

## ~ Frisbee Golf Course Opens at Harder Park ~

Frisbee golf has probably been around since the invention of the Frisbee back in the 1950's but there are two things that have led to it becoming much more popular. Called "Disc Golf" by those who enjoy the sport, it is played in local parks all over the United States and other parts of the world. The things that set it apart from the old-style courses are the pole, chain and basket arrangement that catch the discs at the completion of each hole and the smaller Frisbees that come in a wild variety of colors and can fly farther than your old Wham-O. They even make "putters" out of floppy plastic and "drivers" with sharper edges for more distance.

Local Boy Scout Ian Maki has been dreaming of the day when Disc Golf might come to a park in North Branch. When challenged to come up with a community service project for his Eagle Scout award he thought building a course might be a project that area residents would really enjoy. He met with the City Parks and Recreation board last fall to pitch the idea and they approved the project for Harder Park.

At the park last weekend (Sunday, June 6, 2010) Ian talked about what he's done to get this project completed and thanked the scouts from his troop for putting in more than 200 hours of volunteer labor brushing the trails through the wooded sections of the park, building the baskets and chain racks and installing them at the park. Mike Hillestad got a special thank-you for allowing Ian to use his metal shop up in Pine City and his dad, Todd was given the first official throw from the first tee for his support and encouragement along the way.

A Healthy Community Partnership / Youth Leadership grant from the Central Minnesota Initiative Foundation was key to buying the needed materials for the course. It took 75 feet of structural steel pipe, 500 feet of chain and 950 feet of 5/16ths inch round steel "wire" to build the chain racks and baskets. They were hot dip galvanized to prevent rusting and installed by a crew of more than 20 Boy Scouts and parents and are anchored by 1200 pounds of concrete. Each hole has a beginner tee box (red) and an advanced tee box (blue). The course has 9 holes and covers about half a mile and features a nature trail, a giant sand trap and shorter and longer holes. Permanent tee box signs are planned for later this summer.

Talking about the course, Ian said "The city staff have been really great to work with. They've been out here at the course and helped mark trees and smooth out some of the fairways and have sprayed for poison

ivy. I think the trails are clear but there is more [poison ivy] out there, especially on holes 3 through 7 so play it safe - wear long pants and tennis shoes or hiking boots instead of sandals and wash up with soap and water afterwards. Some of the guys who helped install the course a couple of weekends ago got a pretty bad rash and I don't want that to happen to anyone else." The public works department will do more spraying this summer to make the course safer to play.

For a map of the course visit <http://ci.north-branch.mn.us/pdf-files/HarderParkFrisbeeGolfScorecard.pdf>

Previous Eagle Scout projects from Troop 411 include installing bat houses at Riverwalk and other local parks (Spencer Beam), building the picnic shelter at Roger Johnson Memorial Park (Drew Short), putting in the new veteran's memorial at Central Park (Garrett Smetana), planting the perennial garden in front of the North Branch Middle School (Zach Mattson), putting in horseshoe pits at the Wildridge neighborhood park and re-painting the gazebo at Central Park (Matt Reyer) and moving the Early Childhood playground to the Elementary School in Rush City (John Roerig). The HCP Youth Leadership grant funding was through the Initiative Foundation. This was a Scout project.