



Welcome to the LWV ABC Newsletter – the LINK!

What do you have to contribute for the next issue of this newsletter? Consider sharing events, follow-up on past meetings, info on member accomplishments, etc! Please direct your ideas and comments to Gretchen Sabel at gpsabel@yahoo.com. Deadline for submittal of material is noon on September 23. Thanks!

Also, - remember to check our Facebook page for meeting information, too!

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-ABC-Minnesota/42364336725301>

CALENDAR of Upcoming Events

LWV ABC Events

October – no membership meeting (see forums)
November 10 – Pollinator Protection in LWVABC Cities (panel of local officials)

CMAL Event

October 18 – Woodbury City Hall – Met Council’s Thrive MSP 2040 Plan – 10:30 am (details follow)

Forum Schedule (All forums start at 6:30pm)

September 22 – Anoka County General Election
September 23 – Judicial District 10, District 14
September 24 – Judicial District 10, District 1
September 29 – Coon Rapids General Election Forum and House 36B & 37A Forum
October 2 – Champlin City and House 36A Forum
October 6 – Andover City + House 35B Forum
October 9 – Anoka City + House 35A Forum
October 13 – Ramsey General Election Forum
November 4 – General Election

Thanks to all who have volunteered to help put on the forums. Please spread the word and let people know they are invited to attend. Poster for printing and distribution is attached to this email!

10th District Judicial Forum Added; No October Membership Meeting:



A forum for the 10th District Judicial race will be held at QCTV Studios on September 24; it would be great if we could have many LWV ABC members as well as members of the public in the audience for this event. QCTV is located at **12254 Ensign Avenue North, Champlin, MN 55316**, just north of the Champlin Ice Arena. **There will be no membership meeting in October – we will all be busy with forums.** Please volunteer to help – it takes everyone working together to provide the high-quality events that voters expect from League!

November 10 Meeting – Pollinators

We will be beginning our advocacy with the cities in our area; this meeting will focus on this advocacy. The Pollinator Committee is meeting in the next couple weeks to scope out the work and plan the November meeting – if you would like to participate in this meeting, please contact



Gretchen Sabel at gpsabel@yahoo.com . Thanks!

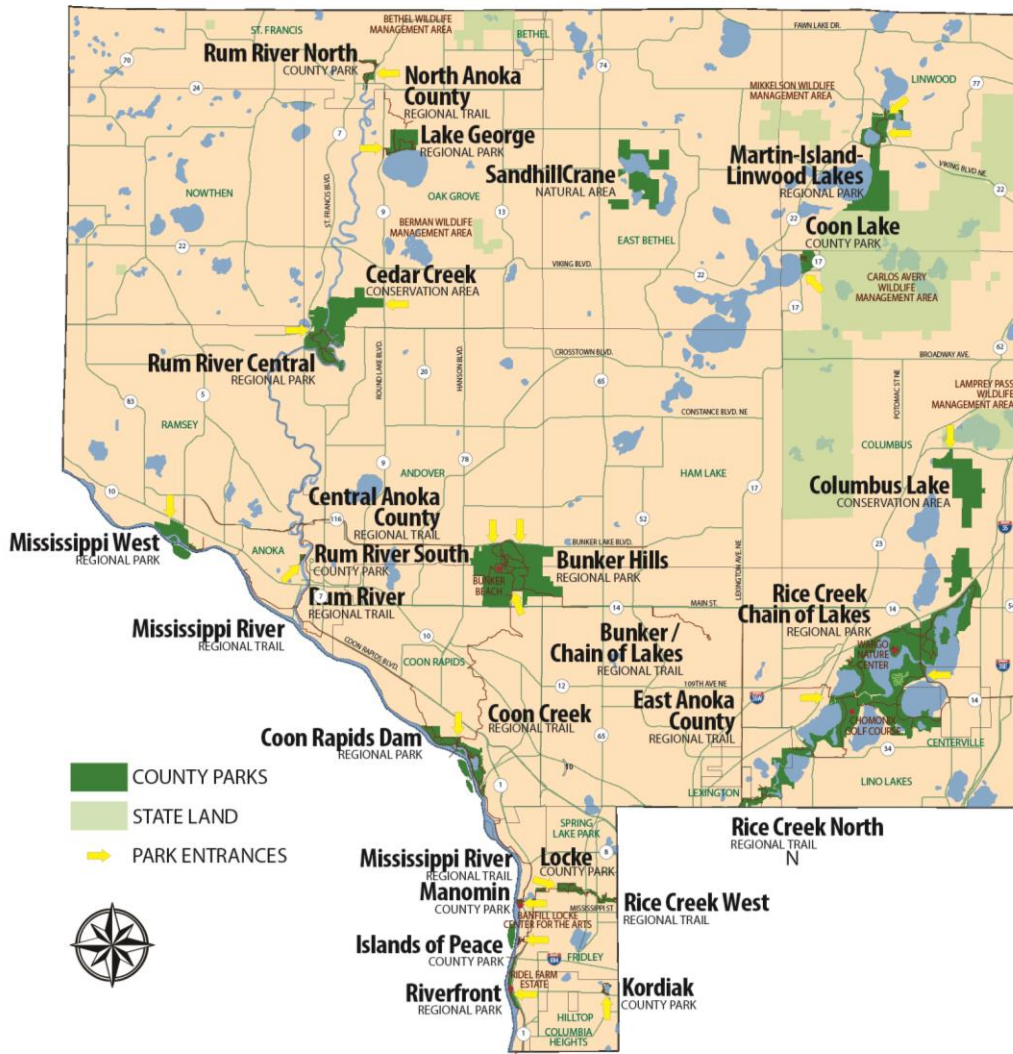
September Meeting – Director John VonDeLinde on Anoka County Parks:



