs of the day. Whether adding to park acreage, increasing from 9 holes to 18 holes within just a few years, converting the greens in the 30’s, moving hole 12, adding a Par 3 course, redesign of the back nine, or remodeling the front nine in the 90’s - change has been a continued theme at Theodore Wirth Park and is also not uncommon on other courses.

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As demonstrated in the proposed golf plans, the proposed changes will improve the golf course and Theodore Wirth Park overall in a way that reflects Wirth’s original intent for Minneapolis park lands and remains true to the time period in which the course was originally built.
Hello Mr. Baker –  

I am writing in response to your email of 12/6/11 below to Andrea Weber of the MPRB Planning Department.  Ms. Weber asked that the Forestry Division respond to Michael’s concerns.  I believe it is best to discuss the matter directly with you.

The work conducted in the Glenwood/Wirth Parkway area that may be of concern is related to an effort to remove deadwood from the area.  If you have photos to help illustrate the situation, I would certainly be interested in seeing them.

The criteria for removing deadwood is to prevent the creation of a fire hazard and to facilitate the management of the park.  We restricted the movement of machinery through the area to this equipment pathway to deter indiscriminate driving throughout the park.  As a forested natural area within the MPRB system, active reforestation and vegetative restoration is dependent on budget availability.  The MPRB takes great pride in our care of park properties and we appreciate hearing from those that use and appreciate our system.  If you have further questions, be sure to let me know………..Ralph Sievert

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Hi Ralph,  

I am in possession of your mail of 12/11 before I wrote you of the MPRB Planning Department.  We were seeking their position on removing deadwood, which I believe is possible.  We will merely follow up on this issue at a later date.  Regards.

Best,

Rich Baker
Weber, Andrea S.

From: zach handler <zachhandler@yahoo.com>

Sent: Wednesday, December 21, 2011 8:20 PM

To: Sievert, Ralph C.

Cc: greenparks@comcast.net; 'Damon Struyk'; Ringold, Jennifer B.; steven@pundtlaw.com; Weber, Andrea S.; cluger85@yahoo.com; jcarcher2003@yahoo.com; goltry@comcast.net; vyditter@vyditter.cnc.net; mmoore@qbp.com; goliath59@msn.com; jjdavisdb@gmail.com; karensoderberg@gmail.com; playclothesco@juno.com; urususj2@gmail.com; lbaker1634@yahoo.com; bmnaprez@comcast.net; sgc132@hotmail.com; sikari_cat6@yahoo.com; ursusj2@gmail.com; Chamberlain, Bruce; lwacker@swbinc.com; Cannon, Ginger; John Munger

Subject: Wirth Park tree clean up

Dear Mr. Sievert:

I am a member of the Wirth Park Advisory Committee, though I am writing to you as a private citizen independent of my role on the CAC. I live 2 blocks from Wirth Park and use the trails daily. I am very concerned about the tornado clean up strategy being employed in Wirth Park. I am trying to understand the rationale for removing all down or damaged trees from park land, and then covering the resultant moonscape in a 1 - 2 foot thick bed of wood chips.

I shudder to think that this clean up effort has left the park much more damaged than it was before the tornado hit, and I worry that this approach of simply clearing the area has done more harm than good.

I am not alone in my concerns. In fact one of the reasons I composed this email is that so many people have approached me asking the same question.

Please help me understand what is going on here. I have tried to access the City of Minneapolis Urban Forestry Policy that is referenced on the MPRB website. It seems that this link has been removed. I am not alone in my confusion. In fact one of the reasons I composed this email is that so many people have approached me asking the same question.

Thank you in advance for your reply.

Zach Handler
1114 Vincent Ave N
Minneapolis
May occur. The criteria for removing standing trees has to do with its potential to cause damage to surrounding healthy trees if such trees should fall or fail. There is also a safety concern for individuals that may be walking through the area. While it was not our intention to remove understory, that which I refer to is a criterion for removing standing trees. The criteria is set up to allow for this option as a protective measure for the neighborhood.

It was not our intention to remove any trees, but we have been directed to by higher authorities. We are also directed to remove any trees that are damaged or that have the potential to cause further damage to the area. This includes trees that are leaning, trees that have been damaged by storms or other natural disasters, and trees that have the potential to cause damage to neighboring property.

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You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "North Tyrol Neighborhood eGroup" group.

To post to this group, send email to north-tyrol-neighborhood-group@googlegroups.com.

To unsubscribe from this group, send email to north-tyrol-neighborhood-group+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.

For more options, visit this group at http://groups.google.com/group/north-tyrol-neighborhood-group?hl=en.
Thanks for the message and report. The clearing of the trails in the Theodore Wirth Regional Park was conducted on Christmas Eve (25 December 2011) due to a number of factors, including the heavy snowfall that occurred earlier in the season. The clearing was done to ensure the safety of visitors and to promote the health of the trees and vegetation in the park.

The clearing was performed by a team of workers who removed the fallen branches and debris from the trails. The work was completed before the weekend, and the park was opened to the public on Tuesday (27 December 2011). We appreciate your interest in the park and your concern for its maintenance.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact us.

Best regards,
[Name]
To: Wiencke, Christine S.

Subject: Theodore Wirth Regional Park

Hello,

Can I ask what they have been doing to the trees in Wirth Park from the areas of Glenwood & Wirth Parkway to Glenwood & Xerxes for the last week or so?

Thank you.

Best,

Subject: Theodore Wirth Regional Park

To: Wiencke, Christine S.
Weber, Andrea S.

Minneapolis Park History <donotreply@wordpress.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 14, 2012 8:15 PM

To: Weber, Andrea S.

Subject: [New post] Minneapolis Park Memory: Ski Jumping at Wirth Park

New post on Minneapolis Park History

Minneapolis Park Memory: Ski Jumping at Wirth Park
by David C. Smith

I have received several very interesting comments from Jim Balfanz on my post about the history of ski jumping in Minneapolis. Today he sent me this photo of him (left) and his brother John, both champion skiers, in a double jump at Wirth Park in 1956. Jim copied the photo from the West High School yearbook of 1956. The original photo was “courtesy of the Minneapolis Tribune.”

In his comments, Jim has provided the names of many people who were important in Minneapolis ski jumping at a time when Minneapolis was producing national champions and Olympians.

If anyone else has memories, stories or photos to add either as comments on that post or in e-mails to me, I’d be delighted to post them.

Thanks to Jim and also to Jay Martin for his comments.

David C. Smith
minneapolisparkhistory[at]q.com

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Comment

See all comments

Unsubscribe or change your email settings at Manage Subscriptions.

Trouble clicking? Copy and paste this URL into your browser:
http://minneapolisparkhistory.com/2012/03/14/minneapolis-park-memory-ski-jumping-at-wirth-park/

Thanks for flying with WordPress.com
Dear Robert Dwyer,

Weber, Andrea S.

From:
Assistant Superintendent Chamberlain

Again I am writing on behalf of the Friends of the Theodore Wirth Par 3. Considerable time has passed since the last Wirth Park Citizen’s Advisory Committee meeting about two of the directives passed by the CAC in November. We do not want the MPRB Planning Staff to get too far down the road determining how to satisfy these CAC directives without knowing more about how we feel.


As you know we supported the adoption of the “outcrop” concept design because it preserved the current design of the Par 3 (with a “slight” exception). Unless we stay with the current design the Par 3 course will no longer be both playable and challenging but it will lose its critical margin of error that currently allows for effective management of play. The tee is placed more than 120 yds away from the new clubhouse. This placement is unacceptable because a) it would make effective management of the 1st tee by the MPRB staff back in the clubhouse impossible, AND b) we can not set a precedent of moving a Par 3 golf hole just because other sports and snow making activities occur on a fairway during the winter.

You will recall that the movement of the 17th and 18th holes on the 18 hole course was supported by my Theodore Wirth management and maintenance staff because of the difficulties of adequately maintaining the 17th hole. We golfers have accepted this position as long as there are also acceptable changes to the 18 hole course which maintain it as a playable and challenging par 72, 18 hole course. There are a variety of reasons why this maintenance was difficult but in the end it was agreed that moving these golf holes off areas where snow making occurs was the solution.

The “outcrop” design that will allow the course to survive. The area of the current Par 3 1st hole shown on the “outcrop” map is intended to be a ski event “stadium” or event start/finish area. They would be making snow each year on this area. So, on this map, they moved our 1st hole. But they also expect to continue to make snow every year on the 9th hole of the Par 3 since that is, and has been, part of their regular 3.5 km competition loop. And this year, because of the lack of snow fall, they also have made snow on the Par 3 8th hole, and the areas in front of its 7th green and 6th tee. If we accept snow making as a precedent for moving golf holes on the Par 3 eventually we would no longer have a course of any value. We do not accept any plan that would move the 1st hole, or any hole, of the Par 3.

Allowing snow making to persist on the holes of the Par 3, as our part of sharing the park, will necessarily result in a challenge to MPRB maintenance staff. Snow making is one of a number of factors that make maintenance on the Par 3 challenging. Management and maintenance staff have some clear ideas as to what could yet be done to solve these problems. Some other ideas came up at the Charrette. But it is possible that we will still have to search for new solutions to the problems caused by snow making.

Attached is our position statement regarding Snow making on the Par 3.


The Cycling Trails Overlay map provided at the Charrette and CAC meetings shows the proposed locations of these trails. These trails come very near the Par 3 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th holes. Our position has been that we have no fundamental objection to the development of practical trails for other summer sports in North Wirth Park, including positions near the golf holes, AS LONG AS the evident and very real obstacles can be addressed to improve playability, pace of play, and profitability of the golf courses, addressing the concerns of adjacent property owners, addressing all environmental concerns, and addressing concerns of various other park patrons (other than golfers, bikers and hikers). If, after addressing all of these concerns, a practical trail system can be designed (i.e. one that will be actually be used by hikers and bikers), and if the MPRB determines that the cost/benefit is appropriate, then a trail system might be produced.

Having said this we must add that even a casual look at the Cycling Trails Overlay map reveals some locations that appear extremely problematic. It is our position that no work on these trails ought to commence unless it is part of a fully approved, fully funded, and fully viable system. A trail section that is not viable on its own should not be started until all of the sections it is dependent on have also been approved and funded. We see no scenario where the Par 3 would be closed off to golf to accommodate any of these trails.

We commend the CAC for defining this directive as a reasonable multi-use objective and limiting the impact to 4-6 ft. wide. We are ready to play a small part in the development of practical trails if they are developed along with the golf course, with mutual benefit to both.”

Robert Dwyer
Friends of the Theodore Wirth Par 3
Weber, Andrea S.

From: dwyers@dwyers@ties2.net
Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2012 5:39 PM
To: Ringold, Jennifer B.
Subject: Two Items

Jennifer,

Hope you are well. One möntember | have copied you on a recent email to Bruce Chamberlain from the Friends. Please forward a copy of this position document and its attachment all the CCA members.

Weber, Andrea S.

Subject: Two
From: dwyers@dwyers@ties2.net
Snow making on the Par 3

Friends of the Theodore Wirth Par 3
Basic Snow Making Principles

Snow making on the Par 3:
A) should be moderated,

B) should be controlled by MPRB staff,

C) should be subject to a strict cut off date of February 14\textsuperscript{th} of each year so that the course does not have to kept closed in the spring awaiting snow melt due to excessive snow making, and

D) Par 3 golfers should be kept informed of developments, and

E) advanced and aggressive summer maintenance techniques should be instituted to minimize the resulting damage to the fairways, tees, and greens.

Note: principles A, B, D and E should apply to all winter sports activities on the Par 3 in general.
January 24, 2012

Jennifer Ringold & Bruce Chamberlain
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
2117 West River Road
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55411

RE: Redevelopment of Theodore Wirth Park / 18 Hole Golf Course

Dear Ms. Ringold and Mr. Chamberlain:

Enclosed, please find the position paper of the Theodore Wirth Golf Association on the work to be done related to the 18 Hole Golf Course at Theodore Wirth Park. The Theodore Wirth Golf Association has been in existence since the early 1920s and has been an active and ongoing member of park life for decades. We have provided a position paper related to the proposed redevelopment of the park in order to make it a part of the public record. We will take an active role in the process as it progresses as our role has been more in the background to this point.

I was designated by the President of the Theodore Wirth Association, Randy Merchen, to lead a group and draft the position paper on behalf of the entire Association.

Please contact me with any questions. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

Paul V. Kieffer
Direct Dial # 651-294-2421
Paul@GallagherLawUS.com

cc: Randy Merchen (via email)
Gary Prevost (via email)
Derek Pile (via email)
Robert Dwyer (via email)

John Munger  
City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation 
1301 Theodore Wirth Parkway 
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55422
The 18 hole course at Theodore Wirth Park
Submitted to the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and
Citizen’s Advisory Commission
by the Theodore Wirth Golf Association

January, 2012

The Theodore Wirth Golf Association is, we believe, the longest continuing
organized group using Wirth Park. The origins of the Theodore Wirth Golf Association
date back to the 1920’s, when our group was known as the Theodore Wirth Men’s
Club.

As a group, our preference is not to change the golf course. If change comes,
we believe the golf course will benefit from a better division between golf and winter
activities and thus are not opposed to course changes that lead to improved course
playability. Our goal with this document is to express, in a concise way, the views of
18 hole golfers on the project and to make constructive suggestions towards
accomplishing the CAC’s goals.

We share the view of the Friends of the Par 3 that we have no criticism of skiers
or a condemnation of their Foundation. The City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation is well
known for its success. In fact, it is our view that the 80 plus years of mutual use of the
park should continue with the proper protections of the golf course from damage
from winter activities. Additionally, we will propose other steps to be taken in the
park to improve the quality for all users of the park.

