

010478

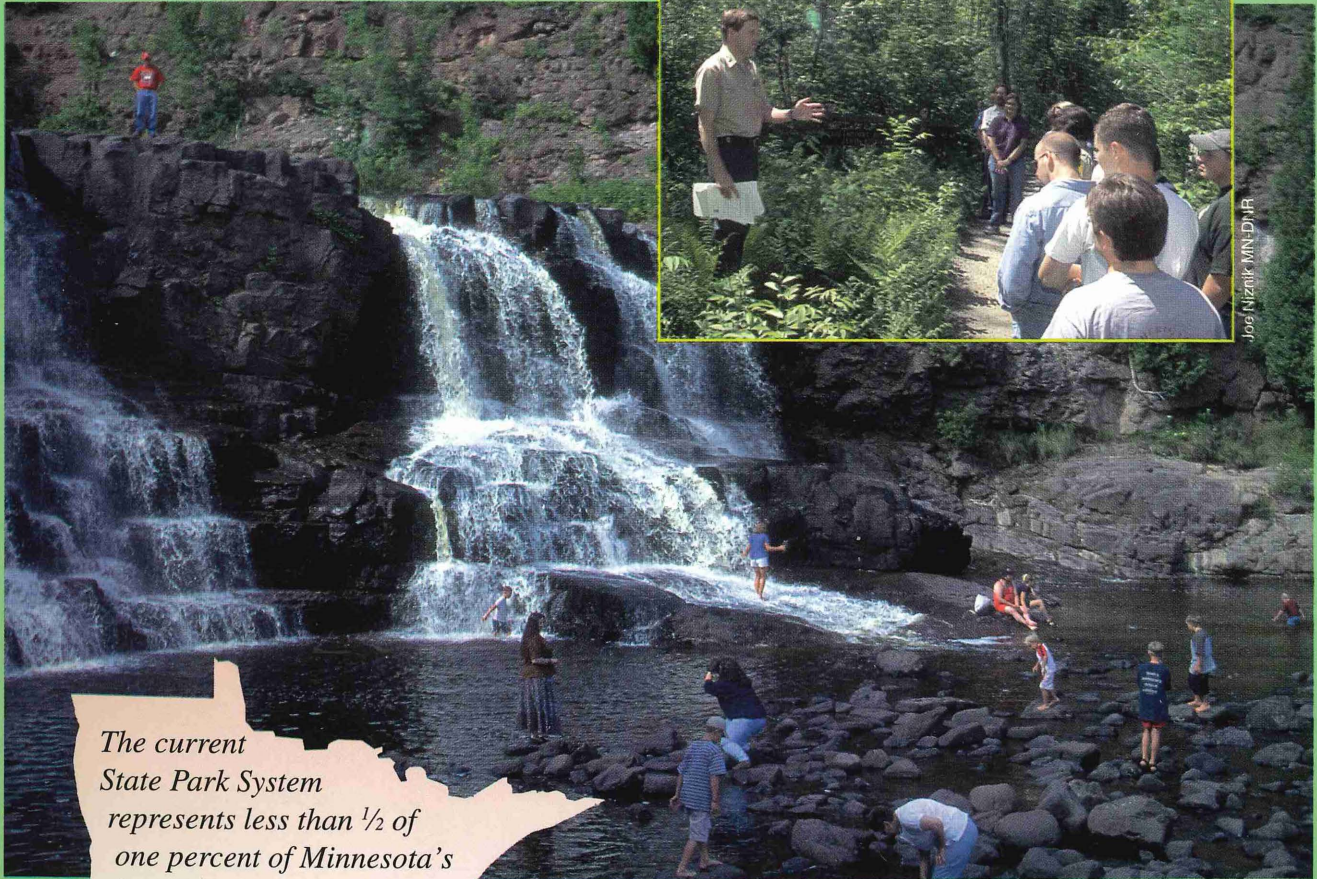
LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY
SB482.M6 M678 2000

- Minnesota state park system lands



3 0307 00061 7244

Minnesota State Park System Land Study



The current State Park System represents less than 1/2 of one percent of Minnesota's land base.

Does this protect a good representation of Minnesota's natural features?

Is this a large enough land base to meet recreation needs for the next 25 years?

Minnesota Land Base

State Park Lands
Less than 1/2 of 1%

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

in cooperation with



SB
482
.M6
M678
2000

For More Information Contact:

**DNR Information Center
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155 - 4040
(651) 296-6157 (Metro Area)
1-888-MINNDNR (646-6367)**

TTY

**(651) 296-5484 (Metro Area)
1-800-657-3929**

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us>

Copyrighted 2000 State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources

“Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is available to all individuals regardless of race, color, creed or religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, age or disability. Discrimination inquiries should be sent to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4031; or the Equal Opportunity Office, Department of Interior, Washington, DC 20240.”

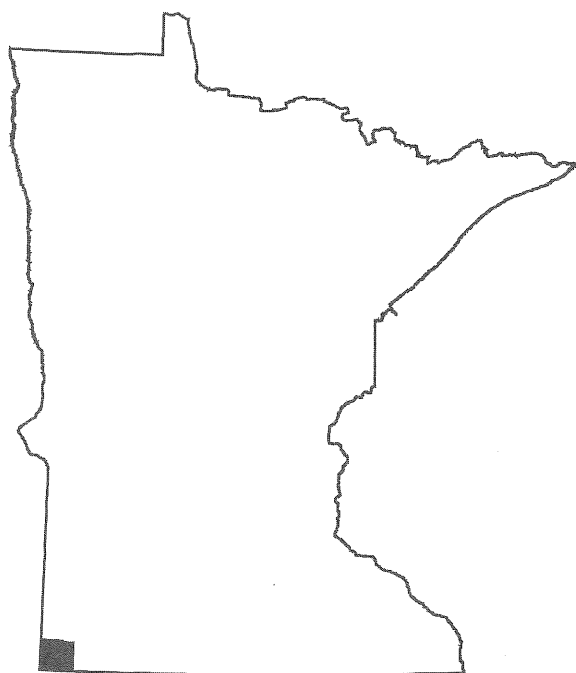
Minnesota State Park System Land Study

April 2000

RECEIVED

SEP 25 2001

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY
STATE OFFICE BUILDING
ST. PAUL, MN 55155



Minnesota State Park System comprises
less than 1/2 of 1% of Minnesota.

University of Minnesota
College of Natural Resources

Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks & Recreation

Acknowledgements

The MnDNR Division of Parks and Recreation gratefully acknowledges the many individuals who contributed to the development of this study.

*This study was a cooperative effort among:
Dorothy H. Anderson, Ph. D., Professor,
University of Minnesota,
David W. Lime, Ph. D., Senior Research Associate,
University of Minnesota,
Carmelita Nelson, Principal Planner,
DNR, Division of Parks & Recreation.
Dennis Thompson, Principal Planner,
DNR, Division of Parks & Recreation*

Thank you to the participants of the Citizens Advisory Team and the Resource Professionals Team who graciously donated time and effort on a regular basis. These teams were critical in generating ideas and providing knowledge that helped direct this study.

A special thank you is extended to the University of Minnesota students for their support on this project. Specifically, Greg Massaro, Tim Mitchell, Andrea Morse and Joanne Svendsen.

A warm thank you is also extended to the numerous individuals not mentioned here who contributed to this study through surveys, interviews, letters, and public meetings.

Thank you for helping the Division of Parks and Recreation envision the state park system needs for 2025.



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4037

Department of Natural Resources Approval of the Minnesota State Park System Land Study

Dear Citizens of Minnesota:

The Department of Natural Resources is committed to having the public involved in long-range planning decisions. This study was developed through a strong public involvement process that included public meetings, surveys, advisory committees and focus groups. Both citizens and professional staff learned a lot about Minnesota and the Minnesota State Park System through this process. Over the course of the next 25 years, the Minnesota State Park System will become more and more valuable to Minnesota's citizens to maintain our quality of life, preserve our most treasured natural & cultural resources, and provide the recreational & scenic highlights essential to a strong tourism economy. State parks, Scientific and Natural Areas, and other state lands of high biodiversity help form the core of the Conservation Connection Program that will improve the ecological health of Minnesota. State Parks through their acquisition and management will provide windows to presettlement conditions. This study helps us to look at what changes are needed in the state park system land base that will allow it to fulfill its resource preservation, recreation and education obligations twenty five years from now.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Allen Garber', is written over a horizontal line.

Allen Garber, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

A handwritten date '3/20/01' is written over a horizontal line.

Date



Preface

The state park system represents one of the most positive, tangible and publicly visible demonstrations of our citizen's and state government's commitment to the environment.

Our system of state parks and recreation areas is one of the state's greatest treasures. It is a key component of the state's tourism industry, attracting state, national and international visitors. As the Department of Health continues to promote physical activity and good nutrition as essential elements of good health, state parks will also play an increasing role in providing lifelong outdoor recreation opportunities for people of all ages. Minnesota state parks are vital for conserving our state's biodiversity, and adding enormous benefits to our daily lives as individuals and communities; economically, socially and environmentally.

Minnesotans are increasingly concerned about their environment. In a state of rapid urban development, our state parks and state recreation areas are models of environmental stewardship and are treasures to be preserved for future generations. In some areas, state parks are islands of biological diversity. In other areas, there are efforts underway to use state parks as the basis of natural corridors and greenways. Many watershed projects around the state use park streams and lakes as the baseline for water quality standards.

The current Minnesota State Park System includes 203,000 acres which comprises less than one-half of 1% of Minnesota's land base. This study looks at whether these lands protect a good representation of the state's natural features and if it has a large enough land base to meet nature based recreation needs for the next 25 years. Just as Jacob Brower had a vision for Itasca State Park, I ask you to have a vision for a state park system that we will be proud to leave for future generations.

Bill Morrissey, Director
Division of Parks and Recreation

Table of Contents

Executive Summary-----	1
Background -----	2
Size & Distribution of The State Park System	
When Parks Were Established	
State Park Visitation	
Study Process -----	8
State System Definition -----	9
State Parks	
State Recreation Areas	
Minnesota State Park's Role -----	11
Benefits of the State Park System -----	12
Personal Benefits	
Social Benefits	
Environmental Benefits	
Economic Benefits	
Complementary Outdoor Recreation Providers ---	16
Resource Preservation Needs-----	18
Natural Resource Gaps	
Cultural Resource Gaps	
Biological Theme Representation	
Geological Theme Representation	
Cultural Resource Theme Representation	
Recreation Needs -----	23
Population Trends	
Recreation Trends	
Close to Home Recreation Demand	
Outdoor Recreation Demand From Tourist Destinations	
Outdoor Recreation Demand for 2025	
High Scenic Potential -----	30
Environmental Education Needs-----	31
Interpretive Services	
Park Visitor Views on Environmental Education	
Decision Making Process -----	33
Expanding Existing State Parks & Recreation Areas	
Deleting Existing State Parks & Recreation Areas	
Establishing State Parks & Recreation Areas	
Mission and Vision Criteria	
Legal Criteria For State Parks	
Legal Criteria For State Recreation Areas	
Prioritizing Potential State Parks	
Prioritizing Potential State Recreation Areas	
State Park Land Study Conclusions -----	41
State Park Land Study Recommendations -----	42
How Can I Help?-----	44
Bibliography -----	45
Addendum -----	48

Needs Assessment

Appendices Available Upon Request

For copies of any of the following appendixes, please contact the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4039.

or call 651-296-6157 or 1-800-766-6000

Appendix A - Needs By Ecological Community System subsection

Appendix B - Designation Decision Process

Appendix C - Gap Analysis Matrix Charts

Appendix D - 1998 State Park Summer Visitor Survey

Appendix E - Public Recommendations

Appendix F - Public Meeting Results

Appendix G - Outdoor Recreation Act Chapter 86A

Maps, Tables, & Charts

Fig. 1: State Park and State Recreation Area Locations -----	2
Fig. 2: Minnesota Land Ownership In Acres -----	3
Fig. 3: Recreational Facilities -----	4
Fig. 4: 30 Mile Radius of State Parks & Recreation Areas -----	5
Fig. 5: Minnesota State Park System Visits & State Population -----	7
Fig. 6: Complementary Preservation/Recreation Providers -----	17
Fig. 7: Biological Needs Summarized by ECS Subsection -----	20
Fig. 8: Geological Needs Summarized by ECS Subsection -----	21
Fig. 9: Cultural Resource Needs summarized by ECS Section -----	22
Fig. 10: Faster Minority Growth Chart -----	23
Fig. 11: Increase in Median Age Chart -----	23
Fig. 12: Persons 16 Years and Older Participation In Outdoor Recreation By Activity 1994-95 -----	24
Fig. 13: Facilities, Services or Features That Should Be In State Parks -----	25
Fig. 14: Close To Home Recreation -----	27
Fig. 15: Recreation Demand From Outdoor Recreation Tourist Destinations -----	28
Fig. 16: Projected Recreation Demand for 2025 -----	29
Fig. 17: High Scenic Potential -----	30
Fig. 18: State Park & Recreation Area Selection Process Summary -----	36
Fig. 19: State Park Criteria In Law -----	37
Fig. 20: State Recreation Area Criteria In Law -----	38
Fig. 21: Priority Acquisition Areas -----	44

Executive Summary

Minnesota has one of the oldest state park systems in the United States. As early as 1885 the citizens of the state recognized the need to set aside lands for natural and cultural resource protection, outdoor recreation and environmental education. Since the first state park legislation was passed, the Minnesota State Park System has grown in response to public need and demand. The state park system is comprised of 66 state parks, 4 state recreation areas and 8 state waysides that encompass 203,000 acres. This area is less than one half of 1% of Minnesota's land base.

In the spring of 1997, the Minnesota Legislature asked the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to study the land base needed for the Minnesota State Park System, and report the study results and recommendations to the Minnesota Legislature.

The purpose of this study is to provide for a state park system which will preserve appropriate representations of Minnesota's landscape regions and meet future demands for state park resources, environmental education, and recreational opportunities.

This study is a cooperative project between the University of Minnesota, College of Natural Resources; and the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation. Staff and students from the University of Minnesota, College of Natural Resources have consulted with DNR staff to help develop the planning process, analyze data, identify recreation trends and develop the study's conclusions. The public was involved extensively in the development and review of this project, through surveys, focus groups, advisory committees, and public meetings.

Some of the Plan Recommendations (for all conclusions and recommendations see pp. 41-43) Include:

- The areas of Minnesota with the highest need for new or expanded state parks or state recreation areas are those that have both high recreational demand and high need for resource protection. Opportunities that arise in lower priority areas should still be analyzed to see if the specifics of a particular site is justified by the established criteria.
- To work in partnership with citizens, other public agencies, and other DNR divisions to support conservation connections and identify potential state parks and state recreation areas that meet established criteria.
- To establish additional state parks or state recreation areas so there is one within 30 miles of all Minnesota residents
- To assess the four ECS subsections without any state parks or state recreation areas: Littlefork-Vermillion Uplands (D); Laurentian Uplands (I); Toimi Uplands (L); and the Rochester Plateau (X), and search for potential state parks or state recreation areas that preserve the characteristic features of these subsections for public use, enjoyment and understanding.

The findings and recommendations of this report will help citizens identify potential state parks that will allow Minnesota state parks and state recreation areas to meet present and future preservation, environmental education and recreation needs.

Background

Minnesota has one of the oldest state park systems in the United States. As early as 1885 the citizens of the state recognized the need to set aside lands for natural and cultural resource protection, outdoor recreation, and environmental education. Since the first state park legislation was passed, the Minnesota State Park System has grown in response to public need and demand.

When Itasca State Park was established in 1891, much of Minnesota was still wilderness. The population of Minnesota was 1,301,826. ⁽¹⁶⁾ One

hundred and nine years later as we approach the year 2000, few remnants of Minnesota's original landscape remain. The population has grown to 4,725,419 ⁽¹⁶⁾ and the state park system is now at 66 state parks, 4 state recreation areas, and 8 state waysides that encompass about 203,000 acres. As the system grows to meet the ever increasing demand for nature based outdoor recreation, ⁽²³⁾ it is important that the growth occur in the most suitable places for both public use and resource protection.



