

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Water Quality Improvements Expected at Como Lake

Join us for one of two public meetings to learn more

SAINT PAUL (February 25, 2020) –Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) is committed to improving water quality in Como Lake, a beloved water resource in Saint Paul for over a century. The lake’s more than 4 million visitors can expect noticeable improvements in water quality and clarity after CRWD completes two in-lake treatments this spring.

The biggest challenge facing Como Lake is too much phosphorus, a pollutant carried to the lake through runoff in storm drains. Over time, high levels of phosphorus – three times higher than Minnesota standards – have led to algae blooms that choke the oxygen from the lake and lead to fish kills. While CRWD and its partners have already worked to reduce phosphorus by 20% in the past two decades, water quality in the lake remains poor.

The other main concern in Como Lake is an invasive aquatic plant known as curly-leaf pondweed. The plant is dominating Como Lake’s ecosystem, making it difficult for native plants to survive. Decaying curly-leaf pondweed adds more phosphorous to the water when it dies off, so management is key to achieving CRWD’s water quality goals.

“Capitol Region Watershed District has spent the better part of two decades working to capture and clean runoff flowing into Como Lake. While we have made significant progress, more work is needed to address years of nutrient pollution that is now being recycled inside of the lake. The two in-lake treatments planned for this spring are critical steps towards improving water quality in Como Lake.”
Mark Doneux, Administrator

In April, an herbicide will be applied to Como Lake to target the overgrowth of curly-leaf pondweed before native plants begin growing. The goal of the treatment is to reduce curly-leaf pondweed so native plants can reestablish in the lake. Similar treatments have been successfully used in a number of metro area lakes over the past decade.

In May, aluminum sulfate (alum) will be applied to Como Lake to reduce phosphorus being recycled inside of the lake. The alum settles to the bottom of the lake and binds to phosphorous in the sediment, making it unavailable for algae to consume. Alum is commonly used in drinking water treatment and

has been a safe lake management tool for decades. Immediate improvements in water quality and clarity are expected.

Lake access may be restricted for recreation at times. Signage will be posted to keep visitors up to date. Water quality monitoring will occur throughout each treatment and the weeks following to ensure it is applied safely and correctly for the best results.

CRWD is hosting two public meetings about the spring 2020 treatments. Join us to learn more: [Como Lake Public Information Meeting 1](#) on Monday, March 2, 6:00-7:30 p.m. at the Como Pavilion, or [Como Lake Public Information Meeting 2](#) on Saturday, March 7, 1:00-2:30 p.m. at the Como Historic Streetcar Station.

Como Lake Plan

Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) is committed to improving water quality in Como Lake, a beloved water resource in Saint Paul for over a century. Despite efforts to address the water quality in the lake over the years, decades of stormwater runoff and pollution have made a new Como Lake Management Plan necessary. CRWD, with guidance and support from the City of Saint Paul and agency partners have outlined the new Como Lake Management Plan based on the industry's best practices, science and technology. The Como Lake Plan identifies strategies to address the water quality issues, which includes treatment of the water over the course of several years, beginning in the spring of 2020 with herbicide and alum treatments. Visit capitolregionwd.org/comolake or follow us on social media to learn more about the Como Lake Plan and see how you can participate.

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