1. **Historic Significance:**

   The historic significance of the Theodore Wirth Golf Course has been overlooked, we believe, in this process. While subject to debate, we believe Wirth is among the oldest 18 hole public golf course in the United States west of the Mississippi, opening in 1916. Further, golf in the park traces back to 1898 according to [http://minneapolisparkhistory.com/2010/10/25/the-mother-of-all-minneapolis-golf-courses-bryn-mawr-i/](http://minneapolisparkhistory.com/2010/10/25/the-mother-of-all-minneapolis-golf-courses-bryn-mawr-i/)

   The significance of the age of the course is important in for the CAC and the Park Board to consider during the redevelopment of the course. To the best of our knowledge, the 17th and 18th holes considered for destruction are original to the course at its present location.

   The strength of the park is not just “trails and silent contemplation” as stated by the Nordic Ski Foundation. Wirth has hosted The Bronze Amateur Golf Tournaments, a historically significant event for the African-American community, The Twin Cities Championship, benefitting the Courage Center and Fairway Foundation (a large fund raising tournament over its existence), and numerous state sanctioned events conducted by the Minnesota Public Golf Association, Minnesota Golf
Association, and the Minnesota Women's Public Golf Association. Numerous youth programs have been run through the golf course staff and our association over many years.

2. **Environmental issues and tree / vegetation removal / erosion**

For 80 plus years, cross country and the 18 hole golf course existed on the same plat of land. We see no reason why this cannot continue.

The Wirth Golf Association is concerned about the systematic removal of trees that have been undertaken in recent years. We believe no further trees should be removed from the 18 hole or Par 3 course, with the exception of safety requirements and the need to remove trees likely over 100 years old to build a new 18th hole, should the redesign of the park progress. The removal of such treasured trees results solely from the planned redesign. It is not the preference of the Wirth Golf Association to remove such trees.

The nature of the park has been altered in recent years with removal of trees and vegetation. We believe the park, which is beginning to support more wildlife, should be left alone. Alternatively, we believe any further tree or vegetation removal should be subject to public hearing and debate. A systematic plan developed not by the Wirth Golf Association, the Nordic Ski Foundation, or any group should be the
basis for the important public policy questions of the maintenance of the environment. Erosion problems need to be proactively addressed at the time a trial is conceived.

We are excited to announce the Soil, Water Climate Department, at the University of Minnesota and 60 of its students, have generously offered their services to the Wirth Golf Association to advise on the redevelopment project and general improvements to the park. The group will prepare a presentation, at no cost, to examine the environmental effects of existing and additional tree and vegetation removal, effects of the golf course and other operations on the park, steps to protect Bassett Creek from degradation by park activities, and methods to improve soil, water, and environmental qualities of the park. An examination of the construction of “rain gardens” to protect and restore Bassett Creek could be part of their task. We have attached to this report a photograph from 1936 that demonstrates how the creek has been changed. We seeks to restore its original state.

Our goal, as an Association, is to urge the CAC and the Park Board to reduce costs for maintenance by creating more environmentally natural areas on the course and to increase water and soil quality. Doing so improves the park for all users and
not a particular group. The ecological health of the land and water should be the primary concern when considering any new use for the park.

3. **Redesign of the golf course**

The Wirth Golf Association believes golfers must be part of the redesign process of the course and that *the playability of the course for all golfers and the strength of the course for tournaments must be a goal of the CAC and the Park Board.*

The Nordic Ski Foundation expressed concerns about the quality of the 17th and 18th holes. The 17th hole was voted one of the outstanding holes in the fall by Golf Digest. The 18th hole is a challenging par 3. We believe it is challenging to maintain the 17th hole with winter activities. The course was able to do so for generations and only increased winter activity in recent years has caused the damage to the 17th hole.

The Wirth Golf Association believes the redesign of the course should attain the following goals:

1. **Maintain a safe separation of summer activities.** Public golfers tend to not always play in the fairway. A safe distance based on established golf course design standards should be considered while planning any park uses at or near a golf hole.
2. **Maintain the trees to the left and right of hole 10.** A map has been circulating showing “cycling event trails”. (See Tab A) The trees in the area of these trials are quite old. (See Tab B). The areas to the left and right of ten would expose most importantly people to being injured by golfers and liability potentially resting on the Park Board for the design flaw.

3. Further, the “event trials” mentioned in the document in Tab A so near Bassett Creek has the potential for further damage to a creek that once flowed wide and deep. (See: Tab C) At a minimum, the report generated by the University of Minnesota group, mentioned below, should be used by the CAC and the Park Board to examine environmental protection and improvement.

4. Changing the entrance to the north end of the park from Golden Valley Road would destroy a scenic entrance. If the park was being built today, such an area would be recommended, not destroyed.

5. The Wirth Golf Association endorses the following redesign elements:

   a. The new 12th hole Par 3 from left of the present 11th green across Bassett’s Creek. (See: Tab D)

   b. The new 13th hole Par 4, with the following comments:

      1a. A new 13th hole of 230 to 300 yards with a new green just over Basset Creek creating a drivable par 4 with significant risk reward.

      1b. Build the new 13th hole using the existing 12th green but make it possible to carry Basset Creek with an aggressive tee shot for all levels of play.

      2. Area to the left and right of the present 12th hole and around a new 12th green (should option 1a above occur) would revert to natural non-maintained areas.
3. No bike path would exist on the right side of the hole due to safety concerns and the need to expand and improve natural areas. Further, biking near golf would expose the Park Board to liability.

4. We also seek ways to modify the present 11th hole, create a new 12th hole in a different location, all leading to the goal of preserving or improving the existing 12th hole with the aid of a golf course architect and without removal of trees on the 11th hole.

c. Examine the potential to convert the present 13th hole into a Par 5, should the existing 12th hole be removed. No bike paths on the right side of the present 13th hole should be allowed due to safety reasons.

d. The new 18th hole (See: Tab E) would include:

1. Tees on the reservoir area as well as on the hill below the reservoir. We have confirmed from the recorded easement and the City of Golden Valley that a tee is permitted on the reservoir.

2. Tree removal must be minimized. The proposed tee by the Wirth Golf Association would lead to this result versus the hole designed demonstrated at the Charette which removed up to 100 plus yards of trees and vegetation. The tee shot should be through a chute of trees to minimize loss.

3. Natural prairie areas would flank the left and right side of the 18th fairway and behind the 18th green, with the goal of increasing natural areas to replace areas removed in recent years for skiing.
e. We believe the drainage problems should be addressed on the 15th hole while equipment is on site and the other projects are being undertaken. Dealing with the water problems on 15 would increase revenue on several fronts.

f. We are opposed to a configuration that moves the 10th tee to the present 11th tee and makes the 18th hole the 10th hole but downhill. The distance from the 9th green to the proposed 10th tee would slow play due to the distance and the time spent in the clubhouse after nine holes and cause administrative problems for staffing the tee.

Having the 18th green near the parking lot, sidewalks and the parkway would create numerous safety issues. Golfers would be hitting shots at a parking lot, sidewalks, and the parkway. Further, the 10th hole, as configured, is original and was the original 1st hole when the course opened. The historic hole should be not altered, given the other alterations to the historic nature of the course.

5. The University of Minnesota group would examine the present drainage patterns on the 2nd, 5th, and 9th holes to remedy the drainage installed in the 1994 course remodel. By all appearances, the drainage has failed. The examination would accomplish three goals: improve course playability presently harmed by poor water drainage, improve the water quality in the ponds and marsh areas on each hole, and improve the quality of the park for all users.

6. To improve revenue and playability, we are seeking the assistance of the Turf School at the University of Minnesota, if agreed to by management staff at Wirth Golf Course or other turf experts.

4. Build a Dedicated Welcome Center for Silent Sports and Winter Recreation

The Wirth Golf Association is not opposed to the new “Welcome Center”. We believe the CAC and Park Board should return the Chalet to its original historic design
and would urge the involvement of historic preservationists to examine the building and develop a plan to preserve the treasure that the Chalet has become. Before additional public money is spent on a new building, the existing building should be protected.

5. The driving range

We support the Friends of the Par 3’s position on the driving range.

6. Park Usage

The number of golfers who use the 18 hole and Par 3 course are objective facts. We believe, as stewards of public money, the CAC and Park Board owe a duty to find objective facts on the non-golf usage of the park. The numbers we have seen in the planning process are estimates. If these usages are accurate today what are the projected usages and costs if the facility is upgraded?

7. Vision

Golf is clearly a lifetime activity, as is soccer, baseball, and hockey. It is not dying in Minnesota or even on the decline. Golf, soccer, baseball, and hockey, to name a few, are all sports ignored in the Nordic presentation reflecting the danger of turning the public policy question of park operation over to a private group. The Nordic Ski Foundation has stated:
While building on Wirth Park’s strengths, this would be a new signature park in the Park Board system. The park would feature world class cross country ski trails, a feature that only a northern city like Minneapolis could boast. With Wirth Park’s woods and hills, it could also provide world class mountain biking and trail running experiences. This is what the Park Board should strive for: a world class park that can be used by all and that will be particularly effective at introducing and retaining young people to lifetime sports.

The Nordic Ski Foundation has failed to explain why the trials that exist cannot be made to be “world class” without the systematic destruction of the trees, vegetation, and habitat of the park which has already partially occurred. We agree with the Friends of the Par 3 who stated:

The Nordic Ski Foundation should be commended for promoting events such as this. There should be no reason why these events can’t be successful without damaging or having to modify the golf course or any of the facilities for other park users.

CONCLUSION

The Theodore Wirth Golf Association has a long and rich history at Wirth Park. Our members generously support the course and concessions. We see no conflict between golf and skiing but do want the CAC process to lead to a course that is more environmentally sound, stops the removal of trees, maintains the history of the course, enables the growing of the game, and builds the new holes to meet modern standards while at the same time reducing course maintenance costs.
Ski jump, Glenwood Park, Minneapolis.
Photographer: Charles J. Hibbard (~1924)
Photograph Collection 1923
Location no. MH5.9 MP4.1 p128
Negative no. 5324-B
View of Bassett Creek and the end of the golf course at Theodore Wirth Park.
Photographer: Norton & Peel
Photograph Collection 6/7/1948
Location no. Norton & Peel 179909
Negative no. NP179909
View of the Theodore Wirth Golf Course.
Photographer: Norton & Peel
Photograph Collection ca. 6/1948
Location no. Norton & Peel 179931
Negative no. NP179931
EVENT TRAILS FOR MOUNTAIN BIKES PROPOSED FOR WIRTH GOLF COURSE NEXT TO HOLES #12 AND #13 AND PAR 3 HOLES #6 AND #7

The four documents listed below can be found on the Minneapolis Park Board website (www.minneapolisparks.org/default.asp?PageID=1150)

1) cycling trails overlay - this map shows a proposed route for an event trail loop which runs along the fence line separating Hidden Lakes homes from the 18-hole and Par 3 golf courses at Theodore Wirth Park. Golfers are opposed to this concept for a number of reasons.

2) trails cross-sections - pay special attention to the MTN. BIKE: EVENT illustration showing a 6 foot wide trail with a surface of grass and GRAVEL.

November 15 CAC (Citizens Advisory Committee) Meeting Materials

3) Handout - Charrette Findings (with design directives from CAC to staff) - the relevant language here can be found on page 2 “Establish a multi-use event trail loop through North Wirth that can coexist with golf. No removal of mature trees. New trail limited to 4-6 ft wide. Use existing trails when possible.”

4) Handout - MOCA Position Paper - Minneapolis Off-Road Cycling Advocates (MOCA) has a long history of building and maintaining trails in an area of Wirth Park known as the “Back 40”. These are single-track trails for mountain bikes. Please note the section on the second page under WHAT MOCA DOES NOT DO. It describes the racecourse (event) as follows: Racecourses often require large amounts of gravel and use powered equipment to repair eroded or damaged areas. The last two pages show photos of what event trails look like when used in wet conditions. This shows what event trails running alongside the fence would look like.

Concept plans for trail location and design are in the process of being prepared NOW for the next meeting of the CAC. Any comments or concerns which GOLFERS have regarding these proposed trails should be made as soon as possible. The next CAC meeting is scheduled for late January, 2012 or early February. A good way to express your comments and concerns would be to contact Bruce Chamberlain, Assistant Superintendent for Planning of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). His e-mail address is: bchamberlain@minneapolisparks.org

This document was prepared by The Friends of The Theodore Wirth Par 3. Contact us at ‘dwyers@ties2.net’ or ‘swylie@mninter.net’
Please insert the information you would like to share with the Citizen Advisory Committee in the box below.

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Among the documents provided for distribution before the next CAC meeting is the proposal showing certain principles which The Friends of the Theodore Wirth Par 3 believe should be an essential part of the policy regarding "Snow making on the Par", as follows: Snow making on the Par 3: A) should be moderated, B) should be controlled by MPRB staff, C) should be subject to a strict cut off date of February 14th of each year so that the course does not have to kept closed in the spring awaiting snow melt due to excessive snow making, and D) Par 3 golfers should be kept informed of developments, and E) advanced and aggressive summer maintenance techniques should be instituted to minimize the resulting damage to the fairways, tees, and greens. Note: principles A, B, D and E should apply to all winter sports activities on the Par 3 in general. The date of February 14th was arrived at in discussion with the MPRB maintenance staff. As far as we are aware this date has been complied with for this 2012 winter/spring. We are not sure that the snow making has been sufficiently moderated so as to prevent any unnecessary negative effect on the 2012 opening of the Par 3 or any negative effect on the longer term condition of the course. We believe these principles should be formally included in the snow making policy of the MPRB and to that end a recommendation by the CAC would seem appropriate.

