

February 2, 2010

Parks Foundation receives first \$100,000+ gift

The Regional Parks Foundation of the Twin Cities received its first donation of more than \$100,000 on Feb. 2. In fact, the value of the land donation from brothers John and Bernard Novotny for Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park in Scott County is \$150,300.

“We’re thrilled to receive this generous gift,” said Peter Bell, chair of the Metropolitan Council and of the foundation board. “This is exactly why the foundation was created – to give people the opportunity to make charitable donations that benefit the regional parks system.”

The eight-acre parcel was appraised at \$680,300. Scott County purchased \$530,000 of the land with funding assistance from the Metropolitan Council’s acquisition grant program, and the brothers donated the remainder to the Foundation, which becomes part owner of the land. The Foundation will, in turn, convey its portion of the land to Scott County in the future.

Preserving prime shoreland

The Novotny parcel is the last undeveloped lake-shore property on Cedar Lake, one of only two major recreational lakes in Scott County. Located on the southern end of the lake, the property contains 750 feet of shoreline and significant maple, basswood, and oak woodlands. “This is a very important piece of property on Cedar Lake,” said Mark Themig, parks director for Scott County. “This purchase helps to protect more lakeshore for the public, provides important connections to the park for neighbors, and gives us the opportunity to be good stewards of that land.”

Land was used for family recreation

The property was in the Novotny family since the 1909, John Novotny said. They never put any buildings on it, but used it for picnics, fishing and hunting. It also served as pasture land for cattle, he said.

“A lot of the cousins from the New Prague area used the land in the 1970s, ‘80s and ‘90s after my brother and I moved away into the Twin Cities,” Novotny said. “It was pretty much minimal use all along.”

“We don’t feel especially generous,” he said. “It’s kind of a nice idea to have this land not be developed. We hope this works out to the benefit of the communities down there.”

Almost 101 years to the day, the combined purchase and charitable gift helps preserve and protect, forever, land that will be enjoyed by the public for generations to come.

“This was a great opportunity to bring the parks foundation into the transaction,” Themig said. “It’s the reason the foundation was created – to promote opportunities for giving to the regional parks system.”

“It’s working,” he said. “We’ve already received another call for a potential donation.”

For more information about the Regional Parks Foundation of the Twin Cities, visit www.rpftc.org or call Jane Johnson, Executive Director, at 952-697-3554.