State parks protect natural environments representative of Minnesota's natural heritage. They also protect numerous historic and cultural areas and interpret these resources. Parks are gateways to nature, history, adventure, discovery, learning and solitude. They encompass some of the state's greatest scenery and diversity of landscapes. Protected and preserved for all Minnesotans and for the world, they offer places to recreate and to refresh our awareness of nature and the human spirit.

Minnesota is ecologically diverse. A series of glacial eras have carved bedrock, and deposited silt, sand, gravel, and boulders in an intricate pattern. It is also the transition zone between the western prairies, eastern hardwood forests, and northern conifer forests. The intricate slow progression of natural communities, as the forest invaded the prairies and the prairie fires pushed them back, created the diverse mixture of plants and animals that we enjoy today. This diversity of geological and ecological features provides the opportunity for a diversity of recreational experiences.

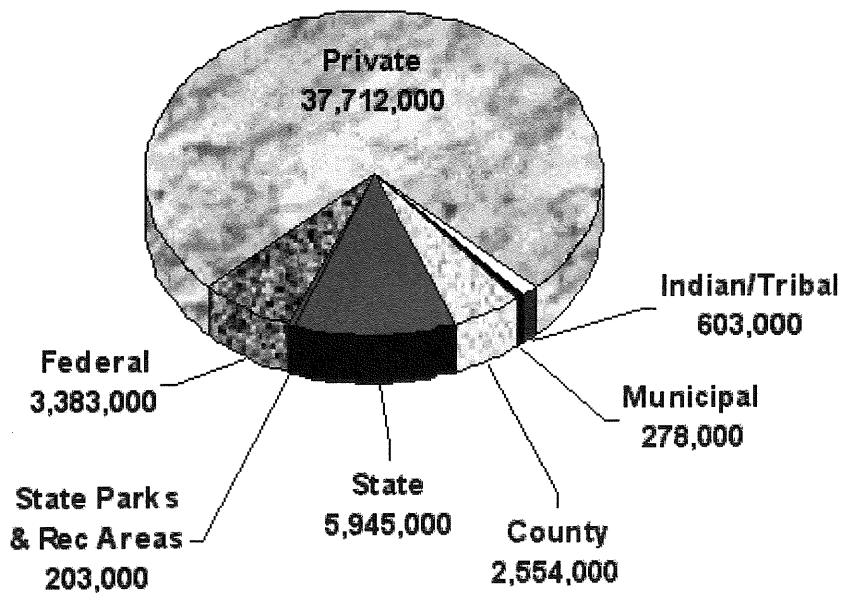
Size & Distribution of the State Park System

Minnesota is 54,000,000 acres in size.⁽³⁴⁾ Less than one-half of one percent (.004 of Minnesota) of the state's total acreage is preserved in Minnesota state parks (203,000 acres). Fig. 2: Minnesota Land Ownership In Acres, displays the land ownership in Minnesota.⁽²¹⁾ Although there is significant public land in Minnesota, the vast majority of it is in the northern part of the state, and has very different purposes than the Minnesota State Park System.

Minnesota State Park System has a very different mission than other public lands as described on page 17, Fig. 6: Complementary Preservation/ Recreation Providers. Although other public lands provide for recreation or preservation, most don't have the same role as the State Park System for all three aspects of its mission; recreation, resource preservation and environmental education.

The Minnesota State Park System has 66 state

Fig. 2: Minnesota Land Ownership In Acres



parcs, 4 state recreation areas, and 8 state waysides. State park and state recreation area statutory boundaries are established by the Minnesota Legislature. Statutory boundaries serve to identify lands appropriate for inclusion in state parks and state recreation areas. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Parks and Recreation manages 203,000 acres of land within a total statutory boundary of 247,000 acres. This leaves 44,000 acres to be acquired within present statutory boundaries. The Division of Parks and Recreation acquires land only from willing sellers so some of this land may not be acquired for public use for many years, or ever. Inclusion in a park boundary does not limit what private landowners can do with their property.

The average size of a Minnesota state park and recreation area is 3,630 acres, but the size of individual units varies considerably across the system. The largest is St. Croix State Park at 34,037 acres and the smallest park is Monson Lake State Park at 187 acres. There are 10 state parks and state recreation areas larger than 5,000 acres, and 13 units that are smaller than 2,150 acres, eight of which are classified as waysides. "Fig. 1: State Park and State Recreation Area locations" map on page 2, indicates the location and size of Minnesota state parks and state recreation areas.

The land base is important not only for the preservation of the diversity of Minnesota's resources, but also to provide recreational facilities that allow visitors to enjoy and learn from these resources. "Fig. 3: Recreational Facilities" identifies some of the facilities provided in present state parks and state recreation areas.

This system has grown during the past 100 plus years. Analysis of state park and state recreation area needs have been undertaken before in Minnesota to guide development of the system. A

comprehensive state park plan was developed in 1939.⁽⁹⁾ The plan's goal was to create a park or recreation area within thirty miles of every state resident. This goal has almost been completed today, with only a few gaps in the state without a state park nearby, as shown on Fig. 4: 30 Mile Radius from State Parks map. This goal is still valid today, as two thirds of all State Park System visitors travel less than 30 miles to recreate.⁽¹⁰⁾

Fig. 3: Recreational Facilities

4,378	Campsites
68	Group Camps
218	Horse Camp Sites
28	Camper Cabins
1,255	Miles of Trail
36	Beaches
6,381	Picnic Sites
33	Fishing Piers
33	Visitor Centers
135	Water Access Sites
7	Scientific and Natural Areas
360	Archaeological Sites
1,600	Buildings

When Parks Were Established

Each state park and state recreation area and the Minnesota State Park System has been established and fostered by people of vision. People who saw the future and understood how important natural islands and conservation connections are to us and our ecosystem. They were visionaries who could look past the present disturbances and see the fresh regeneration of natural systems, visionaries who were often only recognized from the perspective of future recipients of their dreams.

The movement to establish a park system in Minnesota began as early as 1885, with an effort to designate Minnehaha Falls in Minneapolis a state park. But state funds were never appropriated to acquire the land. The acquisition was eventually funded by the City of Minneapolis. Camp Release State Memorial Wayside was established near Montevideo in 1889. It was later transferred to the Minnesota State Historical Society in 1976. In 1891, the legislature established Itasca State Park



in northwestern Minnesota. The effort to pass the Itasca legislation had considerable opposition, and even after passage there was no money for acquisition. Still it became the first Minnesota State Park and was followed shortly thereafter by the creation of the Dalles of the St. Croix Park in 1895, now named Interstate State Park. By 1931 there were ten state parks in the system. In 1937 thirteen new parks were added, more than doubling the size of the system. This was followed by a period of sporadic growth during the 1940s and 1950s.

The 1960s was a decade of major change. In 1963 seven new parks were added and two were transferred to city parks. In 1965, thirteen new parks were created, and five were transferred to cities or counties. In 1967, three parks were established and in 1969, one park was created and one wayside transferred to the Minnesota Historical Society.

During the 1970s five parks were established and

fourteen monuments and waysides; most were small, one acre or less; were transferred to the Minnesota Historical Society and two municipalities.

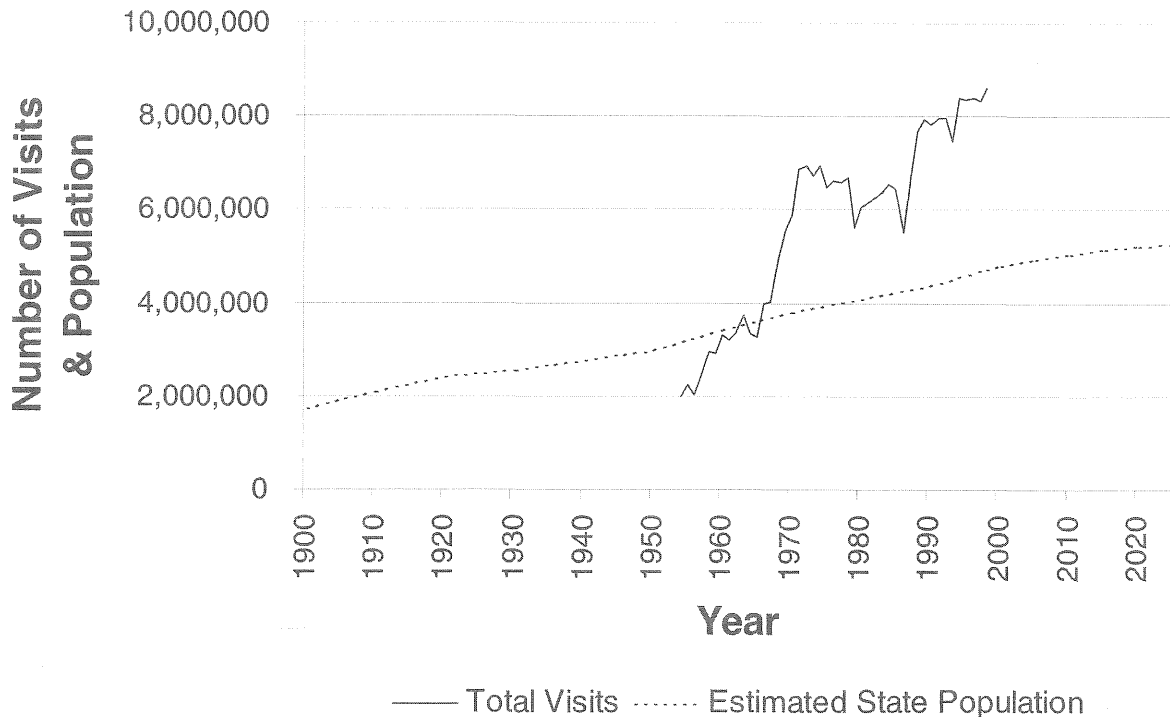
Although park visitation and environmental preservation issues continued to grow, park expansion slowed in the 1980s, with only two parks created during the decade. Hill Annex Mine State Park and Grand Portage State Park were both established in 1989.

During the 1990s three new units were added; Glendalough State Park, Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area, and Garden Island State Recreation Area. Two additional unit designations were changed; Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area was previously named the Minnesota Valley State Trail, and John A. Latsch State Park was reclassified from John A. Latsch State Wayside.

State Park Visitation

State park visitation has grown dramatically through the years. In recent years, park visitation has grown at a faster rate than Minnesota's population. During 1998 the Minnesota State Park System received 8.6 million visits. State park visitation will continue to increase. At a minimum, it will increase at the same rate as the population which would suggest an increase to at least 9.2 million visitors by 2025.

Fig. 5: Minnesota State Park Visits & State Population



Visitor satisfaction with the state park system remains high. The 1998 Summer Park Visitor Survey results showed that 95% of respondents felt satisfied with their state park visit⁽¹¹⁾ This high rate of approval echoes many previous surveys. Minnesotans and out-of-state visitors enjoy the Minnesota state parks system. Over 91% of the survey respondents said that the most important experience and benefit that they attained from visiting the park was the opportunity to enjoy natural scenery. Other experiences and benefits

which over 50% of the people said were very important included: smelling and hearing nature, escaping life's demands, spending time with their family, finding solitude and, enjoying fresh, clean air.

The majority of state park visitors come from Minnesota, but about 20% of our visitors come from other states and nations.⁽¹⁰⁾ State parks are not only important for the recreation and education needs of Minnesotans, they are also an important part of Minnesota's attraction for tourists, and tourism economy.

Study Process

Cooperative Study (U of M & DNR)

The major goal of this study is to:

“ . . . provide for a state park system which will preserve appropriate representations of Minnesota’s landscape regions and meet future demands for state park resources, environmental education, and recreational opportunities.”

The process used to complete this study: identified existing state park resources, opportunities, and benefits; identified future state park land needs for preservation and recreation; and identified a process for making future decisions. Staff and students from the University of Minnesota, College of Natural Resources have consulted with DNR staff to help develop the planning process, analyze data, identify recreation trends and develop the study’s conclusions. The public was involved extensively in the development and review of this study, through public meetings, advisory committees, surveys and questionnaires.

Public Input Meetings

During the summer and fall of 1998, 20 public meetings were held around the state, to discuss existing Minnesota State Park boundaries, and future opportunities for state parks. The agenda focused on state parks in the local area and considered possible new state parks within a 40 mile radius of the meeting site, capitalizing on the expertise of local citizens and government officials. Over 92 potential sites were identified (see Appendix C.)

Citizen Advisory Committee

A Citizen Advisory Committee was established to help draft statewide recommendations in the fall of 1998. The Citizen Advisory Committee included representatives from: MN Parks and Trails Council; Minnesota Horse Council; Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association; Minnesota Association of Townships; Recreation Equipment Incorporated (REI) sporting goods business; Metropolitan Council; Senior Community Services; MN Resort Association; University of Minnesota; SEEK environmental education program; Minnesota

Department of Health; Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources Citizen’s Advisory Team; and several other citizens with recreational and environmental interests as well as representative state park managers and administrators. This advisory committee met eight times and focused primarily on recreational issues.

Resource Professionals Team

The Resource Professionals Team helped develop recommendations for natural and cultural resource issues. This team included: personnel from Minnesota Department of Transportation; The Nature Conservancy; Minnesota Historical Society; North Central Forest Experiment Station; National Park Service; MN Office of Tourism; Chippewa National Forest; Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Commissioner’s Office, Division of Enforcement, Section of Wildlife, Section of Fisheries, Ecological Services, Bureau of Real Estate Management, Division of Waters, Division of Minerals, Office of Management and Planning, Division of Forestry, and state park managers and administrators. This team met eight times to address environmental and recreational issues and the study process.

Surveys and questionnaires

In 1998 over 500 summer park visitors completed surveys identifying experiences, park setting preferences and desires for future state parks (for more information request Appendix D). State park managers were surveyed to identify potential expansion of existing parks and new state park opportunities. Park naturalists held focus groups with environmental educators to identify additional land needs for environmental education, and held general information programs for park visitors.

Public Review Meetings

A final series of 11 public meetings were held during the fall of 1999 to review the draft study.

The recommendations in this study are the result of a partnership-based planning process. This study identifies general needs of the Division of Parks and Recreation during the next 25 years and is not intended to provide specific land acquisition details.

State Park System Definition

In 1975, the Minnesota Legislature passed the Outdoor Recreation Act (ORA) (Minnesota Statutes 86A)⁽¹⁵⁾ This legislation was designed to define and organize the public recreation lands administered by the State of Minnesota. The definitions and criteria for state parks and state recreation areas in this legislation is the basis for assessing existing and future elements of the Minnesota State Park System.

State Parks

According to ORA, state parks shall be established to protect and perpetuate extensive areas of the state possessing those resources which illustrate and exemplify Minnesota's natural phenomena and to provide for the use, enjoyment, and understanding of such resources without impairment for the enjoyment and recreation of future generations.

Resource And Site Qualifications

ORA specifically states that: "No unit shall be authorized as a state park unless its proposed location substantially satisfies the following criteria:

- Exemplifies the natural characteristics of the major landscape regions of the state, as shown by accepted classifications, in an essentially unspoiled or restored condition or in a condition that will permit restoration in the foreseeable future; or contains essentially unspoiled natural resources of sufficient extent and importance to meaningfully contribute to the broad illustration of the state's natural phenomena; and
- Contains natural resources, sufficiently diverse and interesting to attract people from throughout the state; and
- Is sufficiently large to permit protection of the plant and animal life and other natural resources which give the park its qualities and provide for a broad range of opportunities for human enjoyment of these qualities.

Administration

State parks shall be administered by the commissioner of natural resources in a manner which is consistent with the purposes of this subdivision to preserve, perpetuate, and interpret natural features that existed in the area of the park prior to settlement and other significant natural, scenic, scientific, or historic features that are present.

