

# BCL HISTORY – Selected Chronological Data

## ❖ 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

### 1780s era:

### **Land Ordinance of 1785**

In 1784, the Continental Congress had a perplexing situation to deal with. Under the Articles of Confederation, Congress did not have the ability to raise revenue through taxation. *The only way out was to sell land that was available in the then Northwest Territory.* Because of this, the then Continental Congress created the Land Ordinance of 1785 - an effort led by Thomas Jefferson - for the disbursement of the land.

In order to sell the new land there needed to be a method developed for its distribution. The New England Colonies were created on the basis of community development and systematic planning, while the Southern Colonies followed a free flowing individualistic system. The Ordinance authors chose to reflect the New England system and by doing so, developed the Township Pattern that is still used today. Under this system, townships were laid out in squares, 6 miles on a side with each 6 mile square divided into 36 sections. *Of these 36 sections, each 1 square mile = 640 acres.*

As the new county of the United States progressed and land became available through treaties with the Native Americans, new states were formed and the land was available (from the government) to settlers.

Why do I mention all of this? Because, in 1862, with the establishment of the Homestead Act, land became available for very low prices. It was available (through the government) to settlers & *because of his Civil War service*, George Bertram was granted land at the south of end of Bertram Lake. It included land in the NE corner of section 20 and land in the SE corner of section 17.

It should also be noted that the Land Ordinance of 1785 established that Section 16 (and 36?) of each Township be set aside for education. Section 16 of Monticello Township includes most of Long Lake and the land east of it, which when sold, had the proceeds going to help pay for the building of the school in Monticello.. The states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota were established as the land became available. The Treaty of Traverse du Sioux (1851) allowed land to be plotted according to the township system and in time, the county of Wright and Monticello Township were established.

### 1810s era:

### **Why Monticello and Wright County?**

One often wonders why people act the way they do, and in George Bertram's case, what led him to settle in Monticello and Wright County? By looking into his past, we can find some significant reasons why he did so.

In 1812 George Bertram's parents, Andrew and Alison BARTRAM, immigrated from Glasgow, Scotland to a small town 120 miles NW from Manhattan, NY named **Delhi**. This town was located along the Delaware River in the county named **Otsego**. Hmm! The road from New York City to Delhi was little more than a wagon trail but it passed through the Catskill Mountains with the rolling hills and valleys. Along the road was a larger town of Monticello, New York.

What a coincidence! But wait – there's more. Early on in Minnesota's history there was an attempt at creating a small town along the Mississippi River near Dayton, Minnesota. *This town, which eventually disappeared, went by the name of Delhi.* Lastly, what about the county name – Wright? The county was named after a person named Silas **Wright** from Orange County, New York who happened to be the representative from the same area from where the **Bartram's** were living. Wright was an U.S. Representative as well as the Governor of New York from 1845-1846.

So when George & Julia Bertram were looking for a place to call home, they saw **Otsego, Monticello, Delhi and Wright** all along the beautiful Mississippi River.

[Note: the **BARTRAM** spelling is correct and will be addressed in a later tidbit.]

### 1820s era:

### **George M. Bertram - (Life in New York as Bartram).**

The namesake of Bertram Lakes was not a native Minnesotan. George Bertram was born **March 4, 1820** in Delaware County, New York. His parents - **Andrew & Alison Bartram** - emigrated from Scotland. In 1833 he became an apprentice tailor, a career he

would practice the rest of his life, although it would be interrupted by other endeavors. At the age of 13, he was apprenticed to Andrew Little - a tailor in New York - to learn the trade. He did well and in 1840 was released from his indenture by Mr. Little who stated that George proved to be "Honest, Truthful, Of High Integrity, and Sober". George set up business as a tailor. In 1841 he married Julia Hamilton and in the next several years he would father 2 sons and 2 daughters.

**Is the last name (surname) Bartram or Bertram?** In an earlier tidbit, I noted that I had come across a different spelling of the Name (Bertram). It was the original spelling of George's parents — **Andrew and Alison Bartram** — the first "a" not being the "e" that George used later in life.

Andrew and Alison Bartram emigrated from **Glasgow, Scotland in 1812** prior to the outbreak of the War of 1812 and settled in Delhi, New York. Being from Scotland, they spoke English but with a heavy Scottish brogue. In Scottish the first "a" of the Bartram name was pronounced as a stretched out "b-e-a-r" with a slight rolling of the tongue. It's hard to describe this on paper but if you ever see me, I can pronounce it for you (hopefully).

George's name of Bartram remained this way for many years until he was indentured as an apprentice tailor in 1833. By this time, the Bartram's had moved back to New York. (I will address the apprenticeship in a later tidbit). While performing his apprenticeship, it was common for local children to come by the shop, see him working, and call out "**Good Morning, Mr. B-e-a-r.r.r.r.r.tram**" with a strong trill on the "r" to mock his Gaelic pronunciation.

Mr. Little, after completion of the 7 years apprenticeship, released "**Mr. George Bertram**" (mis-spelling) from the original contract. It would be the name **George Monilaws Bertram** would carry for the rest of his life.

## Julia Young Bertram

Julia was the wife of George Bertram. They moved to the Monticello area in **1855** after spending a few years in the newly formed town of Excelsior, Minnesota. In moving to Monticello in 1855, the only "roads" available were **oxen trails** that followed the paths of the natives of the area. Therefore, the only means of transportation was by wagon or on foot. *For a while she was the only white woman west of St. Anthony, Minnesota and was well thought of by the Sioux of the area.*

Julia and George were involved in the very early establishing of the town of **Monticello**, especially the faith community. The **Congregational Church** was born in their home with them both being charter members. It is interesting to note here that in most organizational listings of the time only men were listed.

Julia's life was always a busy one, whether in charitable endeavors, comforting the sick or aiding the needy, white or native. Due to her husband's business and busyness, she did the majority of the raising of their **5 children** (3 boys and 2 girls) while still maintaining an active involvement in the community. *Julia outlived George by 22 years and upon her death was interred beside her husband at Riverside Cemetery.* As a testament to her life, on the day of her funeral all school and businesses activities were suspended in her memory.

### 1830s era:

## Apprentice Tailor

After living for 10-12 years on their rented farm in Delhi, the **Andrew and Alison Bartram** family moved to New York City. Perhaps, this was out of necessity or simply to have better opportunities for their family, but by 1832, they were living in New York City. With the downturn of the economy in 1833, George, at the age of 13, and with the consent of his father, was bound as an apprentice to serve for seven years under Andrew Little, Tailor.

The certificate of indenture lists George as being 13 years, 11 months, 4 days of age and his term of service to end December 1840. The contract wording is interesting, for it states, "The Apprentice is to serve his Master faithfully, to keep his secrets, to obey his lawful commands, and neither to gamble, nor drink, nor commit matrimony within the times". "In return, the Master agrees to teach the Art, Trade and Mystery of the tailor, to provide sufficient meat, drink, washing, lodging and clothing fitting for an Apprentice" and also to give him two quarters of evening schooling in the term.

At this time in history, apprenticeships were considered very serious business and rewards were often offered for "lost, strayed or stolen" apprentices! For the first two years of the apprenticeship, George's tasks would have included: hauling wood and water, sweeping the shop, stocking and putting in order blocks of clothes, picking up pins and needles and other necessary tasks to help the Master. As time went by, he would have learned the "mysteries" of measuring, cutting, basting, pressing, fitting, sewing and button-holing. George persevered and on May 1, 1840, Andrew Little released him from his contract in consideration for his "uniform good conduct, for his honesty, truth, integrity and sobriety".

[**George Bertram** (*new spelling as mentioned earlier*) continued as a journeyman tailor for the next several years but little is mentioned as to which shops he may have been employed at. During this time he met and married Julia Hamilton and began his family.]

## **1840s era:**

### **Sewing Machines**

In 1846, Elias Howe invented the first workable sewing machine but it didn't make an impact until 1850. At this time, George Bertram saw the "writing on the wall" and decided to move west. After helping to found the town Excelsior, he moved on to Monticello where he plied his tailoring business. One of his clients was "tip" Mealy who was providing uniforms for the newly formed Monticello Baseball Club. From 1860 to 1867 he was also a representative of the Singer Sewing Machine Company.

## **1850s era:**

### **Treaties of 1851**

*Two treaties had major impacts on the settling of Monticello/Bertram Lakes area.*

The first was the Traverse des Sioux Treaty. Due to the defeat in the Black Hawk War and other treaties, The **Wapitan** and **Sissitan** bands of the Upper Sioux felt the need to cede over land for monetary payments along with the land along the Minnesota River from Fort Ridgely to the Dakota's for reservations (Upper & Lower Sioux). Because of this, land became available to Eastern settlers through grants by the U.S. Government.

The second treaty was the Mendota Treaty which was between the U.S. Government and the **Mdewakanton** and the **Wahpekute** bands. It stipulated that for \$1.4 million dollars the bands would move to the Lower Sioux reservation (near present day Morton, Minnesota).

As a result of these treaties the U.S. Government received 24 million acres of land – nearly 40% of present day Minnesota. Problems with compliance with the treaties by the U.S. Government would eventually result in the Dakota War of 1862.

### **George Bertram in Excelsior**

George Bertram was one of the founders of Excelsior, Minnesota, a town well known for its history, both native and current. But, what motivates a person who has become comfortable in the largest city in the United States, to gather his family and move to the "frontier"? We cannot look inside the mind of the man but we can look at some of the historical events that may have influenced his decision.

#### **The Traverse Du Sioux Treaty of 1851**

As mentioned above, this treaty ceded to the United States Government most of the land of the current Minnesota from the Sioux. In so doing, the land was open for claim and settlement by the citizens of the United States. George must have seen this as a great opportunity, especially considering his religious views.

#### **Religion**

The era from 1825 – 1850 was a time of renewal and re-creation for religions in America, although the northern states still kept the basic community concept established by the Puritans and the Pilgrims. This concept held the belief that the community of the people and their faith was one and the same. George Bertram believed this and it was instrumental in his vision of Excelsior and eventually Monticello.

#### **Technology**

In the 1840's two events were to affect George Bertram's life. One was an expansion (railroads) and the other was an invention (sewing machine). Railroads (mostly privately owned) began opening up the frontier for settlement and George saw this as an opportunity to make his "dream" to create a new society come true. Couple this with Elias Howe's invention of the sewing machine and he saw his chance. *Remember, Bertram was a tailor and with the new sewing machine finding its way into the homes and factories, his livelihood was being threatened.*

In 1852 Bertram made his way west, eventually landing in **St. Anthony, Minnesota**. From there he traveled west by ox cart and then boat to the west side of Lake Minnetonka where he made a government claim to 160 acres of land, *later to become the city of Excelsior.*

*Upon his return to New York, Bertram began working on his plan to establish the Excelsior Pioneer Association and spent the winter of 1852-53 soliciting memberships. To be a member, the initial fee would be \$8 and \$1 per week dues for the next 8 months. Each member (male), self or family, was to be provided with a farm and one village lot of not less than 1 acre, selected by a drawing from the 160 acres.*

*In 1853 the Bertram's arrived and built their home. George became the first president of the new "association" and church services were conducted in his home. But, for various reasons that were speculated (religious, leadership, conditions, \$, etc.) the Bertram's moved back to St. Anthony in 1854. The town of Excelsior survived to become a thriving vacation spot for many years to come.*

## **George Bertram and the Civil War**

After moving to the Monticello area in 1855, George Bertram spent several years as Sheriff of the newly formed County of Wright - so it seemed right to him that at the outbreak of the **Civil War** he would volunteer to serve.