Robert Dwyer Friends of the Theodore Wirth Par 3

There have been a number of negative comments about the way the MPRB golf courses are maintained. “The Golf courses, ... are an ecological flop. The chemicals, irrigation and constant mowing make what seems to be a "green" space in fact a very pitiful use of a natural resource.” November 8, 2011 “since a driving range is a huge consumer of water and fertilizer resources. There must also be a large quantity of fuel used to manicure the grass.” November 14, 2011 “Does he realize how much fertilizer is used on a golf course?” November 9, 2011 People can't be blamed for expressing their feelings about the maintenance that is performed on the golf courses but they should really check their facts before they criticize. The MPRB staff conducts a maintenance program at the golf courses which minimizes the use of fertilizers and herbicides both by limiting the frequency of application but also by restricting the areas to which they are applied. While some mowing is done nearly every day, nothing is mowed unless the course/weather conditions have made it necessary. Under this maintenance program the Par 3 and three of the 18 hole courses have received Audubon Certification. Certification is pending on the other two 18 hole courses and final approval should not be a problem since the program standards are the same for every course. In addition there are those who are concerned about the effect of the use of the gas powered vehicles to perform this maintenance. It seems a reasonable objective to eventually and gradually replace the use gas powered maintenance equipment (and golf carts) with electric powered vehicles. This should be looked into when the MPRB considers reinvestment in these assets. But of course this concern about equipment use also applies to the winter program especially cross-country skiing. While equipment is used to prepare for winter sports, which includes the distribution of man-made snow at the beginning of the season, it is the regular trail maintenance that has the most impact. In a normal weather year the 15 miles of trails at Theodore Wirth Park plus 5 additional miles through the Chain of Lakes are groomed daily,... each mile every day! Ski trails at the other golf courses, Columbia, Gross and Hiawatha and adjoining park land are groomed at least twice a week. More recently the increasing impact snow making has become an issue. Additional maintenance is now required to restore the parks to good condition the following spring and summer. Persons worried about the
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<th>Environmental impact of maintenance on MPRB land should keep their attention on both summer and winter activities.</th>
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<td>i am writing in support of the Wirth Golf Association position on the redevelopment. Mar 17, 2012 7:41 PM</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>I am standing in support of the Wirth Golf Associations position on the redesign of the golf course. Mar 16, 2012 11:07 PM</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Please support the Wirth 18 hole and 9 hole golf courses. They are important parts of the Theo Wirth Parkway Green Space. Golf is great exercise and a game that can be played by all ages. It is a sport that lasts a lifetime. Mar 15, 2012 10:49 PM</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>To Whom it may concern, I am sharing information regarding future use of the park and observations concerning the golf course. (18 hole championship course). I am an avid environmentalist. I have been a BWCAW canoe guide. I have led environmental learning field trips for ten years in my elementary school where I teach. I have a cabin in the woods in northern Minnesota. I also love to play the game of golf. Golf is a game which is outdoors, in nature, and in beautiful wild settings. The golf course at Wirth is unique. It is historic. It is also in a wild setting in an urban area. Completely unique in todays world. It is also an amazingly difficult and challenging course for a serious golfer. This aspect and the combination of factors favors taking serious consideration when making any decisions regarding changes in the Wirth Park. I would strongly advise to respect the unique nature of this golf course and actually celebrate having it as part of the park system and building around the course other fabulous natural opportunities but leaving the golf course as it is or at least respect and accept it's value. Eric Sisler Cross-country skier and golfer of Minneapolis Mar 15, 2012 10:39 PM</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>I support The mens club at Theodore Wirth on their recommendations Mar 15, 2012 2:30 PM</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>My views have been expressed in the document of the Wirth Golf Association. We are not seeking redesign of the course, that comes from the biking and skiing community, but if done the integrity of both courses must be maintained. If money goes into a redesign it would be very good if a driving range, long missing from Wirth be added. Also, if money is spent on the courses, water problems that surfaced in 2011 on the front nine of the main course must be addressed. More details are provided in the document from our association. Mar 15, 2012 10:22 AM</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Again, there are various opinions about the popularity and financial impact of golf compared to other activities in the MPRB system: (Part Two, Financial Picture) “expanding the Silent Sports opportunities and believe the rev opportunity for the Park and the benefits to the public by doing this is much greater than putting in a driving range” November 14,2011 “The golf courses are only functional5 months out of the year biking/skiing is all year.” November 13, 2011 “I support NOT adding more holes to the golf course…. The bike trails are built &amp; maintained by volunteers, but the golf course needs paid care. Multi-use at no cost trumps single-use with costs.” November 12, 2011 “There seems to be less interest than ever before, and in fact most of the “golfers” I know are golfing less and less every season. .... where as golfs days are numbered. Youth golf participation is declining every year while at the same time youth” November 11, 2011 “I have heard that the Wirth golf courses are losing money year after year for the park. I know they take a ton of resources and man power to maintain. Mar 14, 2012 4:04 PM</td>
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The environmental impacts of a golf course are significant.” November 9, 2011 “Golf is on the decline, period.” November 9, 2011 “. If the figures don’t lie, the par 3 golf course has been losing money every year. Thus I would like to see the par 3 course be removed and turned into a driving range...” November 9, 2011 “Given the continuing decline of the popularity of golf added to the Wirth courses in particular losing money annually, it seems indefensible to me to spend more money in this recreational area.” November 8, 2011 Let us take a brief look at golf’s financial picture. A work sheet is available which shows revenues collected and expense incurred at each golf course location from 1997 through 2010. This shows expenses exceeded revenues at Columbia only once, in 2010. Expenses exceeded revenues at the Theodore Wirth 18 hole course in three of the years out of 14. The Par 3 has expenses exceeding revenues in only one year, 2002. But the Fort Snelling course shows an excess of expenses in each of the last 9 years, this due to the fact that the MPRB does not own the Ft. Snelling land. Overall, the revenues exceeded expenses in all 14 years by a large margin, even with the costs and revenues of the Junior Golf Program included. But the golf courses are part of the MPRB Enterprise Fund. Activities in this fund are expected cover all of their costs with the revenues (fees) collected. The golf courses, Concessions (Refectories), ice areas, permits and certain recreational activities are the programs accounted for in the Enterprise Fund. These activities must bear the costs incurred elsewhere on their behalf. The objective is match the “Full Cost” of the activities with the fees collected. Without detail discussions with MPRB Financial Staff one should not draw too many conclusions about this complex accounting process. But it is common that this full costing includes expenditures for each course incurred away from their location as well as cost incurred in other funds such as the general administrative expenses of the MPRB. Full costing of this kind is a fair process and also helps reduce the citizen’s tax burden. Looking at 2010 as an example, after these adjustments, and as shown in the final MPRB annual report, the revenues for the golf courses have been reduced by about $58,000 and the expenses have been increased by $524,000. In 2010 these allocations turned a profit into a loss for two of the courses. The total shortfall for golf, including the Junior Golf Program, in 2010 was about $181,000. A net loss of that size for a $6 million dollar a year operation would be considered a modest variation to be made up for in better years. And, if you look at the available MPRB annual reports you will see that 2010 is the only year in the last seven that golf has incurred an overall loss. It takes some skill to manage the fee structure and contain costs in such a way so as to maintain a close margin between revenues and expenses. Further examination into prior years should reveal that, except for the occasional bad year, golf is a net contributor to the Enterprise Fund. And the Enterprise fund, in turn, is a contributor via transfers to help cover the MPRB debt service cost as well as transfers to the MPRB General Fund to help cover the cost of activities which do not support themselves thereby, again, reducing the citizen’s tax burden. But there is a risk in attempting to maintain a positive margin by too much cost containment. A tipping point can be reached and the effects of cost containment will begin to reduce rounds and revenues at an accelerating rate, and for the long term. The question for the MPRB then will be whether they are willing to make a real, new, commitment to protect a unique and historic investment. What can we say about Winter Activities? In 2010 there was a small amount of winter activities that were accounted for in the Enterprise Fund. This is likely the tubing hill which in the past has been the only winter activity which regularly pays for itself. However that year these activities incurred a $34,000 loss on a $73,000 operation. In addition for winter activities
in the MPRB General Fund expenses exceeded revenues by another $147,000. By these figures 40% of the cost of winter activities was paid for by other general revenues or the tax dollar. Generally, through 2010, most winter activities should have been accounted for the MPRB General Fund. This fund is supported by the citizen’s tax dollar. Fees are sometimes collected for activities in this fund but not for the purpose of fully covering their costs. Instead the fees recover a portion of the costs and are a method of managing the use of the facilities. Although revenues have risen significantly for winter activities over the last four years, especially for cross-country skiing, costs have also increased. A modest estimate of the losses for winter activities over the 2004 through 2010 period amount to $1.2 million. This figure may not be complete because it is difficult to find analysis by activity outside the Enterprise Fund. In addition costs outside the Enterprise Fund identified as winter activities are understated since they would not be subject to the same full costing process and it is unlikely that any general administrative costs of the MPRB, already paid out of the General Fund, would be added to their presentation. Therefore you must be careful when comparing winter activity figures to golf figures since their basis of accounting may be different. Most winter activities, including skiing, have never covered their costs, and are not expected to cover them. It may not be practical to raise fees to cover the shortfall since the MPRB fees have to remain competitive with other opportunities in the metro area. This is fine. Many activities are provided for, in whole or in part, by your tax dollar: neighborhood parks, parkways, baseball and soccer fields, tennis courts, etc. To keep the tax levy low there is a temptation to hide costs in proprietary funds like the Enterprise Fund. There is a serious danger with leaving activities which incur perpetual losses in this fund. If you can not, or will not, appropriately set fees or manage expenses a deficit can quickly grow, which no one feels responsible for, to a point indicating financial mismanagement. This happened a few years ago to the City of Minneapolis and they suffered a serious downgrade in their bond rating.

There are various opinions about the popularity and financial impact of golf compared to other activities in the MPRB system: (Part One, Rounds of Golf)

"expanding the Silent Sports opportunities and believe the rev opportunity for the Park and the benefits to the public by doing this is much greater than putting in a driving range" November 14, 2011

"The golf courses are only functional 5 months out of the year biking/skiing is all year." November 13, 2011

"I support NOT adding more holes to the golf course.... The bike trails are built & maintained by volunteers, but the golf course needs paid care. Multi-use at no cost trumps single-use with costs." November 12, 2011

"There seems to be less interest than ever before, and in fact most of the “golfers” I know are golfing less and less every season. .... where as golf days are numbered. Youth golf participation is declining every year while at the same time youth golf is on the decline, period." November 9, 2011

"I have heard that the Wirth golf courses are losing money year after year for the park. I know they take a ton of resources and man power to maintain. The environmental impacts of a golf course are significant." November 9, 2011

"Given the continuing decline of the the popularity of golf added to the Wirth courses in particular losing money annually, it seems indefensible to me to spend more money in this recreational area." November 8, 2011

We need to be clear on the actual general parameters. Generally the MPRB golf courses open
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up around Apr 1st and close Nov 1st or thereafter, each year, depending on weather. This means on average there are 7 months of golf and 5 months of winter sports. For winter sports which need artificial snow making it takes a little bit longer, after course closings, to get their areas ready. Often Wirth golf course has to delay the start of their season after Apr 1st due to excessive snow melt required by artificial snow making. Often the Wirth Par 3 can’t make use of playable weather after Nov 1st since the set up for ski rental begins in anticipation of sufficient snow. Mountain biking trails are open and used year round and none of the current trails conflict with areas for golf activities. What do the records of the MPRB reveal about the popularity and financial impact of golf? Golf has gone through a number of cycles of relative popularity during its 100 years in Minneapolis. According to an MPRB document on the history of golf in Minneapolis at Wirth the course was opened in 1916. As the only course the usage was high and the rounds played continued to increase in its early years. The course was expanded to 18 holes in 1919. Subsequently four other 18 hole courses were added. The last one was started in 1929 and was completed in 1934. During the 1950’s the Theodore Wirth course operated at a loss but popularity picked up again in the 1960’s The Par 3 course, still the only one in the MPRB system, was added in 1962. During the most recent golf boom many new courses were built throughout the state and in the nation. But the MPRB, except for taking on the management of the Fort Snelling executive nine, did not add any additional golf courses. So, in the current circumstances, the MPRB is not left with excess golf capacity and continues to provide a cost effective golf opportunity in each area of the City. The real statistics show rounds and profitability have gone through a number of up and down cycles over the years, mostly in response to economic conditions and generational changes. Golf participation has been down at times but has always come back as generations come of age and begin understand and appreciate the game. The following comes from the actual MPRB statistics on rounds played: From 1919 through 1920 Wirth was transitioning to from 9 to 18 holes and Columbia was transitioning from 6 holes to a full 18. The total rounds for both courses in 1920 was 55,125, or about the same number of rounds that Wirth had been experiencing after it first opened. From 1921 through 1925, with both courses operating at 18 holes for full years the number of rounds had a upward trend from 97,000 to 121,000. In 1926 Gross (Armor) had its first full year of operation and the total rounds for all three courses was 159,767. In 1927 Meadowbrook had its first full year of operation and from that year through 1932 the four courses had total rounds ranging from 153,00 to 173,000 each year, except for 1930 which was a stellar year with a total of 219,273 rounds. But rounds dropped to 106,000 in 1933, and 76,000 in 1934, and further to 69,000 in 1935 even with the addition of Hiawatha in its first full year of operation. 1936 began a gradual rise with 103,000 for the five courses. From 1937 through 1945 the rounds ranged from a low of 105,000 to a high of 157,000. 1946 through 1957 saw increases and a stable period. Except for two bad weather years, 1951-52, the total rounds per year were about 200,000 with a low of 194,000 and a high of 216,000. From 1958 to 1968 there was a jump in the total rounds for the five courses which ranged from a low of 213,000 to a high of 254,000. From 1969 through 1972 total rounds dropped owing to the redesign work at Theodore Wirth and reconstruction at Columbia which was completely closed for two years. Through 1980 there was another stable period with rounds averaging less than in the 1960’s but never falling below 200,000. From 1981 to 1992 there was a rebound in rounds played, except for a couple of bad weather years rounds ranged from 240,000 to a high of 268,000. But by then the courses were
beginning to show their age. The Hiawatha front 9 was remodeled in 1993. Drainage problems reduced rounds at Wirth and 9 holes were closed for all of 1994 during reconstruction. In 1995 -96 Meadowbrook went through a renovation due to water problems. Still the total rounds ranged from 213,000 to 230,000 during these years. The rounds rose again from 1997 through 2001 to a range of 238,000 to 258,000, even though the Hiawatha back 9 was remodeled in 1999. But once again, in a period of economic decline the rounds for the five courses fell. The range from 2002 to 2005 was 203,000 to 232,000. And the total has fallen just below 200,000 in 4 of the last five years with a low of 186,816 in 2010. Reconstruction of the sprinkler system at Columbia also affected these last years and 2010 was a bad weather year particularly for that course. These figures do not include the rounds for the Wirth Par 3 or for the Fort Snelling courses. The actual rounds for the Par 3 are not available from its opening in 1962 through 1991. From 1992 to 2001 rounds for that course ranged for 25,000 to 30,000 but with the economic decline rounds have dropped to a average of 21,000 rounds through 2004 and in the last six years to 15,000. The MPRB took over the operation of the Ft. Snelling course in 1992. Rounds stayed above, sometimes well above, 30,000 through 2001. They dropped to an average of about 27,000 in 2002-03, and to about 22,000 a year through 2010. Rounds played can be affected by a number of factors. These include weather, the economy, course conditions, and generational changes. There have been numerous but isolated bad weather years for golf over its MPRB history. The economy usually affects a span of years, some time short, sometime long. Clearly we are currently in a somewhat long span of bad economic conditions. Although a person can get into golf with a very modest investment, playing regularly costs more than most of the other sports which use North Wirth Park. Course conditions are affected in turn by weather events and trends, age of the course, and the effects of the use (especially non-golf uses) of the course. Rounds for 2011 are expected to be down because it was overall a bad weather year. And Theodore Wirth suffered additionally due to a sever bad weather event. The age of the courses will require attention. Much of the parkland is mature forest require some method of thinning, to preserve greens and tees, without significant removal of trees. Drainage continues to be a problem on several of the courses even though work had been done on this within the last 20 years. Much of this must be re-done. Some original construction techniques make maintaining tees and greens more problematic and costly. Again there is potential for improvements. Also, there are environmental improvements which could reduce costs in the long run and enhance the experience for golfers and all park users. More disciplined management of non-golf winter sports using the golf course area could also simplify summer maintenance. Clearly it is superficial to say that a drop in rounds played represents a permanent trend or a sign of a dying population of golfers. It is true that golf is played in a higher proportion by persons who are more mature and have the time and disposable income to do so. Which is why one presentation at the Charrette pointed out that the coming retirements of the Baby-boom generation is one of the reasons we should be optimistic about seeing significant increases in rounds at the MPRB courses.

There seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding about the proposal to place a driving range in the area of the current 17th hole.... “. Appaently the installation of a driving range would negate the possibility of a more multiuse situation of the area involved..... I understand there is an existing one 2 miles away. Golfer can go there?” November 14, 2011 “errant golf balls from a driving range just don't fitin a mixed use area.” November 14, 2011 “Iam concerned with the proposed
driving range on the 17th hole of the golf course. I have nothing against driving ranges nor golf at all. However, running, biking and hiking on trails proposed in this area with golf balls flying is a hazard and quite frankly brings the entire plan backwards.” November 14, 2011 “we can't have it derailed by a short sighted plan to reduce the scope of the Cycling Area and put a driving range there.” November 14, 2011 “Members of the Citizen Advisory Committee: It has come to my attention a golf driving range is being considered as an addition to Theodore Wirth Park. I would like to voice my strong opposition to this proposal. Golf at Theodore Wirth is well represented and occupies much land during summer season. To eliminate or reduce the land available for activities such as mountain biking or cyclecross events would limit the number of people who might utilize this community resource for activities other than golf. ....” Nov 7, 2011 “If a driving range is really needed, the design should incorporate it into the existing space already dedicated to golfing so it only affects the activity of golfing and not any other summer activities like the mountain bike trails, hiking trails, etc” Nov 7, 2011 “As I understand it, the driving range will consume space needed for other multi-sport events....” Nov 6, 2011 “Although I have always wanted a driving range at the Wirth course, I feel that given these options it makes the most sense to forgo that and choose to build the welcome center!” Nov 6, 2011 Golfers are being asked to give up two historic golf holes which have been part of the course for nearly 100 years. These holes are integral to the design and character of the course. Theodore Wirth is the most difficult of all the city courses. Its golfers are proud of the course and its unique character. The 17th and 18th holes are fine challenges in keeping with the rest of the course. The only problem with these holes is their condition. Maintenance problems have gotten worse in recent years as the use of these holes for winter sports has increased. If golfers need to give up these holes it is reasonable that they should get something back. A driving range as part of a golf training area should be included in the final plan. Winter sports would have full use of the current 17th and 18th hole areas during their season as long as this use is properly managed so as not to cause unneeded delay of the beginning of the golf season. The current 18th hole area will be fully available for non-golf summer sports, subject to the final design of the new 18th hole. The driving range is not intended to be included at the expense of any of the other summer sports at the park. It would not displace any of the current biking or hiking trails and would not interfere with the placement and construction of a Welcome Center. The proposal is that the current 17th hole area be shared. The driving range could be active and generate revenue except for times that non-golf summer events would be scheduled for the stadium or start/finish area. The new high school mountain bike league fall season should be part of the schedule. MPRB management staff would impartially manage all scheduling. This golf training area will provide facilities for youth programs in an area of the City where they do not currently exist. For this sharing concept to work it may be necessary that each user community accept more limited versions of their objectives. The driving range may not be designed to match normal specifications. Biking and hiking trails may have to have extra protection and take routes that minimize exposure. Everyone is concerned about the safety of all park users, including non-event daily hikers and bikers. However, if we can’t work out shared use of the 17th hole area then there is little chance that multi-use trails in other portions of the park next to golf holes will work. Many people have written in about how many other Par 3 courses and driving ranges there are in the metro area. It is interesting to hear people from all over the metro say how easy it should be for golfers, especially youth golf program participants, to
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Prior to the last CAC meetings many non-golfers were under the impression that golfers wished to expand the area dedicated to golf at Wirth Park... “I am not sure exactly how the proposed plans for expanding the Theo-Wirth golf course...... I just hope the park board does not destroy such a wonderful jewel as the mountain bike trails at Wirth in the process.” November 14, 2011 “I am horrified at the thought that our outdoor recreation could be taken away...and replaced with golf! There are many, many golf courses in the area.” Nov 7, 2011 “Please please do not expand the golf course at Theo Wirth Park.” November 11, 2011 “Also, to decrease the length of mountain bike trails would...” November 11. 2011 “I want to speak up in opposition to the option(s) that would expand the golf course with the consequence of reducing or negatively impacting the existing 3 mile mountain bike loop.... To damage this gem to expand an activity that already takes up half of Wirth Park would be a shame.” November 11, 2011 “It does not fit with the mission of the park board to expand golf offerings.... ...” Nov 7, 2011 By now it should be evident to anyone attending the CAC meetings that golfers have never asked for an expansion of the area for golf at the expense of any other sport. The designs for golf hole changes at the Charrette which placed Par 3 golf holes on the meadow in the Back 40, or on the east side of the parkway, were in response to the desire of the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation objective of gaining the land used for Par 3 holes for their favored purposes. The Par 3 course has been successful on this land for 50 years, and, like the 18 hole course, has shared the land with skiers and winter sports for decades without controversy. Initially the management and maintenance staff at Wirth was somewhat sympathetic to the idea of moving Par 3 holes due to the difficulty of maintaining certain tees and greens. Par 3 golfers have always been against these changes. They want the course to remain challenging and successful, do not wish to disturb the mountain bike trails on the Back 40, do not wish to conflict with other golf holes and skiing east of the parkway, and hope that the meadow will continue to be maintained as a natural area. Par 3 golfers believe, in the long term, that the maintenance issues can be successfully addressed by allowing the maintenance staff to employ more aggressive but ecological maintenance techniques and by ensuring appropriate moderation regarding snow making and trail grooming. Similarly, regarding the 18 hole course, no golfer chose to make changes to the 17th and 18th holes. These are historic holes dating back nearly 100 years. If the course is redesigned and new holes appear on different land it is due to the Nordic Ski agenda regarding the land that these golf holes are on currently. Again, there are maintenance issues regarding these holes due in large part to snow making for winter sports. The hills of the courses at Theodore Wirth provide a unique character which should not be changed just because another sport or sports covet that ground. Because of the hills, the Theodore Wirth courses are unique in the metro area and the hills are equaled at only a few courses in the state.

Please include me in on the Theodore Wirth Park emails on the project and future public meetings to take place. I am a long time advocate of Wirth Park and utilize the park spring, summer, fall, and winter sports. And a patron golf card holder. And member of the Theodore Wirth Golf Association. Thanks, Derek
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<td>14</td>
<td>I am writing as a member of the Board of Directors of the Wirth Golf Club and volunteer director of the junior golf program for the club. I also work closely with the First Tee program. I have followed closely the plans for revision in north Wirth Park. I am fully supportive of retaining the Par 3 course in its current form. It is a very important asset for our novice junior players who use it on regular basis. I am support of the general plan to separate the 18 hole course from the winter program by eliminating the current 17th and 18th holes. For years we have had major conditioning issues with #17, complicated by the spring transition. The redesign involving hole #12 into two holes seems a resonable solution. The new #18 is a reasonable idea but the design will need to be tweaked. The plan to have summer bike trails that go out on to the back 9 is absolutely unworkable due to dangers for both golfers and bikers. That idea can not go forward. Our Board will be providing a detailed statement on these matters very soon.</td>
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<td>I recently learned that the county is considering constructing a light rail transit line in the BNSF Railway Corridor north of Highway 55, on the border of Theodore Wirth Park. This area is currently Bassets Creek overflow/watershed and home to a wide array of animal and bird species (as well as piece and quiet). All of the sustainability information I have read about Theodore Wirth Park indicates there is a shared goal to protect the natural resources in this park. I am not sure of all the stakeholders or beneficiaries of this decision but the park is positioned to only face additional destruction. Please provide input on this proposal to the Golden Valley Mayor, the Park and Rec board, the county commissioner Mark Stenglein, and at one of the Bottineau Transitway Scoping meetings. There is one at Theo Wirth Chalet on January 23rd at 4:30pm. It is our responsibility as neighbors and stewards to the park system to protect the boundaries and natural habitat of the park, keeping it enjoyable to all parties for the years to come.</td>
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<td>Jan 15, 2012 10:35 AM</td>
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<td>Hello, My name is Molly Gaines and I live on 12th and Washburn Ave N. I am an avid user of Wirth's current silent sport offerings, most notably trail running and skiing, and strongly advocate continuing to bolster this area of the park. It's one of the reasons we moved to the area, and an amenity I believe has the potential to attract many others to north Minneapolis, particularly Willard Hay. I very much support the addition of a Welcome Center for skiing and other silent sport users in the area. I love the idea of a multi-use center, and one that offers good coffee and perhaps a restaurant, in an area where this amenity is sorely lacking. While I appreciate the golf course and support its continued operation, I do not understand any proposal to expand or enhance golf offerings. There are so many places for people to golf, and the current Wirth golf course doesn't get maximum use as it is. Yet Wirth has the potential to become the premier place in Minneapolis for city-dwellers to engage in silent sports and truly &quot;get away from it all&quot; in the heart of the city. Furthermore, residents of north Minneapolis, particularly youth, would greatly benefit from increased emphasis on a variety of outdoor/nature offerings, versus more golf attractions (e.g. a driving range). There are not many places in the city of Minneapolis where residents can pursue silent sports in the way that Wirth offers. It's truly an urban oasis that could be smartly developed to encourage hiking, biking, trail running, etc. in the area, and encourage in the city and in North Minneapolis to embrace the outdoors. The park also has the potential to bridge the gap between north Minneapolis and other city residents, bringing residents together in the outdoors in unique and transformational ways. The combination of rising obesity rates, the &quot;nature</td>
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<td>deficit disorder” so many of our youth are experiencing, and a significant uptick in interest in silent sports makes the ideal choice for Wirth's future -- with its location, natural setting and existing trails/infrastructure -- so clear: embrace and pursue a silent sports and a silents sports center that symbolizes and acts as the center of everything Wirth park has the potential to be. Without a center focused on silent sports, silent sports will continue to feel like an afterthought for the park, rather than at the heart of it. Thank you, Molly Gaines</td>
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<td>I would like to see the Par 3 course remain intact. Any changes to the regulation 18 hole course should have approval of golfers because they don't want to see just holes created just to create holes but to see that they are good holes and fit the character of the course. Such as they do not want 3 par 3 holes on the back side and do not want the plan that plays 10 backwards. For the changes made of losing 17 and 18 (which are great hole designs by the way - would just need some tweaking and tlc) golfers want a driving range. If you are talking about revenue that would bring in far more than your idea of mountain biking which would it even bring in revenue. There has been a lot of destruction to the course in the removal of trees for skiing trails already on the back nine that seem to be bad for the forest system. Trees would need to be remove at a minimum to create new holes and that is understandable but what has been done for these trails is terrible. There are exposed roots to the trees lining these cut outs and have cause erosion already. Whoever did this apparently did not know what they were doing. I think there needs to be more oversight in this type of actions they seem to run amuck.</td>
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<td>I support the expansion on the single track mountain bike trails at Wirth as I believe it will be an asset to the biking community and help increase visitors to our park. I also support bridges over Wirth Pkwy and at Glenwood for skiing and hiking and biking purposes (much needed) as well as keeping and maintaining the permanent orienteering course that currently exists. I think the Silent Sports Center idea is a great one in that I believe it will help promote both summer and winter sports in the Mpls community, as well as to help increase the safety within the park as a whole. I use the park on a weekly basis if not more for various purposes (hiking, train running, skiing, the playground with my child, orienteering, and mountain biking). I am very happy to see that the city is making an effort to keep Wirth Park safe and fun for everyone as it is a vital part of the Mpls community for so many reasons. I do not support a driving range if it conflicts with other trails. One other idea I had to help keep the park clean, perhaps more volunteer clean up days could be arranged throughout the year - thus encouraging citizens to invest in the park which will help keep it not only cleaner, but also safer if more people take on such an investment and sense of responsibility within their community. Thank you - your investment in this project is very much appreciated.</td>
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<td>Are you serious? BMX course? Nordic ski centre? If part of the plan is to reroute 17 &amp; 18 and make them better holes, then fine. I have serious questions about the 17th hole myself. However, I'm guessing that Wirth is a pretty good money maker for the city &amp; the course has been in business as a going concern for many decades.</td>
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<td>Wirth Par 3 golf course is one of the jewels in the crown of Theodore Wirth Park. It serves a variety of valuable public services. It is close to the neighborhoods of several minority groups who use it frequently. It is the home of the Minnesota</td>
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Minority Junior Golf Association and the Minneapolis First Tee program. Seniors and young kids take advantage of its low cost and short length. Convention attendees from downtown are able to fit in a quick round at the Par 3. Spill-over players from tournaments on the 18 hole course use the Par 3. The Par 3 helps keep the slower players off the main course. The attendants at the Par 3 help mountain bikers with maps and repair parts and have even helped with first aid to injured bikers. The golfers accepted the disk golfers on to the course without much fuss. To radically change or plow-under the Par 3 to upgrade the family friendly winter skiing area into a "World Class" facility does not seem like a wise move. In fact, becoming a "World Class" facility deserves some debate. Sometimes small is beautiful.

