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Como Golf Course Clean Water Project Construction Begins

SAINT PAUL (July 16, 2020) – Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) and the City of Saint Paul began construction on a clean water project at Como Golf Course on July 6 that is expected to capture and clean 11 million gallons of runoff before it reaches Como Lake. This is the third project the two entities have collaborated on in 2020. An herbicide treatment was completed in March to reduce invasive curly-leaf pondweed and an alum treatment in April to reduce phosphorous cycling inside of the lake to improve water clarity and reduce algae blooms.

The biggest challenge facing Como Lake is too much phosphorus, a pollutant carried to the lake through runoff in storm drains. Phosphorus comes from decaying organic matter like leaves, grass clippings, pet waste, and soil. Over time, high levels of phosphorus in the lake — three times higher than Minnesota standards — have led to algae blooms that choke the oxygen from the lake, leading to fish kills and strong odors mid-summer.

CRWD and the City of Saint Paul examined Como Regional Park to identify sites to strategically manage stormwater runoff. Sites were prioritized based on the availability of suitable land and water quality treatment provided. Two locations were selected at Como Golf Course as part of this process, the fairway of Hole 7 and the stormwater pond between Holes 3 and 11.

"The analysis done at Como Regional Park ensures that CRWD, the City of Saint Paul and its residents are getting the most water quality benefits for their money. It also helps to safeguard the recent investment in an alum treatment by reducing new phosphorous flowing into the lake." Forrest Kelley, Capitol Region Watershed District Regulatory Division Manager

Hole 7 Fairway: An existing storm sewer pipe near the fairway of Hole 7 captures runoff from 63-acres of land including the zoo and surrounding neighborhood. Water from the pipe will be diverted to an infiltration basin, similar to a large rain garden, and an underground infiltration system. Polluted rainwater will fill the basin and any excess water will flow into a series of underground pipes with thousands of holes in them to allow the water to soak into the ground. Native plants will help soak up water, provide pollinator habitat, and enhance the beauty of the area. The water is cleaned as it moves through the soil, removing pollutants that would have otherwise ended up in Como Lake.

Northwest Pond: Water from 150-acres of land within the Cities of Saint Paul, Roseville, and Falcon Heights drains to a stormwater pond between Holes 3 and 11. An iron-enhanced sand filter will be added along the eastern edge of the pond to remove dissolved phosphorus, a pollutant in the water that fuels algae growth. Iron filings mixed into sand create a bond with phosphorus, removing it from the water before it enters Como Lake.

A smart control system added at the pond's overflow outlet will help control the level of the pond to optimize the effects of the iron-enhanced sand filter and reduce flooding on the course.

The green at Hole 7 was closed on July 6, 2020 and will reopen for play in the spring of 2021. A temporary green at Hole 7 has been established.

CRWD appreciates the patience of golfers as we work to improve water quality in Como Lake. The improvements will prevent approximately 55 pounds of phosphorus from entering Como Lake each year.



CRWD received a \$1.76 million grant award from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, with funds from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, to improve water quality in Como Lake and Lake McCarrons. A portion of the grant, along with funding from CRWD, will be used to cover project costs, estimated at \$1.4 million.

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