- Management shall seek to maintain a balance among the plant and animal life of the park and to reestablish desirable plants and animals that were formerly indigenous to the park area but are now missing.
- Programs to interpret the natural features of the park shall be provided.
- Outdoor recreation activities to utilize the natural features of the park that can be accommodated without material disturbance of the natural features of the park or the introduction of undue artificiality into the natural scene may be permitted.
- Park use shall be primarily for aesthetic, cultural, and educational purposes, and shall not be designed to accommodate all forms or unlimited volumes of recreational use.
- Physical development shall be limited to those facilities necessary to complement the natural features and the values being preserved."

State Recreation Areas

A state recreation area shall be established to provide a broad selection of outdoor recreation opportunities in a natural setting which may be used by large numbers of people ⁽¹⁵⁾.

Resource and Site Qualifications

ORA specifically states that: "No unit shall be authorized as a state recreation area unless its proposed location substantially satisfies the following criteria:

- Contains natural or artificial resources which provide outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities that will attract visitors from beyond the local area;
- Contains resources which permit intensive recreational use by large numbers of people; and
- May be located in areas which have serious deficiencies in public outdoor recreation facilities, provided that state recreation areas should not be provided in lieu of municipal, county, or regional facilities.

Administration

- State recreation areas shall be administered by the commissioner of natural resources in a manner which is consistent with the purposes of this subdivision primarily to provide as broad a selection of opportunities for outdoor recreation as is consistent with maintaining a pleasing natural environment.
- Scenic, historic, scientific, scarce, or disappearing resources within state recreation areas shall be recommended for authorization as historic sites or designated scientific and natural areas pursuant to section 86A.08 to preserve and protect them.
- Physical development shall enhance and promote the use and enjoyment of the natural recreational resources of the area."

Minnesota State Parks Role

The following mission and vision statements were established in the strategic plan for the Minnesota Division of Parks and Recreation is consistent with and supported by the ORA.⁽¹⁵⁾

Division of Parks & Recreation Mission

“We will work with the people of Minnesota to provide a state park system which preserves and manages Minnesota’s natural, scenic and cultural resources for present and future generations while providing appropriate recreational and educational opportunities.”

Division of Parks & Recreation Vision

“We will continue to work with the people of Minnesota to ensure that the Minnesota State Park System will be sensitive to the needs of current and future generations and guided by the following principles and values:

- A commitment to ensure deliberate and effective natural, cultural, historical and archaeological resource management;
- A commitment to provide appropriate recreational opportunities;
- A commitment to maintain a proper balance between resource protection and recreational use of state park lands;
- A conscious recognition of our responsibility to the public for wise and prudent acquisition and development of state park lands;
- A recognition of our educational and interpretive roles;
- A conscious and continuous effort to respect the valuable human resources embodied in our employees and the public;
- A continued desire to actively seek and adopt innovative, effective and efficient management practices;
- A realization of our responsibility to secure and maintain the resources necessary to implement our mandates and mission;
- A pledge to provide high quality public service; and
- A promise to consistently seek public involvement and support in decision making.”⁽¹⁵⁾

Benefits of the State Park System

Outdoor recreation is important to Americans. The use of public lands is increasing. However, there is only a general understanding of the benefits park visitors receive from outdoor recreation. As recreation professionals adopted a greater customer service orientation, it became important to understand the experiences their visitors desired, and how satisfied they were with present services. Now we are trying to understand what benefits our customers receive, how to maximize opportunities for these benefits, and the impact these benefits have on customers and their communities.

A management concept known as Benefits-Based Management (BBM) has evolved to better explain the relationships between recreation settings, visitor activities and beneficial outcomes.⁽²³⁾ This management concept identifies the benefits sought, and then develops management goals that provide opportunities for visitors to achieve these benefits. Minnesota state parks have been involved in two pilot projects with the participation of the University of Minnesota (U of M); and USDA Forest Service to test and implement BBM's basic concepts.

Personal (Visitor) Benefits

Recreating in a natural environment provides the opportunity for visitors to achieve a variety of personal benefits. Outdoor recreation is vital to the health of Minnesotans and to our economy. Physical inactivity (combined with poor diet), is a leading underlying cause of death in Minnesota and the United States (second only to tobacco use).⁽³⁶⁾ State parks provide recreational opportunities that encourage visitors to be more active. Americans of all ages are more overweight than ever before. This trend, along with the aging population, is significantly increasing the risk of premature death and disability.

A study by the US Department of Health and Human Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1998) reports that: "Every year, chronic diseases claim the lives of more than one and a half million Americans. These diseases account for 7 of every 10 deaths in the United States each year and for more than 60% of total medical care expenditures. Much of the chronic disease burden is preventable. To a certain degree, the major chronic disease killers, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes, are an extension of what individuals do or what they do not do, as they go about the business of daily life. Promoting regular physical activity and healthy eating and creating an environment that supports these behaviors are essential to reducing the burden of chronic diseases. Despite the proven benefits of being physically active, more than 60% of adults do not engage in levels of physical activity necessary to provide health benefits and nearly half of the young people 12 to 21 do not regularly engage in vigorous physical activity."

Although the health benefits associated with recreation and physical activities are important, outdoor recreation also provides visitors opportunities for a wide range of other benefits. Among the most important benefits visitors report they attain during their visits to Minnesota state parks are:^(20, 24)

- keep or get physically fit;
- enjoy the natural scenery and the smells and sounds of nature;
- help get away from the usual demands of life and release or reduce built-up tension;
- get away from crowds and experience solitude;
- expand understanding by experiencing new and different things;
- rest physically and feel healthier and exhilarated;
- learn more about nature;
- become more energized by experiencing excitement;
- maintain a sense of self-pride;
- express and nurture spiritual values;
- build self reliance by doing things my own way; and
- foster family togetherness.

Social (Community) Benefits

State parks also provide social benefits for visitors and non-visitors alike. The benefits park visitors derive from their park experiences carry over into the rest of their daily life. The things they learn about themselves, their environment, and their companions, family and friends impact their daily actions and relationships. People who never even visit a nearby state park often feel better about their community because they identify with it as a significant landmark, and the potential of visiting it.

Residents of communities near state parks identify several social benefits they attain from the park.

They indicated that the park provides:^(1, 23, 25)

- opportunities to experience unique outdoor recreation opportunities;
- opportunities for local people to maintain an outdoor oriented life-style;
- a feeling of community pride, and that their community is a special place to live;
- a natural setting in which their community takes great pride;
- opportunities for exercise that improve people's health;
- a sense of security that the natural environment will not be lost;
- opportunities to foster a greater concern for the natural environment among residents;
- opportunities to gain a greater understanding of the area's natural, and cultural resources;
- opportunities for residents to interact with and learn from people of different cultures;
- foster family togetherness; and
- integrated and accessible leisure services that enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities.

Environmental Benefits

A variety of environmental benefits are also achieved by the strong preservation and education mission of Minnesota state parks. State parks preserve representative landscapes of Minnesota in its natural state for the enjoyment of visitors and opportunities for people to learn about and appreciate the wonders of our environment.

Some of the environmental benefits associated with the Minnesota State Park System are:^(1, 23, 25)

- preservation and conservation of various natural and unique ecosystems;
- enhanced environmental health of communities;
- increased support for environmental protection and rehabilitation in communities;
- develop an informed constituency for environmental issues by providing nature based leisure activities.

Economic Benefits

Minnesota state parks benefit local, regional and state economies. State parks directly generate about one-third of the money needed to operate them through user fees. An additional two-thirds is generated by indirect income through tourist spending. Indirect revenue is based on the amount that state park visitors spend, especially out-of-state tourists, that goes into the local economy. Approximately 20% of state park visitors are from other states.⁽¹⁰⁾ Park visitors spend an average of \$22 per person per day and overnight visitors an average of \$28.50 per person per day in communities surrounding the parks, accounting for \$196.6 million in visitor spending annually.⁽⁸⁾ This income does not go directly to state parks, rather it is seen as income and jobs generated for the state and local economies. State parks also aid economic growth and contribute to local and regional business and civic organizations. There are also many economic benefits associated with an active and physically fit work force. The opportunity for people to enjoy becoming more physically fit and mentally relaxed results in more production, less sick time, and a more satisfied work force.

Some of the economic benefits associated with Minnesota state parks are:^(1, 18, 23, 25)

- parks more than pay for themselves in direct and indirect income;
- health care costs are reduced because outdoor recreation is a preventive health service;
- the work force is more physically fit and productive;
- small investments in recreation yield big economic returns;
- businesses are more likely to locate and expand in communities near state parks;
- meaningful leisure services reduce the high cost of vandalism and criminal activity; and
- more tourism dollars are spent in local communities, which supports a more stable local and regional economy.

One aspect of public land ownership is the impact on the local tax base, because the state does not pay property tax to counties. This has long been a concern of local governments. The statewide average for real estate taxes is 1.5% of the assessed value of the land. The state has paid counties Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) payments since 1979 to compensate counties for tax revenue that would have been paid by private land owners. The PILT payment is either 3/4 of one percent of the appraised value of all acquired DNR land in the county or \$3 per acre, whichever is higher. This figure is similar to the amount paid by the federal government.

Part of the reasoning that the state does not pay the full amount of real estate taxes is that state land does not use the full range of services provided to citizens. For example, DNR land does not require the use of schools. Often the DNR also contributes to or assists in providing local services. Among these services are:

- state park road account funds are paid directly to townships for maintenance of township roads in state parks;
- state highway funds are available to highways that provide access to most state parks;
- solid waste fees are paid to individual counties;
- special assessments are paid for water and sewer;
- contracts with local fire protection and some enforcement; and

These payments and the benefits derived from state parks offset property tax revenues that might be lost from state ownership of land for recreational purposes.

Complementary Outdoor Recreation Providers

There are a variety of public recreation facilities across Minnesota. Each serves important but different roles in providing recreational opportunities for Minnesota residents and out-of-state tourists.

Minnesota state parks and state recreation areas have a different role than other outdoor recreation units. State parks and state recreation areas roles are defined in Minnesota Statutes 86A (ORA).⁽¹⁵⁾ Some recreation units have similar preservation mandates, and others have similar recreation or education mandates. The Regional Park System of the Minneapolis/ St. Paul seven-county metropolitan area has a similar role, but a more urban focus. Only National Parks have similar preservation, recreation, and educational roles to Minnesota state parks & state recreation areas.

Conservation connections linking recreational units are also needed. They can be very important for a broad variety of ecological and recreational considerations. Virtually every type of trail user desires more trail connections.

The Fig. 6: Complementary Preservation/Recreation Providers on page 17 shows which units have similar roles to state parks and state recreation areas. For example scientific and natural areas have a similar preservation role to state parks, but do not have the recreation or interpretation mandates.

State parks are required by ORA to exemplify the natural characteristics of the major landscape regions of the state.⁽¹⁵⁾ But if another agency with a similar preservation role such as a national park, or scientific and natural area already preserve a particular feature of an Ecological Community System (ECS) subsection, then the priority for

preservation within a state park is less.




The Complementary Preservation/ Recreation Providers Chart will be used to help determine the priority of establishing a new state park or recreation area. The steps that will be followed to use the information in this table are:

1. identify a potential state park or state recreation area;
2. identify the themes that could be preserved and the recreation opportunities that could be provided that are not provided by other state parks or state recreation areas;
3. identify which other recreational units in that ECS subsection have a similar roles for preservation, recreation or education; and
4. determine if the units with a similar role preserve the same themes.

If other recreational units with similar preservation, recreation and or education roles are meeting the needs now, then the priority for establishing a state park or state recreation area would be reduced. The results of this analysis will be used to help determine the scores for biologic and geologic representation criteria. Designation priority is summarized on page 39 Prioritizing Potential State Parks, and the details are in Appendix B - Designation Decision Process.

Fig. 6: Complementary Preservation/Recreation Providers

	Federal							State					Reg				
	State Parks	Nat'l Park Service Areas	Nat'l Forests	Nat'l Wilderness Areas	Nat'l Wildlife Refuges	National Wild & Scenic River	U.S. Army corps of Engineers	State forests	State Wildlife Mgt. areas	Scientific & Natural areas	State Historic Sites	State Trails	State wild & Scenic rivers	Metro Regional Parks	County & Metro Parks	Municipal Parks	Private
State Parks																	
Exemplifies the natural characteristics of the major landscape regions of the state. . . . to meaningfully contribute to the broad illustration of the state's natural phenomena:																	
Contains natural resources, sufficiently diverse and interesting to attract people from throughout the state:																	
Is sufficiently large to permit protection of the plant and animal life and other natural resources which give the park its qualities and provide for a broad range of opportunities for human enjoyment of these qualities.																	
State Recreation Area																	
Contains natural or artificial resources which provide outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities that will attract visitors from beyond the local area:																	
Contains resources which permit intensive recreational use by large numbers of people:																	
May be located in areas which have serious deficiencies in public outdoor recreation facilities, provided that state recreation areas should not be provided in lieu of municipal, county, or regional facilities.																	
Both State Parks & Rec. Areas																	
Interpret natural features that existed in the area of the park prior to settlement and other significant natural, scenic, scientific, or historic features that are present																	

 These units would also usually meet this criterion.
 Some of these units meet this criterion.
 These units will usually not meet this criterion.

Resource Preservation Needs

Natural Resource Gaps

One of the goals of the study is to determine how well the various landscapes of Minnesota are represented within the state park system. Under Minnesota Statutes 86A part of the purpose of state parks is to “protect and perpetuate extensive areas of the state possessing those resources which illustrate and exemplify Minnesota’s natural phenomena...”⁽¹⁵⁾ One of the criteria of a state park is that it “exemplifies the natural characteristics of the major landscape regions of the state, as shown by accepted classifications...”⁽¹⁵⁾ State parks need to illustrate and exemplify the natural phenomena found in Minnesota’s 25 distinct Ecological Classification System (ECS) subsections.

The natural resource gap analysis addresses this aspect of the ORA legislation. The resource gap analysis looks at what resources are found within the park system, compares it to what resources should be protected within the park system, and finds where gaps exist. Modeled after the National Park Service’s Natural History Theme Study and North Carolina’s Systemwide Plan⁽⁴⁾, Minnesota’s gap analysis consists of several steps:

- 1. Define resource themes within the categories of biological and geological resources.**
- 2. Identify how well each of the themes are represented within present state parks and state recreation areas.**
- 3. Identify which of the themes are found in each ecological subsection.**
- 4. Determine the significance of themes within each ecological subsection.**
- 5. Identify which of the significant themes for each subsection are not preserved in state parks or state recreation areas.**

Step 1: Define resource themes within the categories of biological and geological resources.

A complete list of resource themes can be found in Appendix C (available on request). These themes were developed with assistance from the DNR Section of Ecological Services, Division of Minerals, Minnesota Historical Society, and the Minnesota Geological survey, as well as staff from the DNR Division of Parks and Recreation.

Step 2: Identify the representation of themes within state park units.

Resource themes were ranked according to how well they were represented in each state park and recreation area. Themes were ranked as adequate, moderate, low or no representation, based on the quality and the quantity of biological and geological resources preserved in present state parks and recreation areas. These rankings were completed by resource specialists within the DNR Division of Parks and Recreation and the Division of Minerals, and are based on the expert opinions of these professionals. There are no state parks in four of the ECS Subsections; Littlefork-Vermillion Uplands, Laurentian Uplands, Toimi Uplands and the Rochester Plateau.

Step 3: Identify which of the themes are found in each ecological subsection.

Park rankings were then extrapolated into ECS subsection rankings. These rankings were used to assess how well resource themes are represented in the park system for each ECS subsection.

Step 4: Determine the significance of themes within each ecological subsection. This was done to ensure that a resource theme was considered for representation only in those areas of the state where it is historically found. For example, while there may be no prairie communities found in state parks in the northeastern part of the state, we should not expect parks to contain such themes because prairie communities are not significant in that area. Theme significance was ranked as high, medium, low or not applicable in consultation with staff from the DNR Division of Parks and Recreation, DNR Section of Ecological Services, the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Geological Survey.

