# Loring Park Vegetation Management

## *Past, Present and Future*

*There's been a lot of work performed at Loring Pond in the past to stabilize and improve its aesthetics and vegetative diversity. Starting in August the Park Board will continue that work to control the cattail population and increase native aquatic emergent vegetation.*

### 1997

Loring pond was dredged and a geosynthetic clay liner was installed to prevent the pond from losing water. An aeration system was also installed and native aquatic emergent vegetation was planted in the pond, along with an upland shoreline buffer to deter geese and ducks.

### 2012-2014

Working under Minnesota DNR permits, the Park Board and contractor Applied Ecological Services (AES) implemented a limited project in the South Bay. This project involved removal of cattails near the outlet structure, dock and in a 100-foot restoration area near the dock. In 2013 native aquatic emergent vegetation was planted into the restoration area.

### Fall 2014-Spring 2015

New state legislation passed in 2014 allowing the Park Board to continuously manage cattails and plant native aquatic emergent vegetation in all of Loring Pond. AES cut as many cattails as possible below the water in Loring Pond in the fall and early winter of 2014-2015 in an effort to suffocate them and prepare the site for future vegetation management.

A reduced population of cattails reemerged in spring 2015.

### 2015-2018

The Park Board has a three-year contract with AES for implementing a multi-faceted plan to manage vegetation at Loring Pond. The plan includes:

**Mechanical cutting**: Cattails will be cut below the water wherever possible in the South and North Bay.

**North Bay Floating Mat**: Floating mat cattails cannot be cut below the water's surface, rendering the removal of the floating mat costly and time consuming. Currently staff are assessing all options to remove the mat in a manner that is least disruptive to the park.

**Targeted Herbicide Applications**: In both bays herbicide will need to be applied to cattails growing in very shallow water and in saturated soils where cutting below the water is not a control option. It will also be used to control the seeding of cattails on the floating mat comprising most of the North Bay.

**New Native Plantings**: Once cattails are controlled to a manageable level, native aquatic emergent vegetation will be planted to enhance the pond's aquatic vegetation. The upland shoreline buffer will be reestablished to deter waterfowl. Temporary fencing will be installed to protect the native plantings from Canada geese.


Photo: Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org


Photo: MN Dept. of Natural Resources


Photo: Graves Lovell, AL Dept. of Conservation & Natural Res., Bugwood.org


Photo: MN Dept. of Natural Resources


Photo: Flickr user Distant Hill Gardens

### Future Maintenance

Complete removal of cattails is not possible in Loring Pond. Seed sources for cattails are everywhere and can be brought in by wind, migrating waterfowl and birds. Ongoing maintenance is needed to control cattails to a level where they do not dominate the aquatic emergent vegetation zone of the pond.

There may be short-term disruptions experienced by users of the park while the cattail population is reduced, but these disruptions are necessary to ensure the long-term vitality of the pond.

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## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### What is the scope of the current vegetation management project in Loring Park?

The Park Board has a three-year contract (2015-2018) with Applied Ecological Services (AES) to manage vegetation in Loring Park.

Cattails will be cut below the water wherever possible in an effort to suffocate them. Cattails growing in very shallow water and in saturated soils where there is no water will be treated with herbicide. The floating mat of cattails in the North Bay will also be treated with herbicide in August and September to prevent it from seeding.

Vegetation management in 2016 and beyond will depend upon the effectiveness of the previous year's work. When cattails are controlled to a manageable level, native aquatic emergent vegetation will be planted and the upland shoreline plant buffer will be restored.

### Will park activity be disrupted?

Park users may hear or see machinery used by AES to cut cattails. Signs will be posted notifying the public when herbicide is used. Otherwise people are encouraged to continue enjoying the park as they typically would.

### What are hybrid cattails?

The hybrid cattail is a cross between the native cattail and the narrow-leaved cattail, which is native to Eurasia. Hybrid cattails are very aggressive, opportunistic and can thrive in a wider range of conditions than the native cattail.

Hybrid cattails are also more likely to spread through their roots and are capable of quickly forming floating mats of roots. These floating mats can break off and colonize other areas.

### Why are hybrid cattails a problem in Loring Park?

Hybrid cattails have crowded out native aquatic emergent vegetation around Loring Pond. The cattails' dominance has reduced the amount of open water on the pond, limiting park users' views and decreasing aquatic vegetation diversity.

### Will this project ever completely remove cattails from Loring Pond?

No. Loring Pond offers ideal growing conditions for hybrid cattails due to its abundance of shallow water and fluctuating water levels. This project aims to manage cattails to a level where native aquatic emergent vegetation is the dominant vegetation in the pond.

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*The Park Board would like to thank members of Citizens for a Loring Park Community and The Friends of Loring Park for their dedication toward making the park a more beautiful place.*

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