I would like the Citizen Advisory Committee to know that I ride the mountain bike trails at Theodore Wirth Park often and I would like to see more mountain bike trails. I also volunteer for maintenance of the trails at Theodore Wirth Park. The cross country ski trails are also very important to me. Thank-you, Carl Paulson

The First Tee Minneapolis responds with our own vision as collaborated with our First Tee Advisory Board: Our Vision: Our vision is to expand facilities and enhance programming at Theo Wirth Golf Course to include a driving range, classroom within a new building, a practice chipping and putting green, pro shop, and a practice bunker. This new project would be called The First Tee Learning Center of Theo Wirth. The First Tee Minneapolis has plans to take our program to 57 elementary schools in Minneapolis through the National School Program (NSP) and a sponsorship with Nature Valley/General Mills. This NSP program will implement the 9 core values and 9 healthy habits to kids in gym classes at no cost to the schools. Our impact could be as much as 25,000 kids a year that will have been taught the important life skills that will make them better citizens, whether they end up playing golf or not. This could have a serious impact on rounds of golf at city golf courses and junior facilities in future years. Our vision also includes a “Fit for the First Tee” (see First Tee of Cleveland) facility which would mean nutrition, after school programming, and even cooking classes for participants and parents. This is the time to prepare for the growth of the game through the First Tee, not shut it out. We would be more than happy to share space with the Nordic Ski Foundation to combine golf and ski programs year around. Our future goals will be to make The Theo Wirth First Tee Learning Center the premiere practice center in the state, providing an opportunity for all kids to compete at the highest level. We also are looking at implementing a caddy program (which was incredibly successful in years past) that would give First Tee kids a job. We are also looking at being a continued host of the First Tee All City Junior Golf Tournament, MN PGA Junior Golf Championship, and hosting other premiere junior, senior, adult, and disability golf tournaments. We will also continue to send kids every year to the Toro Leadership Conference in Orlando, The First Tee Life Skills Academy in Kansas City, and other leadership forums and conferences throughout the year. Having a facility in North Minneapolis would greatly increase the opportunities for kids in our north side area participating at these great events. The First Tee of Minneapolis chapter serves 50 park centers throughout the city and annually reaches approximately 500-1000 youth. Programming takes place at Gross, Hiawatha, and Columbia Learning Centers. The First Tee Minneapolis has served over 7500 kids since it's inception in 2001 and continues to be a model for youth programming. Our program doesn't cost anything to families in need and equipment plus free rounds of golf are provided for every participant. Our program more importantly
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teaches 9 core values (Judgement, Respect, Courtesy, Sportsmanship, Honesty, Perseverance, Confidence, Integrity, and Responsibility) and recently began implementing the 9 healthy habits into our curriculum. The First Tee nationally has reached 4.7 million youth and has goals to reach 10 million kids by 2017. Our program would greatly benefit from an upgraded facility and needs to develop a driving range to implement programming and training for the north side community. Our program is hugely popular and successful and needs to look at developing more opportunities for training facilities and use other chapters as models (Three Rivers, Kansas City, Cleveland, Chicago). The First Tee of Minneapolis has been a model of junior programming and is recognized state wide as Michael Hinton, Executive Director won the prestigious Minnesota PGA Junior Golf Leader of the Year award for 2011. First Tee Minneapolis Mission: Mission Statement The mission statement of The First Tee is to positively impact the lives of young people by providing learning facilities and educational programs that promote character development and life-enhancing values through the game of golf. Our vision is to teach The First Tee Nine Core Values providing the vehicle through which kids can accomplish their dreams, thrive socially, excel academically and athletically, and become productive members of society with integrity, strong family values and commitment to community. Our mission is to serve the north side community in this project and across the city period. We want to connect with the north side community by providing jobs, creating after school programming, educating children on the important life skills and core values through the game of golf. We want to provide all children a place to go for socialization and support, inspiration, income, food, and education to become better citizens. We want to educate our communities to all of the possibilities that golf has to offer and how the First Tee organization can help our children learn important life skills that will carry over to future jobs and education. Our vision is designed to help develop better citizens, who just may turn out to be golfers, which will help our communities for years to come! Respectfully: Michael Hinton Executive Director-First Tee Minneapolis 2011 MN PGA Junior Golf Leader of the Year
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<th>Among the documents provided for distribution before the next CAC meeting is the proposal showing certain principles which The Friends of the Theodore Wirth Par 3 believe should be an essential part of the policy regarding &quot;Snow making on the Par&quot;, as follows: Snow making on the Par 3: A) should be moderated, B) should be controlled by MPRB staff, C) should be subject to a strict cut off date of February 14th of each year so that the course does not have to be kept closed in the spring awaiting snow melt due to excessive snow making, and D) Par 3 golfers should be kept informed of developments, and E) advanced and aggressive summer maintenance techniques should be instituted to minimize the resulting damage to the fairways, tees, and greens. Note: principles A, B, D and E should apply to all winter sports activities on the Par 3 in general. The date of February 14th was arrived at in discussion with the MPRB maintenance staff. As far as we are aware this date has been complied with for this 2012 winter/spring. We are not sure that the snow making has been sufficiently moderated so as to prevent any unnecessary negative effect on the 2012 opening of the Par 3 or any negative effect on the longer term condition of the course. We believe these principles should be formally included in the snow making policy of the MPRB and to that end a recommendation by the CAC would seem appropriate. Robert Dwyer Friends of the Theodore Wirth Par 3</th>
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|2 | There have been a number of negative comments about the way the MPRB golf courses are maintained. “The Golf courses, ... are an ecological flop. The chemicals, irrigation and constant mowing make what seems to be a "green" space in fact a very pitiful use of a natural resource.” November 8, 2011 “since a driving range is a huge consumer of water and fertilizer resources. There must also be a large quantity of fuel used to manicure the grass.” November 14, 2011 “Does he realize how much fertilizer is used on a golf course?” November 9, 2011 People can't be blamed for expressing their feelings about the maintenance that is performed on the golf courses but they should really check their facts before they criticize. The MPRB staff conducts a maintenance program at the golf courses which minimizes the use of fertilizers and herbicides both by limiting the frequency of application but also by restricting the areas to which they are applied. While some mowing is done nearly every day, nothing is mowed unless the course/weather conditions have made it necessary. Under this maintenance program the Par 3 and three of the 18 hole courses have received Audubon Certification. Certification is pending on the other two 18 hole courses and final approval should not be a problem since the program standards are the same for every course. In addition there are those who are concerned about the effect of the use of the gas powered vehicles to perform this maintenance. It seems a reasonable objective to eventually and gradually replace the use gas powered maintenance equipment (and golf carts) with electric powered vehicles. This should be looked into when the MPRB considers reinvestment in these assets. But of course this concern about equipment use also applies to the winter program especially cross-county skiing. While equipment is used to prepare for winter sports, which includes the distribution of man-made snow at the beginning of the season, it is the regular trail maintenance that has the most impact. In a normal weather year the 15 miles of trails at Theodore Wirth Park plus 5 additional miles through the Chain of Lakes are groomed daily,... each mile every day! Ski trails at the other golf courses, Columbia, Gross and Hiawatha and adjoining park land are groomed at least twice a week. More recently the increasing impact snow making has become an issue. Additional maintenance is now required to restore the parks to good condition the following spring and summer. Persons worried about the
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<td>Environmental impact of maintenance on MPRB land should keep their attention on both summer and winter activities.</td>
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<td>I am writing in support of the Wirth Golf Association position on the redevelopment.</td>
<td>Mar 17, 2012 7:41 PM</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>I am standing in support of the Wirth Golf Association positions on the redesign of the golf course.</td>
<td>Mar 16, 2012 11:07 PM</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Please support the Wirth 18 hole and 9 hole golf courses. They are important parts of the Theo Wirth Parkway Green Space. Golf is great exercise and a game that can be played by all ages. It is a sport that lasts a lifetime.</td>
<td>Mar 15, 2012 10:49 PM</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>To Whom it may concern, I am sharing information regarding future use of the park and observations concerning the golf course. (18 hole championship course). I am an avid environmentalist. I have been a BWCAW canoe guide. I have led environmental learning field trips for ten years in my elementary school where I teach. I have a cabin in the woods in northern Minnesota. I also love to play the game of golf. Golf is a game which is outdoors, in nature, and in beautiful wild settings. The golf course at Wirth is unique. It is historic. It is also in a wild setting in an urban area. Completely unique in todays world. It is also an amazingly difficult and challenging course for a serious golfer. This aspect and the combination of factors favors taking serious consideration when making any decisions regarding changes in the Wirth Park. I would strongly advise to respect the unique nature of this golf course and actually celebrate having it as part of the park system and building around the course other fabulous natural opportunities but leaving the golf course as it is or at least respect and accept it's value. Eric Sisler Cross-country skier and golfer of Minneapolis</td>
<td>Mar 15, 2012 10:39 PM</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>I support The mens club at Theodore Wirth on their recommendations</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>My views have been expressed in the document of the Wirth Golf Association. We are not seeking redesign of the course, that comes from the biking and skiing community, but if done the integrity of both courses must be maintained. If money goes into a redesign it would be very good if a driving range, long missing from Wirth be added. Also, if money is spent on the courses, water problems that surfaced in 2011 on the front nine of the main course must be addressed. More details are provided in the document from our association.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Again, there are various opinions about the popularity and financial impact of golf compared to other activities in the MPRB system: (Part Two, Financial Picture) &quot;expanding the Silent Sports opportunities and believe the rev opportunity for the Park and the benefits to the public by doing this is much greater than putting in a driving range&quot; November 14,2011 &quot;The golf courses are only functional5 months out of the year biking/skiing is all year.&quot; November 13, 2011 &quot;I support NOT adding more holes to the golf course.... The bike trails are built &amp; maintained by volunteers, but the golf course needs paid care. Multi-use at no cost trumps single-use with costs.&quot; November 12, 2011 &quot;There seems to be less interest than ever before, and in fact most of the &quot;golfers I know are golfing less and less every season. .... where as gols days are numbered. Youth golf participation is declining every year while at the same time youth&quot; November 11, 2011 &quot;I have heard that the Wirth golf courses are losing money year after year for the park. I know they take a ton of resources and man power to maintain.</td>
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The environmental impacts of a golf course are significant.” November 9, 2011 “Golf is on the decline, period.” November 9, 2011 “. If the figures don't lie, the par 3 golf course has been losing money every year. Thus I would like to see the par 3 course be removed and turned into a driving range...“ November 9, 2011 “Given the continuing decline of the popularity of golf added to the Wirth courses in particular losing money annually, it seems indefensible to me to spend more money in this recreational area.” November8, 2011 Let us take a brief look at golf’s financial picture. A work sheet is available which shows revenues collected and expense incurred at each golf course location from 1997 through 2010. This shows expenses exceeded revenues at Columbia only once, in 2010. Expenses exceeded revenues at the Theodore Wirth 18 hole course in three of the years out of 14. The Par 3 has expenses exceeding revenues in only one year, 2002. But the Fort Snelling course shows an excess of expenses in each of the last 9 years., this due to the fact that the MPRB does not own the Ft. Snelling land. Overall, the revenues exceeded expenses in all 14 years by a large margin, even with the costs and revenues of the Junior Golf Program included. But the golf courses are part of the MPRB Enterprise Fund. Activities in this fund are expected cover all of their costs with the revenues (fees) collected. The golf courses, Concessions (Refectories), ice areas, permits and certain recreational activities are the programs accounted for in the Enterprise Fund. These activities must bear the costs incurred elsewhere on their behalf. The objective is match the “Full Cost” of the activities with the fees collected. Without detail discussions with MPRB Financial Staff one should not draw too many conclusions about this complex accounting process. But it is common that this full costing includes expenditures for each course incurred away from their location as well as cost incurred in other funds such as the general administrative expenses of the MPRB. Full costing of this kind is a fair process and also helps reduce the citizen’s tax burden. Looking at 2010 as an example, after these adjustments, and as shown in the final MPRB annual report, the revenues for the golf courses have been reduced by about $58,000 and the expenses have been increased by $524,000. In 2010 these allocations turned a profit into a loss for two of the courses. The total shortfall for golf, including the Junior Golf Program, in 2010 was about $181,000. A net loss of that size for a $6 million dollar a year operation would be considered a modest variation to be made up for in better years. And, if you look at the available MPRB annual reports you will see that 2010 is the only year in the last seven that golf has incurred an overall loss. It takes some skill to manage the fee structure and contain costs in such a way so as to maintain a close margin between revenues and expenses. Further examination into prior years should reveal that, except for the occasional bad year, golf is a net contributor to the Enterprise Fund. And the Enterprise fund, in turn, is a contributor via transfers to help cover the MPRB debt service cost as well as transfers to the MPRB General Fund to help cover the cost of activities which do not support themselves thereby, again, reducing the citizen’s tax burden. But there is a risk in attempting to maintain a positive margin by too much cost containment. A tipping point can be reached and the effects of cost containment will begin to reduce rounds and revenues at an accelerating rate, and for the long term. The question for the MPRB then will be whether they are willing to make a real, new, commitment to protect a unique and historic investment. What can we say about Winter Activities? In 2010 there was a small amount of winter activities that were accounted for in the Enterprise Fund. This is likely the tubing hill which in the past has been the only winter activity which regularly pays for itself. However that year these activities incurred a $34,000 loss on a $73,000 operation. In addition for winter activities
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in the MPRB General Fund expenses exceeded revenues by another $147,000. By these figures 40% of the cost of winter activities was paid for by other general revenues or the tax dollar. Generally, through 2010, most winter activities should have been accounted for the MPRB General Fund. This fund is supported by the citizen’s tax dollar. Fees are sometimes collected for activities in this fund but not for the purpose of fully covering their costs. Instead the fees recover a portion of the costs and are a method of managing the use of the facilities. Although revenues have risen significantly for winter activities over the last four years, especially for cross-country skiing, costs have also increased. A modest estimate of the losses for winter activities over the 2004 through 2010 period amount to $1.2 million. This figure may not be complete because it is difficult to find analysis by activity outside the Enterprise Fund. In addition costs outside the Enterprise Fund identified as winter activities are understated since they would not be subject to the same full costing process and it is unlikely that any general administrative costs of the MPRB, already paid out of the General Fund, would be added to their presentation. Therefore you must be careful when comparing winter activity figures to golf figures since their basis of accounting may be different. Most winter activities, including skiing, have never covered their costs, and are not expected to cover them. It may not be practical to raise fees to cover the shortfall since the MPRB fees have to remain competitive with other opportunities in the metro area. This is fine. Many activities are provided for, in whole or in part, by your tax dollar: neighborhood parks, parkways, baseball and soccer fields, tennis courts, etc. To keep the tax levy low there is a temptation to hide costs in proprietary funds like the Enterprise Fund. There is a serious danger with leaving activities which incur perpetual losses in this fund. If you can not, or will not, appropriately set fees or manage expenses a deficit can quickly grow, which no one feels responsible for, to a point indicating financial mismanagement. This happened a few years ago to the City of Minneapolis and they suffered a serious downgrade in their bond rating.