Step 5: Identify which of the significant themes for each subsection are not preserved in state parks or state recreation areas. Areas with a high significance but little or no representation were considered a “high need” for representation. Areas with a medium significance but little or no representation were considered a “moderate need” for representation.

Cultural Resource Gaps

The cultural gap analysis was done somewhat differently from the Biological and Geological analysis. Due to the broad and overlapping nature of the types of cultural resources found in Minnesota, this analysis examines gaps in each ECS Section, rather than by subsection. Rather than assigning significance values for particular cultural themes, all themes are equally significant. The steps followed for the cultural resource gap analysis are as follows:

1. **Define resource themes for cultural resources.**
2. **Identify how well each of the themes are represented within present state parks and state recreation areas.**
3. **Identify which themes are not preserved in present state parks or state recreation areas.**
4. **Identify how many themes are not preserved in each ECS section.**

Note:

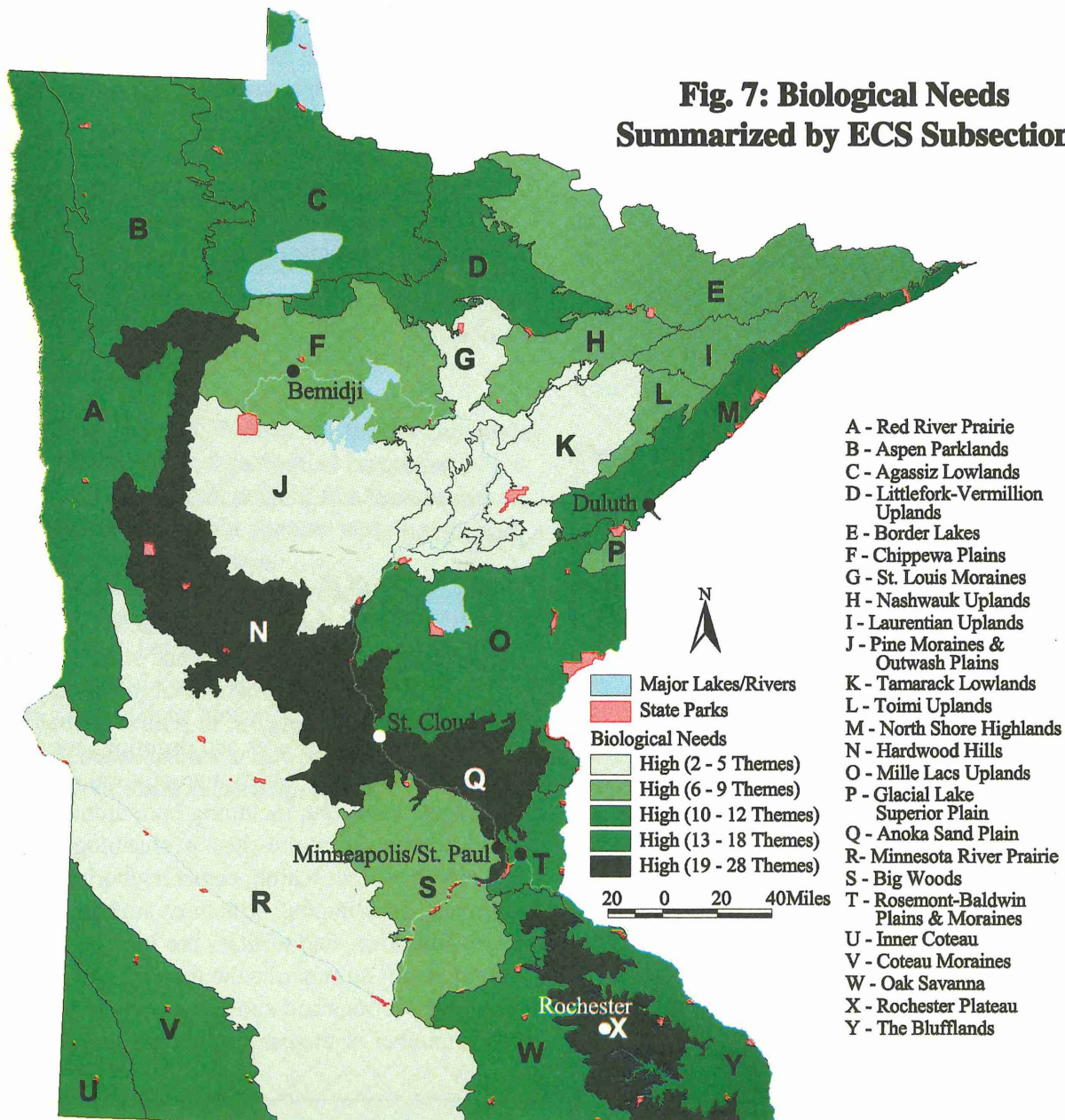
Detailed results of this analysis can be found in Appendix C which is available on request. Sixty-four biological themes were analyzed. Biological themes include wetlands, hardwood forests etc. The 26 geologic themes include such things as cliffs, relict coastal features and drumlins, eskers, moraines, and kettles. Thirty-two cultural resource themes were analyzed, including both archaeological and standing structure sites. Archaeological sites such as artifact scatter, cemetery/burial sites, trails/roads, and standing structures such as agriculture, education, and military are included. The following maps summarize the results, showing which ECS sections and subsections contain the greatest number of themes that are not preserved now.

Biological Theme Representation

At present, the state park system preserves representative examples of many of the biological themes across the state. However, not all themes are adequately represented in existing parks. Some biological themes are significant in several ECS subsections. There are seven biological themes that were identified as high or medium need for representation in over 12 subsections. They are wet meadow/fen; rich fen; mixed hardwood swamp;

mixed emergent marsh; lowland hardwood forest; white cedar swamp; and tamarack swamp. Preservation of these themes will help address preservation gaps in several ECS subsections.

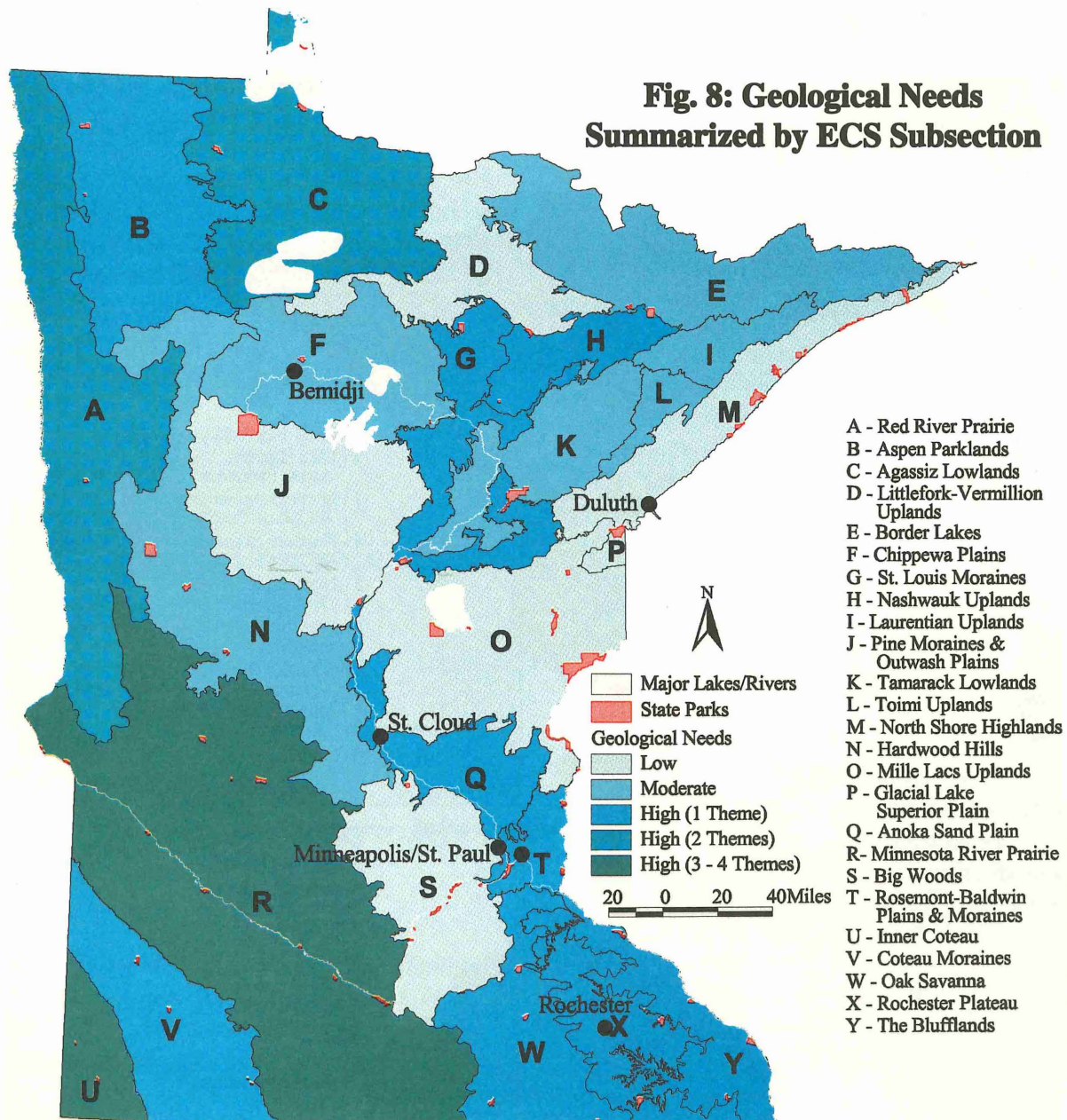
Some of the ECS subsections have many more high need themes than others, see Biological Needs Summarized by ECS Subsections Map. Three ECS subsections have nineteen or more needs identified for representation of biological resources within the state park system. They are Hardwood Hills (N), Anoka Sand Plain (Q) and Rochester Plateau (X) Subsections.



Geological Theme Representation

Many of Minnesota's geologic themes are preserved in the present state recreation system. Two geologic themes are identified to have a high or moderate need for representation in the state park system in six subsections: peatlands and inter-stream wetlands; and drumlins, eskers, moraines, kettles, tunnel valleys. The summary map Fig. 8: Geological Needs Summarized by ECS Subsection displays the number of geological themes that are

not preserved in state parks, or state recreation areas. The two ECS subsections with the most unpreserved themes are the: Inner Coteau (U) and Minnesota River Prairie (R).

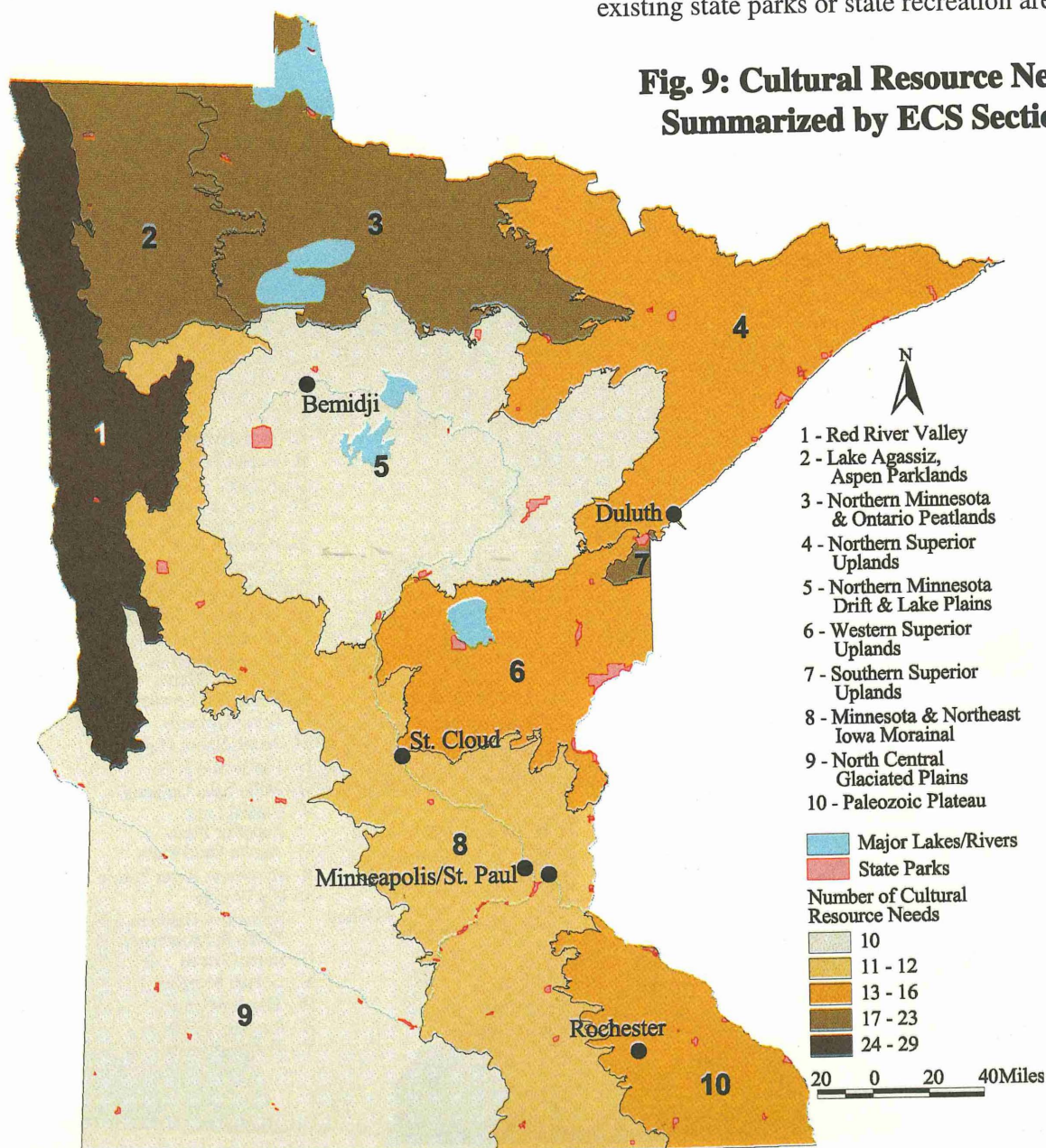


Cultural Resource Theme Representation

There is limited data available for preservation and interpretation of many types of cultural features. Information on standing structures is very good, because they are readily observable. Archaeological surveys are usually required to identify and evaluate cultural resource impacts prior to ground disturbing activities, such as road construction. Most of the information on subsurface archaeological sites are available where they have been disturbed for research, construction or land use

activities. This piecemeal approach to identifying archaeological sites within state parks, and the state as a whole, has resulted in an inadequate inventory. The assessment of archaeological sites represented, addresses those sites that are documented in the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office Database. This is the best statewide data available. This database is constantly changing, as more sites are added each year.

The Cultural Resource Needs Summarized by ECS Section Map below displays the number of cultural resource themes for each section not identified in existing state parks or state recreation areas.



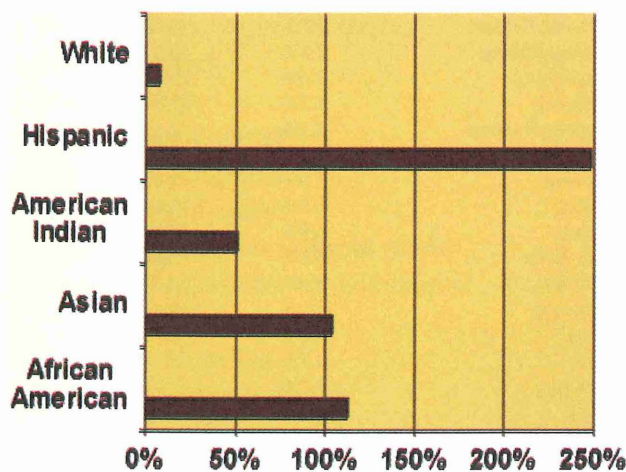
Recreation Needs

Population Trends

Minnesota's population will pass 5 million by the year 2020.⁽¹⁸⁾ During the 1990's Minnesota has had its slowest overall growth rate this century (6.3%).⁽¹⁷⁾ This slow growth is expected to continue through 2020.⁽¹⁷⁾ Urban areas will grow faster than the rest of the state through larger families and immigration. The state's main urban core will be between St. Cloud, the Twin City Metro Area and Rochester.⁽¹⁷⁾

The majority of Minnesota's population growth (80%) will be in minority populations.⁽¹⁷⁾ With immigration, higher fertility rates, and younger average age, the minority population in Minnesota will nearly triple (175% increase) between 1990 and 2020.⁽¹⁷⁾ This tripling will bring the minority population from 6% to 13% for the state. The majority of present state park visitors are white middle class families.⁽¹⁰⁾ To also accommodate special recreational needs of various minority groups will require additional lands easily accessed from urban centers.

