

LqP County Park Key Message

The Lac qui Parle County Park: Preserving a rich heritage while educating today's generation and conserving substantial pristine natural resources for future generations! Dac

Regional Trail Grant - Lac qui Parle County Park Expansion

A particular feature of the Park area is the unique riverine fluvial geomorphic landscape. A variety complex of classic examples is displayed across the Park area landscape. These features include meander neck cut-off, oxbow lake, upland remnant meander island, near stream capture, point bar formation / migration, cut-bank formation / migration, terrace development / preservation, flood plain development / maturation, riffle & boulder plunge pool sequences and base level change induced downcutting to name a few. The 60 foot elevation sheer cut-banks provide a window into the glacial history of this area and include a boulder pavement. There is also a display of Bur Oak trunk goose-necking induced by stream bank creep.

This unique combination of landscapes provides habitat for a diverse variety of flora and fauna. The floodplain hardwoods provide an appropriate understory for numerous rare plants to include the Canadian Moonseed and Jack-in-the-Pulpit. Fauna range from Pileated Woodpeckers to Gopher, Fox and Western Hognose Snakes to Prairie Skinks, Burns Leopard Frog, American, Canadian & Great Plains Toad, Tiger Salamander, Spiny Softshell Turtle and the prolific Wild Turkey and White Tail Deer. Upland and wintering habitat also exist for reintroducing the native Sharp Tailed Grouse.

All of these readily assessable combined features, flora and fauna destine this park a rare natural outdoor laboratory for citizens, students and researchers of all interests and disciplines.

Dac

Lac qui Parle County Park

Its Regional Setting And History - Dave Craigmile

The base landscape of the Park moved into the area some 2.6 billion years ago during the Algoman Orogeny with the plate tectonic movement of a 3.5 billion year age Island Arc northward. This movement, subduction and subsequent suturing with an existing plate to the north along what is known today as the Great Lakes Tectonic Zone created a local environment of

volcanism, earthquakes, tsunamis and mountain building. Although the mountains have long eroded away their granite roots are still evident in the local area from surface outcrops to near surface depths of 25 to 500 feet below the surficial glacial till. Overlying undisturbed areas of the eroded granite at depth are the deposits of various incursions into the area by ancient seas, the latest being some 100 million years ago. More recently the area has been reshaped, reorganized and replenished by numerous continental glaciations the past 2.5 million years. The most recent glaciation ended some 13,000 years ago with the melting ice waters initiating major portions of local waterways, rivers and streams to include the Lac qui Parle River which flows through the Park on into the namesake Lake and Glacial River Warren Minnesota River & Valley. Thus the landscape with its till, soil, morphology, water, flora, fauna and climate came first with humans choosing to move into the area to take advantage of these abundant natural resources.

The first claim on Park lands by non-aboriginals was by France in 1682. There is local evidence of native people being in the area for at least 9,000 years. Thus in modern history the Park lands became a part of New France on the North American Continent and were named La Louisiane for King Louis XIV. Subsequently French traders and explorers moved into and through the area establishing kinship as well as business ties with what they called the Teton, Sioux or Dakota Indian people. France made no definitive attempt to colonize the area as England had done on the East Coast.

France did establish a number of trading posts in the area and maintained excellent relations with the native people to the extent that in later years the native people sided with France in the French & Indian War against England. These French traders gave the river which runs through the Park the name Beaver Creek for its abundance of beaver. The Dakota people's name for the river was Watapan Intapa meaning "river at the head". The French later misinterpreted the Dakota name and came up with the French word, Lac qui Parle, which means "lake that talks" assigning both the river and lake that the rivers delta created in the underfit Minnesota River Valley the same name.

In 1763 as a result of losing the French & Indian War to England, France gave up all of its lands East of the Mississippi river to England. France also gave up its lands west of the Mississippi to Spain as compensation for the loss of Florida. The Park lands thus now belonged to Spain; however in 1800 France made a special treaty with Spain and received back the western lands so that in 1800 the Park lands once again belonged to France. By 1801 President Thomas Jefferson decided that it was strategically important for the young country to control the Port of New Orleans and the Mississippi River; thus America began negotiating with Napoleon Bonaparte and France for New Orleans and subsequently France's lands west of the Mississippi River. In 1803 America and France concluded what became known as the Louisiana Purchase with America paying the equivalent of 15 million dollars for some 530 million acres or about 3 cents per acre. The Park lands for the first time became part of the U.S.A.; however the Dakota people living on these lands certainly claimed these lands as their own without regard for the Louisiana Purchase.