10 There are various opinions about the popularity and financial impact of golf compared to other activities in the MPRB system: (Part One, Rounds of Golf) “expanding the Silent Sports opportunities and believe the rev opportunity for the Park and the benefits to the public by doing this is much greater than putting in a driving range” November 14,2011 “The golf courses are only functional5 months out of the year biking/skiing is all year.” November 13, 2011 “I support NOT adding more holes to the golf course…. The bike trails are built & maintained by volunteers, but the golf course needs paid care. Multi-use at no cost trumps single-use with costs.” November 12, 2011 “There seems to be less interest than ever before, and in fact most of the “golfers” I know are golfing less and less every season. …. where as golfs days are numbered. Youth golf participation is declining every year while at the same time youth” November 11, 2011 “I have heard that the Wirth golf courses are losing money year after year for the park. I know they take a ton of resources and man power to maintain. The environmental impacts of a golf course are significant.” November 9, 2011 “Golf is on the decline, period.” November 9, 2011 “. If the figures don't lie, the par 3 golf course has been losing money every year. Thus I would like to see the par 3 course be removed and turned into a driving range...” November 9, 2011 “Given the continuing decline of the popularity of golf added to the Wirth courses in particular losing money annually, it seems indefensible to me to spend more money in this recreational area.” November8, 2011 We need to be clear on the actual general parameters. Generally the MPRB golf courses open
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up around Apr 1st and close Nov 1st or thereafter, each year, depending on weather. This means on average there are 7 months of golf and 5 months of winter sports. For winter sports which need artificial snow making it takes a little bit longer, after course closings, to get their areas ready. Often Wirth golf course has to delay the start of their season after Apr 1st due to excessive snow melt required by artificial snow making. Often the Wirth Par 3 can’t make use of playable weather after Nov 1st since the set up for ski rental begins in anticipation of sufficient snow. Mountain biking trails are open and used year round and none of the current trails conflict with areas for golf activities. What do the records of the MPRB reveal about the popularity and financial impact of golf? Golf has gone through a number of cycles of relative popularity during its 100 years in Minneapolis. According to an MPRB document on the history of golf in Minneapolis at Wirth the course was opened in 1916. As the only course the usage was high and the rounds played continued to increase in its early years. The course was expanded to 18 holes in 1919. Subsequently four other 18 hole courses were added. The last one was started in 1929 and was completed in 1934. During the 1950’s the Theodore Wirth course operated at a loss but popularity picked up again in the 1960’s The Par 3 course, still the only one in the MPRB system, was added in 1962. During the most recent golf boom many new courses were built throughout the state and in the nation. But the MPRB, except for taking on the management of the Fort Snelling executive nine, did not add any additional golf courses. So, in the current circumstances, the MPRB is not left with excess golf capacity and continues to provide a cost effective golf opportunity in each area of the City. The real statistics show rounds and profitability have gone through a number of up and down cycles over the years, mostly in response to economic conditions and generational changes. Golf participation has been down at times but has always come back as generations come of age and begin understand and appreciate the game. The following comes from the actual MPRB statistics on rounds played: From 1919 through 1920 Wirth was transitioning to from 9 to 18 holes and Columbia was transitioning from 6 holes to a full 18. The total rounds for both courses in 1920 was 55,125, or about the same number of rounds that Wirth had been experiencing after it first opened. From 1921 through 1925, with both courses operating at 18 holes for full years the number of rounds had a upward trend from 97,000 to 121,000. In 1926 Gross (Armor) had its first full year of operation and the total rounds for the five courses was 159,767. From 1927 Meadowbrook had its first full year of operation and the total rounds for all three courses was 159,767. In 1927 Meadowbrook had its first full year of operation and from that year through 1932 the four courses had total rounds ranging from 153,00 to 173,000 each year, except for 1930 which was a stellar year with a total of 219,273 rounds. But rounds dropped to 106,000 in 1933, and 76,000 in 1934, and further to 69,000 in 1935 even with the addition of Hiawatha in its first full year of operation. 1936 began a gradual rise with 103,000 for the five courses. From 1937 through 1945 the rounds ranged from a low of 105,000 to a high of 157,000. 1946 through 1957 saw increases and a stable period. Except for two bad weather years, 1951-52, the total rounds per year were about 200,000 with a low of 194,000 and a high of 216,000. From 1958 to 1968 there was a jump in the total rounds for the five courses which ranged from a low of 213,000 to a high of 254,000. From 1969 through 1972 total rounds dropped owing to the redesign work at Theodore Wirth and reconstruction at Columbia which was completely closed for two years. Through 1980 there was another stable period with rounds averaging less than in the 1960’s but never falling below 200,000. From 1981 to 1992 there was a rebound in rounds played, except for a couple of bad weather years rounds ranged from 240,000 to a high of 268,000. But by then the courses were
beginning to show their age. The Hiawatha front 9 was remodeled in 1993. Drainage problems reduced rounds at Wirth and 9 holes were closed for all of 1994 during reconstruction. In 1995-96 Meadowbrook went through a renovation due to water problems. Still the total rounds ranged from 213,000 to 230,000 during these years. The rounds rose again from 1997 through 2001 to a range of 238,000 to 258,000, even though the Hiawatha back 9 was remodeled in 1999. But once again, in a period of economic decline the rounds for the five courses fell. The range from 2002 to 2005 was 203,000 to 232,000. And the total has fallen just below 200,000 in 4 of the last five years with a low of 186,816 in 2010. Reconstruction of the sprinkler system at Columbia also affected these last years and 2010 was a bad weather year particularly for that course. These figures do not include the rounds for the Wirth Par 3 or for the Fort Snelling courses. The actual rounds for the Par 3 are not available from its opening in 1962 through 1991. From 1992 to 2001 rounds for that course ranged for 25,000 to 30,000 but with the economic decline rounds have dropped to a average of 21,000 rounds through 2004 and in the last six years to 15,000. The MPRB took over the operation of the Ft. Snelling course in 1992. Rounds stayed above, sometimes well above, 30,000 through 2001. They dropped to an average of about 27,000 in 2002-03, and to about 22,000 a year through 2010. Rounds played can be affected by a number of factors. These include weather, the economy, course conditions, and generational changes. There have been numerous but isolated bad weather years for golf over its MPRB history. The economy usually affects a span of years, some time short, sometime long. Clearly we are currently in a somewhat long span of bad economic conditions. Although a person can get into golf with a very modest investment, playing regularly costs more than most of the other sports which use North Wirth Park. Course conditions are affected in turn by weather events and trends, age of the course, and the effects of the use (especially non-golf uses) of the course. Rounds for 2011 are expected to be down because it was overall a bad weather year. And Theodore Wirth suffered additionally due to a sever bad weather event. The age of the courses will require attention. Much of the parkland is mature forest require some method of thinning, to preserve greens and tees, without significant removal of trees. Drainage continues to be a problem on several of the courses even though work had been done on this within the last 20 years. Much of this must be re-done. Some original construction techniques make maintaining tees and greens more problematic and costly. Again there is potential for improvements. Also, there are environmental improvements which could reduce costs in the long run and enhance the experience for golfers and all park users. More disciplined management of non-golf winter sports using the golf course area could also simplify summer maintenance. Clearly it is superficial to say that a drop in rounds played represents a permanent trend or a sign of a dying population of golfers. It is true that golf is played in a higher proportion by persons who are more mature and have the time and disposable income to do so. Which is why one presentation at the Charrette pointed out that the coming retirements of the Baby-boom generation is one of the reasons we should be optimistic about seeing significant increases in rounds at the MPRB courses.

There seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding about the proposal to place a driving range in the area of the current 17th hole..... “. Appaently the installation of a driving range would negate the possibility of a more multiuse situation of the area involved..... I understand there is an existing one 2 miles away. Golfer can go there?” November 14, 2011 “errant golf balls from a driving range just don't fitin a mixed use area.” November 14, 2011 “Iam concerned with the proposed
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Driving range on the 17th hole of the golf course. I have nothing against driving ranges nor golf at all. However, running, biking and hiking on trails proposed in this area with golf balls flying is a hazard and quite frankly brings the entire plan backwards." November 14, 2011 "we can't have it derailed by a short sighted plan to reduce the scope of the Cycling Area and put a driving range there." November 14, 2011 "Members of the Citizen Advisory Committee: It has come to my attention a golf driving range is being considered as an addition to Theodore Wirth Park. I would like to voice my strong opposition to this proposal. Golf at Theodore Wirth is well represented and occupies much land during summer season. To eliminate or reduce the land available for activities such as mountain biking or cyclecross events would limit the number of people who might utilize this community resource for activities other than golf. ..." Nov 7, 2011 "If a driving range is really needed, the design should incorporate it into the existing space already dedicated to golfing so it only affects the activity of golfing and not any other summer activities like the mountain bike trails, hiking trails, etc" Nov 7, 2011 "As I understand it, the driving range will consume space needed for other multi-sport events...." Nov 6, 2011 "Although I have always wanted a driving range at the Wirth course, I feel that given these options it makes the most sense to forgo it and choose to build the welcome center!" Nov 6, 2011 Golfers are being asked to give up two historic golf holes which have been part of the course for nearly 100 years. These holes are integral to the design and character of the course. Theodore Wirth is the most difficult of all the city courses. Its golfers are proud of the course and its unique character. The 17th and 18th holes are fine challenges in keeping with the rest of the course. The only problem with these holes is their condition. Maintenance problems have gotten worse in recent years as the use of these holes for winter sports has increased. If golfers need to give up these holes it is reasonable that they should get something back. A driving range as part of a golf training area should be included in the final plan. Winter sports would have full use of the current 17th and 18th hole areas during their season as long as this use is properly managed so as not to cause unneeded delay of the beginning of the golf season. The current 18th hole area will be fully available for non-golf summer sports, subject to the final design of the new 18th hole. The driving range is not intended to be included at the expense of any of the other summer sports at the park. It would not displace any of the current biking or hiking trails and would not interfere with the placement and construction of a Welcome Center. The proposal is that the current 17th hole area be shared. The driving range could be active and generate revenue except for times that non-golf summer events would be scheduled for the stadium or start/finish area. The new high school mountain bike league fall season should be part of the schedule. MPRB management staff would impartially manage all scheduling. This golf training area will provide facilities for youth programs in an area of the City where they do not currently exist. For this sharing concept to work it may be necessary that each user community accept more limited versions of their objectives. The driving range may not be designed to match normal specifications. Biking and hiking trails may have to have extra protection and take routes that minimize exposure. Everyone is concerned about the safety of all park users, including non-event daily hikers and bikers. However, if we don't work out shared use of the 17th hole area then there is little chance that multi-use trails in other portions of the park next to golf holes will work. Many people have written in about how many other Par 3 courses and driving ranges there are in the metro area. It is interesting to hear people from all over the metro say how easy it should be for golfers, especially youth golf program participants, to
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"go away from their own neighborhood or into the suburbs to play their sport. But these same hikers and bikers complain that it is so hard for them to go to suburban locations that are available to them, compared to coming to Wirth themselves."

