

FRIENDS OF LAKE HIAWATHA

Equity and environmental goals:

Lake Hiawatha and Hiawatha Golf Course have a long history that is part of America's past and present struggles with racism and injustice. The goal is to help identify solutions to the challenges facing Lake Hiawatha that acknowledge these past and present issues and embody a commitment to both racial and environmental justice and equity.

Honoring Indigenous Land and Perspectives: The Chain of Lakes in Minneapolis, including Lake Hiawatha, were home to the Dakota, and other indigenous people, who lived sustainably with the land and relied on what was previously known as Rice Lake for the harvesting of food and survival. The Dakota were forcibly removed from this land in 1862. We hope that people from the Dakota and other indigenous communities will participate in the planning process going forward as we attempt to return to a more sustainable relationship with the land and water.

Hiawatha Golf Course's historic and current significance to the African American golf community: Notably, Hiawatha Golf Course was a place that was welcoming to African American golfers when other golf courses were not. It is still a place where many African Americans golfers play. We must acknowledge the role HGC has played in the African American community, and find viable ways to meet community needs for welcoming and inclusive spaces.

Environmental racism and environmental justice: People of Color and low-income communities have long been, and still are disproportionately impacted by pollution in Minneapolis. Industrial sources of pollution in our city are concentrated around low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. This is evident particularly in the East Phillips neighborhood and in North Minneapolis.

The pollution impacting Lake Hiawatha is also a significant equity and environmental justice issue. Lake Hiawatha's park visitors reflect the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of Minneapolis. Individuals and families from all backgrounds picnic, fish, swim and play at Lake Hiawatha. Children play in water that is often littered with storm sewer trash, including needles, condoms and used diapers. It is contaminated with chemicals, excess nutrients and bacteria. Additionally, Minnehaha Creek runs through Lake

Hiawatha before joining the Mississippi River, which is the main source of drinking water for Saint Paul and other communities downstream.

The answer is not to close the beach and cutoff the community from the Lake, but to take the environmental measures the Park Board has put forward. We must mitigate the pollution entering Lake Hiawatha via the “north pipe” storm sewer and groundwater pumping. These two sources originate on the golf course.

Whatever public use is decided going forward, mitigating the storm sewers, reducing pumping and changing land use practices by eliminating the use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides will result in massive improvements in water quality and ecological function at Lake Hiawatha.

I think the community can find common ground in these goals.

Sean Connaughty