The Dakota people of the Park area had become familiar with and established kinship ties with both the French and English, the Americans they were not so sure of and did not trust them! The Dakota continued trade and ties with the English through Canada until after the War of 1812 and Treaty of 1818 when America eventually solidified its border with Canada and required the Dakota people to recognize and trade with American interests.

Ft. Snelling was established at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers in 1819 and the Lac qui Parle Park, Minnesota River and Lac qui Parle River confluence area became a west most trading post and mission sphere of influence for the U.S. Government. The major U. S. Government exploration parties of Stephen H. Long in 1823, George Featherstonhaugh in 1835, Joseph Nicollet in 1838-9 and G. K Warren in 1872 came through and stopped in the area.

Starting before, but especially after the Louisiana Purchase, Thomas Jefferson set in motion a master plan to explore and settle the new lands west of the original colonies by negotiating land treaties with the native Indian

people and surveying lands in 6 mile square tracts called townships. Typically the U.S. Government would negotiate Indian land treaties for 3 to 10 cents per acre, survey the lands and then sell them to settlers for \$1.25 per acre thus financing the U.S. Government. The first such treaty with area Dakota Wahpeton and Sisseton people was negotiated in 1851 and became known as the Treaty of Traverse de Sioux. The Dakota lands were purchased for about 7 cents per acre and the area Dakota people were to retain as a reservation a tract of land 10 miles wide on either side of the Minnesota River from the Yellow Medicine River confluence by Granite Falls to the Little Minnesota River confluence with Lake Traverse near Browns Valley. Thus the Park lands were to become official property of the Dakota people. However the Reservation lands part of the treaty was never ratified but stricken from the treaty by the U. S. Senate with President Millard Fillmore requested to find and set-aside appropriate lands elsewhere for these Dakota people. The President did relent that the Dakota people could stay in the promised area while he figured out where "an appropriate area elsewhere" was. Subsequently two official U.S. Government Indian Agencies were established on the south side of the Minnesota River and became known as the Lower Agency near Redwood Falls and the Upper Agency near Granite Falls; yet there was no official treaty language that the Dakota people would have a reservation in this area. The Park area lands remained U.S. Property within Minnesota Territory.

With Minnesota about to become a State and the Dakota people fed up with unfulfilled promises from the U.S. Government, it was decided that a new treaty should be negotiated that would make certain the Reservation lands and appropriate payments guaranteed by previous treaties. Thus the Dakota - Washington Treaty of 1858 was signed June 19, 1858 in Washington D. C. which made certain the 10 mile wide by 70 mile long Reservation on the south side of the Minnesota River while allotting the Dakota people 30 cents per acre for the lands they were originally promised as Reservation on the north side of the Minnesota River. The south side Reservation lands were to be surveyed and the Dakota people could take individual ownership of 80 acre tracts and become U.S. Citizens if they so choose. The Reservation southwest line was surveyed in

1859 and is still visible to this day in some property parcels. The township outline survey was completed in October of 1858 with the individual section subdivision survey being completed in July of 1865. The Park area lands thus became official Dakota Reservation lands subject to Dakota individual ownership.

By November of 1861 a new satellite mission station for the Dakota people headed by Amos & Sophia Huggins along with teacher Julia LaFramboise had been completed on the Lac qui Parle River just downstream from the immediate Park area. The original Lac qui Parle Mission at the confluence of the Lac qui Parle and Minnesota Rivers had been abandoned in 1854 when Missionary Stephen & Mary Riggs home burned and he decided to move to the vicinity of the Upper Agency near Granite Falls and start the Hazel Wood Mission. This was a time of rising discontent among the Dakota people over promises still not kept by the U.S. Government, settler encroachment and a loss of their Dakota culture. The discontent eventually resulted in an armed warlike uprising against area settlers and traders by the Lower Dakota people in mid August of 1862, which spread somewhat to the Upper Dakota. On August 19, 1862, missionary Amos Huggins was killed at his mission station and the various buildings looted and burned while his wife and children along with teacher Julia were allowed to escape unharmed.