Prior to the last CAC meetings many non-golfers were under the impression that golfers wished to expand the area dedicated to golf at Wirth Park... “I am not sure exactly how the proposed plans for expanding the Theo-Wirth golf course...... I just hope the park board does not destroy such a wonderful jewel as the mountain bike trails at Wirth in the process.”

November 14, 2011 “I am horrified at the thought that our outdoor recreation could be taken away...and replaced with golf! There are many, many golf courses in the area.”

Nov 7, 2011 “Please please do not expand the golf course at Theo Wirth Park.”

November 11, 2011 “Also, to decrease the length(of mountain bike trails) would...”

November 11, 2011 “I want to speak up in opposition to the option(s) that would expand the golf course with the consequence of reducing or negatively impacting the existing 3 mile mountain bike loop...... To damage this gem to expand an activity that already takes up half of Wirth Park would be a shame.”

November 11, 2011 “It does not fit with the mission of the park board to expand golf offerings....”

Nov 7, 2011 By now it should be evident to anyone attending the CAC meetings that golfers have never asked for an expansion of the area for golf at the expense of any other sport. The designs for golf hole changes at the Charrette which placed Par 3 golf holes on the meadow in the Back 40, or on the east side of the parkway, were in response to the desire of the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation objective of gaining the land used for Par 3 holes for their favored purposes. The Par 3 course has been successful on this land for 50 years, and, like the 18 hole course, has shared the land with skiers and winter sports for decades without controversy. Initially the management and maintenance staff at Wirth was somewhat sympathetic to the idea of moving Par 3 holes due to the difficulty of maintaining certain tees and greens. Par 3 golfers have always been against these changes. They want the course to remain challenging and successful, do not wish to disturb the mountain bike trails on the Back 40, do not wish to conflict with other golf holes and skiing east of the parkway, and hope that the meadow will continue to be maintained as a natural area. Par 3 golfers believe, in the long term, that the maintenance issues can be successfully addressed by allowing the maintenance staff to employ more aggressive but ecological maintenance techniques and by ensuring appropriate moderation regarding snow making and trail grooming. Similarly, regarding the 18 hole course, no golfer chose to make changes to the 17th and 18th holes. These are historic holes dating back nearly 100 years. If the course is redesigned and new holes appear on different land it is due to the Nordic Ski agenda regarding the land that these golf holes are on currently. Again, there are maintenance issues regarding these holes due in large part to snow making for winter sports. The hills of the courses at Theodore With provide a unique character which should not be changed just because another sport or sports covet that ground. Because of the hills, the Theodore Wirth courses are unique in the metro area and the hills are equaled at only a few courses in the state.

Please include me in on the Theodore Wirth Park emails on the project and future public meetings to take place. I am a long time advocate of Wirth Park and utilize the park spring, summer, fall, and winter sports. And a patron golf card holder. And member of the Theodore Wirth Golf Association. Thanks, Derek.

Feb 9, 2012 1:51 PM

Jan 25, 2012 3:41 PM
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<td>I am writing as a member of the Board of Directors of the Wirth Golf Club and volunteer director of the junior golf program for the club. I also work closely with the First Tee program. I have followed closely the plans for revision in north Wirth Park. I am fully supportive of retaining the Par 3 course in its current form. It is a very important asset for our novice junior players who use it on regular basis. I am support of the general plan to separate the 18 hole course from the winter program by eliminating the current 17th and 18th holes. For years we have had major conditioning issues with #17, complicated by the spring transition. The redesign involving hole #12 into two holes seems a resonable solution. The new #18 is a reasonable idea but the design will need to be tweaked. The plan to have summer bike trails that go out on to the back 9 is absolutely unworkable due to dangers for both golfers and bikers. That idea can not go forward. Our Board will be providing a detailed statement on these matters very soon.</td>
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<td>I recently learned that the county is considering constructing a light rail transit line in the BNSF Railway Corridor north of Highway 55, on the border of Theodore Wirth Park. This area is currently Bassets Creek overflow/watershed and home to a wide array of animal and bird species (as well as piece and quiet). All of the sustainability information I have read about Theodore Wirth Park indicates there is a shared goal to protect the natural resources in this park. I am not sure of all the stakeholders or beneficiaries of this decision but the park is positioned to only face additional destruction. Please provide input on this proposal to the Golden Valley Mayor, the Park and Rec board, the county commisioner Mark Stenglein, and at one of the Bottineau Transitway Scoping meetings. There is one at Theo Wirth Chalet on January 23rd at 4:30pm. It is our responsibility as neighbors and stewards to the park system to protect the boundaries and natural habitat of the park, keeping it enjoyable to all parties for the years to come.</td>
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| 16 | Hello, My name is Molly Gaines and I live on 12th and Washburn Ave N. I am an avid user of Wirth's current silent sport offerings, most notably trail running and skiing, and strongly advocate continuing to bolster this area of the park. It's one of the reasons we moved to the area, and an amenity I believe has the potential to attract many others to north Minneapolis, particularly Willard Hay. I very much support the addition of a Welcome Center for skiing and other silent sport users in the area. I love the idea of a multi-use center, and one that offers good coffee and perhaps a restaurant, in an area where this amenity is sorely lacking. While I appreciate the golf course and support its continued operation, I do not understand any proposal to expand or enhance golf offerings. There are so many places for people to golf, and the current Wirth golf course doesn't get maximum use as it is. Yet Wirth has the potential to become the premier place in Minneapolis for city-dwellers to engage in silent sports and truly "get away from it all" in the heart of the city. Furthermore, residents of north Minneapolis, particularly youth, would greatly benefit from increased emphasis on a variety of outdoor/nature offerings, versus more golf attractions (e.g. a driving range). There are not many places in the city of Minneapolis where residents can pursue silent sports in the way that Wirth offers. It's truly an urban oasis that could be smartly developed to encourage hiking, biking, trail running, etc. in the area, and encourage in the city and in North Minneapolis to embrace the outdoors. The park also has the potential to bridge the gap between north Minneapolis and other city residents, bringing residents together in the outdoors in unique and transformational ways. The combination of rising obesity rates, the "nature
deficit disorder" so many of our youth are experiencing, and a significant uptick in interest in silent sports makes the ideal choice for Wirth's future -- with its location, natural setting and existing trails/infrastructure -- so clear: embrace and pursue a silent sports and a silents sports center that symbolizes and acts as the center of everything Wirth park has the potential to be. Without a center focused on silent sports, silent sports will continue to feel like an afterthought for the park, rather than at the heart of it. Thank you, Molly Gaines

17 I would like to see the Par 3 course remain intact. Any changes to the regulation 18 hole course should have approval of golfers because they don't want to see just holes created just to create holes but to see that they are good holes and fit the character of the course. Such as they do not want 3 par 3 holes on the back side and do not want the plan that plays 10 backwards. For the changes made of losing 17 and 18 (which are great hole designs by the way - would just need some tweaking and tlc) golfers want a driving range. If you are talking about revenue that would bring in far more than your idea of mountain biking which would it even bring in revenue. There has been a lot of destruction to the course in the removal of trees for skiing trails already on the back nine that seem to be bad for the forest system. Trees would need to be remove at a minimum to create new holes and that is understandable but what has been done for these trails is terrible. There are exposed roots to the trees lining these cut outs and have cause erosion already. Whoever did this apparently did not know what they were doing. I think there needs to be more oversight in this type of actions they seem to run amuck.

18 I support the expansion on the single track mountain bike trails at Wirth as I believe it will be an asset to the biking community and help increase visitors to our park. I also support bridges over Wirth Pkwy and at Glenwood for skiing and hiking and biking purposes (much needed) as well as keeping and maintaining the permanent orienteering course that currently exists. I think the Silent Sports Center idea is a great one in that I believe it will help promote both summer and winter sports in the Mpls community, as well as to help increase the safety within the park as a whole. I use the park on a weekly basis if not more for various purposes (hiking, train running, skiing, the playground with my child, orienteering, and mountain biking). I am very happy to see that the city is making an effort to keep Wirth Park safe and fun for everyone as it is a vital part of the Mpls community for so many reasons. I do not support a driving range if it conflicts with other trails. One other idea I had to help keep the park clean, perhaps more volunteer clean up days could be arranged throughout the year - thus encouraging citizens to invest in the park which will help keep it not only cleaner, but also safer if more people take on such an investment and sense of responsibility within their community. Thank you - your investment in this project is very much appreciated.

19 Are you serious? BMX course? Nordic ski centre? If part of the plan is to reroute 17 & 18 and make them better holes, then fine. I have serious questions about the 17th hole myself. However, I'm guessing that Wirth is a pretty good money maker for the city & the course has been in business as a going concern for many decades.

20 Wirth Par 3 golf course is one of the jewels in the crown of Theodore Wirth Park. It serves a variety of valuable public services. It is close to the neighborhoods of several minority groups who use it frequently. It is the home of the Minnesota
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<td>21</td>
<td>I would like the Citizen Advisory Committee to know that I ride the mountain bike trails at Theodore Wirth Park often and I would like to see more mountain bike trails. I also volunteer for maintenance of the trails at Theodore Wirth Park. The cross country ski trails are also very important to me. Thank-you, Carl Paulson</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The First Tee Minneapolis responds with our own vision as collaboratively with our First Tee Advisory Board: Our Vision: Our vision is to expand facilities and enhance programming at Theo Wirth Golf Course to include a driving range, classroom within a new building, a practice chipping and putting green, pro shop, and a practice bunker. This new project would be called The First Tee Learning Center of Theo Wirth. The First Tee Minneapolis has plans to take our program to 57 elementary schools in Minneapolis through the National School Program (NSP) and a sponsorship with Nature Valley/General Mills. This NSP program will implement the 9 core values and 9 healthy habits to kids in gym classes at no cost to the schools. Our impact could be as much as 25,000 kids a year that will have been taught the important life skills that will make them better citizens, whether they end up playing golf or not. This could have a serious impact on rounds of golf at city golf courses and junior facilities in future years. Our vision also includes a “Fit for the First Tee” (see First Tee of Cleveland) facility which would mean nutrition, after school programming, and even cooking classes for participants and parents. This is the time to prepare for the growth of the game through the First Tee, not shut it out. We would be more than happy to share space with the Nordic Ski Foundation to combine golf and ski programs year around. Our future goals will be to make The Theo Wirth First Tee Learning Center the premiere practice center in the state, providing an opportunity for all kids to compete at the highest level. We also are looking at implementing a caddy program (which was incredibly successful in years past) that would give First Tee kids a job. We are also looking at being a continued host of the First Tee All City Junior Golf Tournament, MN PGA Junior Golf Championship, and hosting other premier junior, senior, adult, and disability golf tournaments. We will also continue to send kids every year to the Toro Leadership Conference in Orlando, The First Tee Life Skills Academy in Kansas City, and other leadership forums and conferences throughout the year. Having a facility in North Minneapolis would greatly increase the opportunities for kids in our north side area participating at these great events. The First Tee of Minneapolis chapter serves 50 park centers throughout the city and annually reaches approximately 500-1000 youth. Programming takes place at Gross, Hiawatha, and Columbia Learning Centers. The First Tee Minneapolis has served over 7500 kids since it's inception in 2001 and continues to be a model for youth programming. Our program doesn't cost anything to families in need and equipment plus free rounds of golf are provided for every participant. Our program more importantly</td>
<td>Nov 15, 2011 9:48 AM</td>
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teaches 9 core values (Judgement, Respect, Courtesy, Sportsmanship, Honesty, Perseverance, Confidence, Integrity, and Responsibility) and recently began implementing the 9 healthy habits into our curriculum. The First Tee nationally has reached 4.7 million youth and has goals to reach 10 million kids by 2017. Our program would greatly benefit from an upgraded facility and needs to develop a driving range to implement programming and training for the north side community. Our program is hugely popular and successful and needs to look at developing more opportunities for training facilities and use other chapters as models (Three Rivers, Kansas City, Cleveland, Chicago). The First Tee of Minneapolis has been a model of junior programming and is recognized state wide as Michael Hinton, Executive Director won the prestigious Minnesota PGA Junior Golf Leader of the Year award for 2011. First Tee Minneapolis Mission: The mission statement of The First Tee is to positively impact the lives of young people by providing learning facilities and educational programs that promote character development and life-enhancing values through the game of golf. Our vision is to teach The First Tee Nine Core Values providing the vehicle through which kids can accomplish their dreams, thrive socially, excel academically and athletically, and become productive members of society with integrity, strong family values and commitment to community. Our mission is to serve the north side community in this project and across the city period. We want to connect with the north side community by providing jobs, creating after school programming, educating children on the important life skills and core values through the game of golf. We want to provide all children a place to go for socialization and support, inspiration, income, food, and education to become better citizens. We want to educate our communities to all of the possibilities that golf has to offer and how the First Tee organization can help our children learn important life skills that will carry over to future jobs and education. Our vision is designed to help develop better citizens, who just may turn out to be golfers, which will help our communities for years to come! Respectfully: Michael Hinton Executive Director-First Tee Minneapolis 2011 MN PGA Junior Golf Leader of the Year
Weber, Andrea S.
From: iriharding@aol.com
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2012 3:06 PM
To: Weber, Andrea S.
Subject: Re: March 20 Wirth CAC Meeting - permanent orienteering course

Hi Andrea,

Yes... post would need either painting or some other signage (we have wooden posts with small metal plaques on them). I would suggest 15 posts would be about right. In some cases the local boy scout troop or similar has taken on the job of getting posts (donations from local lumber company), painting them and getting them installed. The POC project at Afton State park was 100% externally funded. It is less than $1000 item that we jointly can easily get funded.

So I think we need to separate the funding question from the "how does it fit in the design of the park upgrades".

Thanks
Have a great weekend

Ian Harding
MNOC

-----Original Message-----
From: Weber, Andrea S. <AWeber@minneapolisparks.org>
To: 'iriharding@aol.com' <iriharding@aol.com>
Sent: Fri, Mar 16, 2012 7:33 am
Subject: RE: March 20 Wirth CAC Meeting - permanent orienteering course

Ian,

Thanks for the additional info. I can certainly include the new posts into the list of items that need funding and the CAC can decide on prioritizing.