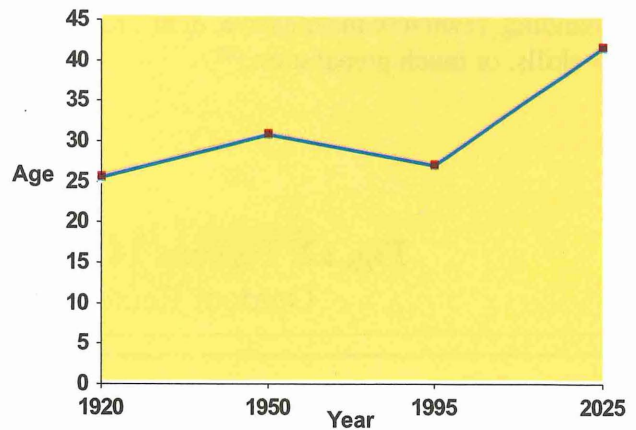
Fig. 10: Minority Growth



The population of Minnesota is also getting older. Persons 45 and older will increase nearly 70% by 2025.⁽¹⁷⁾ This increase will bring Minnesota's median age from 32.5 years old in 1990 to 40 years

old by 2020.⁽¹⁷⁾ In fact persons 65 years old and older will outnumber children in most counties, and children under age 5 will decrease by 11% by 2020.⁽⁷⁾

Fig. 11: Increase in Median Age



Most of the counties with major growth of people over 65 years old are near the Twin Cities urban core and the St. Cloud to Rochester high urban growth area.⁽¹⁸⁾ Much of this increased median age is because the largest group in the population, the baby boomers, will be over age 65 by 2025. The oldest of the baby boomers will be 79 years old. The baby boomers are in their 40's & 50's now. Many have: two career families; fewer children at home; more discretionary income; but fewer large blocks of leisure time.⁽³⁹⁾ They tend to vacation more frequently, but closer to home than other age groups. As they retire, expectations are that they will continue to be more active than previous generations.⁽³⁾ They are expected to have more free time, and they will need additional recreational facilities.⁽⁷⁾ State parks will most likely see more midweek and year round pressure by these active senior citizens increasing demand for recreational land near urban centers.

Recreation Trends

The Participation in Outdoor Recreation Activities chart below shows the activities that had the highest numbers of participants nationwide during 1994-95. This data was published in the US Forest Service's *1994-95 National Survey of Recreation and The Environment*.⁽²³⁾ The activities with the most participation were generally not physically demanding, relatively inexpensive, didn't require new skills, or much preparation.⁽³⁹⁾

Fig. 12: Persons 16 Years and Older Participating In Outdoor Recreation By Activity 1994-95⁽²³⁾

Activity	Percent	Number (in millions)	Activity	Percent	Number (in millions)
Overall Participation	94.5%	189.0	Basketball	12.8%	25.6
Walking	66.7%	133.6	Tennis	10.6%	21.2
Visiting a Beach or Waterside	62.1%	124.4	Coldwater fishing	10.4%	20.8
Gathering with Family	61.8%	123.8	Sledding	10.2%	20.4
Sight-seeing	56.6%	113.4	Saltwater fishing	9.5%	19.0
Picnicking	49.1%	98.4	Hunting (total)	9.4%	18.8
Outdoor Sports Event	47.5%	95.2	Water Skiing	8.9%	17.8
Visiting a Nature Center	46.4%	93.0	Downhill Skiing	8.4%	16.8
Swimming/pool	44.2%	88.5	Catch and Release	7.7%	15.4
Visit a Historic Site	44.1%	88.3	Floating, Rafting	7.6%	15.2
Swimming/non-pool	39.0%	78.1	Backpacking	7.6%	15.2
Yard Games	36.9%	73.9	Snorkeling	7.2%	14.4
Visiting a Visitor Center	34.6%	69.4	Big game Hunting	7.1%	14.2
Wildlife Viewing	31.2%	62.5	Horseback Riding	7.1%	14.2
Boating (total)	30.0%	60.1	Canoeing	7.0%	14.0
Fishing (total)	29.1%	58.3	Baseball	6.8%	13.6
Studying Nature near Water	27.6%	55.3	Football	6.8%	13.6
Bird-Watching	27.0%	54.1	Small game	6.5%	13.0
Camping (total)	26.8%	53.7	Handball	5.6%	11.2
Running/Jogging	26.2%	52.5	Ice-skating	5.2%	10.4
Outdoor Team Sports	24.7%	49.5	Sailing	4.8%	9.6
Freshwater Fishing	24.4%	48.9	Soccer	4.7%	9.4
Hiking	23.8%	47.7	Jet Skiing	4.7%	9.4
Motor-boating	23.4%	46.9	Caving	4.7%	9.4
Outdoor Concert	20.7%	41.5	Anadromous Fishing	4.5%	9.0
Developed Area Camping	20.7%	41.5	Mountain Climbing	4.5%	9.0
Warmwater fishing	20.4%	40.9	Rowing	4.2%	8.4
Snow and Ice Activities	19.4%	38.9	Rock Climbing	3.7%	7.4
Visit a Prehistoric Site	17.4%	34.9	Snowmobiling	3.5%	7.0
Golf	14.8%	29.6	Cross-Country Skiing	3.3%	6.6
Volleyball	14.4%	28.8	Orienteering	2.4%	4.8
Primitive Area	14.0%	28.0	Migratory Bird Hunting	2.1%	4.2
Off-Road Driving	13.9%	27.8	Kayaking	1.3%	2.6
Fish Viewing	13.7%	27.4	Surfing	1.3%	2.6
Bicycling	13.6%	27.3	Sailboarding/windsurfing	1.1%	2.2
Softball	13.1%	26.2	Snowboarding	.8%	1.6

The 1998 Minnesota State Park Summer Visitor Survey asked: "What sorts of facilities, services or features should be in state parks?"⁽¹¹⁾ Because it was a summer only survey, fall and winter activities received a lower positive response than if fall or winter visitors had also been surveyed. The results of this question supports the expectation that participation in relatively less strenuous activities will continue to grow in Minnesota.

The majority of respondents indicated a preference for low impact nature-oriented types of recreation facilities and services, as indicated in the top thirteen categories. Those facilities that primarily serve smaller user groups, or require more intense development generally received less support.⁽¹¹⁾

Fig. 13: Facilities, Services or Features That Should Be in State Parks⁽¹¹⁾

Facilities, Services Or Features	Yes + Definitely Yes	Or Features	Definitely Yes
Hiking trails	96.6%	Cross-country ski trails	54.4%
Native plants and animals	92.9%	Bike rentals	51.8%
Clean waterways	92.0%	Non-motorized lakes	48.6%
Natural recreation areas	89.6%	Paved roads	47.6%
Natural vistas	88.1%	Fishing piers	47.4%
Visitor/trail centers	85.1%	Boat/canoe camps	46.6%
Self-guided interpretive trails	79.3%	Dump Stations	45.6%
Picnic shelters	78.1%	Snowshoe trails	45.4%
Flush toilets	73.6%	Boat accesses	44.8%
Undeveloped shorelines	72.9%	Backpack campsites	41.7%
Naturalist programs	72.1%	Electric hookups	40.7%
Interpretive displays	70.5%	Group camps	40.4%
Undeveloped areas without roads	68.3%	Mountain-bike trails	37.6%
Handicap accessible trails/facilities	67.3%	Narrow trails	36.9%
Showers	66.1%	Camper cabins	30.8%
Drive-in campsites	65.2%	Snack bar/vending machines	28.9%
Swimming beaches/pools	64.6%	Skate-ski trails	28.5%
Historic sites	64.5%	Gift shop(s)	26.7%
Surfaced trails for hiking/biking	63.4%	Motorized lakes	22.3%
Scenic drives	61.6%	In-line skate trails	22.1%
Canoe/boat rentals	59.0%	Horse trails	21.8%
Playgrounds	57.3%	Snowmobile trails	12.6%
Facilities, Services	Yes +	Horse camps	12.3%

The 1998 survey also asked if visitors saw a need for new Minnesota state parks in the next 25 years. Many people responded 'don't know'. Of those who felt they had sufficient knowledge to respond 'yes' or 'no', 84% of Minnesota users responded 'yes'. More of the out-of-state respondents answered 'don't know' than Minnesota residents.⁽¹¹⁾

When asked what criteria they thought should be used to determine if an area should be designated as a new Minnesota State Park, over one-half of the visitors indicated five criteria were most important. These are:⁽¹¹⁾

Scenic Beauty	95.5%
Contains quality natural resources	64.0%
Opportunity for environmental ed.	63.1%
Located on a lake or river	57.6%
Contains rare plant / animal species	50.4%

Park visitors were also asked to identify how important it was for them to have opportunities to obtain various experiences and benefits. The following list indicates the percent of respondents who indicated that a particular experience or benefit from state parks was very important to them ⁽¹¹⁾.

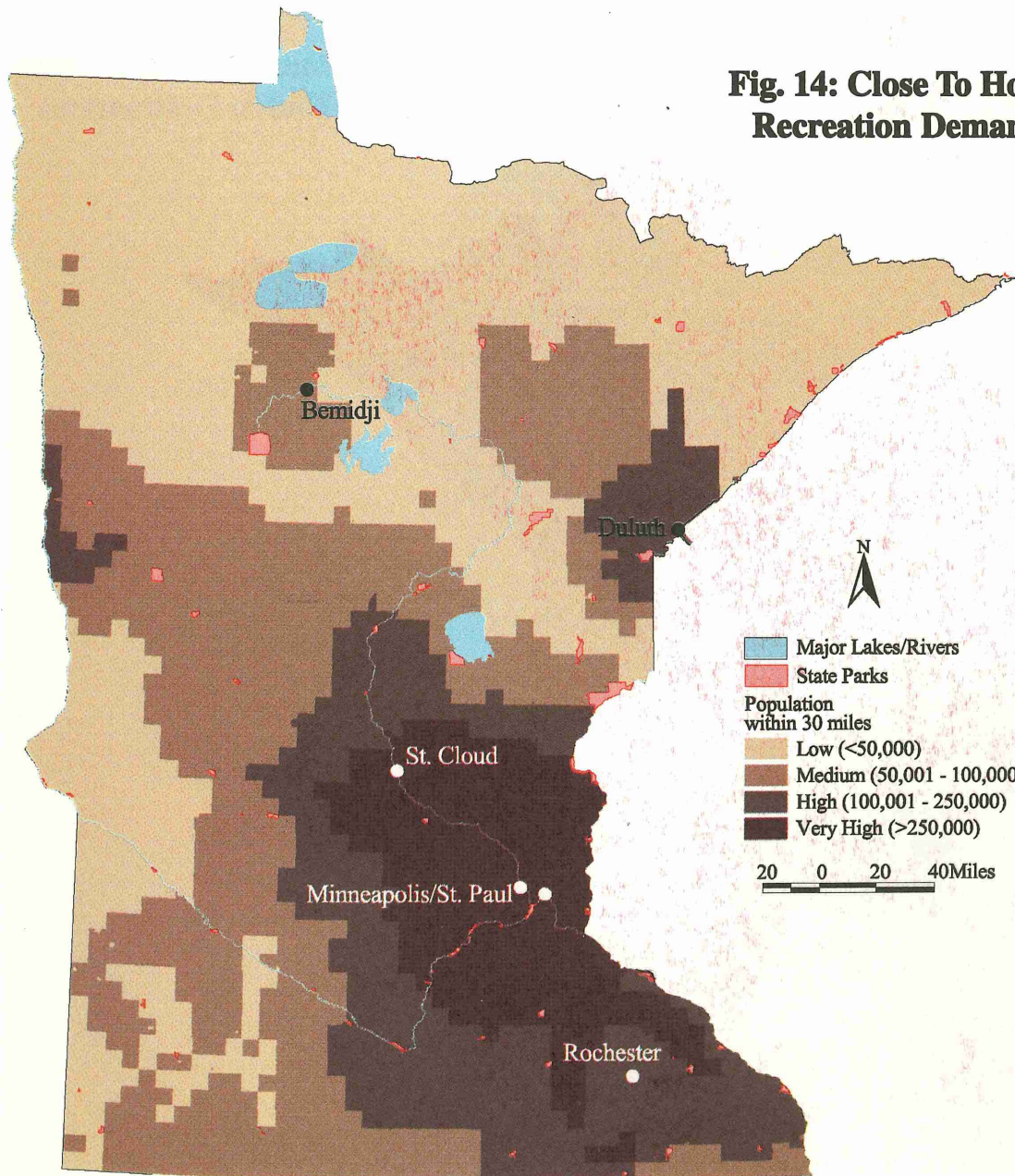
Enjoy natural scenery	70.0%
Enjoy smells and sounds of nature	59.9%
Experience fresh, clean air	58.4%
Get away from life's usual demands	57.5%
Spend leisure time with family	55.8%
Get away from crowds	52.6%
Experience silence and quiet	47.6%
View wildlife	44.9%
Feel connected with nature	44.6%
Rest mentally	42.4%
Feel healthier	38.1%
Explore and discover new things	37.5%
Experience a feeling of wildness	37.4%
Experience dark night skies	37.3%
Enjoy different experiences	36.9%
Learn more about nature	34.9%

Considering this list of very important experience and benefit opportunities, it is clear that state parks need to continue to provide large natural areas that allow people the opportunity to reconnect with nature and step out of their normal daily lives.

Private campground owners explained that many private and municipal campgrounds are changing to year-round or summer long campsite rental. This trend will increase the need for short term campsites, and the land base to accommodate them.

Close to Home Recreation Demand

Where people live has a big impact on where they recreate. Previous surveys show that over two thirds of Minnesotans travel less than 30 miles for day-use recreation.⁽¹⁰⁾ This map depicts the amount of people who will live within 30 miles of any particular location in Minnesota in the year 2025.⁽¹⁸⁾ The darker areas represent the areas within 30 miles of the most densely populated areas and therefore the areas with higher demand for recreational opportunities from their primary residences.