He enlisted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Company H of the Minnesota Volunteer Infantry. Their duties took them south to Tennessee where they met the Confederates at **Murfreesboro**, which is 40 miles southeast of Nashville, TN. *They were outnumbered 4-1 by southern volunteers and Texas Rangers, yet they were still able to put up a valiant effort before being taken as **prisoners**.* It was during this imprisonment that George Bertram suffered sunstroke that was to plague him the rest of his life. After being "paroled" by the rebels, he was transferred to the Invalid Corp and was assigned to "light" duty at Fort Snelling.

### **Summer 1856:**

### **A Plague of Locusts**

The **summer of 1856** was a critical time for the struggling farmer around the **Bertram Lakes**. They were beginning to turn the tough prairie sod into tillable earth for the production of such crops as wheat, oats and rye and found the soil rich and responsive. Through hard work and good rains, the crops of 1856 were in very good condition and near ready for harvest.

But nature, as always, has its own way of doing things. In August, a **hoard of locusts** (flying grasshoppers) descended on Wright County and in particular the Monticello area. They attacked the oats, stripping the leaves, and left only the stems. The wheat, having grown stronger stems, had less damage but the immature seed pods were easy eating. The rye, being the hardier plant, was less damaged but still was left in unusable condition.

Because of eggs being laid during the devastation in August, **the next spring the locusts returned** and devoured the young crops! *Because of the loss of both crops many settlers picked up and left the county.* A few, however, turned their attention to other forms of farming, especially dairy, cattle and sheep.

*[The locusts eventually left and farming in this area became more stable and productive.]*

### **1859 season:**

### **Wright County War**

"**Frontier Justice**" wasn't always limited to cowboy towns as seen in many old movies – it happened right here in Wright County. Henry Wallace settled near Rockford in the spring of 1858. He cleared land to farm and built a log home. He was educated and reputed wealthy. Oscar Jackson settled 2 miles from Mr. Wallace also clearing land and building a small home. The two sometimes worked together during the summer haying season. Early September a rumor spread that Wallace was missing and an ensuing search party found his remains in a clump of willow.

Suspicion was on Mr. Jackson and based on some evidence he was arrested and indicted at the next district court which was held in Monticello in March, 1859. The case went trial and in April 1859 Mr. Jackson, to the surprise of all, was found "**Not Guilty**". After leaving for a month, Jackson returned to Wright County and was arrested on a charge of larceny. While in custody (Monticello), an armed body of enraged citizens stormed the jail, *and took Jackson to Rockford where he was hung at the Wallace farm.*

News of Jackson's death spread and other residents of the area clamored for the arrest and punishment of the "**lynchers**" or "mob". One of the "lynchers" was arrested and jailed in Monticello only to be set free by the rest of the "mob" for fear of being turned in. All of this forced Henry Sibley, **Governor of Minnesota**, to issue a proclamation "...in view of the fact that the "**civil officers of Wright County are perfectly powerless to enforce and execute the laws**", *I do hereby declare the said County of Wright in a state of insurrection . . . ."*

Three separate groups of police or “**Guards**”, each numbering around 40, **for a total of 120**, were sent to Wright County, along with military wagons of arms and provisions to keep the peace and prevent riot and rebellion. This incident was known as the **Wright County War**. As a result “**peace**” was restored and the laws upheld.

**Why do I write about this?**

**Because, the Sheriff during all of this was our very own George Bertram.**

*Sheriff George Bertram. Elected and assumed office Jan 1, 1856. Served for Four Years.*

**1850’s – 1860’s:**

## **Wild Ginseng - A Cash Crop at Bertram**

**Wild Ginseng** is a fleshy-rooted herb native to cool and shady hardwood forests of North America – Minnesota to the Atlantic and south through the Appalachian Mountains. It has been harvested extensively over the centuries and now is quite rare. Most ginseng currently is produced through commercial cultivation. Early settlers of the Monticello and Bertram Lakes area were forced to supplement their income from meager crops by, in essence, “**living off the land**”. A sudden and extraordinary demand for this product in the **1850’s and 1860’s** produced a temporary “**boom**” for the people of Wright County. In almost every town a “purchasing agent” was employed and cash promptly paid for every pound of ginseng brought in. Whole families would go into the woods and work for days gathering their precious commodity, often abandoning other important work.

Many citizens prospered greatly from this endeavor and turned a near destitute region into one of comparable wealth. It helped improve farms at a time when many pioneer families were struggling – especially during the Civil War when many young men were away fighting. Eventually the trade dwindled but in the meantime agriculture advanced to a state where the ginseng trade was no longer needed.

The Bertram Lakes areas was important at this time and provided the ginseng necessary for many of the surrounding settlers to survive. *The area between Bertram and Long Lakes (The Esker) was a primary location for the growth of Ginseng.*

**1860s era:**

## **The Lakes**

**In the mid-1800’s** Bertram Lake and Long Lake were originally named *Lake Pleasant* and *Lake Otter*. **Lake Pleasant** received its name for obvious reasons – it is very peaceful and serene within its surroundings and was very *pleasant* to be near. **Lake Otter** received its name for the abundance of otter in the area. As people moved up (or down) the Mississippi River, places were often named for their natural surroundings - thence Otter Creek received its name. People following the creek found an abundance of otter and beaver and named the area *Lake Otter*. [**NB:** *Because of flooding by beaver damming the creek, Mud and First Lakes were often hard to separate from Lake Otter (Long Lake).*]

**Beaver Pond.** To the southeast of Long Lake and across 90th Street, is a lowland and swampy area that for many years has been neglected. But this area has a name and was originally known as Beaver Pond. At an early time in American history, beavers had dammed the neck area near Long Lake and created the large pond. With a little help from the beavers maybe this pond could return to its larger self – Who Knows!

## **Wright City**

**In 1860, George Bertram** was awarded 80 acres of land on the south end of *Lake Pleasant* (later named **Bertram Lake**) and *Lake Otter* (later named **Long Lake**). It was here that he planned to establish a town called “Wright City”.

A plan of the original town exists in the Wright County Historical Society in Buffalo. Streets and avenues are arranged in the typical “block” fashion and named following the tradition of honoring figures, trees, and family names (Washington, Jefferson; Oak, Elm, Cherry; Alice, Jane, Julia). A mill was proposed on Otter Creek and a Market Square was planned following the design of many other Minnesota towns. Bertram gambled that the new railroad would come out at or near “Wright City”, but instead it was routed near the Mississippi River through Monticello.

**1862:**

## **Sioux Uprising of 1862**

The Civil War usually dominates American History from 1860 -1865. But in 1862 the Sioux Uprising had a very strong effect on the residents of the Monticello area. With many men away at war in the South, their rural families were left feeling very insecure in 1862

when the Sioux rose in revolt to their treatment by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Though much of the uprising took place south and west of the Monticello area, fear became rampant throughout Wright County. In reaction, most rural families fled to Monticello for protection. A “fort” of upright logs was built around the then Monticello “academy” to help protect the families

## 1870’s era:

## Wright County Mammoth Squash

The following quote appeared in the Minneapolis Farmer’s Union paper on **April 5, 1873**, edited by Col. J. H. Stevens:

*“I sent you a few seeds of my Mammoth Squash. I raised it last year, and had it on exhibition at our county fair. It was far ahead of anything of the kind that had ever been seen here. It weighed 142 pounds, measured 6', 7" around length-ways and 5', 9" around over the top. The color was sage green, deeply ribbed and finely netted all over like a nutmeg melon. The flesh was from 6-8" in thickness, and of a deep orange color. I baked some in the oven, and it was the sweetest squash I ever tasted. Everyone who saw it wanted seeds, so I have put them up in papers and am selling them. I got about 600 seeds from the squash. I was sorry I had not sent it to the State Fair. I heard there was one there that weighed 140 pounds. I think this is the largest one that has been raised in the State. I was going to call it Minnesota Mammoth Squash, but thought I would give the name to Wright County. We can raise as big things here as anywhere. There will be great strife in raising big squash up here this year. All who can get seeds are going to try. This package I send you is the only one that will leave the county, except one I send to a friend of mine in New Jersey. Let us hear what you can make out with it”.*

Yours truly,  
Geo. M. Bertram.  
Monticello, March 17, 1873

*[Note: Besides being a tailor by trade, George Bertram, along with his wife, Julia, were avid gardeners who grew much of their own fresh vegetables and fruits.]*

## The Early Monticello Schools

In **1874**, Monticello was a very small village. The “Academy” serviced the school children of the town and the very immediate surrounding area. The rest of Monticello Township was serviced by rural schools. The children around the Bertram Lakes Area attended two of these schools. Either Prairie West School No. 6 or Cahill School No. 5. Children who attended these schools usually walked to them. Prairie West School still exists and is located on the north side of County Road 39, just west of the old Silver Springs Golf Club entrance. The small white building was remodeled into a home. The Cahill School was torn down in the late 1970's but was re-located on the west side of Cahill Ave, one block south of County 106.

*[NOTE - In the 1879 plat, Lot 16 - the land east of Long Lake was designated as “school property” but was never used as such. ALSO - Lots 16 & 36 of each 6 mile x 6 mile township unit were usually dedicated “school property” for future school build or dollar value support of schools following sale.]*

## A Monument to the Man and his Wife

A few years after Minnesota became a state, the legislature passed a law regarding interment of the dead. This law required cities and villages to establish and maintain cemeteries for their people. 1861: Hillside Cemetery, just north of Perkins, was created to serve the village of Monticello. At the time its location was at the southern edge of town. 1883: Riverside Cemetery was established - it is located by the Mississippi River on the west end of Monticello. It is here where George Bertram and his wife, Julia, are buried. The stone monument is well weathered but the words are still legible.

*[There is however a mystery that needs to be solved --George Bertram died in 1879 but his resting place was not established until 1883. How? What? Where? And Why?].*

**Mystery Solved:** In the earlier tidbit above, I mentioned that George Bertram’s **grave** was located at **Riverside Cemetery**. This is true but Riverside Cemetery was not created and dedicated until 1883 -- 5 years after Bertram’s death. This was the discrepancy that created the mystery -- until now.

Upon researching **Hillside Cemetery**, the old pioneer cemetery which is located on Highway 25 & 7th Street in Monticello (next to Perkins), I found that Plot 145 was held under the name of Bertram who died in 1878.

After Riverside Cemetery was opened in 1885, the body was moved to its present site where it lies in rest beside the grave of his wife, Julia.