The deciding battle of the Dakota War of 1862 was at Wood Lake (actually Lone Tree Lake) on September 23, 1862 with the Dakota warriors being defeated and deciding to leave Minnesota for South and North Dakota as well as Canada. Meanwhile 269 white and mixed blood captives-hostages along with some 1200 non warring Dakota were camped just downstream of the Park area at the confluence of the Minnesota and Chippewa Rivers. Upon arrival of Colonel Sibley and his Army from the Wood Lake Battlefield on September 26, 1862, the captives-hostages were released to Sibley and the site became known as Camp Release which is today located in the NW 1/4 of section 24, Camp Release Township, Lac qui Parle County. The people of Minnesota and Governor Ramsey decided that the Dakota people should be severely punished for starting the war and banished from the State. Governor Alexander Ramsey

stated, "Our course then is plain. The Sioux Indians of Minnesota must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of the State".

On February 16, 1863 the U.S. Senate abrogated all treaties with the Dakota people. Once again the Park lands changed ownership and again became lands of the State of Minnesota which would become available for general settlement. In June of 1863 an Army of 4,000 was assembled by General Henry H Sibley just north of Redwood Falls to march north west along the (Lac qui Parle Trail, Agency Road, or Military Road) to engage, disrupt and defeat any Dakota-Sioux warrior threat that may still exist within and beyond Minnesota borders. This large Army on its march west camped for a weekend (June 20-21) between Camp Release and the Lac qui Parle River at a spot known as Camp McPhail, named in honor of cavalry commander, Colonel Samuel McPhail. Col. McPhail was highly impressed with the area and after the military mission west he and his cavalry returned via the same route remarking that they had been on half rations but that he had a good meal of ripe plums upon reaching the Lac qui Parle River.

After continued military service in the Civil War, Col. McPhail and four companions arrived at what was to become Redwood Falls on May 2, 1864 to stake their claims in the actual river falls area and subsequently establish the river namesake town and county. As what lands that were to become Yellow Medicine and Lac qui Parle Counties were at that time still considered part of Redwood County, the general Lac qui Parle area lands were given the name McPhail County for obvious reasons. And the first township within was named Cerro Gordo, again with obvious input from McPhail and others that had served in the Battle of Cerro Gordo during the Mexican-American War. The first settler land claims in the Park list the lands as Sioux Indian, the county as McPhail and the township as Cerro Gordo. It was not until March 6, 1871 that Lac qui Parle County was officially named as such and set-off from Redwood County. And it was not until December 27, 1872 that Lac qui Parle Township was created by splitting off the east half of Cerro Gordo township. The Park lands finally had official residence in the official township of Lac qui Parle within the official County of Lac qui Parle through which flowed the Lac qui Parle River on into Lac

qui Parle Lake!! Is there any question as to why these Park lands should be named Lac qui Parle County Park?!

The first settlers to secure U.S. Government land patents in section 30, T118-N R42W of Park lands were Rosetta H Mills (1871), Edwin Nash (1872), Amund Olson (1872) and John Nash (1873); directly adjacent in the W 1/4 of Section 29 was Peter F Jacobson and Hans Hansen (1871) while another Nash, Thomas M (1873) claimed land adjacent in section 31. With all the Nash ownership and with the river lands being quite heavily forested, the Park area quickly became known as Nash's Grove. Numerous 2 - 4 acre parcels of these valuable river bottom lands timber were surveyed and sold off to individuals, some of whose families still hold those lands today as deer hunting parcels. It is quite interesting to note that the County ordered official surveys of these parcels as early as 1872 such that they could be taxed by the County. These original surveys have been found and are of high quality such that the official stone and tree monuments noted may be located. These surveys could be used and set-up in an activity version of today's popular geo-caching.

