



Working to protect the Mississippi River  
and its watershed in the Twin Cities area.

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Dear Mayor Carter, Councilmember Prince, and Director Hahm,

We are writing in support of the city's plan to realign and remove trails at Indian Mounds Park. We applaud this effort to protect a sacred Dakota place.

As you know, Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) is a local non-profit organization that works to protect, restore and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities metropolitan region. We have more than 2,700 active members, 3,500 volunteers and 2,500 advocates who care deeply about the river's unique resources.

The city of St. Paul sits on land that was stolen through treaties that exploited Dakota tribes for the financial benefit of white European settlers. Indian Mounds Park is an incredibly significant sacred burial ground for the Dakota people, yet their ownership of the site has been stripped away and the majority of their burial mounds destroyed. This damage cannot be reversed. But the city can and must respond to the guidance it's received from tribal communities about the best ways to acknowledge this devastating history and protect the burial sites that remain.

FMR believes that everyone deserves access to parks, trails, and the Mississippi River. East Side residents should have better access, but that disparity should be addressed within the larger system of parks and trails. One small site such as Indian Mounds Park cannot sufficiently meet all needs even with a blufftop trail. We encourage the city to make significant investments in improving river access and recreational amenities for the East Side. Sites such as Pig's Eye Lake Regional Park, Lower Phalen Creek, Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, and Battle Creek Regional Park are all ideal opportunities.

Parks serve several purposes; preservation and recreation are both critical functions. The city's proposal to improve the Mounds Boulevard path, remove the eroded blufftop trail, and add spur trails to the bluff where possible is the right route forward for Indian Mounds Park. Thank you for your commitment to this plan.

Sincerely,

Whitney L. Clark, Executive Director

Irene Jones, Senior Policy Advocate