

Westwood Hills Nature Center Timeline

- 1930 Land used as a fox farm and public golf course; Marsh kept drained with drain tile.
- 1935 Maple trees (sugarbush) planted by Sprague Gee.
- 10/7/57 Carl L. Gardner and Associates investigate the feasibility of the city acquiring all or portions of the Westwood Golf Course as an addition to the City's Park and Recreation facilities.
- 1959 PGA golf tournament held at Minneapolis Golf Club; Westwood Golf Course used as a parking lot.
- 1959 The City of St. Louis Park acquires 90 acres from the golf course (Robert McNulty) for public park use.
- 1959/60 When a housing development was started at Westwood Hills Drive, a water pipe broke south of Franklin Avenue. The lake started to fill up and flood, killing trees around the sides. Water then backed up through a Highway 12 culvert, Brookview Golf Course and over the land to Bassett Creek.
- 1960s City of St. Louis Park acquires additional land through federal, state and city grants. This includes the entire golf course and residential property; Land used as a day camp.
- 1960 Evergreen trees planted on the hill to the east of the building.
- 1960 An agreement was made by the city to lease Westwood Hills Park to Elmer Carlson, Minneapolis.
- 1964 Abnormal rainfall ran into Westwood Lake increasing its size; citizens want to preserve it as a nature center.
- 1967/68 West side of entrance road used as a fill site. The fill was from the digging out of Lamplighter Pond.
- 11/1970 Feasibility study for Westwood Hills Environmental Interpretive Center is prepared by Brauer & Associates.

- 8/1971 A citizen's advisory committee is formed by the St. Louis Park city council to help plan the Westwood Hills Interpretive Center, chaired by Mitch Kirschbaum.
- 5/19/75 The St. Louis Park city council establishes a Westwood Hills advisory committee; hires Christian Nelson, consultant; hires Dyanne Sheldon, naturalist.
- 1976 Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) grant is received to purchase one of the two remaining residential parcels for the park; Westwood Lake officially deemed part of the Bassett Creek Watershed.
- 3/1977 The first phase of a three year development program is approved by the citizen council.
- 8/9/77 The following are now completed: marsh, basswood and upland trails, access road and parking, sanitary sewer service, and most of the chain link fencing; Tree Trust involved in trail building.
- 9/1977 Hydrologic study of Westwood Lake takes place.
- 1/11/78 Grant application for phase two of development plan including the following trails: grassland, north bay, boardwalk, floating boardwalk and lake observation node.
- 1/17/78 Building prospectus for Westwood Hills Environmental Education Center created.
- 2/21/78 Prairie Restorations, Inc. is chosen to develop a plan for the prairie area and site preparation, seeding, wildflower planting and a site management plan.
- 5/1/78 Construction of front entrance fence begins.
- 7/1978 City approves to submit final applications for LAWCON funding for marsh trail and the interpretive center building.
- 10/4/78 City council begins architect selection for the design of the center.
- 8/20/79 Project manual developed for the construction of Westwood Hills Environmental Education Center-designed by Smiley Glotter Associates; City council approves motion to accept construction bids for the building.

- 8/1979 Fred Seed property is acquired.
- 11/20/79 Presentation of Westwood Hills sign by the Lioness Club of St. Louis Park.
- 12/28/79 City council accepts bid by Bud Johnson Construction Company for the interpretive center building.
- 12/1979 First full-time manager and naturalist begins.
- 1/16/80 Construction of the center begins.
- 5/15/80 Fire protection plan re-evaluated after a major grass fire in southwest part of park.
- 1981 First year of joint school district/city outdoor education curriculum at Westwood Hills.
- 2/6/81 Nature Center building occupied by staff.
- 7/1/82 Second full-time naturalist position approved.
- 1982 Amphitheater and prairie decks built. First full year of weekend program offerings.
- 1984 Upper basswood trail completed.
- 1987 Y-dock built and receptionist position added.
- 1988 Summer Nature Outreach Program begins.
- 1990 Wildflower paved trail constructed; Main entrance moves to Virginia Avenue gate temporarily.
- 1991 Westwood celebrates its 10th anniversary; Sunrise Rotary deck built; New trail signs installed.
- 1992 Southwest section of marsh trail converted to wooden walkway; Jr. Naturalist program begins.

- 1994 Deer management program begins; Y-dock repaired (new floats added).
- 1995 Westwood purchases its first canoe; Honeybee observation apiary is constructed.
- 1996 Exhibit computer purchased with a Westwood Neighborhood grant; Insect display constructed.
- 1997 St. Louis Park Rotary clubs fund aquatic mammals exhibit; Eroded gulch in park filled.
- 1998 T-Dock is re-built.
- 2000 New Puppet theater is constructed by Richard E. Johnson with funding from a Westwood Neighborhood grant.
- 2001 Westwood Celebrates its 20th anniversary.
- 2002 Floating Boardwalk replacement project begins.
- 2003 Floating Boardwalk is completed. Northwest Boardwalk construction begins. Interpretive Center Building is closed in November for reconstruction. Programming occurs at the Brick House.
- 2004 Interpretive Center Building is reopened for programs in June. Entire Marsh Trail reconstruction project is completed.
- 2006 New playground area installed in picnic area near parking lot and trail to drainage pond completed
- 2007 Picnic Shelter completed near parking lot
- 2008 New park entrance gate with timer
- 2008 New steps completed near nature Center building (Tree Trust project) (Steps run from lake all the way to the sugar bush