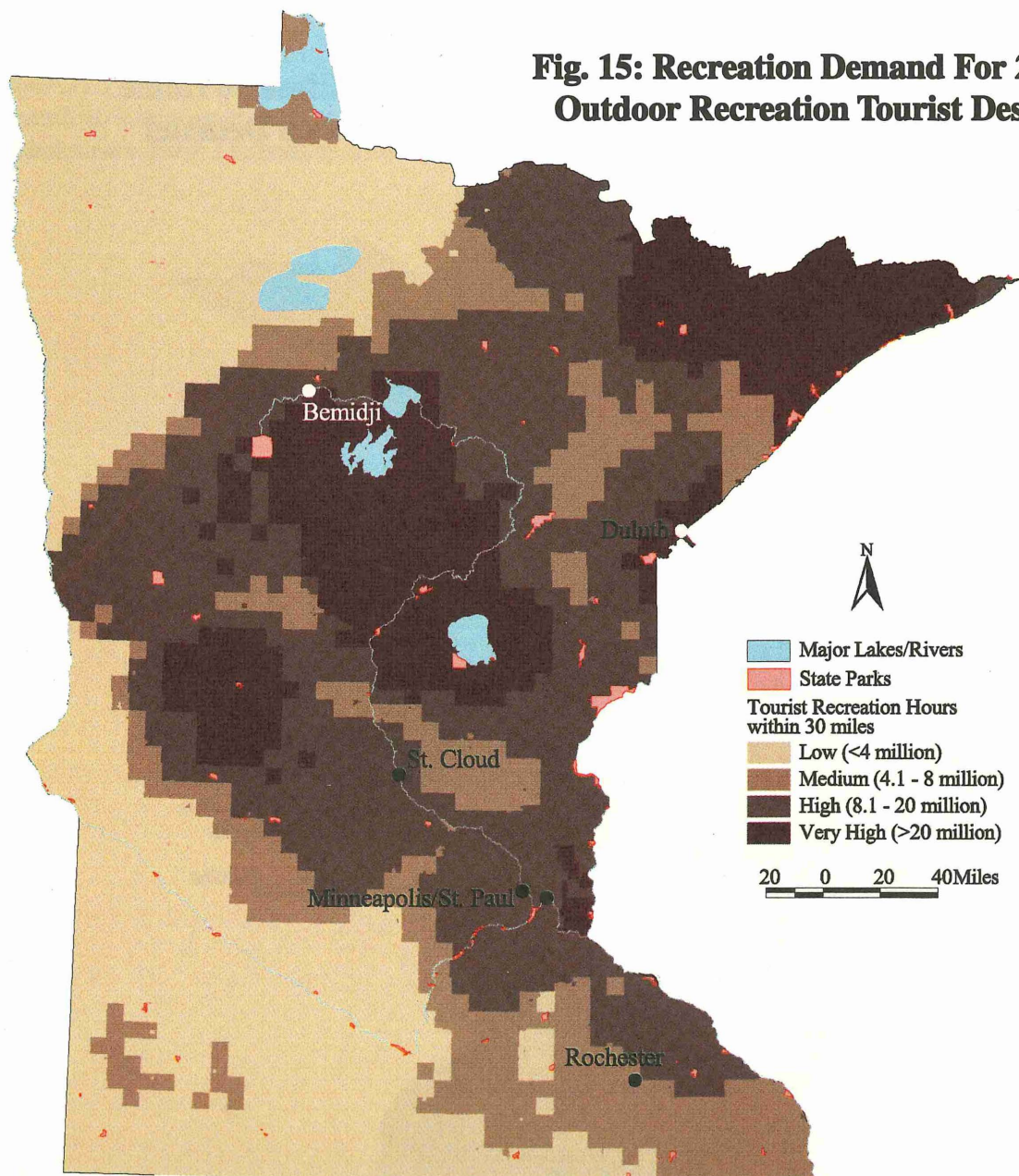


Outdoor Recreation Demand From Tourist Destinations

Another high recreation demand area is within 30 miles of tourist destinations.⁽¹⁰⁾ While on vacation people tend to take day trips to recreation areas within 30 miles of their primary destination.⁽¹⁰⁾ Tourist destinations in Minnesota were identified through Minnesota's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Surveys For Residents In 1985-86.⁽⁸⁾ Detailed analysis of tourist travel patterns have not been done since,

but general locations identified annually by the Minnesota Office of Tourism indicate that the major direction of the older survey is still valid. Areas of the state with a large number of recreational sites are more likely to have a higher demand for recreation near those particular sites. The Recreation Demand For 2025 From Outdoor Recreation Tourist Destinations Map identifies those areas of Minnesota that are within 30 miles of the state's major outdoor recreation tourist destinations. The darkest areas (Very High) are within 30 miles of over 20 million outdoor recreation tourist destinations.

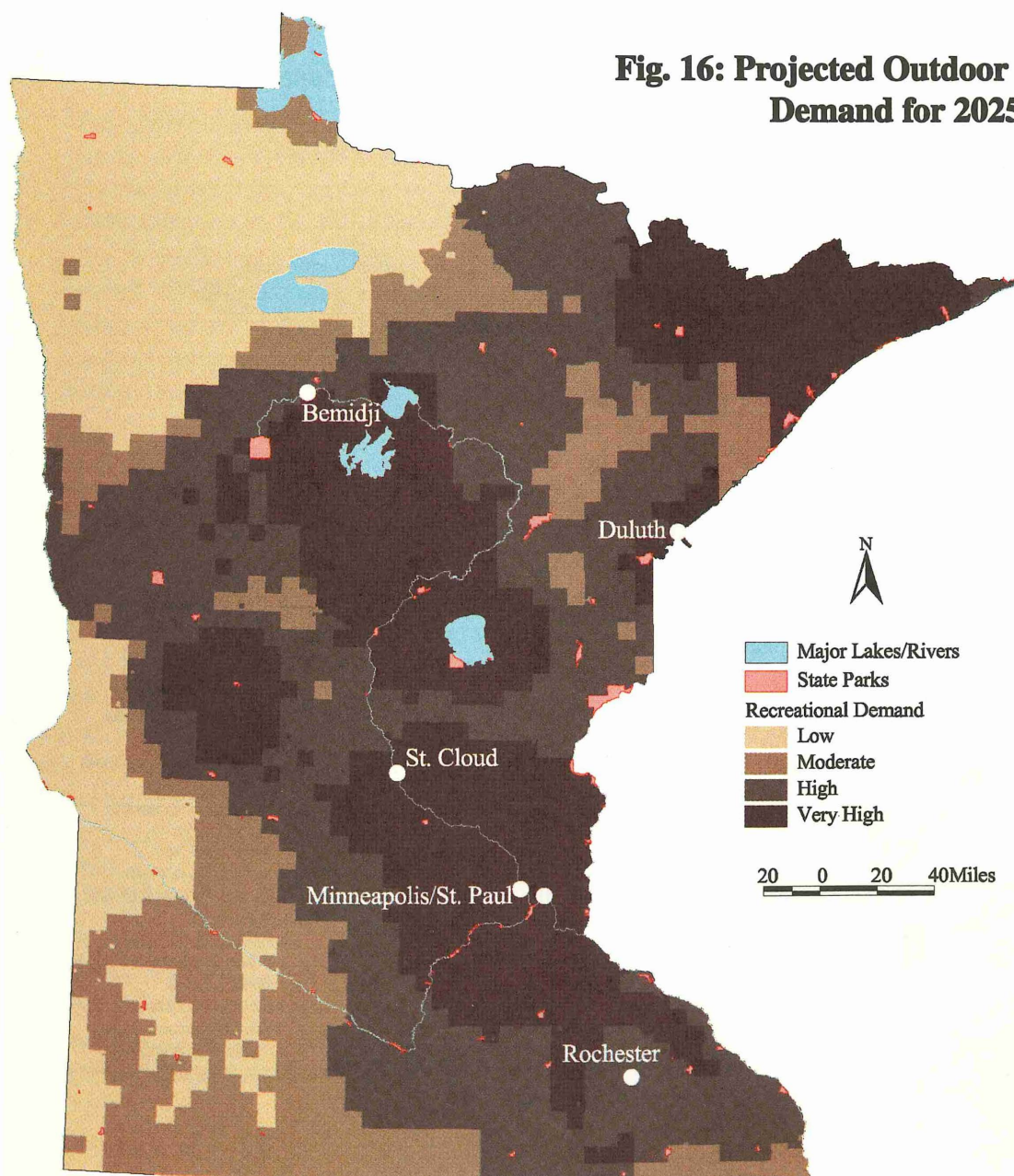
Fig. 15: Recreation Demand For 2025 From Outdoor Recreation Tourist Destinations



Outdoor Recreation Demand for 2025

To demonstrate where the future demand for day-use recreation is, the population data from Fig. 14 page 27 is combined with the tourist destination data from Fig. 15 page 28 to show future recreational demand in Minnesota. Combining the data in this way indicates both areas frequented by outdoor recreation tourists and those that have a high population density. These areas will potentially have the highest demand for recreation.

The areas of Minnesota with the highest demand have the darkest color on the Projected Recreation Demand for 2025 Map below. This assessment of future demand adjusts for projected changes in population but doesn't project new recreational use patterns. Minor adjustments may be needed in the future to reflect new outdoor recreation travel patterns.

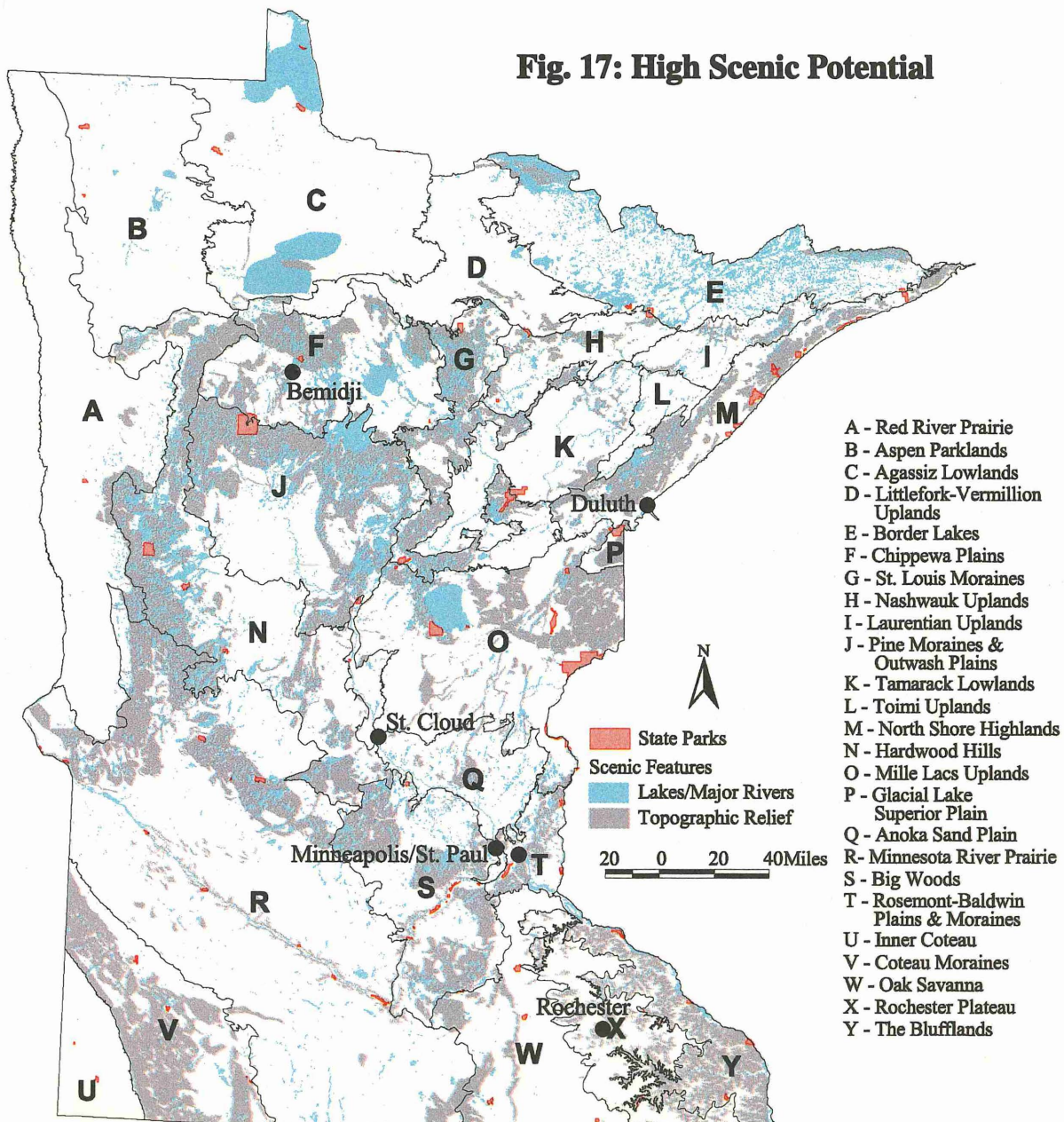


High Scenic Potential

Park visitors identified scenic quality as the most important criteria to use when selecting future state parks. Ninety-five percent of respondents identified scenic beauty as one of the criteria to use. There are a variety of factors that together create scenic beauty. Varied topography and water are two features accepted by most people as adding to the scenic quality of an area.⁽³⁷⁾ The following map depicts areas of Minnesota with the most varied topography and water features. State parks located in these areas are more likely to offer areas with

high scenic potential. The actual assessment of scenic quality is so dependant on detail characteristics that a final assessment can only be made on site as potential state parks or state recreation areas are identified.

Fig. 17: High Scenic Potential



Environmental Education Needs

Interpretive Services

The interpretive service program in Minnesota state parks began in 1941 through the WPA program, when guide services were offered at Itasca State Park. The program lasted for one summer and was shut down for World War II. In 1947, Walter Breckenridge, from the Bell Museum, negotiated an agreement for the Bell Museum to run interpretive programs in several state parks. This arrangement lasted until 1960, when Minnesota state parks began their own interpretive services programs.

Interpretation of Minnesota's resources is mandated in ORA.⁽¹⁵⁾ The act states:

"State parks shall be administered by the Commissioner of Natural Resources . . . to preserve, perpetuate, and interpret natural features that existed in the area of the park prior to settlement and other significant natural, scenic, scientific, or historic features that are present. . . . Programs to interpret the natural features of the park shall be provided. . . . Park use shall be primarily for aesthetic, cultural, and educational purposes, and shall not be designed to accommodate all forms or unlimited volumes of recreational use."

A Statewide State Park Interpretive Plan was completed in 1995 that established program priorities through the year 2001. In this plan, all state parks are evaluated by resources, audiences, and park use. The results are then tabulated into a rating for each park. This rating sets the priorities for funding and staffing for individual park interpretive programs. This plan defined the Minnesota State Park and Recreation's interpretive mission as:

"to provide accessible interpretive services which create a sense of stewardship for Minnesota's natural and cultural heritage by illuminating the changing relationships between people and landscapes over time."

As a division of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Minnesota State Park System seeks to:

- Promote increased understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources in Minnesota;
- promote protection of each state park and state recreation area's resources;
- promote public understanding of, involvement in, and support for the DNR and its Division of Parks and Recreation; and
- promote public awareness of critical environmental problems on a local, state, national and worldwide scope, as a major provider of environmental education experiences.

Annually, more than one million people participate in Minnesota State Park interpretive programs, nature walks, self-guided nature tours and park exhibits. Thirty-three state parks have visitor centers with informative displays for visitors. Twenty-five state parks have full-time or part-time interpretive staff. State park naturalists conduct interpretive and outreach presentations, environmental education and recreational activities, and field trips for park visitors. Programs focus on park resources and the development of stewardship ethics. Interpretive staff also offer environmental education workshops for teachers and other group leaders. Every park has interpretive displays. Some provide only basic information, while busier parks have information provided in a variety of media.

Park Visitor Views on Environmental Education

In the 1998 Minnesota State Park Summer Visitor Survey, public interest in environmental education was evident. Almost 50% of the respondents participated in at least one of four learning activities: naturalist-led programs, self-guided nature walks, visiting historic sites, and looking at visitor center exhibits. This number increases to nearly 66% of the visitors when combined with the responses for bird watching and/or nature observation.⁽¹⁾ Through their behavior, people indicated that learning is important to them.

Approximately 80% of the visitors reported that learning about nature was either a very important or important experience and benefit to them when visiting the park. Most of this tends to be passive learning rather than attending naturalist led programs. When asked what factors contributed to their enjoyment of a park, over 81% responded that informational brochures and maps were very important or moderately important. Similarly, 58% said that visitor centers were important for their enjoyment of a park. Interpretive programs and exhibits ranked as very important or moderately important for 39% of the visitors. While many people said naturalist programs should be in state parks, only 4.4% actually participated in naturalist programs during their park visit.

Present park visitors place a high value on selecting future parks with environmental education opportunities. Over 63% of visitors thought environmental education opportunities should be part of the criteria for establishing new state parks. Environmental education opportunities rated number three, behind scenic beauty and natural resources.