*The exact date of the transfer is unknown, Bertram’s wife, Julia, died in 1901.*

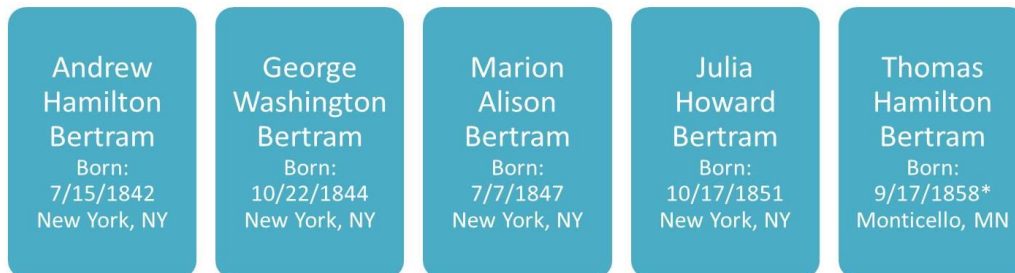
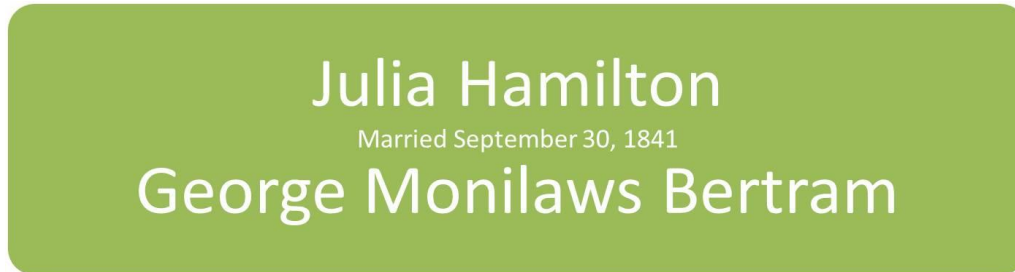
## The George Bertram Family Tree

To begin looking at George Bertram's family, we must back up one generation to his parents, Andrew Bartram and his wife Alison Monilaws Bartram.

Andrew & Alison Bartram immigrated to the United States from Glasgow, Scotland in 1812.

George was one of four boys and six girls born to Andrew and Alison.

His birth date was March 4, 1820.



*George married Julia Monilaws Hamilton on September 30, 1841 in Newark, New Jersey and their family tree of 2 girls & 3 boys is shown above.*

\* Thomas was born 4 months after Minnesota became a state.

## ❖ 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

### Early 1900's:

### Lake Ice

Over 100 years ago, before electricity and refrigeration, people used ice boxes with blocks of ice to keep many of their foods cool and safe. Many residents of Monticello and the surrounding area needed a fresh and available supply of ice to provide their needs. They were happy to have this supply within a horse and wagon ride away – the Bertram Chain of Lakes.

Actually, the lake most used was Long Lake. Under the south end of the lake there is a large spring that provided clean, fresh water to the lake and for this reason the ice during the winter was clear and fresh, also. The west end of the lake currently has a boat landing which was the original entry point for the men who would do the cutting of the ice. The cutting itself was quite unique – holes were drilled by an auger to make room for the saws which then cut the ice into chunks.

After being cut, the blocks were hauled by wagon to the ice house which was located near the beach on Bertram and east of the pump. The ice was cut for many years from Long Lake and was a very renewable supply for the residents of the area. Packed in straw it could last through the summer. I should also mention that over a hundred years ago there were very few trees and underbrush between the boat landing on Long Lake and the beach on Bertram. It was mostly pastureland. This made it a lot easier to haul the ice from Long Lake to the ice house by the Bertram beach.

### Post-1950's:

### The Historic Farms - Part I

There were originally 9 farmsteads located on the Manitou Lakes property. The farm lands were purchased by the Y in the 1950's-1960's (?) either independently from a farmer or from the LeHigh Portland Cement Company. The only farmstead remaining is the house and barn which houses the caretaker of the Y property. Many of the building were torn down including machine sheds, henhouses, granaries, silos and other out buildings. Some were burned down as practice for the Monticello Fire Department.

**Farms - Part II:** The YMCA's interest in the Bertram Chain of Lakes land first came from donations/purchases by the Lehigh Cement company which owned land on the east side of the lakes, including First Lake. During the next 15 years (from 1952-1967) neighboring farms were bought up as they began to cease operations. Most of these farms were small one-family operations of dairy, small grain, sheep and cattle and provided a life for these families for almost 100+ years (from 1850's-1950's plus).

These farms were purchased one at a time until the current land area of the Bertram Chain of Lakes was created. All together there are nine (9) farmsteads that can be located on the land, several of which have old foundations and other remains to show where they were. In the future when all of the land has been purchased and the entire natural area of the park is open to the public, these farmsteads will be marked showing the last two farmers or owners of the land.

Several of these farms produced specialty crops:

- The corner of Briarwood & 90th Street (horse pasture) was originally a field where sheep were raised for many years. They produced wool, mutton & chops.
- Inside the south entrance and just southeast of the parking lot was the site of a very specific crop; this was the site of a mink farm. The pelts of the mink were used for coats and stoles. Changing attitudes led to its demise.
- Rumor has it that there was a celery farm located near Long Lake but the specific location has not been found.
- In time, the YMCA used the land to farm Christmas trees for sale in the cities. Several of these areas are still in existence today but will be restored to native habitat in the future.

We must be sure to remember and celebrate these early stewards of the land!

**Farms - Part III:** Nine farmsteads were created running N to NW & S to SE (see data below). Jim Lindberg is researching data via Wright County Historical Society records and interviews with current descendants.

Remember – New Hope people sponsored Monticello/Manitou Y when it was started. Prior to purchases – Target founder George Dayton (Uncle of current Governor Dayton) used area a lot and bought Manitou land from LeHigh Portland Cement Company towards N end of First Lake.

Past Manitou Y Director - Mike Melotad - (now at Redwing Y) is a 25 year friend of Jim Lindberg. Mike lived at Farmstead 4 building (only one still standing – barn already gone) from roughly 1980 to 1995. Scot Peterson (now on BCL Advisory Board/Council) lives W of Bertram Lake *close to land George Bertram's wife Julia Young Bertram owned later in life*. Connie Erichsen - initially on Friends of BCL Board – is daughter of Farmstead 7 resident; but her father died before Jim Lindberg could interview him.

**Farmstead 1** – top NE corner; currently no information about owner/renter or family name.

**Farmstead 2** – top NW corner near Co Rd 39; again no info on family name or any owner/renter situation.

**Farmstead 3** – near new (2015) Y ‘bubble’ area; William Kiebel 1903 (son bought #5)

**Farmstead 4** – still standing as current Y staff home (see note above); associated barn already gone; owned by Geherenbeck and wife Zumbrunen (who ran some commune in the Hasty area with brother). Their son wrote up history of Monticello's Hospital.

**Farmstead 5** – Oscar Kiebel (son of William # 3); Jim Lindberg has photo of this home which was later purchased and moved elsewhere in Monticello – Jim also has photo of the modern home. Mike Melotad talked to Jim about the old Ox Trail that led from SE to this farmstead (and on) alongside the later developed road Briarwood Avenue.

**Farmstead 6** – the old ‘Pig Farm’ in SW corner of Y property beyond long-used Y stable & corrals; concrete slab of barn is still in place; Beto was a renter family.



**Farmstead 7** – Erichsen property near bend in 90<sup>th</sup> St N opposite the site of Dick & Jerry’s greenhouse facilities on S boundary of park. Daughter Connie was initially on early Friends of BCL board; Jim Lindberg needs to do a recorded interview with her.

**Farmstead 8** – lower of two farmsteads on E side of park along 90<sup>th</sup> St N; adjacent to one of the ‘Y’s Men’s tree plantings, W of road. Known as the Wipper Farm, this family had eight kids, most of whom Jim Lindberg taught in Monticello school system.

**Farmstead 9** – just N of 3<sup>rd</sup> entrance to Bertram Park alongside newly replanted prairie that will become Oak Savanna in due course. History of names here is currently lacking (?)

## **1950’s-plus era:**

## **Mining for Cement**

In 1950 the LeHigh Portland Cement Company of Minneapolis purchased the land on both sides of Long Lake and the land to the north of Mud Lake. They proceeded to mine the Mud Lake area for cement which in its fine powder form when mixed with sand, stone and water would form concrete used for construction.

When the mining played out they abandoned the area and in 1964 partially “donated” and sold the land to the YMCA to be used for recreational purposes. Many local “kids” would hike or bike out to First Lake to go swimming and fishing and remember seeing the machinery north of Mud Lake.

There is a saying that “Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it”. This is no less true today than when it was written. It is nice to study the history of our area (Bertram Lakes) but we must be cautious when we do so. We cannot always look at history through our own eyes but we need to practice studying it through the eyes of the people who lived it.

When we look at the land, we must understand that between 1850 and even until the 1940’s most of the people did not have modern conveniences. They hand pumped water, used “outhouses”, rode horse drawn wagons to town, grew and gathered much of their food, made most of their clothes, used dirt/gravel roads and walked to school.

Conveniences like electricity, cars, radios and others were slow in developing and took time to impact the area. So, it takes time to look at history this way but with practice it can be accomplished. The next time you are at the beach by Bertram Lake, pretend you are a member of a Sioux family gathering hazel nuts for the winter.

## **So What Exactly is Marl?**

After World War II, the United States was involved in a large construction project and the demand for cement and lime was very high. The Lehigh Cement Company bought up the land containing First Lake, Mud Lake, and Long Lakes of the Bertram Chain because they contained large amounts of “marl”. Technically, “marl” is a result of glaciations when lime (or calcium bicarbonate) leaches through the sandy soil of the area and dissolves into the ground water. During spring runoff, the water flows into the lakes and changes into insoluble mono carbonate which is precipitated to the lake bottom. After thousands of years these deposits have reached depths of 15 – 20 feet. Marl is very useful for agricultural lime and as a source for the manufacture of Portland cement.

The **Lehigh Cement Plant** was located at the north edge of Mud Lake and it was there for two specific reasons; 1.) - it had access to County Road 39 and, 2.) - the new **dam on Otter Creek** below Bertram could control the water levels of Long, Mud and First Lakes, thereby making the marl more accessible with lower water levels. *Because of the marl the **water remains very clear** and free of water “algae blooms” in the summer while inhibiting the growth of troublesome plants and limiting the production of organic matter.*

## **Post-1950’s:**

## **Camp Manitou – the Y’s Day Camp**

The Northwest Branch of the Minneapolis YMCA, **located in New Hope**, has operated the Day Camp since **1952**. *It just finished its’ 60<sup>th</sup> year this past 2012 summer.* The Day Camp served children from the communities of Plymouth, Osseo, Robbinsdale, New Hope, Maple Grove, Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center - as well as Monticello, St. Michael and Albertville (*not Buffalo?*)

*Originally the camp was located on Rice Creek in Fridley, Minn. where it operated for many years. It moved to the “Y” property at Monticello in 1973 after the YMCA finished purchasing the final block of land that comprises the current 1250 acres.* During the 80’s and 90’s as many as 375 children ages 5–12yrs., attended the summer camps. Many were disadvantaged children from the cities area. Camp activities included swimming, hiking, games, arts & crafts, horseback riding, cookouts, bonfires, story-telling, and singing all in an outdoor atmosphere of caring and sharing.

