

# *History of Cub Lake in Bear Lake Township*

Cub Lake represents all that is natural and inviting in a non-recreational lake. It is a fine example of a small up north Michigan lake, surrounded at the shoreline with hardwoods and native pines.

No records are found for the early history of Cub Lake, but we do know that at one time a train track ran along West Bear Lake Road that may have also served as a logging road. Trains made a stopped at Eleanor Bay for water.

A half a mile away is Bear Lake; a larger companion lake to Cub Lake which at one time was known as 'Little Bear Lake'.

The township that contains both Cub and Bear Lake was platted in the late 1920's and was originally called Clearwater Township. The name was changed to Bear Lake Township on January 6, 1925.

On the property built in the 1920's and now belonging to the Wilson Family, at 399 West Bear Lake Road, stands the old ice house for Cub Lake. In the winter, block ice used during the summer months was cut, packed in sawdust and stored in the small ice house near the waters edge.



During the late 1930's or early 40's George Burke of Grayling owned several hundred acres on and around Cub Lake. Around this same time, Burk sold lakefront acreage to George Griffin also from Grayling. In the 1940's George Griffith began to harvest logs on the northeast section of Cub Lake for a home he wanted to build on the Manistee River. World War II interrupted his construction plans, and he stored the logs until after the war. With his home built, in 1946 he decided to subdivide the property on Cub Lake and using some of the logs he had harvested he built a spec log home. Griffin sold his spec cottage to Louis and Rita Rocque. Rocque was an automotive modeler for Chrysler and a pilot. He would fly up from down state to the Grayling Airport during the time he owned the cottage. Rouge sold the log cabin to Peter Houk who lives there today.

In 1952, Ross and Geraldine Donnelly (Bonnie Isaac's parents) purchased 80 acres, five of which were on Cub Lake. The remaining 75 acres were across West Bear Lake Road on the east side, and reached south to behind Dingmans' and north to East Bear Lake Road. The Donnelly's built their lake front home still called 'Paradise on the Lake' from '54 to '55 and moved in 1956.

## ***History of Cub Lake in Bear Lake Township, continued***



Bonnie Isaacs and her dad  
swimming near the boat launch



Bonnie Isaacs and her mom  
1950's bathing beauties

In the fall of 1955 Griffin, with the help of Ross Donnelly, put through a dirt road part way around the south side of the Cub Lake called, Aspen Road. After Aspen Road was in place, Griffith teamed up with Chuck Staley to sub-divide the rest of the property on and off Cub Lake which Staley eventually sold. Subdivision One ran from just west of Donnelly's property to Griffith Park. Subdivision Two ran from Griffith Park to West Bear Lake on the north end of the lake. All lake property parcels were lots and the properties across from the lake were divided into 5 & 10 acre parcels.



Old Signage for Fishing Cottages

On West Bear lake Road, perhaps in the 1950's there were three fishing cabins for rent by the Wilson family. Over time, the fishing cottages were sold and the new owners either tore them down or remodeled them. George Bryant purchased one of the former fish cottages in 1969. Another former fishing cottage that we know for sure is Wachters, formerly Barb Joabar's cottage.

Next to Wachters is a white cottage very close to the lake that was originally owned by Mr. Potter (current owner O'Dell). The cottage has a brick basement with the cottage built over it. This cottage may be the oldest structure on Cub Lake.

On the northwest side of Cub Lake on what is now the Strefling property, there is evidence of a prior camping or logging encampment. The Strefling family frequently finds camping stakes and canvas that the movement of the earth has brought to the surface. Perhaps the strongest indication of the sizable establishment is the campfire area, a shallow bowl shape depression in the earth for gathering around a fire and near there is a two-inch pipe well pounded into the ground.

## ***History of Cub Lake in Bear Lake Township, continued***

The Kalkaska Registrar of Deeds has a record of two prior businesses at the Streffling home site location. The Cub Lake Company in 1953 and The Manistee Lumber Company in 1988, but there is no additional information as to the type of business activity that took place for either of these companies. Perhaps long time residents will be able to shed light on these past businesses.

This concludes the gathering of Cub Lake history to date. Residents and friends are encouraged to share their knowledge of our lake's development and evolution through time.

Thanks to our Cub Lake History contributors:

Barry and George Bryant

Ron and Carol Clark

Peter Houk

Bob and Bonnie Isaacs

Barb Joabar

Debra Payne

Neil and Dorothy Streffling