The early settlers of the Park area decided they would wish to establish a church and city; however there was quite a discussion as to whether the church (especially) and city should be north or south of the Lac qui Parle River. The first church was organized June 1, 1870 and recognized as the first Lutheran Church in the County as well as Upper Minnesota Valley. Church services were held in local homes or outdoors in timber on the south side of the river. And in April of 1871 the congregation expressed interest in a potential church & cemetery site near the center of section 30, north of the river on land owned by Amund Olson. Land owners William Mills (father of Rosetta H who married Charles Nash), Peter Jacobson and Edwin Nash south of the river talked of donating land and platted out parcels of their lands for the city, church and cemetery. The town was to be called Bison City or Williamsburg which would hopefully become the new county seat boom town; thus a store was quickly opened in 1870 by a Mr. Donaldson. However there was competition from another faction of settlers some three miles to the east for another town site to be called Lac qui Parle Village. This competition for a prospective county seat town site would be

settled by the first elected County Commissioners; thus a spirited political campaign ensued to elect the appropriate three persons as originating County Commissioners. The newly elected commissioners first met January 11, 1872 and they voted unanimously to select Lac qui Parle Village as the county seat. That was the death knell for Bison City and the Donaldson store packed up and quickly moved to Lac qui Parle Village.

The new church site selection was not quite yet decided as the congregation did not wish to have their church at Lac qui Parle Village, but did prefer it to be centrally located in the vicinity of section 30 . Amund & Gorgina Olson Vold owning a one acre parcel of land north of the river in the NW 1/4 of section 30 officially sold it to the Lac qui Parle Branch of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for \$1.00 with a deed dated April 16, 1875. The congregation had tentatively chosen the site earlier and started a cemetery there but then decided the location was unsuitable for the church structure as there were problems with accessibility.

The church was eventually constructed one mile due west of the described cemetery on donated acreage and is still active on the same site today which is north of the Lac qui Parle River and easily accessible. The original cemetery site is presently within Park boundaries and is very solemn and picturesque.

As time marched on into the 20th Century, Park area lands changed ownership; however people continued to enjoy visiting, hunting, fishing and recreating in the Park area as well as paying respects at the original cemetery. Nearby in adjacent section 19 to the north a future governor of Minnesota was growing up and enjoying the Park area to the extent that he built a future Governor's Summer Home on the north bank of the Lac qui Parle River. Theodore Christianson served three terms as the 21st Governor of Minnesota from 1925 - 1931 and his surviving family members to this day enjoy visiting the beautiful summer home and adjacent Park area. Even the Minnesota Army National Guard found the Park accommodating, for in the 50's - 70's the local National Guard units practiced maneuvers and honed their marksmanship skills in the Park during weekend drills. The former horse, ox and cart trails once

again felt the pounding of hoofs as area and distant saddle clubs found the Park very enticing. The area Boy & Girls Scouts often camped at the Park with the Boy Scouts engineering a bridge across the river. And area 4H Club projects helped tidy up the cemetery and other areas. Class reunions also became common at the Park.

Moving into the 21st Century, area schools began using the Park as an outdoor natural and earth science classroom. A particular feature of the Park is the unique riverine fluvial geomorphic landscape with sheer 60 foot cut-banks and associated features. This unique combination of landscapes also provides habitat for a diverse variety of flora and fauna. The Lac qui Parle County version of the Minnesota Sesquicentennial Celebration was held at the Park with numerous historic displays, exhibits and tours given of the area. The Park also began to host a very popular Halloween Haunted Hay Ride. The Park is truly four season, for winter months entice people that enjoy skiing, snowshoeing and sledding. No motorized vehicles are allowed in the Park except on the main entrance roads. No firearms are allowed in the Park; archery hunting is allowed. There are 226 acres in the Park today and a hoped for expansion of some 65 acres is in the planning stages. The Park is open to the public year around, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. No other park in the County or surrounding area offers such a rich natural resource experience! The Park is preserving a rich heritage while educating today's generation and conserving substantial pristine resources for the future generations! Most certainly the future of Lac qui Parle County Park is exceptional!