The “core” of the camp was moved to the north side of Lake Bertram in 2004 to be closer to the beach and to use the chalet as an office and safety area. Also, in 2004 a 400 seat capacity amphitheater was built by the Chalet by AmeriCorps, the Tree Trust, and YMCA volunteers including staff and the “Y’s” Men.

Many children from Monticello area attend the camp and many teenagers ended up being camp “counselors”.

### **1960’s – 1980’s:**

### **The “Y”’s Men’s Tree Farm.**

As one walks the property of Bertram Lakes, a person will see several “plantation” pine trees. These “plantation” pines were planted by a group of men from the New Hope Branch of YMCA. This group is known as the “Y”s Men (nice play on words). These men were volunteers who conducted activities to help raise money for YMCA projects. During the 1960’s, 70’s, and 80’s one of the major fundraisers was the sale of Christmas trees throughout the Twin Cities area. In order to raise the number of trees needed, they established a planting program whereby they would plant thousands of seedlings each spring. After a few years, the young trees were pruned into the shape of a Christmas tree. In November, they would spend a week cutting and bundling the trees for sale. These trees were much desired by the Cities’ people because of their freshness, color, and reasonable price.

### **1980’s Land Use:**

### **South East Asian Assistance Program.**

In the early 1980’s a number of Asian refugee families from Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam were re-settled in the Twin Cities region through the Southeast Asian Resettlement Assistance Program. For their involvement in this program, the YMCA of Minneapolis decided to set aside 5 acres of land at Camp Manitou as a garden for the raising of vegetables & corn. Ten to fifteen families of Hmong, Laotian and Cambodian descent worked the 5 acres of land for several years. The 5 acres of land was located just west of the entrance to the southern boat landing on Bertram Lake and south of the horse barn. *Currently the land has pine trees on it but in 1984 it was a cornfield.* The land was divided among the 3 groups with seed corn and seeds from their native countries provided. Often Mike Melotad (Camp Director) was invited to lunch to sample the Asian cuisine. Some was very hot!

Transportation to Camp Manitou was provided by the YMCA along with translators who would help the refugees with their English. Furthermore, coming out to the field during the weeks and weekends would give them something to do and it must be remembered that these were extended families with children involved. Aside from the garden, they also maintained a chicken coop for about 300 chickens to supplement their diet. Out of superstition, they preferred colored chicken to white chicken because they believed that white chicken would make you sick.

*All in all it was an excellent YMCS program that provided the refugees with a few years to help make their transition to America easier.*

### **1986 Oops:**

### **The Gas Spill – American Oil’s Oops!**

There are times in life’s journey when we are traveling along just fine and all of a sudden ... Oops! This happened at the YMCA Camp on September 26, 1986 – The “Gas Spill”. *Let me back up* --- in September of 1946, the Standard Oil Company received a right-of-way easement to install a gasoline pipeline through the NE corner of the property. The easement was re-assigned to the American Oil Company in 1960. There were no incidents with the pipeline for the next 26 years, until the “oops” occurred.

In September of 1986, a landscape company was given permission by the YMCA to purchase and remove larger 10’ to 15’ spruce trees from the property for use in their business. The landscaper was shown where to dig the trees and was also shown the location of the pipeline. But, if you have ever been to a Christmas tree farm in search of the “perfect” live tree, you know that the one “over there” looks better and soon you are far from where you started.

Eventually, the landscaper found the better tree and dug one up right over the pipeline. As a result, he cut into the pipeline and created the gas spill. In all, 23,000 gallons of unleaded premium gasoline were released into the sandy soil before the line could be shut down! The cleanup of the land lasted over the next several years. However, due to the technology used, the extraction of the gasoline was nearly 100% and cleaner soil was hauled in to replace the contaminated soil.

*All in all, it was an unfortunate “Oops” but fortunately it was remedied properly!*

## Jim Lindberg's Lake Statistics

Water flows from the **west side** of Bertram Lake from Birch Lake to the west. As it flows through the property, it is regulated by the dam at Bertram and by other sources of ground water plus water from Beaver Pond. It flows out of First Lake, through the Monticello Golf Club by Otter Creek Park to the Mississippi. Many local townsfolk often refer to **Otter Creek as First Creek** because it flowed out of First Lake. In the early years of Monticello, a grist mill was built by the Creek where it enters the Mississippi and for years was referred to as **Mill Creek**.

### *Lakes area & maximum depth (approximate):*

- 1) **Bertram Lake** 137 acres | depth 42 feet
- 2) **Long Lake** 160 acres | depth 35 feet
- 3) **Mud Lake** (*Middle*) 25 acres | depth 35 feet
- 4) **First Lake** 14 acres | depth 37 feet
- 5) **Beaver Pond** 18 acres | depth varies

### *Land area owned (currently 711 acres) consists of:*

1. **201 acres** of tillable farmland
2. **20 acres** of pasture (sheep now horse grazing)
3. **120 acres** of pine plantations
4. **170 acres** of contiguous deciduous forest
5. **200 acres** Otter Creek and miscellaneous stuff

## Bertram Chain of Lakes Glacial History

Within the last million years much of northern Midwestern USA was periodically covered by vast ice sheets (some 2.0 to 2.5 miles thick). Today, Minnesota's surface features are mostly defined by the last (*Wisconsin*) glacial period which had

Formation and melt of such consecutive continental glaciers profoundly affected surface features of the land over which they moved. Vast quantities of rock and soil were scoured by ice from the original terrain and such abrasion redeposited as drift or till during glacial retreats. *Till* was dumped into preglacial river valleys while *drift* was carried further and heaped into hills (*lateral* or *terminal moraines*) at the margins of glacial lobes.

During meltdown, streams formed within ice sheets carried suspended material laterally (forming elongate *eskers*) or vertically (forming cone-like *kames*) which unlike moraine deposits contained few boulders. And outwash left by receding glaciers in central Minnesota was mainly of reddish sands or gravelly shale (as is typical of much of the local Anoka Sand Plain). Depressions within these areas – in which ice chunks remained – became either *fens* or *kettle lakes* depending upon depth and how much water was finally retained.

Minnesota's current preponderance of lakes represents a far different picture than in preglacial times when most of the lands rain or melt water rapidly drained to the oceans of earlier eons. Today – precipitation retained at lake surfaces meanders through connecting streams with only a portion of it finally reaching larger rivers and a long-distance run to the Gulf of Mexico.

Bertram Chain of Lakes is now characterized by **a)** four lakes – Bertram, Long, Mud and First (each with a maximum depth of 30 to 40 ft.) – fed, interconnected, and drained to the Mississippi River by *Otter Creek*; **b)** a sizeable wetland area to the E (*Beaver Pond*); **c)** a unique *fen remnant* W of Bertram; **d)** a stream-bisected *esker ridge* between Bertram and Long, and a *kame hillside* E of Long adjacent to 90<sup>th</sup> Street. These geologic moments, along with a more recent history of *nine demised farmsteads* and remnant *native* versus *invasive* biota, make this future regional park a mecca of teachable moments for schools in the surrounding urban areas.

**Martyn J. Dibben, Ph.D.**

**Chair, Bertram Chain of Lakes Advisory Board**



**April 22, 2010:**

## **Minnesota Parks and Trails Legacy Project**

In 2008, voters approved a constitutional amendment to levy an additional sales tax for Minnesota's legacy. The Department of Natural Resources receives some of this money to put towards parks and trails. How do you think the money should be spent? What's your vision for Minnesota's parks and trails? The Citizens League is working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as it engages Minnesotans in their Parks and Trails Legacy Project.

The project will establish guidelines for how money from the constitutional "Legacy Amendment" and other traditional sources of funding will be spent over the next 25 years based on the vision and priorities of Minnesotans. The purview for this work is just for Minnesota's parks and trails, and has no relationship with or impact on how the other Legacy monies will be spent (clean water, preservation, and arts and culture). The input gathered from Minnesotans will guide the plan. Your feedback and information will serve as the basis for decisions for the DNR's workgroups, who will be responsible for writing plan elements. How to get your voice and your thoughts heard: 1) Visit the web page at [www.citizing.org](http://www.citizing.org) and fill out the survey. 2) In Person Meetings were the DNR will be asking for public input?

The first and closest meeting for residents of Wright County will be held in St. Cloud on Thursday, May 6, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at the St. Cloud Library. For a full list of meeting locations and times visit [www.citizing.org](http://www.citizing.org). When completing the survey or giving your input remember that Wright County is considered Greater Minnesota. Your input is vital to the overall statewide park and trail planning process and future projects in Wright County.

*The time is now to leave your legacy -- Minnesota Parks and Trails Legacy Project.*

### **May 18, 2010:**

### **See You Tonight!**

We're looking forward to seeing you all tonight at the Monticello Community Center! The slide show starts at 7:00 PM. There will be lots of information about the acquisition of this land and the plans for the eventual park and so we hope you can attend. Make sure to stop by the Friends of Bertram Lakes table to enter a drawing for a free t-shirt. We have a gift for you too! *See you there - and always, thanks for your support!*

### **June 11, 2010:**

### **Family Fun Day is Saturday!**

We're less than 48 hours away from FAMILY FUN DAY!! This is a special opportunity to spend some time at Bertram Lakes Regional Park . . . here are the details: **When:** Saturday, June 12, 2010 from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM. **Where:** Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park, 9910 Briarwood Ave NE, Monticello, MN. **Directions:** Directions are available at [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com), but the easiest way is to take CR 39 West to Briarwood Ave. Go South on Briarwood Ave for 1 mile and the park is on the left side.

#### **Schedule and Activities:**

10:00 AM and 2:00 PM – Amphitheater Events (**Don't miss the show with live raptors, owls, and eagles and the Teddy Bear Band plays at 2:00 PM in the Amphitheater**)

11:30 AM -- 1:00 PM Picnic at the Beach (Hot Dogs and Chips served by the Monticello Lions and donated by FiberNet Monticello.)

10:00AM--3:30 PM Hiking (Two levels of difficulty so that everyone may enjoy.)

10:00 AM -- 3:30 PM Canoeing (Equipment, including life jackets, provided by Clearwater Outfitters.)

10:00 AM -- 3:30 PM Fishing (Child fishing near the beach. Poles and bait provided. No license required for kids.)

11:00 AM -- 2:00 PM Face Painting (Miss Monticello candidates will be drawing nature themes.)

11:00 AM -- 3:30 PM Wagon Rides (Horse-drawn wagon rides) 11:00 AM – 3:30 PM – Swimming (Open swimming with life guard on duty.)

This is a great way to spend time with the whole family and enjoy this beautiful land.