The post itself is about $10, but then you need the top painted and you need it installed, so I would probably estimate 40$ per post installed conservatively. I see from the map that there are 8 posts now. How many would you ideally have? Would you just re-do the current course?

The post that is down is 8-J.

Thanks,
Andrea

Andrea Weber
MPRB Planning

From: Weber, Andrea S. <AWeber@minneapolisparks.org>
To: 'iriharding@aol.com' <iriharding@aol.com>
Sent: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 5:59 pm
Subject: RE: March 20 Wirth CAC Meeting - permanent orienteering course

Ian,

We have not forgotten about you. I still have the handouts you gave me. We will be happy to work with you to re-develop the orienteering course when we get into further details after the main concept is developed and approved. It is a great fit for the South Wirth area. I think the orienteering course, as an existing amenity, is not likely to be lost from the area, nor have I heard any concerns about keeping it. At this point I just haven't been able to get to that level of detail yet on the concept design.
Here is some info for you to keep current on the process. I would recommend you sign up for gov-delivery updates on the website.

The upcoming CAC meeting on March 20th is going to focus on the north half of Wirth. We hope that the April 10th meeting will cover central and south Wirth, so that might be the best time for you to attend if you can.

My understanding is that you have installed and maintain the markers and produce the maps so it is no cost to the park board, is that correct?

I hope that helps. Feel free to let me know if you have questions.

Thanks,
Andrea

Andrea S. Weber, RLA
Project Manager, Planning Services
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
2117 West River Rd.
Minneapolis, MN 55411-2227
612-230-6466
www.minneapolisparks.org

From: Ringold, Jennifer B. 
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 3:16 PM 
To: Weber, Andrea S. 
Subject: FW: March 20 Wirth CAC Meeting - permanent orienteering course
Can you help with this one? Best, jbr

Jennifer Ringold
Manager of Public Engagement and Citywide Planning
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
2117 West River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55411
Phone: 612-230-6464
Cell: 612-516-0727

From: iriharding@aol.com [mailto:iriharding@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 3:11 PM
To: Ringold, Jennifer B.
Subject: Fwd: March 20 Wirth CAC Meeting - permanent orienteering course
Hello Jennifer and the CAC

Minnesotae Orienteering Club representatives attended several of the CAC meetings and the charrette last fall about the S Wirth park changes and improvements. Several members of our club spoke to the design staff and the commissioners about the redesign of the existing permanent orienteering course in S Wirth park as part of improving educational and recreational experiences there.

In reviewing the design documents going forward from that there seems to be no mention of this community resource. MNOC is still ready and willing to be part of the process of developing and implementing the extended permanent orienteering course as part of the improvements to keep this park as an asset for the community.

Please let us know if the permanent orienteering course is part of the design going forwards; if it is not has it been expressly removed or some reason or was it just overlooked.

Thanks for your assistance

Ian Harding
President MN Orienteering Club
Andrea

Weber, Andrea S.

Subject:
To:
From:
Sent:
Thursday, March 01, 2012 12:09 AM

It's been a few weeks now since the last time I spoke to you about the lighting in our city. I wanted to take this opportunity to express my concerns and ask for your help in making some changes.

As you know, I have always been passionate about the lighting in our community. In my opinion, the current lighting is not only aesthetically pleasing, but it also serves an important function in maintaining safety and security for our residents.

I have noticed that the lighting in our area is not consistent. In some parts of the city, the lighting is bright and clear, whereas in others, it is dim and unclear. This inconsistency can create a sense of unease and make people feel less safe.

I believe that we need to take a comprehensive approach to lighting improvements. I suggest that we conduct a thorough analysis of the current lighting system and identify areas that need improvement. We could also consider installing new lighting fixtures that are more energy-efficient and cost-effective.

I would like to propose a meeting with you and other community leaders to discuss these ideas further. We could also reach out to local businesses and organizations to see if they would be willing to contribute to the improvements.

I hope you can see the importance of this issue and will consider my suggestions. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Andrea Weber
Hi Andrea.

See my message below to Anita in relation to the message she received. I thought you would be the best to help. Best, jbr

Jennifer.

From: Ringold, Jennifer B. [mailto:JRingold@minneapolisparks.org]
Sent: Saturday, February 11, 2012 9:10 AM
To: Weber, Andrea S.
Subject: Fwd: Wirth Picnic Light Pollution

Hi Andrea.

See my message below to Anita in relation to the message she received. I thought you would be the best to help. Best, jbr

Jennifer.
Commissioner Tabb

I've been deeply concerned over what I've been observing in Wirth Park picnic area for the last couple of weeks. I thought I'd hold off on contacting you, hoping that what I was seeing was some sort of mistake when someone went to Home Depot.

But these lights are truly hideous. Please tell me there was some sort of mistake when someone went to Home Depot.

Thanks

- Jeff LaFleur
Weber, Andrea S.

From: Shelby Riley <shelbyriley2017@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 25, 2012 10:32 PM
To: Ringold, Jennifer B.
Subject: Wirth Redesign

Hi Jennifer,

I love your question about how we could adjust the hem. Let me attach a mock-up of what I had in mind. I think this would look good and give us a bit of a view of the floor. Let me know what you think!

Sincerely,
Shelby

The second plan we brainstormed is to lower all of the level floors and add a different kind of edging to give the place a more modern feel. There's also a second floor that goes above the second floor, but I think we could get away with that.

Problems: You would need a separate entrance from new 10 to 11.

1. "#18 (a) This would be too long and the edge of the roof of the hill would be too close.
   #17 (a) This would be too close to the center line.
   #16 (a) This would be too close to the second floor.
   #15 (a) This would be too close to the main floor.
   #14 (a) This would be too close to the main floor.
   #13 (a) This would be too close to the main floor.
   #12 (a) This would be too close to the main floor.
   #11 (a) This would be too close to the center line.
   #10 (a) There would be a view from the same level. It would be up to the hill down the hill having the green trumpet over the creek and the creek and the creek.
   There is no green point on the hill.

Would you like the hill space to be used to house buildings and a dining room? Could we come in on your house and build it in that space? It would be a great opportunity to have the green trumpet over the creek and the creek and the creek.

With thanks,
Shelby
Hi Andrea,

Hope your 2012 is going well so far. I know you are very busy. I am in town right now going back and forth to Tucson this winter and Arizona.

I am in town now, going back and forth to Tucson this winter and Arizona.

Thanks,

Pam Weiner

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Subject: From: J Pam Weiner <drjpw@earthlink.net> Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2012 3:25 PM To: Weber, Andrea S.
Mr. Ralph Sievert  
Director of Forestry  
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board  

December 17, 2011  

Dear Mr. Sievert,  

Thank you for your prompt reply to my December 6 email to MPRB Planner Andrea Weber regarding the tornado cleanup work underway in the area of the Theodore Wirth Parkway/Glenwood Ave. intersection.

Like you, I am a civil servant in natural resources, and know well how difficult it is to satisfy the desires and needs of a diverse citizenry. I have worked both in the field and in management for the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service as well as the Minnesota DNR, and am no stranger to the subtleties of managing parks and forests to achieve the often-conflicting goals of recreation, safety, and conservation. I am also an avid user of Theodore Wirth Park (TWP), and consider it one of the most valuable assets of our community. I have walked or biked through the park almost daily for the past 13 years. I also buy a ski pass every winter and ski daily during that season. Overall, I have been impressed with the management of TWP by the MPRB. However, I am not satisfied by your 12/7 email, and here I must respond at greater length. I remain very concerned about the “clean-up” project, the long-term damage it has done, and the management of natural areas in TWP.

I hope this letter will encourage MPRB to take a fresh look at natural area management in TWP.

**NW corner of Intersection**  
Prior to the May tornado, this little-used area supported stands of mature black oak forest and evergreens. The oak forest was diverse in age class and understory species. Standing and down deadwood was present in moderate amounts, but was not an impediment to the ongoing regeneration and understory development, and buckthorn was present, but sparse. An undesignated bike path runs along the western edge, but there is no other evidence of recreational use. My wildlife observations in this area included a healthy suite of woodpeckers and other bark gleaners that rely upon standing live and dead trees for foraging and nesting sites.

The tornado damaged or downed trees in small patches scattered throughout this area. The clean-up has removed and chipped all standing or downed deadwood throughout this area and has created several very large, unvegetated openings. The skidder used to remove the wood created many wide, bare-soil, and compacted skidpaths through the area. The wood chips produced from the deadwood have been spread over much of the stand. The result is that **large portions of this area have been converted from an oak forest to a sparsely vegetated state.** The wood chips that have been spread over much of the site will smother any seed bank or natural regeneration that might otherwise occur. In my judgment, even if the chips are removed, the area now has little potential for anything other than buckthorn regeneration over the foreseeable future without a large investment in restoration.

**SE corner of Intersection**  
Prior to the May tornado, bottomland in this area supported a shrub wetland with considerable species diversity, but with severe buckthorn infestation. It supports many seeps and springs. Mature black oak forest grew on the hillside between the wetland and the EB Wildflower Garden. A single paved path runs through the site. My wildlife observations in this area included a suite of shrub wetland bird species, many of which are uncommon due to the rarity of this cover type in the metro area.

The tornado damaged or downed many large trees in this area. The clean-up has removed and chipped all standing or downed deadwood, and has also stripped the area of much of the remaining vegetation. The skidder disturbed the muck soil throughout the wetland, and wood chips have been spread throughout its western edge. All deadwood has been removed from the hillside to the south up to the edge of the EB Wildflower Garden. **The wetland portion of this area has been subjected to wholesale conversion from shrub wetland to a sparsely-vegetated state.** The mulched area will not support any growth in the foreseeable future, and even if the chips are removed, the remainder of the site will be dominated with buckthorn, but without the structural diversity that existed there previously, unless a large investment in restoration is made. **The hillside abutting the Wildflower Garden has also been converted from forest to an open state.**
Standing Deadwood: I understand that Forestry’s goal was to remove only the damage caused by the tornado. However, the result of this work has gone far beyond that goal, and has resulted in a conversion of these sites from a tornado-damaged, but natural state to a highly modified condition. In your email, you state that “We are removing fallen trees as well as trees that are structurally damaged yet still standing. There were so many fallen trees that leaving them would pose an obstacle to any natural regeneration that may occur.” I know of no scientific evidence that the presence of fallen trees in either an oak forest or shrub wetland (unlike slash in a clearcut) poses an obstacle to natural regeneration. You also state that “The criteria for removing standing trees has to do with its potential to cause damage to surrounding healthy trees if such trees should fall or fail.” However, modern forest ecology considers tree fall, tree failure, and other patchy catastrophic disturbance like that produced by the May tornado to be an important component of a healthy and dynamic natural forest.

Coarse Woody Debris: Dying, dead, and downed trees (aka “coarse wood debris” or cwd) are products of natural forest dynamics and serve a critical role in forest health. They provide habitat for animals, serve as nursery sites for germination and growth of plants, and provide a store of nutrients that are cycled through the forest as they decompose. Up to 40% of forest birds are cavity nesters that require the presence of standing dead or dying trees. Small mammals, salamanders, snakes, and innumerable invertebrate species rely on the presence of cwd for their existence. By removing all cwd from these sites, you have eliminated the potential to support much of the biological diversity that is native to the area. I refer you to the extensive scientific literature on this subject for more information. (see two references below)

I believe that the unnecessary clean-up project has done far more damage to TWP than did the tornado itself or will any future failure of damaged standing trees. Unfortunately, MPRB’s misguided policy of removing standing and downed deadwood is evident throughout the southern portion of TWP.

Safety: You also state that “There is also a safety concern for individuals that may be walking through the area.” However, the minimal human use of these sites does not justify the extent of the work done by your crews. I understand the need to remove hazard trees from road and trail rights-of-way, but MPRB’s work has gone far beyond this standard.

Recreation: I know that recreation is an important goal of TWP, although you do not mention it in your email. Although the chip-covered skid paths now look like ski trails, I have confirmed with the Nordic Foundation that from their perspective, this is neither a desirable nor intended outcome of the clean-up. The skid paths are also far wider than would be used for either walking or biking.

Natural Areas: Finally, you state that “As a forested natural area within the MPRB system, active reforestation and vegetative restoration is dependent on budget availability.” However, the “natural area” character of these sites has been destroyed by the clean-up, and without active restoration, these areas will quickly become buckthorn thickets with little plant or animal diversity or other “natural” characteristics. MPRB should not have implemented wholesale conversion of these sites if it was not prepared to invest immediately in their restoration. Oak savannah restoration, if that is the intent of the clean-up, does not consist of removing the deadwood, disturbing the soil, and destroying the understory.

I am copying other resource managers, MPRB staff, and elected officials to apprise them of my concerns. In my professional judgment and in light of the tornado clean-up, I recommend that MPRB reevaluate its TWP natural area management policies to insure that future natural area management efforts are more conducive to maintaining a sustainable natural resource within TWP. I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss these concerns further at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Baker

NOTE: This letter presents my personal knowledge and judgment, and in no way represents my employer or any other organization with which I may be affiliated.

References
(See especially Chapter 10: “Dying, dead, and down trees” by W. McComb and D. Lindenmayer)
Good morning, Ms. Weber -

I live in Golden Valley, directly across Wirth Parkway from Wirth Lake. I am curious about the tree-clearing operations which are going on behind my house. While I understand the need to clean up storm damage, it appears that a rather large number of healthy trees, including many of the large pines, are being cut down. It looks like a logging operation is commencing in the Park!

I was not aware that any significant changes were on the board for this portion of the Park; please let me know if there are. I can be reached at 4009 Roanoke Circle, Golden Valley, MN.

Thank you,
Heidi Annexstad
4009 Roanoke Circle
Golden Valley, MN