

# Fort Whyte & Whyte Ridge: Beyond the Surface

---

Created and presented by Leanna

# Contents:

---

- Part 1: Where the name comes from
- Part 2: Origins of Fort Whyte
- Part 3: Importance of it all





Part 1:

---

Where the name comes  
from



## Tracks on the Trail

We see all kinds of tracks here at FortWhyte Alive – human and animal. But you might not have expected *train* tracks.

These decommissioned tracks are part of our heritage.

The present-day FortWhyte Alive was once an industrial site used by The Canada Cement Company (now Lafarge Inc.) to mine clay and gravel to make cement. By the 1950's, floods and other sources of material rendered the Fort Whyte site obsolete. At this time, the Manitoba Wildlife Foundation saw the industrial landscape as potential habitat, and started reclamation work.

That's what we do here at FortWhyte Alive – link history and heritage with sustainable communities.

Whether you're walking, riding your bike, or snowshoeing, remember to stop at all railway crossings – see tracks, think train!



## Part 1: Where the name comes from: Beginnings

---

- Untouched until early 1800's – fur traders
- 1869 – Louis Riel creates new government
- New government favors Northern Pacific Railway
- Late 1870's – first steam engine



## Part 1: Where the name comes from: Conflict

---

### Northern Pacific

- Wants to expand
- Needs to cross Canadian Pacific tracks

### Canadian Pacific

- Wants to stop their competition



# Part 1: Where the name comes from: Conflict

---

- Jessica Miller, granddaughter of CP rail worker:
- “CP was struggling with finances, and with a depression around the corner, CP was desperate to hold onto their outdated deals and leverage. It was hard on my grandfather.”



## Part 1: Where the name comes from: The Standoff

---

- William Whyte (super intendant of CP)
- Most vocal against Northern Pacific expansion
- Used any means necessary, including:
  - Dead rail cars and fences
  - Set up a 200-man guard



# Part 1: Where the name comes from: The Standoff

---

- Jessica Miller, granddaughter of CP rail worker:
- “My grandfather was there, and with such high tensions, it became to a desperate attempt to protect their rail lines.”





## Part 1: Where the name comes from: The Resolution

---

- The Canadian Supreme Court ruled against CP
- Remaining area named 'Fort Whyte'
- Named as a joke by the press
- Fort Whyte & Whyte Ridge name origin





Part 2:

---

Origins of Fort Whyte





## Part 2: Origins of Fort Whyte: Cement Prospects

---

- 1911 – Canadian Cement Company digging site
- 1913 – Plant opened, 100 people hired
- Houses built near plant
- Stores, schools, and houses were built
- Now known as Whyte Ridge



## Part 2: Origins of Fort Whyte: Interests in Waterfowl

---

- 1950's – interest in waterfowl
- Developed a waterfowl raising facility on-site
- Public loved it
- Nature trails made, picnic area





## Part 2: Origins of Fort Whyte: Interests in Waterfowl

---

- 1970 – Lafarge bought the plant
  - Operations changed, funding was started
- 1974 – Fort Whyte Nature Centre was opened
  - (Now known as Fort Whyte Alive)
- 1980's – plant closed, used for transport





Part 3:

---

Importance of it all



The background image shows a serene wetland landscape. A wooden boardwalk made of planks leads from the foreground into a body of water, flanked by tall, dry reeds. In the distance, a wooden bench sits on a small platform. The sky is overcast and grey, and the trees in the background are bare. The entire scene is framed by a thin white border.

## Part 3: Importance of it all: Expansions

---

- Fort Whyte Alive keeps growing
- Added 200 acres in 1983
- 1986 – Kiwanis bee exhibit added
- 1989 – Aquarium of the Prairies added
- Expanded to 640 acres in 2000



## Part 3: Importance of it all: Education & Environment

---

- Protects environment
- Fieldtrip programs for environmental education
- Locally driven







### Part 3: Importance of it all: Who it affects

---

- 125,000+ yearly visitors
- Has 350+ volunteers



## Part 3: Importance of it all: Preserving History

---

- Many stories are lost
- Local stories
- Keep them alive



Thank you for listening!  
Questions?

---