***It's the Bertram Lakes EVENT OF THE YEAR! You do not want to miss out!***

### **July 22, 2010:**

### **Closed on 51 Acres - Great News!**

We've closed on 51 additional acres and so that brings our total to 370 acres! That means we own almost one-third of our future park!  
*Yeah! Thanks for all your support in helping to make this happen!*

## **February 14, 2011:**

## **And The Winners Are. . .**

The Snow Sculpture Contest was a HUGE success! We want to thank all of the people who came out to participate, mingle, and learn about the Friends of Bertram Lakes. The weather was beautiful and the entries were just awesome! We want to give a special congratulations to all our winners . . . . **First Place** – The Swan and the Moose – Todd Aulner and Jody Jensen. **Second Place** – The Monarch and Caterpillars – Jim Sullivan, Rob Savage, Ashley Davis, and Crystal Allen. **Third Place** – The Egyptian Sphinx – Ed and Nancy Peiffer. Congratulations to all of you! Thanks to our judges Denise Merritt, Martyn Dibben, and Jeff O’Neill, and to Mayor Clint Herbst for coming out to present the ribbons. And much appreciation to Kitty Baltos and Sarah Cahill and all of the staff at the Monticello Community Center for all of their support in this project! *If you weren’t able to attend on Saturday, do stop by the Monticello Community Center to see the handiwork. Your opportunity may be short lived, however, with all of this warm weather we’ve been having.*

## **March 16, 2011:**

## **Pancake Breakfast!**

We have a fun family event coming up with the Friends of Bertram Chain of Lakes and we didn’t want you to miss out! On Saturday, April 9th we’re having a pancake breakfast! Here are the details: **What:** .A Pancake Breakfast. **Where:** .Applebee’s, 9386 Deegan Ave NE, Monticello, MN. **When:** Saturday, April 9th from 8:00 AM until 10:00 AM. **Cost:** \$5.00 per person. You can either buy tickets in person at Applebee’s or you can order tickets in advance by sending \$5.00 per ticket to: Friends of Bertram Chain of Lakes, P.O. Box 1142, Monticello, MN 55362. Your tickets will be mailed to you and so make sure to include your address with your request. *It’s a great outing for the whole family and you’d be supporting a wonderful cause!*

## **April 3, 2011:**

## **Donate Online to Friends of BCL**

Did you know you can make an online donation to Friends of Bertram Chain of Lakes through the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota? It’s easy and it’s tax deductible! Just go to this link: <http://budurl.com/DonationforFOBL>. Remember when you enter your donation to designate “Friends of Bertram Lakes” in the Donation Info section (Gift Restrictions.). We really appreciate your support! Together we can save this land!

## **April 3, 2011:**

## **About “History**

There is a saying that “Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it”. This is no less true today than when it was written. It is nice to study the history of our area (Bertram Lakes) but we must be cautious when we do so. We cannot always look at history through our own eyes but we need to practice studying it through the eyes of the people who lived it. When we look at the land, we must understand that between pre-1850 and even up until the 1940’s most people did not have modern conveniences. They hand pumped water, used “outhouses”, rode horse- drawn wagons to town, grew and gathered much of their food, made most of their clothes, used dirt/gravel roads and walked to school. Conveniences like electricity, cars, radios and others were slow in developing and took time to impact the area. *So, it takes time to look at history this way but with practice it can be accomplished. The next time you are at the beach by Bertram Lake, pretend you are a member of a Sioux family gathering hazel nuts for the winter.*

## **September 20, 2011:**

## **Great News! Another YES Vote!**

Today the County Board voted 3-2 (Sawatzke, Thelen and Eichelberg), to provide the County share of the local match to complete a phase 3 acquisition at Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park, this phase includes the area between Long and Bertram Lakes. Now we will be working with the YMCA on a closing date, survey of the property, appraisal, MOU update, and purchase agreements. The goal is to complete the purchase by the end of 2011. We’d like to encourage you to write and email thank you to each of the three commissioners supporting the Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park. Please take a minute to write Rose Thelen; Patrick Sawatzke; & Elmer Eichelberg @ co.wright.mn.us. Sample Text: “*Thank you for voting YES to provide the county share of the local match to complete phase 3 acquisition of the Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park.*” We know they would love to hear from you - thanks so much for your continued support!

## **June 13, 2011:**

## **Family Fun Day 2011 A Success - Thanks for Participating.**

The Family Fun Day is an opportunity for visitors to experience the full breadth of what is planned to be a 1200 acre regional park cooperatively owned and operated by Wright County and the City of Monticello. The park saw close to 900 visitors on Saturday – a mix of new and returning visitors from across the County and beyond.

Among the host of activities: \*A Narrated horse-drawn carriage ride around the north side of Long Lake. \*Buckthorn walking sticks, made with the help of the Friends of Bertram Lakes Regional Park. \*Fishing off the docks at Bertram – and the sunnies were biting! \*Face-painting by Monticello Royalty at Bertram Beach. \*Kayaking and Canoeing at Long Lake – with kayaks and canoes courtesy of Clear Water Outfitters. \*Critters including snakes and lizards from the MN Herpetological Society. \*At the amphitheatre – Animals Nobody Loves and Raptors from the Wildlife Science Center.

Thanks to the many volunteers, sponsors and organizations that make the event so successful – Xcel Energy, Cargill Corporation, Clear Water Outfitters, Moon Motors, FiberNet Monticello, the Monticello Lions, New River Medical Center, Veolia, Wright County Sheriff's Dept. - mounted patrol, the MCC staff, the Friends of Bertram Lakes and last, but certainly not least, the Park Departments of the City and County, who ready the park for the event and make it look effortless!

The Friends of Bertram Lakes, the City of Monticello and Wright County continue to work to make this park a reality. We invite residents & visitors to visit the 370 acres of public park this summer – and thank you all of your enthusiastic support!

## **May 27, 2011: Wright County Trail and Bikeway Plan - Ready for Review.**

Wright County is unveiling the Draft Trail and Bikeway Plan at two community meetings this June. The first meeting is Wednesday, June 1, 2011 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at Clearwater City Hall (605 County Road 75, Clearwater, MN 55320). The second meeting is on Monday, June 6, 2011 from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Wright County Public Works Building in Buffalo (1901 Highway 25 North, Buffalo, MN 55313). A summary of the plan will be presented at 7:00 p.m.

The goal of the Trail and Bikeways Master Plan is to improve county-wide connectivity and to foster active living. The Wright County Plan is a guide to future bikeway and trail development, operations, and implementation. The Plan was funded by a grant from the Statewide Health Improvement Program and Live Wright. The public is invited to view the Plan, hear a brief presentation and provide their ideas and suggestions. The Plan can also be viewed on-line from May 27th onward. Input from the public, County officials and County staff will help shape the final plan which is likely to go before the County Board in late June.

The Draft Plan is based on an evaluation of the County, input from townships, cities and the public. Forty-five people attended two open house meetings in February and 140 people completed a trail and bikeway questionnaire. The County Parks Commission also provided input. Key findings from the community input are:

- The need for more trails and bikeways in parks and along scenic areas like lakes and rivers.
- The desire for more paved off-road trails, loop trails and bikeway loops.
- The need to connect Wright County to existing and planned State and regional trails like the Luce Line, the Lake Wobegon Trail and trails in Hennepin County.

The Draft Plan recommends adding regional trails and bikeways paralleling the Crow and Mississippi Rivers, around lakes, and within County Parks. The Plan also calls for new trails to be built when highways are rebuilt and to create bike routes and pedestrian and bike friendly roads by having paved shoulders on new and rebuilt County State Aid roadways. The Plan includes a “legacy idea” (100-200 years from now) the potential to have a nature area and trails paralleling the North Fork of the Crow River.

## **April 28, 2011: IMPORTANT ACTION ALERT (in from Marc Mattice)**

The House Legacy Committee has completed its work on its Legacy bill voted to bill out of committee on Wednesday (4-27). The Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee will amend its bill and vote the bill out of committee today (4-28). *Where we stand:* The park and trail legacy split in the House bill is 40% exclusive to DNR, 40% exclusive to metro parks, and 20% is non-exclusive funding to the Statewide Grants Program which metro counties and agencies can apply for. The park and trail legacy split in the Senate is 37% to DNR, 37% to metro-park, *and 26% to the Statewide Grant Program exclusive to Greater MN.* These splits are exclusive to each of the three entities. The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Coalition fully supports the senate language, while urging House members to vote for the House plan as the best deal that could be reached in the body. House Message – Please support the House Park and Trail Legacy proposal in the House Legacy bill. Greater Minnesota needs greater equity in park and trail legacy funding and this is a good start toward that objective. SEE:

[http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/committee\\_bio.php?cmte\\_id=1006&ls=#members](http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/committee_bio.php?cmte_id=1006&ls=#members).

**Here are some bullets to use which focus on the big picture and the senate bill...**

\* Join the efforts of the Greater MN Regional Park and Trail Coalition in urging our local legislators to support the park and trail provisions in the House Legacy bill, and SF1230, a bill sponsored by Sen. John Pederson, R – St. Cloud, in the Senate which provide the best efforts to bring equity to the distribution of approximately \$38 million in annual Park and Trail Legacy revenues between the DNR (state parks), metro parks and trails, and Greater Minnesota parks and trails.

\* Greater Minnesota cannot fund the planning and construction of the statewide system of regional parks and trails called for in the Parks and Trails Legacy Plan – A 25 Year Long Range Plan for the State of Minnesota, on the 16% of Park and Trail Legacy funding recommended by Governor Dayton.

\* In undercutting Greater Minnesota in favor of continuing to enrich the DNR and metro parks and trails – each of which receive an equal share of 42% exclusive funding for each – Governor Dayton is ensuring that Greater Minnesota will not share in the vision created by the citizens of the state who voted for the Legacy plan.

Our hope is with the legislature in the form of the House Legacy bill, and SF1230 in the Senate. We hope you will help us build support for adequate park and trail legacy funding by urging your House member to support the House Legacy Park and Trail bill, and your Senate member to support Sen. John Pederson and SF1230. You may even wish to contact the Governor's office to let him know his Park and Trail Legacy recommendation is too low and needs reconsideration. *Thanks for taking time to make these important contacts.*

**April 3, 2011:**

## **MN Parks and Trails Donation.**

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*We really appreciate your support! Together we can save this land!*

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**October 22, 2011:**

## **Hatchet Harry – A Halloween Story**

(Thanks to *Colleen Allen* for the following story . . . just in time for Halloween !!!)

There was a boy named Harry who grew up on a farmstead in what is now Bertram Park. His house is gone now, it burned down, but there is still an old stone foundation and grainery there. Harry was born at the farm in the 1940's where he lived and he stayed there

until... *well we will get to that.* Harry helped out on the farm as all kids had to do back in those days. He did chores around the farm like take care of animals and pick rocks. His dad was really mean to him. He would call him stupid and other much worse names. He also beat him terribly. Once his dad took him out on the tractor to pick rocks and Harry slipped and his right foot got run over by the tractor tire. For the rest of his life, Harry walked with a slight limp.