The survey results also offer direction for what type of environmental education opportunities should be offered in state parks in the future. When asked what types of facilities, services, and other features should or should not be in a state park for their enjoyment:

- 85% of respondents said that visitor centers were appropriate;
- 79% felt self-guided interpretive trails were appropriate;
- 72% felt naturalist programs were appropriate; and
- 70% felt interpretive displays were appropriate state park facilities and services.

As per "A GreenPrint for Minnesota, State Plan for Environmental Education", state parks are likely sites for day-use programs within 50 miles of each school and in populated areas, (at least one for every 100,000 individuals). It also recommended that curriculum be developed for teachers use to conduct their own off-school-site programs at each park.

Many environmental education and interpretation programs can be developed in a broad variety of situations. Some sites, however, offer special opportunities for interpretation. Once potential new state parks or state recreation areas are identified, they will be assessed for their exceptional potential for interpretation.

Decision Process

Expanding Existing State Parks & State Recreation Areas

State Park boundaries are established by the Minnesota Legislature. Statutory boundaries serve to identify lands appropriate for inclusion in the park. State parks are authorized to negotiate acquisition of land only within the statutory boundary. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) does not have the authority to acquire park land except from willing sellers. Inclusion in a park boundary does not limit what private landowners can do with their property.

Only the Minnesota Legislature can change park boundaries. All boundaries are legally described in Minnesota Statutes. There is a boundary bill almost every year requesting a change in the statutory boundary of existing parks for resource or recreational purposes. When an addition to a park is considered, the DNR Division of Parks and Recreation contacts private landowners that would be within a proposed boundary and ask for their documented support. Appropriate local units of government will also be contacted for their support. Without the support of the community, the Division of Parks and Recreation does not request boundary changes from the Minnesota Legislature.

For more details on the decision process, request a copy of Appendix B - Designation Decision Process from the DNR Division of Parks and Recreation.

Priorities and Guidelines for Expanding Park Boundaries

State park statutory boundaries often need to be revised to adjust to changing conditions. They are revised according to the following guidelines. They are generally in priority order, however, if for a particular location one factor is very important such as visitor safety, it might rise higher in the list. Large, high quality resources under some immediate threat are often the highest priority for boundary changes.

Guidelines:

- Quality/quantity of natural/cultural resources. Statewide significance is important as well as the potential to recreate high quality resources or reestablish sizable representations. Does the area offer the potential to preserve significant themes that are not now preserved in state parks;
- urgency/development pressure.;
- recreation needs, including planned facility development and trails. This might also include levels of use, or potential levels of use, or need to disperse usage;
- riparian lands (lake/river/stream frontage or wetlands);
- location/access/park operations (internal parcels, on roads, etc.);
- aesthetic/visual/scenic concerns;
- presence of unique features (e.g. Blue Mounds, Mystery Cave);
- visitor safety concerns;
- funding leverage (e.g. partners such as The Nature Conservancy (TNC) or Minnesota Parks and Trails Council (MPTC); or “bargain sales”); and
- potential for interpretation and education.

Deleting Existing State Parks & State Recreation Areas

Twenty-seven state parks have been deleted from the state park system over time. Most of these were very small units that were transferred to local units of government or other state agencies. Most, clearly belonged under different administration. In 1984 a subdivision was added to ORA which was designed to eliminate deleting any existing parks from the state park system. It simply states that any park that was a state park in 1984 will remain a state park.⁽¹⁵⁾

Use of Land & Water Conservation Fund money (formerly called LAWCON) can also impact the decision to delete an existing state park. If this federal aid was used in acquiring or developing a state park then the land must stay as recreational land in perpetuity. Almost every existing Minnesota state park has received some L&WCF/LAWCON funding for development or land acquisition. In an emergency, it is possible to make a declaration that it is to the benefit of the state to have this land converted to some other use. Lands converted must be replaced with other recreation lands of at least equal fair market value and similar recreational potential. Conversion requests must be submitted to and approved by the National Park Service.

Establishing New State Parks & State Recreation Areas

Only the Minnesota Legislature can create a new state park. The division can only negotiate for purchase of the land from willing sellers within the statutory boundary of a state park.

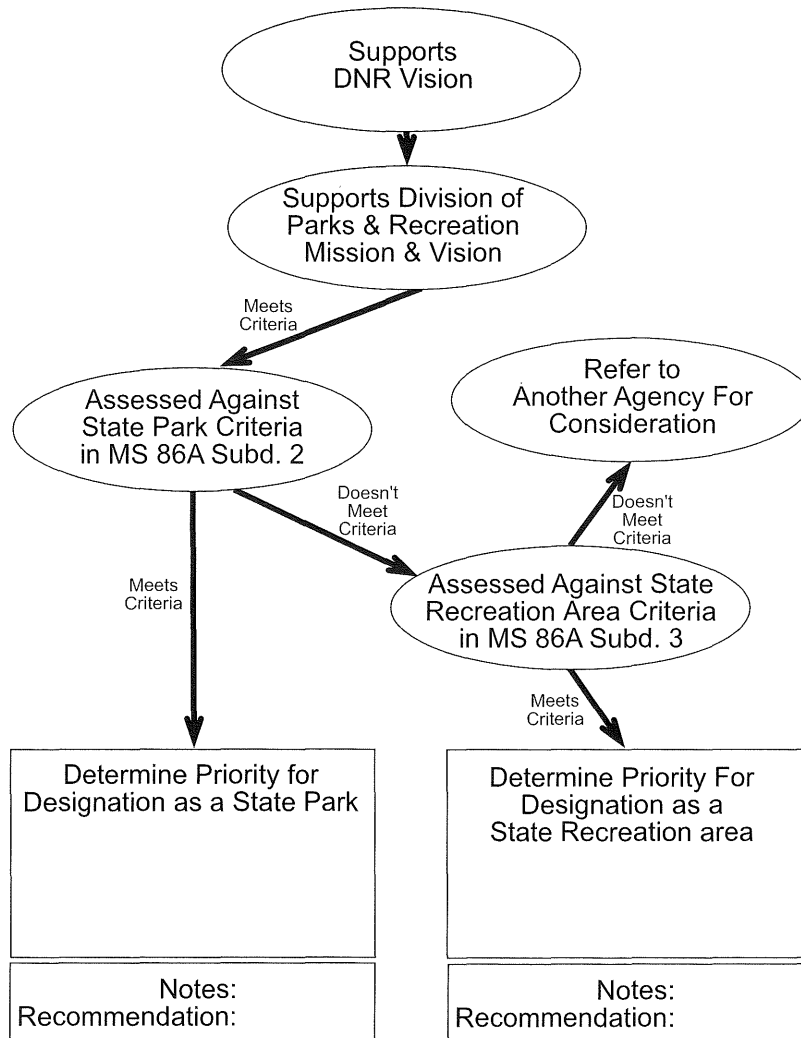
In the 1998 State Park Visitor Survey, those people who felt they had sufficient knowledge to respond 'yes' or 'no', 83% responded 'yes' to 'if they saw a need for new state parks in 2025'. Thirty-nine percent answered 'I don't know' wanting more information. Only 10% of those surveyed said there should be no new state parks in the next 25 years. In response to the question; "where should a new park be located?" most visitors indicated they wanted any new parks located near to where they live. Nearly 40% of visitors wanted the new park(s) in their home region, and another 30% chose a region adjacent to their home region. Overall, the region receiving the most new-park votes was the north central, followed by metro and central.⁽¹¹⁾

This correlates very well with Fig. 16: Projected Recreation Demand for 2025 map on page 29. This information is important, because public support is necessary to create new state parks. All state parks were established through the support of interested citizens working together.

There are many things to consider when assessing the relative value of a land area as a future state park. Fig.18: State Park & Recreation area Selection Process Summary on page 36 portrays a process that assesses the relative merit of a site to be designated as a state park. Applying these criteria involves asking a series of questions. A short description of the criteria and questions follows.

- **Supports Mission & Vision**
If the area becomes a state park will it support the vision of the Department of Natural Resources, and the Division of Parks & Recreation's mission?
- **Meets Legal State Park Criteria**
Does the area meet the criteria established in law, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 86A, Subd. 2 (ORA), for a State Park? If yes, then legislation could be sought to establish it as a state park. The state park priority criteria would further evaluate the area and help determine the priority to acquire this land as compared to other acquisition opportunities across the state. If it doesn't meet the state park criteria, then it may be evaluated against the state recreation area criteria in ORA.
- **Meets Legal Recreation Area Criteria**
If it meets the state recreation area criteria, then legislation could be sought to establish it as a state recreation area, but the recreation area priority criteria would further evaluate the area and help determine the priority to acquire this land as compared to other acquisition opportunities across the state.
- **Recommend The Area For Consideration To Another Agency.**
If an area does not meet the criteria for either a state park or state recreation area, then it may be recommended to another management authority for their consideration.

Fig. 18: State Park & Recreation Area Selection Process Summary



Mission and Vision Criteria

At the broadest level, establishment of a state park or state recreation area must help fulfill the DNR vision, and the Division of Parks and Recreation’s mission.

DNR Vision:

“To work with the people to manage the state’s diverse natural resources for a sustainable quality of life.” DNR has two primary goals: 1) to maintain, enhance, or restore the health of Minnesota ecosystems so that they can continue to serve environmental, social, and economic purposes; and 2) to foster an ethic of natural resource stewardship among all Minnesotans.

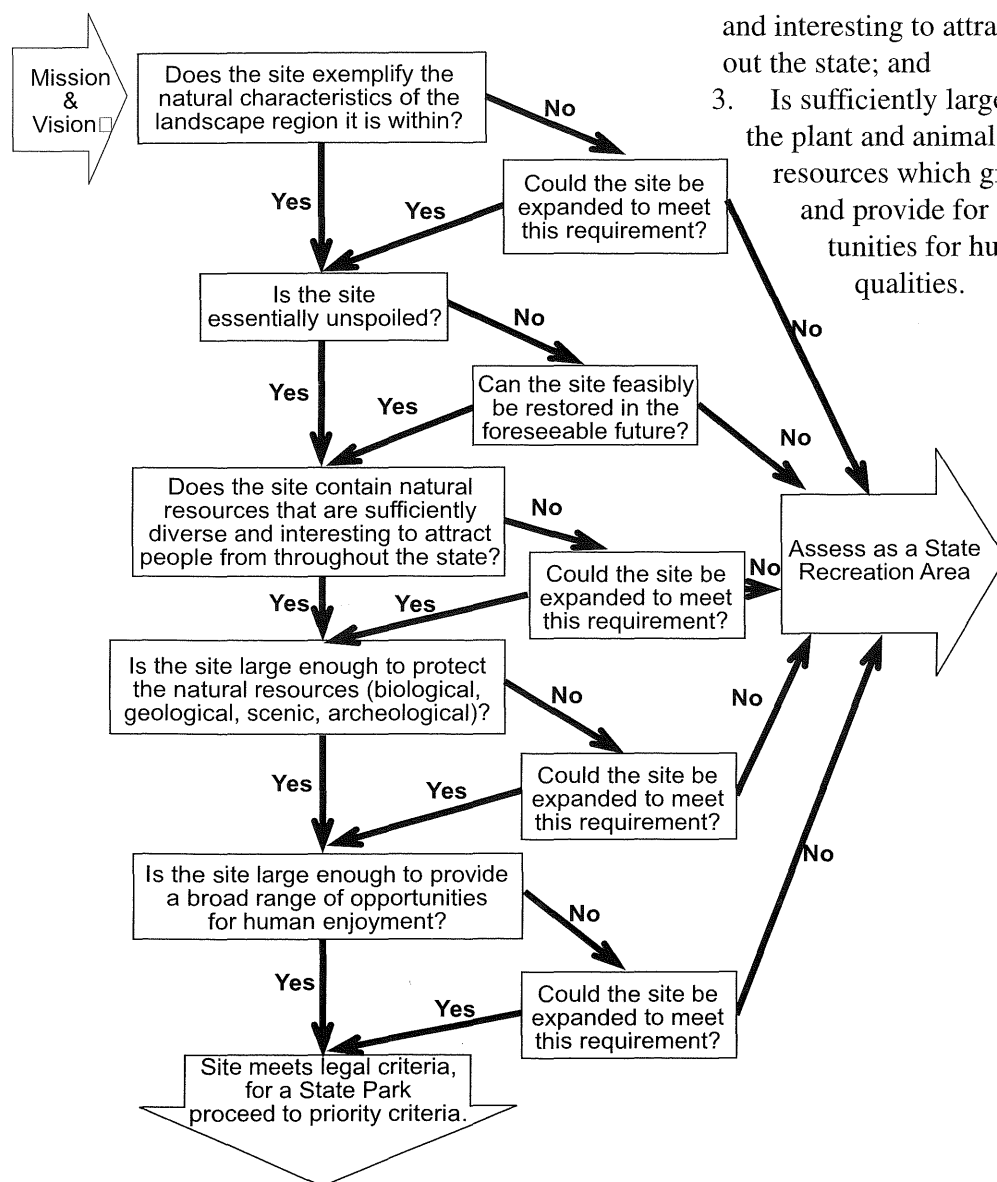
State Park Mission statement

“We will work with the people of Minnesota to provide a state park system which preserves and manages Minnesota’s natural, scenic and cultural resources for present and future generations while providing appropriate recreational and educational opportunities.”

Legal Criteria For State Parks

Fig.19: The State Park Criteria In Law flow chart graphically portrays the legal criteria for determining if a site is eligible for state park designation. The figure also links the criteria into a decision making framework. The ORA defines the criteria for Minnesota state parks.⁽¹⁵⁾ To be considered as a state park, an area must meet the criteria established in this legislation.

Fig. 19: State Park Criteria In Law (MS Chapt. 86A Subd. 2)



Resource And Site Qualifications

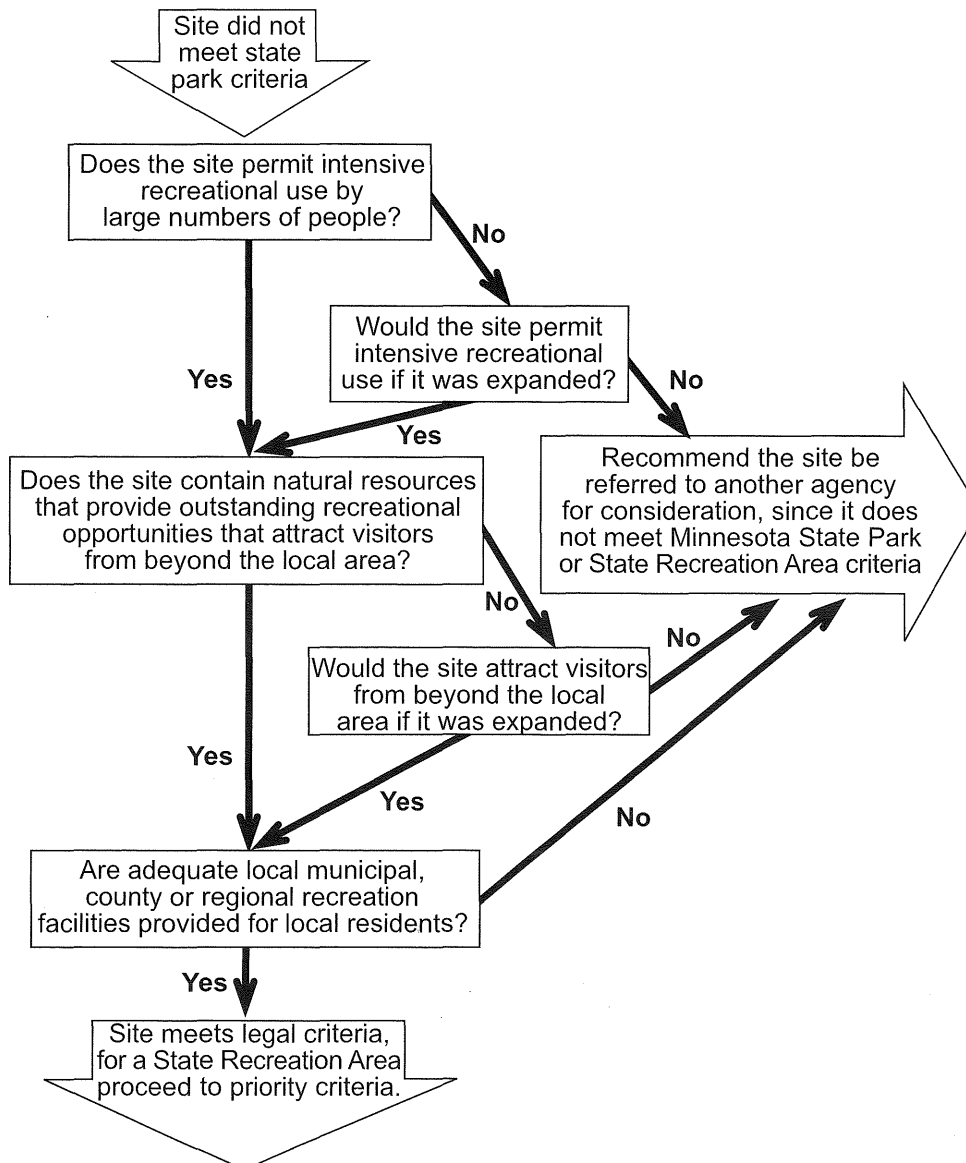
No unit shall be authorized as a state park unless its proposed location substantially satisfies the following criteria:

1. Exemplifies the natural characteristics of the major landscape regions of the state, as shown by accepted classifications, in an essentially unspoiled or restored condition or in a condition that will permit restoration in the foreseeable future; or contains essentially unspoiled natural resources of sufficient extent and importance to meaningfully contribute to the broad illustration of the state's natural phenomena; and
2. Contains natural resources, sufficiently diverse and interesting to attract people from throughout the state; and
3. Is sufficiently large to permit protection of the plant and animal life and other natural resources which give the park its qualities and provide for a broad range of opportunities for human enjoyment of these qualities.