Congratulations to John VonDeLinde, recipient of the 2014 Friend of League award from LWV ABC!

"To John VonDeLinde in recognition of your accomplishments as Director of Anoka County Parks & Recreation since 1994 : For substantially expanding the park & trail system and the visitors served - For opening up comprehensive planning to citizen input - For securing funding - For conserving native plant & wildlife habitat, and - For providing diverse active & passive recreational and educational opportunities for people young & old in the Metro region-- Presented to you John VonDeLinde - This Friend of League Award - This 8th Day of September 2014 - Susan Anderson , President (award made by Mary Jo Truchon).

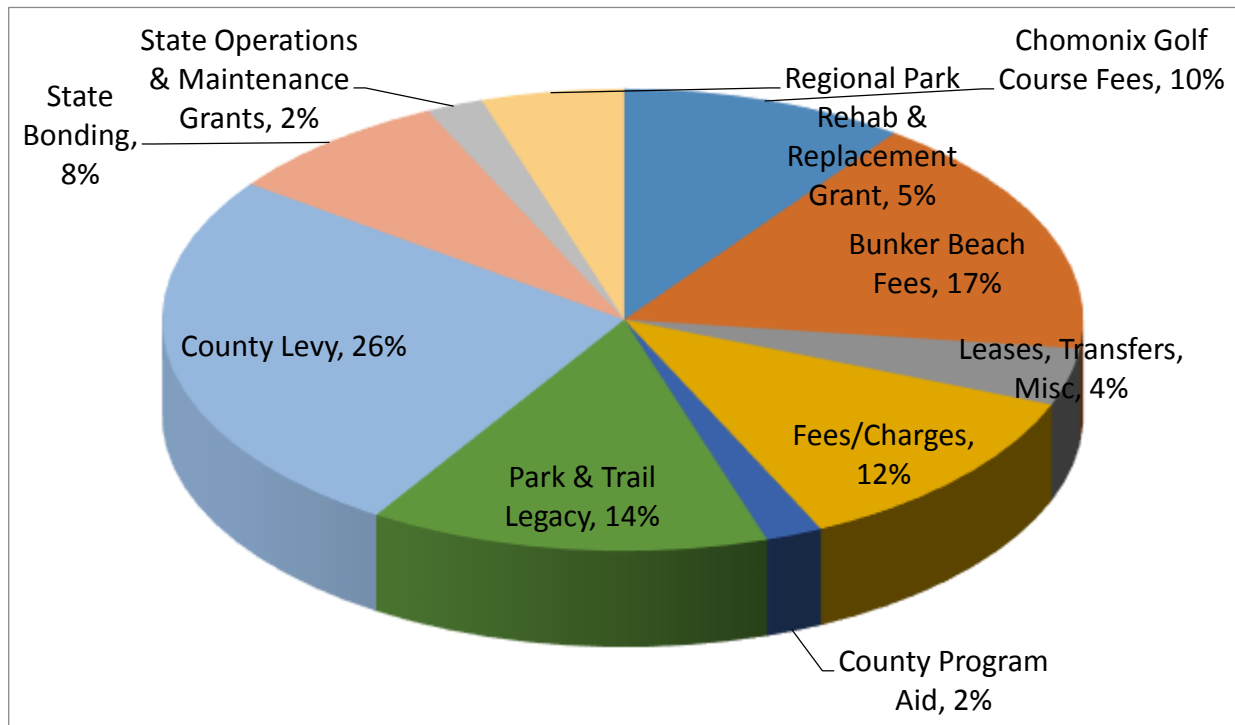
Director John VonDeLinde then talked about Anoka County Parks. John has been Director of Anoka County Parks since 1995 (actually December 29, 1994). Under his leadership, **the parks system** has seen significant increase in size, facilities and patronage. The first county park in Minnesota was Kordiak Park in Columbia Heights, back in 1965. Since then, Anoka County's park system has grown to include 18 parks and conservation areas, 55 miles of regional trails and much more. Key principles that went into building the county park system were that county parks should be located throughout the county, be located in conjunction with lakes and streams, and that facilities in county parks should complement, not compete, with facilities in city parks. Accordingly, most parks focus on more passive activities in harmony with beautiful natural settings.



Anoka County Parks are part of the Metropolitan Regional Park system, but have several **unique elements**: Bunker Beach waterpark is the largest outdoor waterpark in Minnesota, Manomin Park's Banfill Tavern (built in 1847) is on the National Historic Register and is operated in partnership with the non-profit Banfill Center for the Arts, Bunker Stables are the only livery stable in a park in the Twin Cities, and land purchases that were recently added the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes make that park area the largest in the Twin Cities. The county is also partnering with the Corps of Engineers and the state in the changes now being made to the Coon Rapids dam to make it better able to repel invasive carp that may try to move upstream in the Mississippi River.

Park usage has greatly increased in the past two decades to nearly 4 million visits in 2012. The county has been promoting parks through a revamped website, use of social media, marketing through Groupon and billboard advertisements, and through partnerships with other local institutions like county libraries. The county also partners with groups like the YMCA, who runs day camps two county parks, and receives an annual grant from Connexus that is used to put on Heritage Days on Peltier Lake, where 3000 students come each year to learn about the life of Native Americans in this area.

The average household in Anoka County contributes \$16 in taxes to support county parks, about 26% of the \$9,500,000 parks budget. Other **funding** comes from state grants and bonding, and assorted fees. The graphic below shows that general fees and charges (the dark gold segment) account for 12% of the revenue. Both Chomonix Golf Course and Bunker Beach operate as separate enterprises and do not receive subsidies from the county, although they are shown here.



