

**Tom Dimond**  
2119 Skyway Drive  
Saint Paul, MN 55119

Pollution cleanup and natural resource restoration in our National Park

Thank you to City Councilmembers Jane Prince and Nelsie Yang for authoring Resolution 22-69 in support of pollution cleanup and natural resource restoration on the Eastside of Saint Paul. The area is BIPOC Majority and Economically Disadvantaged.

This area has been disadvantaged when it comes to access and use of safe, healthy, and welcoming natural resource opportunities. Our great natural resources have instead been used as a place to dump waste/pollutant. The barriers that restrict public access to our natural resources need to be removed. Regional Park Plans adopted by the City Council and approved by the Metropolitan Council over 40 years ago promised the park trails, boat access, pavilion, bathrooms, and park signage would be completed within 9 years. We are still waiting.

Extensive funding has gone into park facilities elsewhere while the BIPOC Majority in our part of town have not seen the honoring of promises made during 50 years of Regional Park planning, and creation of our National Park and State Critical Area. Equity and equality call for immediate action to provide safe and healthy natural resources accessible by all.

Pig's Eye Lake is a Glacial Lake. It was here before the Mississippi or Minnesota Rivers in Saint Paul. The lakes, wetlands, and flood plain forests of Pig's Eye Regional Park are unique natural resources of great value. The natural resource value of wetlands has not always been understood and appreciated. Filling and destruction of wetlands contribute to a great loss of essential habitat, ponding and filtration of runoff water.

French traders called the lake's vast wetlands Grand Marais. The area was teeming with wildlife in a beautiful setting.

The area remained a largely untouched natural area until recent times. For more than a century plans called for the whole area to be protected as a natural area for all to enjoy. While plans called for it's protection, City resources were focused on creating Mississippi River Boulevard, Reserve Boulevard, Summit Avenue, Como Park, etc.. During the Depression the City opened up the park as a place to dump anything into the wetland. This continued through the 1970's as an unlicensed dump.

The upside was the absolute disgust of many watching what was happening to this unique and valuable natural resource. This disgust combined with the growing environmental movement in the 1960's and 70's demanded the protection and enhancement of Pig's Eye Lake Regional Park and the surrounding bluffs.

The Regional Park designation, State Critical Area designation, State Scientific and Natural Area designation and Mississippi National River and Recreation Area designation as part of the National Park System established in law the need and significance of protecting and enhancing the natural resources and recreational opportunities.

We have seen great progress in many areas to protect and enhance natural resources and enhance recreational opportunities. Sadly, the BIPOC Majority neighborhoods around Pig's Eye Lake have been denied the pollution cleanup, natural resource restoration, and enhancement of recreational opportunities that others have benefitted from.

The resolution authored by Councilmembers Jane Prince and Nelsie Yang is an important first step to rectify this disparity.

Climate change has contributed to more violent storms and deluges of water. We have seen the tragic consequences. Removing pollution from the superfund site in the flood plain helps protect our City and those downriver who use the river as their source of drinking water.