To take out his frustrations when his dad called him names and beat him, Harry would go out to the grainery and beat things around. He would kick buckets and milking cans. He would take a shovel and knock stuff off the wall. He was just so angry. Once when he was out in the grainery, his dad came out there to get him, and Harry took a hatchet off the wall and killed his dad with it. Then Harry felt bad of course. He stayed out in the grainery all day until his mother got worried and came looking for him and his father. Harry was afraid, and remember he wasn't very smart, so he did the only thing he could think of at the time. He took the hatchet and killed his mom too. *Well, Harry ran off after that and nobody really knows what happened to him.* Some people say that he was captured and sent to a mental institution in Wilmar where he was locked up until he died in there. Others swear they still see Harry wandering around Bertram Park.

There have been many sightings and strange occurrences that just can't seem to be explained. You see Harry always wore bib overalls, a patterned shirt and a baseball cap. One day at YMCA camp, some of the kids saw a strange man over by a gate with, bib overalls, a patterned shirt and a baseball cap. This was the area between the two lakes where there is only one way in, and one way out. He entered the area and one of the counselors used a walkie-talkie to call down to the other counselors on the other side. Guess what, no one ever came through.... On either side. They went looking for him but didn't find anyone.

Another time there was a kid named Tom who went to camp there for a lot of years. He knew the camp better than just about anyone. He lived nearby so when he was in high school, he used to come out and go fishing. One day he saw someone, wearing guess what, bib overalls, a patterned shirt and a baseball cap. He was over by the pump which is where Tom had parked his truck. Tom hadn't locked his truck so he was worried about it and he came into shore to check on it. Guess what, no one was there. And if you have ever been by the pump, you will know that it is really sandy right there. Tom found that it was really spooky because, there were no footprints in the sand where he had just seen the guy.

There are other stories too including ones about cats. Some say that the spirit of Hatchet Harry lives on, in a black cat. Many black cat sightings have occurred amongst YMCA campers through the years. Many were by the old grainery where you know what happened. Black cat sightings have also happened by the chalet. Sometimes, a cat would walk along the rail of a building and spook all the kids in the class.

Once, someone was out by the old grainery trying to clean up the place because there was a lot of old junk out there. He took an axe, much like the old hatchet that Harry used, and he cut off a branch of an old tree. He pulled on the branch because it didn't come all the way off, and guess what happened? The branch left a mark in the tree in the shape of... a cat. That mark is still there today! I found it last year! And while I was looking at it, I felt a little prickle at the back of neck, like someone was watching me! Next time you are out at Bertram, keep on the lookout for black cats and say hi to Harry if you see him!

### **January 31, 2012:**

### **Open House.**

The Friends of the Bertram Chain of Lakes invite you to learn more about what's happening at the 500 acre regional park and how you can become involved in supporting the park. Join the Friends for cookies, coffee and more information at their **Open House on Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup>** from 10 AM to Noon at the Monticello Community Center.

### **February 16, 2012:**

### **Another Terrific Open House!**

Thanks to everyone who attended the Friends of Bertram Lakes Open House on Saturday February 11, 2012. **Martyn Dibben** did a great slide show presentation and attendees learned which areas of the park we own and which are open for public use.

There was a nice discussion of the committees available for those who want to participate in helping the Friends of Bertram Lakes and many people signed up to help. We are especially happy that we will be able to see so many of you at the Park Clean-Up Day this coming Spring. *We appreciate all of your involvement and can't wait until the next time!*

### **May 23, 2012:**

### **Boy Scouts Turn Out For Clean-Up Day!**



The Monticello boy scouts gathered a fantastic group of people who worked very hard at Bertram Clean-Up Day! They said it was about 100 kids but I think it was a lot more with all the troupe leaders and parents and other volunteers. They cleared the entire section of Buckthorn that was laid out and kept right on going. They picked all the rocks in a designated section, cleared out old broken down docks and other structures. I saw some picking up trash and others cleaning the dead wood out of the dam between Bertram and Long. They worked right through the rain and I thought they did a great job! I think they appreciated the Friends of Bertram Lakes being there to help out too.

Big shout out to Eagle Scout project leader, Mitch Walker, who had a huge job arranging and directing all the volunteers. He did a great job! Thanks to everyone for another successful clean-up day!

**April 18, 2012:**

## **Clean-Up and Buckthorn Busting.**

**It's Spring Clean-Up Time!** **Where:** Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park. **When:** Saturday, May 5, 2012 1 – 4 pm. The Friends of Bertram Lakes is partnering with the Boy Scouts this year for a Spring Clean Up and Work Day at Bertram Lakes Regional Park. We have lots of great projects we could use some help with so we are inviting the public for a fun day of helping a great cause. Come enjoy the park and pick up trash or help us bust some buckthorn. Trash bags will be provided. Please bring along gloves. For buckthorn removal we will have a few pruning loppers but bring yours along if you have one. We will meet on the south side of the park off 90<sup>th</sup> Street.

*Questions, call Colleen at 651-983-3481*

**May 4, 2012:**

## **Best Little Park by a Dam Site.**

As you meander south from the beach, you walk on a trail between Lake Bertram and Long Lake. Eventually you come to where Otter Creek exits Lake Bertram which is spanned by a concrete structure – a dam. This dam was constructed in 1942 by the U.S. Conservation Services and became under the control of the Minnesota Department of Conservation (now the D.N.R.). Originally there was a concrete “Power House” located on the south end of the dam which electrically controlled the level of Lake Bertram by raising or lowering the two “stop-logs”. Approximately 300 feet southwest of the dam is a flat area where the builders of the dam pitched their tents. In those days, workers often camped near their project to minimize cost and transportation. A capped well still exists in the area. Annual fluctuation in the water level of Lake Bertram are now so minimal that the dam in its present form serves an appropriate purpose.

**September 9, 2012:**

## **Manitou Camp Stories**

Most of us have experienced sitting around a campfire with a group of people listening to stories on a varied number of topics. Some of these include stories of mystery, ghosts and murder. **Hatchet Harry was one of these stories.** The Hatchet Harry story was born out of the YMCA Camp Manitou before it ever moved to the Bertram Lakes area. (Earlier Tidbit) It is a story that has been embellished over a great number of years by a number of storytellers. Each addition usually can be attributed to some unexplained (or natural) occurrence that people have encountered at the camp.

One such adaptation has been the inclusion of the Black Cat to the story. Because there were 9 farmsteads that comprised the Bertram Lakes area, barn cats were a common occurrence and by coincidence many of them were black. When Monticello High school programs used the Chalet it was not uncommon to have a black cat stop by for a visit or watched from the woods. *So, the next time you're at the Park and you see a black cat, please remember it's ... just a story.*

**January 19, 2013:**

## **An Author's Tale – Jim Lindberg.**

I am a very avid reader, however this has not always been true. Until the age of 20, I only read comic books and the Sunday funnies. My favorites were “action” comics where the good guys always beat the bad guys and saved the day. I guess this is why some of my current readings have followed this same theme. One such author is Clive Cussler. A voracious writer of action novels that center around lost ships, history, bad guys and heroes. It was while reading his novel “Valhalla Rising,” that I came across an interesting tidbit about Viking ships and the Monticello area – especially Bertram Lake.

One aspect of the book was that the Vikings in the eleventh century had discovered the New World (North America) and began exploring the land. *During their travels they had created records of their trips on Rune Stones and placed them in certain locations along their routes.* One such place was west of the Mississippi River next to a lake that later became known as Bertram. Dirk Pitt, the hero of the story, sought out an expert on runes who happened to live next to the lake. ***I quote from the book.....***

“...she heard the thumping sound of a helicopter approaching her farm outside Monticello, Minnesota. Her house was typical midwestern farm structures: a wooden frame and siding, a chimney that rose from the living room through the upstairs bedroom and a peaked roof with two gables. Across a broad grassy lawn stood a red barn in pristine condition. The property had once been a working dairy farm, but now the barn was her office and the three hundred acres of wheat, corn and sunflowers were sharecropped and sold on the market. Behind the farm, the lane dropped down a sloping bank to the shoreline of Bertram Lake. The blue-green waters were surrounded by trees, and the shallow water around the edges was filled with lily pads. Bertram was popular with fishermen...”

It seems that Mr. Cussler must have visited the location to have such detail. It's nice to know that many people have at least read about our little corner of the world.

**February 26, 2013:**

## **The Big Woods**

Most Minnesotans have heard of the term “The Big Woods” but what exactly does it mean? The term was originally the name given to the region by French explorers - Le Bois Grand - (which means Big Woods). This region covered most of south central Minnesota, a portion of western Wisconsin and a part of south central Minnesota. It also covered some of the area along the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. Most of the Big Woods was bordered on the west and south by the beginning of the Great Plains.

The Big Woods was dominated by American elm, basswood (linden), sugar maple, and red oak. The understory was composed of ironwood, green ash, aspen and birch. The entire area covered as much as **5,000 square miles** (in a diagonal strip 100 miles long and 40 miles wide) and created a canopy that at times, blocked the sun and limited undergrowth. *Plaque near Elko, MN:*

A small part of the Big Woods is being preserved in pristine condition in **Nerstrand** – Big Woods State Park, which is located just east of **Fairbault**, Minnesota. And there is a plaque commemorating the Big Wood located off Interstate 35 near Elko, Minnesota (see above).

Wright County lies just off the northern edge of the region but some areas still bear the characteristics of the “Woods”. To see and experience what it may have been like one has only to visit Lake Maria State Park. But, there is also an area of the Bertram Lakes that still has that “**feel**” of the Big Woods and that is in the area between **Bertram Lake and Long Lake**. Walk the area, get off the trails and find the groves of ironwood, basswood and maple. You will love it!

**December 2, 2013:**

## **Knickers & Kickers**

Cross country skiing is as popular as it ever has been and the Bertram Lakes property will again be a popular spot for the sport and related recreation. Yes, I said again. There was a time in the late 1970's and early 1980's when the property was the home location for an area club known as the Knickers & Kickers of Monticello

Cooperation between the club and the YMCA created 4 ski trails throughout the property. The first trail was the Bertram Lakes Trail which followed a track around the lake. The second trail started at the Chalet, followed around the east side of Bertram to the old Day Camp, then cut back and followed the Esker along the west side of Long Lake then back to the Chalet. The third trail went along the east side of Bertram then through the Day Camp, hooked up with the horse trail, followed it around the east side of Long, crossed over Otter Creek, then followed the north ridge back to the Chalet. The fourth was the longest trail going east from the Chalet, along the north side of Mud and First lakes, followed through the pine forest near County 39 and back to the Chalet.

A fifth trail was built through the Esker. This trail was known as the Short & Snappy Trail because of the constant up and down of the terrain. It lived up to it's name. All of the trails (except Short & Snappy) were groomed by the YMCA in the winter and brushed by the YMCA with the help of the Knickers & Kickers Club members in the summer and fall. A large map of the trails and their lengths (in miles) was posted at the entrance for any skier who would like to use them.

