

April 5, 2021

TO: St. Paul City Council Members

FROM: Peggy Lynch
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RE: St. Paul City Council discussion of taking land from the Pigs Eye area: April 8, 2021

I ask the St. Paul City Council to reject the proposal of the St. Paul Water Utility to take 8.5 acres of flood plain forest park lands along Pig's Eye Lake Road to use as a construction debris dumping site.

The Pigs Eye area is St. Paul largest lake and also the site of the largest heron and egret rookery on the Upper Mississippi River. It is a regional park and is the site of a designated Scientific and Natural Area, the only one in St. Paul. Pigs Eye was also included in the National Geographic Magazine, [A Tale of Two Cities](#), November, 1980 which showed its value for St. Paul. In all of this time, St. Paul has not bothered to help clean up the area or to put in an entrance for citizens to find and enjoy the natural area that is there.

Pigs Eye Lake and its surrounding acres have been designated as a part of Battle Creek Regional Park for over 50 years. Neither Ramsey County nor the City of St. Paul have moved to forward the development of this land for a park in all of these years. Instead the area has been desecrated by the barge industry, the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission, and the railroads.

Railroad lines have encroached on this parkland over the years; the Waste Control Commission authorized the dumping of the sludge from the treatment plant into the lake; St. Paul allowed a dump to be put there; the Port Authority built an industrial area (Red Rock) there; and the Park's Department agreed to establish the wood recycling facility as a "temporary" use to help clean up the diseased Dutch elm trees in St Paul in the 1970's. The temporary use continues in Pigs Eye 50 years later.

Since that time the Water Utility has also been allowed to dump construction material at Pigs Eye and now the Water Utility wants additional acres to further their dumping activities. The Water Utility has other property where they can dump their debris.

There have been many other industrial uses proposed for the area and they were generally not allowed because of citizen recognition of the uniqueness of the area. The citizens worked hard to defeat approval of these industries in Pigs Eye.

Moreover, in the early 1990's I participated in amending the St. Paul Charter to include a "no net loss" of parkland. The charter amendment established a procedure to dispose of parkland, and includes the provision that states that parkland must be replaced. The Charter also states consideration shall be given to replacing parkland within the same district planning council and to replace lands with similar lands for the purpose of maintaining balance within the park system. This provision of the Charter is not included with this request by the Water Utility.

I ask that you reject the request by the Water Utility to take land in Pigs Eye Regional Park, it does not follow the spirit of the charter amendment and would continue further loss of land at Pigs Eye.