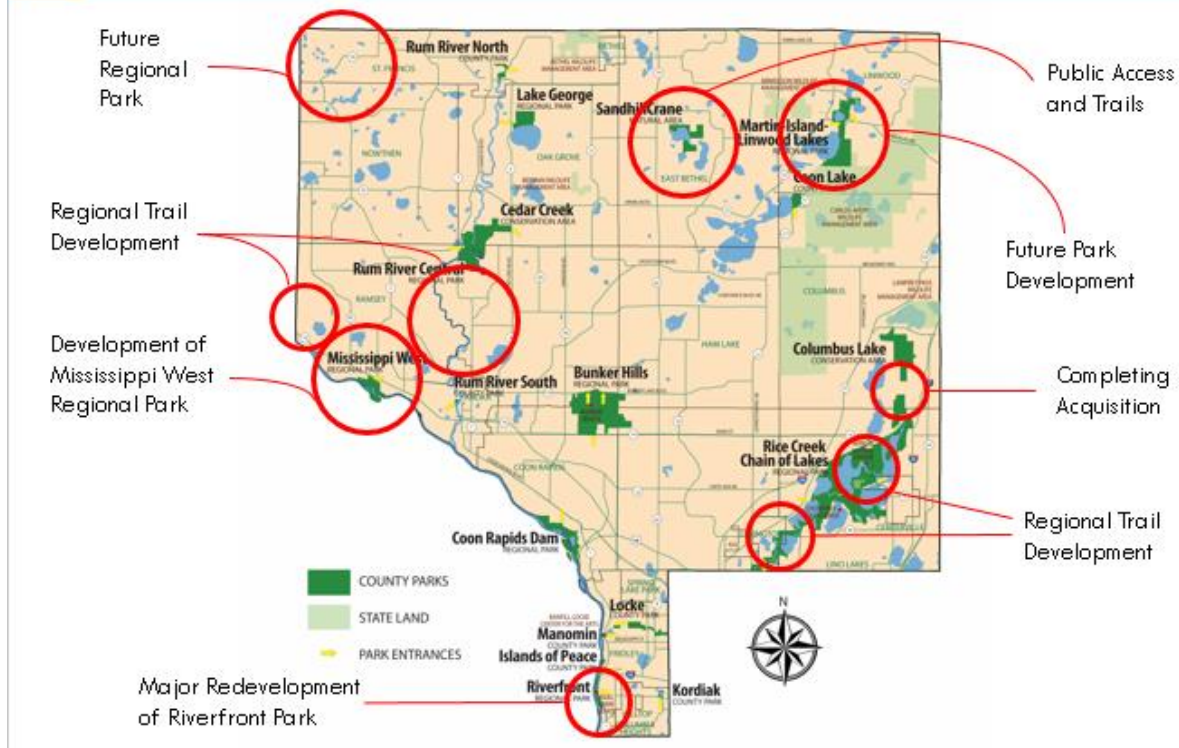
John was asked whether the county would **eliminate gate fees** like Three Rivers Park District has done as a way to increase park use by people of lower incomes. John replied that gate revenues account for about 10% of revenue and are too significant to eliminate. There are a number of reduced-price options that folks can take advantage of, like free First Tuesdays and Second Sundays and programs such as the one through the library where kids can earn passes to Bunker Beach by reading books.

Another question posed was how **public input** is provided to Anoka County Parks Department. John said that there will be a citizen advisory council established to help with the coming development of an overall plan and vision for the parks for the next ten years. Anoka County is unique in that it does not have a standing citizen group, instead decisions are made by a committee of county commissioners who meet on monthly. More info here on these meetings:

<http://www.anokacounty.us/calendar.aspx?CID=25> The Parks Department also does many surveys, both of users of specific facilities and of the community in general.

Future plans for park acquisition include a major purchase of land for a new regional park in Nowthen, on property now owned by ATK. Forests here are part of Minnesota’s Big Woods and are significantly different from the rest of the county. Also, Mississippi River Bike Trail will eventually extend along the river from Minneapolis to Elk River; final segments will be completed in the next few years. Development of facilities will also take place in the Linwood/Island/Martin Lakes Park in Linwood Township, a park that now has only limited facilities. The graphic below shows more projects in the works or at least in planning.

Future Initiatives



Challenges facing Anoka County Parks include: Invasive species management – principally buckthorn. Volunteers from Cummings Diesel in Coon Rapids have been assisting with removal at the Dam and youth have also been enlisted through the CCC, but more is needed here. Asset preservation – aging infrastructure means that facilities constantly need to be updated and replaced; this is an ongoing effort. Regional trails development will continue. One big area that will be a challenge is “nature deficit disorder”, where many youth are quite disconnected from the outdoors. This needs to be turned around. The Parks Department will be spending considerable time and effort in completing the last major park acquisitions and the next 10 year Visioning Process.