It's nice to know that in the future the Bertram Lakes Regional Park will again provide the opportunity for this sport. *And.... Yes..... I was a Kicker who wore Knickers.*

**December 4, 2013:**

## **Park Hits the Halfway Mark!**

A closing for the next land acquisition at the Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park took place on December 17, 2013. The purchase included approximately 140 land and water acres lying along the south and west side of the planned park – including a large portion of Bertram Lake. After months of work on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) pertaining to the development of the YMCA's Camp Manitou at the park, the purchase is ready to move forward! The Wright County Board of Commissioners and the Monticello City Council, at their respective meetings, both approved the Fourth Addendum to the MOU and its exhibits on November 12, 2013, paving the way for the closing. *This acquisition will put the Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park at almost 640 acres, or over half of the total planned park area of 1,250 acres!*

**June 4, 2014:**

## **Our Park Continues to Grow!**

A \$3.8 million, 164-acre acquisition successfully closed on June 5, 2014, bringing the park total to 721 acres. The purchase was made possible with \$2.2 million in grant funding and additional match funding from Wright County and the City of Monticello. The next acquisition of 80 acres is slated for 2015. The estimated cost is \$2.3 million with \$1.4 million coming from grant funding. With the closing of the latest acquisition, the county and city will now own the beach at Bertram Lake and the 12-acre parcel where the YMCA intends to build its new Day Camp Manitou. The YMCA will operate Camp Manitou on the county/city property through the end of the 2014 season, and transition over to their new camp for the 2015 season. The county and city will look into the options for opening the beach to the public after day camp hours. There are many issues that need to be resolved prior to opening the beach; therefore, it is assumed the public opening of the beach will commence in 2015. Furthermore, the city has secured grant funding to begin Phase I of the Athletic Complex sometime in 2015.

**Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists (MORC)** will continue building the single track mountain bike trails in the park this summer. Currently MORC volunteers are working to reroute and rebuild a 10-mile mountain bike loop open to non-motorized use; however, it is expected that the trails will grow to 14 miles. MORC volunteers work on the trails in the park on Wednesday evenings through the summer. Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park is the one place in Wright County that offers mountain biking. The trails are signed and bikers are encouraged to test out the trails. The topography is fun to ride and there are a lot of great switches, so there can be challenging parts!

*Once Bertram reaches the planned 1,050 land acres (1,250 acres including water bodies), it will become the largest regional park in Wright County!*

**June 4, 2014:**

## **Blazing the Trails**

The St. Cloud Times posted an article highlighting the redesigned single-track mountain bike trails built and maintained by MORC (Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists). MORC volunteers work at Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park on Wednesday evenings through the summer. Check out the article here: <http://www.sctimes.com/story/life/outdoors/2014/05/24/cyclists-blaze-new-trail-monticello-park/9514059/>. Visit Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park today and enjoy the outdoors and all the natural recreation the land has to offer!

**July 3, 2014:**

## **Stand-Up Paddle Board Classes at Bertram!**

**Stand-Up Paddle Boarding (SUP) is the world's fastest growing water sport. This sport offers a fun and relaxing way to play on the water! SUP delivers a full body workout and, thus, has become a popular cross-training activity.**

The Monticello Community Center (MCC) has teamed up with Clear Waters Outfitting to offer stand up paddle boarding classes on Bertram Lake throughout the summer at the Park! Classes will be held in the evenings from 6:30-8 p.m. on Bertram Lake. Regular classes and Yoga classes! No experience is needed and no equipment is required as all the equipment will be provided by the outfitting company, including life jackets, boards, paddles, and instruction. Fun for the entire family or call your best friends and sign up for night on the lake today. *To Register Call the MCC at 763-295-2954.*

**July 2, 2014:**

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Winter Block Party**

The Friends are once again teaming up with the Monticello Community Center and the City of Monticello to host the **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Winter Block Party on February 21, 2015.**

**This FREE and fun family event is sure to be a wintertime favorite for years to come!**

**Family Fun Includes**

- **Snow Sculpture Contest with Cash Prizes!**
- **Kids Snowman Contest with Prizes!**
- **Window Painting at MCC!**
- **Face Painting by Monticello Royalty!**
- **Clowns!**
- **Fun Games!**
- **FREE Hot Cocoa!**
- **FREE Lunch!**

Come out and enjoy a fun-filled Saturday with the family! Pre-Registration required for the Snow Sculpture Contest. Register in-person at the MCC or Call 763-295-2954.

*\*Snowman & Snow Sculpture Contests canceled if no snow by Feb 17<sup>th</sup>*

**July 2, 2014:      3<sup>rd</sup> Annual “Blazin’ thru Bertram” Phillip LaVallee Memorial Run.**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual ‘Blazin’ thru Bertram’ Phillip LaVallee Memorial Run is planned this year for Labor Day Weekend on Saturday, **September 5th, 2015**. Register online by clicking the link below. Race day registration begins at 7:30am and the run starts at 9:00am. If you have entered the new Monticello Race Series, this is the final run in the series and the winners will be announced at the end of the run. The Run and/or walk is open to ALL and participants are not required to have competed in the other series runs. We’re hoping for a beautiful day and that you can join in for a 4 mile trail run or a 2.25 mile trail walk. Proceeds from the run support the Friends of Bertram and the Community Center programming!

Phillip was a 2012 Monticello graduate and standout runner who was hit and killed by a car while out on a training run in August 2013 - preparing for his second year at SDSU. For further details, please visit the website listed below. **Website:** [Online Registration](#). Runners may also pre-register for the event by contacting the [Monticello Community Center](#) at 763-295-2954.

Date: September 5, 2015 (Saturday)

- **Annual:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Event
- **City:** Monticello, MN
- **Distance:** 4 miles
- **Time:** 9:00 AM
- **Location:** Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park
- **Surface:** Trail

*Runners will enter at the West Entrance, the YMCA Camp Manitou Entrance of the park located at 9910 Briarwood Ave NE in Monticello!*

**July 3, 2014:      New for 2015 - Monticello’s “Annual Frostbite Days Fishing Contest” will be held at Bertram Lake!**

The Frostbite Days Committee approached the BCOL Advisory Council in 2013 with regard to moving the ice fishing contest portion of the event to Bertram Lake for the 2015 event. This is a family friendly event with a kids contest as well as an open fishing contest. The kids are provided with free rods and reels and given instruction from Simply Outdoor Experiences, a family mentoring and education program creating positive outdoor experiences. Many door prizes are given away at the event and cash prizes for the top three fish in each category. All fish must be alive and fresh when weighed and are then released back into the water. This event has been held annually the last three years on Pelican Lake in Wright County. However, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has begun a restoration project to lower high lake levels from the current elevation on the 4,000-acre Pelican Lake (a MDNR – designated wildlife lake) for wildlife management purposes.

The Frostbite Days Committee met with the Park Use and Natural Resources Subcommittees to review the details of the event and the conditions, limitations and restrictions set forth by the Advisory Council. The priority of the BCOL Advisory Council is to maintain the natural resources of this beautiful park and to ensure the environmental impact of such an event does not have a negative outcome on the park. The Wright County Park Ordinance applies, including no alcohol on the park premises, and no motorized vehicles in the park except in designated parking areas. *Please visit the Monticello Frostbite Days website for the event details and 2015 dates.*

**July 3, 2014:      Fishing Clinics for Kids and Families**

**The Monticello Community Center teams up with MinnAqua to offer fishing clinics to kids and families during the summer months at the Park!**

MinnAqua is a program offered by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Fish & Wildlife Outreach Section. This is a statewide education program designed to teach angling recreation and stewardship, as well as the ecology and conservation of aquatic habitats. Fishing right off the piers at Bertram and Long Lakes, this is a great way to introduce kids to fishing, and engage kids with learning that is relevant, interdisciplinary and fun! To learn more about this wonderful program, please visit the MinnAqua website by clicking the link below.

**To register for a fishing clinic. Please contact the [MCC](#) at 763-295-2954.**

**July 3, 2014:**

## **Annual Spring Cleanup**

The Friends of Bertram are always looking for more “Friends” to help out at our Annual Spring Cleanup Day at the park. Usually around the first weekend in May, the volunteers meet at the south park entrance (on 90th) Street to get directions on cleanup projects that need to be completed. All tools are provided. We just ask that you bring gloves, bug spray and wear boots or shoes you don’t mind getting muddy! If the weather holds out, it’s always a fun day to stay and have a picnic by the lake following the cleanup. If you or your group (girl scouts, boy scouts, garden club, cycle club, etc.) wish to participate, please contact us by sending us an email.

**October 24, 2014:**

## **The Cecropia Moth**

When looking at and remembering history, we are too often forced to look at it in human terms but, plants, insects and animals have always had their own influences, in in some instances, very serious impact on human history. In this case, I had a very interesting and beautiful encounter with an insect in the Bertram Lakes area.

It was the summer of 1990, while supervising some summer youth employment students. We were engaged in some cleanup near the beach area of Bertram Lake. A storm had come through and left some of the oak trees with broken branches and scattered leaves. One of the older trees had received a lightning strike that left it in fairly bad shape. We had decided that it needed to come down and proceeded to trim all the branches away. As I began using the chainsaw on the upper trunk, I felt little resistance to the saw. It soon became apparent that the tree was hollow and in fact, very hollow

After cutting several feet off the upper trunk we could look inside and see that the entire bottom was covered, 3 feet deep, with course sawdust. In looking through the sawdust, I found several (6-10) very large larvae, all about the size of a finger. They were off-white with a faint green hue and about 3/4 of an inch thick. They could be nothing less than the larvae of the **Cecropia Moth**. The largest of the moth family in North America. Recognizing this, we stopped cutting, covered the top with branches and leaves and left it alone until the next year.

I can only hope that they all survived. I was very happy and awed to see how nature compliments itself by providing what is necessary for its components to survive. Beauty isn’t always in what we can see, but it’s hidden all around us!

**December 11, 2014:**

## **YMCA Detached Worker**

I first became aware of this phase in the mid 1970’s when a YMCA Detached Worker was assigned to the Monticello area through the Manitou Camp, located on the south end of Bertram Lake. A worker by the name of Mike M. came to the Monticello High School and introduced himself to be the YMCA person who would be coordinating programs in the schools in conjunction with Camp Manitou. The YMCA has always been instrumental in the social issues of children and created the Detached Worker Program to help struggling children with school, home and personal issues. I asked Mike where the “Detached Worker” part came in because I didn’t see him coming “apart” in any way!

We laughed and he explained that he was a YMCA employee but that he had no office or specific role other than to help disadvantaged, neglected and/or forgotten children who needed help, guidance, structure, and a person to care about them. Since the detached worker was not restricted to hours, he or she could work with children of all ages and at all times ~ especially afternoons and evenings outside of regular school times.

Some of the activities included camping trips, group work, volunteer activities, sports, games, and family referrals. One very popular program the Mini Bike Program. The YMCA had secured a partnership with Honda to provide some mini bikes to Camp Manitou. Each year students would learn about the bikes and how to handle and ride them safely. After the basic introduction, they would practice riding them in an oval to help them hone their skills. The final result was to go on a trail ride throughout the YMCA-Bertram

property. In the end they would clean and maintain the bikes for the next trail ride; similar to the book, “Zen and Art of Motorcycle Maintenance”, except they were mini bikes. This program lasted over 25 years and educated hundreds of children in the Monticello area on mini bike safety.

