

Como Lake Signs & Stories Walking Tour



Como Lake Signs & Stories Walking Tour

Omníciye Makhóche

The Land Where We Gather

Como Lake has always been a sacred gathering space for many Native American communities. Our memories have been shared throughout time, passed down by oral storytelling, praying for the water, and honoring our plant relatives.

Háza Inyanke Win

A Fierce Protector of the Land and Water

For centuries Native women have gathered traditional medicines together at Como Lake. We harvest and gather in deep connection with each season and teach our younger generations how to live in harmony with Uŋčí Makhá (Grandmother Earth).

The Watershed's Influence on Como Lake

The water quality in Como Lake has been significantly affected by stormwater runoff from its urban watershed. Over the last century, polluted runoff has flowed into the lake through storm sewers, degrading water quality and ecosystem health. Impacts to the lake from pollution include algae blooms, low water clarity, fish kills, and lack of biodiversity. In recent years, Como Lake's water quality has improved through ongoing strong community support and strategic management activities led by Capitol Region Watershed District, the City of Saint Paul, and partners.

What's Happening Inside Como Lake?

Inside Como Lake, complex natural processes affect the lake's water quality, aquatic plants, and wildlife. Seasonal changes directly influence the physical and chemical properties of the lake, like water temperature, oxygen levels, and nutrient availability. Como Lake's ecosystem relies on warm temperatures and sunlight in the summer to support aquatic life and process nutrients, and cold temperatures and ice in the winter to insulate the wildlife below. Any change to this annual cycle can have cascading effects on the ecosystem. This makes Como Lake particularly vulnerable to impacts from urban development, climatic extremes, and aquatic invasive species.

Rain Gardens Help Keep Como Lake Clean

Rain gardens are low-lying gardens designed to collect and filter polluted runoff before it flows into Como Lake. Rain and snowmelt flow from pavement into the garden where it soaks into the ground instead of washing into a storm drain and the lake without treatment.

Benefits of Natural Shorelines

In early 2000, the City of Saint Paul and community partners transformed Como Lake's entire shoreline from shallow-rooted turf grass to native plants. Today, the diverse native plants and trees around Como Lake protect water quality and promote lake health by filtering runoff, reducing erosion, and providing wildlife habitat.

A Wildlife Oasis in the City

Como Lake provides a lush oasis and peaceful retreat for people and wildlife alike. Water, soil, plants, and trees provide habitat for wildlife that is critical to their survival in this dense urban environment. As you explore, listen to birds overhead, look for turtles on fallen logs, or watch butterflies flutter along its shore. Each time you visit, you'll see something new.

Fishing at Como Lake

Measure Your Fish! Como Lake is a popular destination for fishing year-round. You'll find beginners and seasoned experts fishing at the lake. Fish surveys have identified 15 different species of fish living in Como Lake. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources stocks fish each year based on existing populations, ecosystem needs, and fishing demands.

Formation of Lake Como

Como Lake's size, shape, and depth have changed throughout time from both natural geologic processes and human alterations. What was originally a large shallow wetland became a smaller, deeper lake as urban development expanded and Como Regional Park was established in 1872.

Como Lake's Dynamic Food Web

Plants and animals living in Como Lake rely on each other to survive in a food web. Energy moves through the ecosystem when top predators prey on smaller fish which eat microscopic organisms who consume nutrients. In a balanced ecosystem, all plants and animals thrive equally which helps keep their populations in check. A single change can cause a ripple effect throughout the entire ecosystem.