When asked what the county is doing to **protect pollinators and enhance pollinator habitat**, John said that there is not a concerted effort in this area but that the work that is being done to restore prairie and to plant native plants will help here. He urged folks to go visit the Veteran’s Memorial in Bunker Hills Park to see the plantings here. John also told the group that he would welcome partnership with LWV ABC on this topic.

Another question focused on **vandalism**, asking if this is a significant issue in county parks? John shared that the county has seen some vandalism, primarily graffiti, but that it is not as much as might be expected. He said, “Building quality facilities, keeping them nice and increasing the number of park visitors help to reduce vandalism”. This formula has proven effective.

The final question was what **LWV ABC can do to help Anoka County Parks through advocacy**. John said that it would really help if citizens would come to the state capitol with John when he is lobbying for funds, and that letters of support to groups like the Lessard-Sams council would also be useful.

CMAL Meeting: Metropolitan Council’s Thrive MSP 2040 Plan

The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues invites you to their quarterly meeting on October 18 at



10:30am in Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Rd, Woodbury MN. The guest speaker will be Wendy Wulff, who represents Met Council District 16 and currently serves on the Environment Committee (Vice Chair) and the Community Development Committee. Wendy was appointed to Met Council in 2009 by Governor Tim Pawlenty and again in 2011 by Governor Mark Dayton. She was on Lakeville’s City Council for seven years and on Lakeville’s Planning Commission for seven years, and has served on many other board and committees dedicated to local government.

Agenda:

- 10am – check-in, coffee, refreshments
- 10:30-11:30 – Speaker presentation and follow-up discussion
- 11:30-11:45 – CMAL delegates meet

LWV ABC Board Meeting Dates Set

LWV ABC’s Board will meet on the 4th Monday of most months at Davanni’s over lunch from 11:30am to 1pm. The next meeting will be on September 22. All members are invited to attend! Draft notes from the August 27 meeting follow.

LWV ABC Board Meeting
August 27, 2014
The Bean, Andover

Present: Jeorgette Knoll, Zilla Way, Jane Arndt, Kathy Aanerud, Kathie Whelchel, Carol Bradley, Arlene Gillett, Susan Anderson

The meeting was called to order at 6:25. The agenda provided by Susan Anderson was reviewed and modified – an item titled “501C3” was added. Also “MLD” and “Friend of League update” were added.

Minutes from the Retreat (parts 1 and 2) were reviewed. Motion to approve Kathy Aanerud, second Kathie Whelchel. All in favor, passed unanimous.

Treasurer report – still several members with outstanding dues.

Upcoming Board Meetings – will be on the 4th Mondays at lunch time, 11:30 to 1:00, at Davani’s in Coon Rapids. The next one will be on September 22.

Candidate forums – We worked to find some extra people, we will discuss this at the September 8 membership meeting.

Hostess List – We have what we need to be good through 2014. No further action needed.

Voter Registration – Geri put together a sign-up sheet for several events, we will discuss this also at September 8.

Membership categories – The “Household Membership” category will be retained. The timing of dues was discussed. We need to have a list of members that is as correct as possible by Dec 31. This would be our 2014 members. Gretchen will send out the dues notice to those who have not paid so far for 2014 and request payment by Sept 30. The dues bills for 2015 will be sent out around February 1, with payment requested by March 15. Gretchen agreed to discuss with Geri whether including the BE campaign as a line on our dues statement was a good idea. We had a long discussion on the need for increased dues; this will be discussed with membership at the Annual Meeting in April. Budget/finance meeting needs to be called to discuss dues and fundraisers. This group will identify the amount needed, another committee will be developed to actually raise the funds.

Letters – We need to write welcome letters to new members, thank you letters to presenters and other types of correspondence as well. Carol Bradley agreed to act as correspondence secretary: Kathy Aanerud will provide Carol with stationery.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 PM

Submitted by,
Carol Bradley and Gretchen Sabel