**December 18, 2014:**

## **“Capture the Seasons” 2015 Photo Contest (2nd Annual Photo Contest)**

It’s time to get out your cameras and explore Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park to “Capture the Seasons” in the Friends of Bertram 2nd Annual Photo Contest. We are looking for creative and captivating visual interpretations of each of the four seasons highlighting the natural beauty in the Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park and the various activities and recreational opportunities available at this wonderful park!

Over \$1,000 in Cash & Prizes will be awarded and the Contest is open to all photography enthusiasts ages 14 and over, including professionals who do not earn a living from photography. Please click the links below to review the complete contest rules before entering any photos. Contest entries will be accepted from **January 1 through November 6, 2015**. Winners will be announced at an Awards Reception at the Monticello Community Center on December 1, 2015 from 6-8 p.m.

Participants may enter up to **4 times** in each category, limited to **1 photo per category depicting each of the seasons: Winter, Spring, Summer or Fall**. The Photo Contest Categories are as follows:

- **Land & Waterscapes**
- **Sunrises & Sunsets**
- **Recreation & People**
- **Plants & Wildlife**

*We look forward  
to your entries!*

**October 15, 2015:**

## **An Oak and its Acorn**

I have been asked to retell the story of the oak tree that I told at the opening ceremony of the Natural Theme Playground. I hope that it will be of interest to the readers.

In June of 1985, I began working for the YMCA supervising summer youth employment students ages 14-17. One of the tasks was to make sure the beach area was clean and well organized. The “Y” Day Camp used the beach, as well as a few weekend campers. Next to the road that goes by the beach area was an old, hollowed out oak tree that was struggling to stay alive. As stated in an earlier tidbit, “Cecropia Moth”, many old oak trees rot from the inside out, with the cambium layer still alive. This old oak tree was definitely hollowed out with a couple of feet of sawdust chips in the center. Plus, there was one live branch growing out of the side that extended several feet into the air. This branch was still producing acorns and, in the past, one of them had fallen into the “sawdust” in the center of the tree. Miraculously, the acorn had taken root and was at least 7-8 feet tall!

Over the next two years, this old tree gave out and we had to cut down what was left of it. Without the old tree surrounding it, the new young oak grew stronger by itself and now, 40 years later, it is the magnificent tree that we can see and enjoy today. *But we must remember that nature renews itself in its own time and not in ours. Appreciate the tree for what it is, beauty, shade and renewal.*

## *Overviews*

### **\*DIRECTIONS TO BERTRAM CHAIN OF LAKES\***

**A:** *TO BERTRAM BEACH ENTRANCE -- BRIARWOOD AVE (W) ACCESS*

**From Monticello:** From the Public Works Department on Golf Course Road (CR 39 West) travel west for 2.4 miles. Take a left onto Briarwood Ave. Follow for 0.9 miles and the Bertram Park entrance will be on your LEFT.

**From the North:** 94 East to Exit 193, MN-25. At the top of the exit turn RIGHT onto MN-25 S. Go .2 miles and then turn RIGHT onto Chelsea Road. Go 1.4 miles and then turn LEFT onto CR 39 West. Follow for approximately 1.6 miles. Take a left onto Briarwood Ave. Follow for 0.9 miles and the Bertram Park entrance will be on your LEFT.

**From the South:** 94 West to Exit 193, MN-25. At the top of the exit turn LEFT onto MN-25 S. Go .2 miles and then turn RIGHT onto Chelsea Road. Go 1.4 miles and then turn LEFT onto CR 39 West. Follow for approximately 1.6 miles. Take a left onto Briarwood Ave. Follow for 0.9 miles and the Bertram Park entrance will be on your LEFT.

**B:** *TO PUBLIC TRAILHEAD ENTRANCE -- 90<sup>th</sup> STREET (S) ACCESS*

**From Monticello:** Head west on Chelsea Road. Take a left onto 90<sup>th</sup> Street NE. Follow for approximately 2.6 miles. (90th Street will take a sharp curve to the right at about the 2 mile-mark.) Bertram Park entrance is on the RIGHT.

**From the North:** 94 East to Exit 193, MN-25. At the top of the exit turn RIGHT onto MN-25 S. Go .2 miles and then turn RIGHT onto Chelsea Road. Go .7 miles and then turn LEFT onto 90th Street NE. Follow for approximately 2.6 miles. (90th Street will take a sharp curve to the right at about the 2 mile-mark.) Bertram Park entrance is on the RIGHT.

**From the South:** 94 West to Exit 193, MN-25. At the top of the exit turn LEFT onto MN-25 S. Go .2 miles and then turn RIGHT onto Chelsea Road. Go .7 miles and then turn LEFT onto 90th Street NE. Follow for approximately 2.6 miles. (90th Street will take a sharp curve to the right at about the 2 mile-mark.) Bertram Park entrance is on the RIGHT.

## **\*FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS\***

### **How did the opportunity to turn this property into a park come about?**

Wright County and the City of Monticello were approached by the YMCA of Minneapolis in 2006. At that time, the YMCA owned the 1,250 acres known as “Camp Manitou” in its entirety. The YMCA was interested in the possibility of selling the property to development in order to invest in other YMCA facilities. Sensing an opportunity, the City and County immediately began working in cooperation with the YMCA to purchase the property for long-term preservation and park use.

### **How much of the property is currently owned by the County and City?**

Currently, Wright County and the City of Monticello jointly own 720 acres of property at Bertram Lakes. It is the goal of the City and the County to purchase the entire 1,250 acres, which will be fully mapped for trails & other amenities.

### **What is the cost of the proposed park?**

The County, City and the YMCA agreed to a purchase price of \$20.5 million for the entire 1,250 acres. This amount was based on an appraisal of the property, agreed on by all parties.

In 2008, the County, City and the YMCA entered into an agreement which allows the County/City to make incremental purchases of the property through 2013, as funding is secured through grants and local matches.

The County and City entered into this agreement with the understanding that each would be funding partners, with additional funding pursued from State of Minnesota sources. The two entities are actively seeking the support of the State to help fund the purchase of all 1,200 acres.

### **Who is paying for the park?**

The first acquisition of 319 acres in 2008 cost \$3.6 million. Each partner (County, City, State) contributed one-third of the cost of the acquisition, or \$1.2 million.

The State of Minnesota’s \$1.2 million included \$1 million from the Environmental Trust Fund (your lottery funds) and \$200,000 from the Department of Natural Resources Metro Greenways grant program.

In 2010, the City and County purchased an additional 51 acres, bringing the total parkland at Bertram Lake to 370 acres. That purchase was made possible by a grant from the DNR’s Metro Greenways program, as well as matching funding from the City of Monticello (park dedication fund) and Wright County.

In 2011, the County and City acquired 126 land and water acres lying primarily between Bertram and Long Lakes. This acquisition was made possible through grants from the DNR's Non-Metro Regional Park program and the Park Legacy grant program, with matching funds from the City of Monticello and Wright County.

In 2013, the County and City acquired another 140 land and water acres lying along the south and west side of the park, including a large portion of Bertram Lake. This acquisition brought the park to over half of the total planned park area of 1,200 acres!

In 2014, a \$3.8 million, 164-acre acquisition successfully closed on June 5, 2014, bringing the park total to 721 acres. The purchase was made possible with \$2.2 million in grant funding and additional match funding from Wright County and the City of Monticello. This acquisition includes the beach and landing at Bertram Lake, the 40 acres of the planned athletic area, as well as the 12-acre parcel where the YMCA intends to build its new Day Camp Manitou.

The next acquisition of 80 acres is slated for 2015. The estimated cost of this acquisition is \$2.3 million with \$1.4 million potentially coming from grant funding.

### **Who will own and operate the park?**

Wright County and the City of Monticello will jointly own and operate the facility. Both will continue to plan for and budget for on-going improvements and maintenance.

### **What types of activities are planned for the park?**

You decide! The opportunities for both active and passive recreational opportunities at this 1,250 acre property are abundant. The Bertram Chain of Lakes Advisory Council wants to hear your ideas for year-round activities that make the most of the park's lakes, woodlands, wetlands and open spaces while protecting and enhancing this important natural resource.

### **Will hunting be allowed in the park?**

Under current ordinances, the City of Monticello and Wright County prohibit discharge of firearms within public parks. It is the goal of the County and City that the park remain as accessible to as many people as often as possible. However, it is possible that special hunts may be permitted at times as a conservation management strategy.

### **What will happen to the YMCA and their day camp?**

Under the agreement the County and City signed with the YMCA, the YMCA will be able to maintain a day camp on the site for 99 years. The new day camp will be set up on a 12-acre portion of the park not far from the current YMCA Camp Manitou entrance on Briarwood Avenue. The City and County will also cooperatively plan activities and events whenever possible with the YMCA. It's a partnership that will continue to benefit all three organizations.

### **Why are the City and County purchasing this property?**

It is recognized that Wright County will remain one of the fastest growing counties in the State. This growth in population and the loss of natural resources associated with development make the acquisition of the Bertram Chain of Lakes area a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

The County and City have the chance to improve the community's quality of life by preserving this irreplaceable natural area through the creation of a regional public park for active and passive recreation. It is increasingly rare anywhere in Minnesota, particularly within reach of the Metro area, to find almost 6 miles of undisturbed lakeshore, 1.5 miles of streams, 615 acres of woods including oak forest, 245 acres of wetlands and mixed vegetation and 140 acres of active agricultural lands and recreational facilities.

There is an economic benefit to this property's conservation, as well. A recent study of home and property values in Hennepin County indicates that people are willing to pay more to live close to very large open spaces (greater than 50 acres). Homes within a quarter-mile of large open spaces are worth almost 4.8% more; those beyond a quarter mile but within half a mile are worth 3% more.

Ultimately, the Bertram Chain of Lakes will have a positive regional impact for property values and serve as a major regional asset.

### **What areas of the park are open to the public?**



The County and City are working on making this park safe and accessible for all. The 720 acres owned by Wright County and the City of Monticello are currently accessible via the west park entrance at 9910 Briarwood Avenue (YMCA Camp Manitou entrance) and the south park entrance at 1744 90th Street NW (the Trailhead entrance). You can park and walk into the park at either location.

### **What's the next step in the park purchase and planning process?**

The Advisory Council has reviewed public input provided from community forums and events, and has developed an overall concept plan for the park which includes an active area for a future athletic complex, including youth baseball fields and soccer fields, the Bertram Lake Beach, natural playground, camping area, nature trails and hiking, mountain bike trails, fishing piers, and more. When all the acquisitions are complete, Bertram Chain of Lakes will become the largest Regional Park in Wright County.

Please contact members of the Wright County Board of Commissioners, members of the Monticello City Council and your legislators to voice your support for this irreplaceable open space and become a member of Friends by using the "Become a Friend" feature on the home page of this site.

**Your continued support and input are critical to future acquisitions and park planning. The Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park can't happen without you!**

[Data gathered by MJD – Winter 2015/16]