Legal Criteria For State Recreation Areas

Fig.20: State Recreation Area Criteria In Law, graphically portrays the legal criteria for determining whether a site is eligible for state recreation area designation. The figure also links the criteria into a decision making framework. Minnesota ORA addresses the qualifications of Minnesota state recreation areas ⁽¹⁵⁾. To be considered as a state recreation area, an area must first meet the criteria established in this legislation.

Fig. 20: State Recreation Area Criteria In Law (MS Chapt. 86A Subd. 3)



Resource and Site Qualifications

No unit shall be authorized as a state recreation area unless its proposed location substantially satisfies the following criteria:

1. Contains natural or artificial resources which provide outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities that will attract visitors from beyond the local area;
2. Contains resources which permit intensive recreational use by large numbers of people; and
3. May be located in areas which have serious deficiencies in public outdoor recreation facilities, provided that state recreation areas should not be provided in lieu of municipal, county, or regional facilities.

Prioritizing Potential State Parks

The following criteria prioritize those areas that qualify as a state park under the criteria in law. State recreation area priorities are discussed in the next section. A site does not need to meet all of the following criteria in order to qualify for a state park or recreation area. Duplication of resources should not rule out a site for consideration.

Several factors are very important for determining if it is possible to designate an area as a state park.

- Landowner Support - Landowners must be willing to be included within a state park statutory boundary. They do not have to be willing to sell to be included in a statutory boundary.
- Citizen Support - Most state parks have been established because of strong citizen support. It is important to have both local and statewide support for a potential state park to generate legislative action.
- Political feasibility - The local units of government need to accept the idea of a state park, and local state legislators must support the proposal. The general political climate in the Governor's Office and the legislature must also be conducive to creating a new state park.

A description of these criteria and a scoring form can be found in Appendix B at the end of this document. A potential state park is evaluated on a 1-5 scale that indicates how well it meets each criterion. This score is then multiplied by a factor that reflects how important that criterion is. The scores for all the criteria are then added together to give a total that will be used to compare two or more acquisition opportunities.

General Criteria

1. Size
2. Level of threat
3. Aesthetic qualities
4. Economic benefits
5. Suitable infrastructure

Ecological Criteria

6. Biologic representation
7. Geologic representation
8. Significant atypical feature
9. High ecological integrity
10. Rare or endangered species
11. Significance
12. Connection or buffer potential
13. Potential for restoration

Cultural, Educational and Interpretive Criteria

14. Significant archaeological sites
15. Cemetery sites
16. Significant standing structures
17. Significant landscapes
18. Significant Events
19. Interpretive and educational potential

Recreational Criteria

20. Recreational need
21. Spectrum of recreational experiences
22. Trail or linear corridors

Prioritizing Potential State Recreation Areas

These criteria prioritize those areas that qualify as a state recreation area under the criteria in law. A site does not need to meet all of the following criteria in order to qualify for designation as a state recreation area.

Several factors are very important for determining if it is possible to designate an area as a state recreation area.

- Landowner Support - Landowners must be willing to be included within a state recreation area statutory boundary. They do not have to be willing sellers to be included in the statutory boundary.
- Citizen Support - All state recreation areas have been established because of strong citizen support. It is important to have both local and statewide support for a potential state recreation area to generate legislative action.
- Political feasibility - The local units of government need to accept the idea of a state recreation area, and local state legislators must support the proposal. The general political climate in the Governor's Office and the legislature must also be conducive to creating a new state recreation area.

A description of these criteria and a scoring form can be found in Appendix B at the end of this document. A potential state park is evaluated on a 1-5 scale that indicates how well it meets each criterion. This score is then multiplied by a factor that reflects how important that criterion is. The scores for all the criteria are then added together to give a total that will be used to compare two or more acquisition opportunities.

Recreational Criteria

1. Recreational need
2. Ability to withstand intensive recreational development
3. Spectrum of recreational experiences
4. Trail or linear corridors
5. Significance

Natural Setting Criteria

6. Natural appearing environment
7. Connection or relief potential
8. Unusual recreational opportunities

Cultural and Educational and Interpretive Criteria

9. Significant archaeological & cemetery sites
10. Significant cultural sites
11. Significant standing structures
12. Significant landscapes
13. Interpretive and educational potential

General Criteria

14. Size
15. Potential to reclaim/restore the natural setting
16. Utility
17. Distribution
18. Aesthetic qualities
19. Economic benefits

State Park Land Study Conclusions

Priority need to fill out the state park system based on resource gaps and recreation demand are:

- Of the 25 Ecological Classification System (ECS) subsections in Minnesota, four have no state parks. They are Little Fork-Vermillion Uplands, Laurentian Highlands, Toimi Uplands and Rochester Plateau.
- Three ECS subsections with the most biological themes that still need to be preserved in state parks or state recreation areas are: Hardwood Hills, Anoka Sandplain and Rochester Plateau.
- Two ECS subsections with the most geologic features that still need to be preserved in state parks or state recreation areas are: Minnesota River Prairie, and Inner Coteau.
- The Red River Valley ECS Section in western Minnesota has the most cultural resource themes that still need to be preserved in state parks or state recreation areas.
- Surveys show that over two thirds of park visitors travel less than 30 miles for day use recreation. There are seven areas of the state where people are more than 30 miles from a state park.

Additional important results from this study are as follows:

- State parks have a unique legislative mandate to provide a combination of three services, outdoor recreation, resource preservation, and environmental and cultural education.
- State Parks will be important recreation and preservation anchors in future conservation connections.
- The present land base of less than one-half of 1% of Minnesota will not be adequate to meet the demands of our society in 2025.

- State park visitation is projected to be a minimum of 9.2 million visitors by 2025.
- The main population growth will be in urban areas, the majority of which will be between St. Cloud, the Twin City Metro Area and Rochester. This area will have a higher demand for outdoor recreation opportunities.
- There is strong support from present visitors and schools for a state park land base near population centers that provide opportunities for environmental education and interpretation.
- Eighty-four percent of the present park visitors who had an opinion, felt that additional state parks were needed.⁽¹¹⁾
- The highest areas of projected Outdoor Recreation Demand for 2025 are in NE Minnesota, North Central Minnesota, St. Cloud to Seven County Metro Area to Rochester.
- The vast majority of people who came to the twenty public meetings held in 1998 on the State Park Land Study recommended establishing additional Minnesota state parks and recreation areas. Over 90 park sites were recommended for further study.
- There are a variety of personal, social, environmental and economic benefits that Minnesotans derive from state parks and state recreation areas.
- Park visitors want state parks to continue to provide natural areas that allow people to reconnect with nature.
- Most Minnesota state parks and state recreation areas were established through local support groups. The public needs clear designation techniques and processes to pursue establishing new state parks.

State Park Land Study Recommendations

The Major goal for this study is to:

“... provide for a state park system which will preserve appropriate representations of Minnesota’s landscape regions and meet future demands for state park resources, environmental education, and recreational opportunities.”

1. The areas of Minnesota with the highest need for new or expanded state parks or state recreation areas are those that have both high recreational demand and high need for resource protection. Figure 21: Areas of Highest Need map depicts the combination of several data layers:



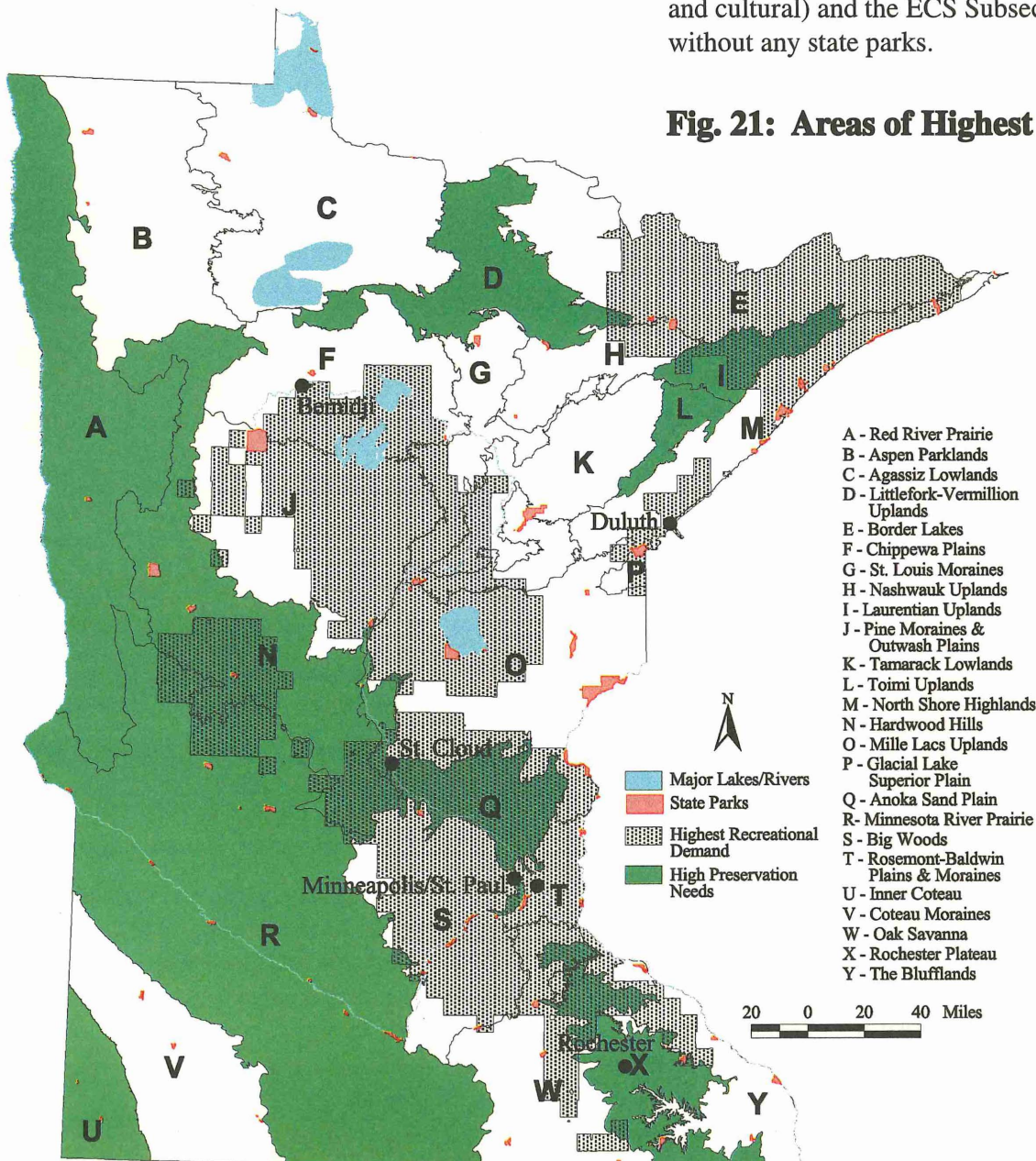

-  Black Dot Pattern: The area with the highest recreational demand predicted for 2025.
-  Solid Green Tone: The ECS Subsections with the highest needs from the three needs analysis (biological, geological and cultural) and the ECS Subsections without any state parks.

Fig. 21: Areas of Highest Need



 The areas with both solid green, and the black tone of the high demand area are the most likely areas to look for a state park that can meet several state park system needs. The areas without any tone do contain high resource needs and less intense recreation demand. Opportunities that arise in lower priority areas should still be analyzed to see if the specifics of a particular site is justified by the established criteria.

2. Work in partnership with citizens, other public agencies, and other DNR divisions to support conservation connections and identify potential state parks and state recreation areas that meet established criteria.
3. Establish additional state parks or state recreation areas so there is one within 30 miles of all Minnesota residents (see Fig. 4: 30 Mile Radius From State Parks & State Recreation Areas, page 5).
4. Assess the four ECS subsections without any state parks or state recreation areas: Littlefork-Vermillion Uplands (D); Laurentian Uplands (I); Toimi Uplands (L); and the Rochester Plateau (X), and search for potential state parks or state recreation areas that preserve the characteristic features of these subsections for public use, enjoyment and understanding.
5. Use the findings of this study and the decision process to assess major boundary adjustments in future state park management plans.
6. Use the designation process in Appendix B to assess all potential new state parks and state recreation areas.

How Can I Help?

Throughout the process of developing this study, people have continued to ask how they could help. There are many ways for civic minded citizens to get involved with supporting the Minnesota State Park System, and help to ensure that future generations are able to experience, enjoy and learn in the most beautiful natural areas in Minnesota. Supporters can:

- join the Minnesota Parks and Trails Council, a statewide support group;
- Become active in friends groups for individual state parks;
- form a support group to foster the establishment of a new state park; or
- speak to state legislators about new or expansion ideas for the state park system.

There are friends groups for over one half of Minnesota's state parks and state recreation areas. Often these groups were formed to help establish the park initially. They provide a variety of services across the state:

- volunteering time to help on special projects or special events;
- championing park needs with local communities, service groups and legislators; and
- helping to integrate their state park into the local community to better meet their needs.

People involved in these organizations help to support a variety of benefits for park visitors and their community, learn about park resources and management issues, and work together with a dedicated group of people to foster something they believe in.

Joining the Minnesota Parks and Trails Council is one way to work with over 1,000 other people statewide. This private not-for-profit organization's mission is to further the establishment, development, and enhancement of parks and trails within the State of Minnesota and to encourage their prudent use and protection. This organization has been very active in establishing new state parks and helping to expand existing parks when needed. They have also been able to move quickly to purchase land and hold it for resale or donation to the state.

Forming a new friends group to establish a new state park is very fulfilling. The need for additional state parks will continue to grow. These needs have been clearly documented in this study. The legal definition and priority criteria have been clearly laid out. Every state park has been established by groups of dedicated individuals who knew their part of Minnesota well. They were convinced that an area they know meets the criteria and should become part of a system of very special areas, a Minnesota State Park. There is no one recipe for success in establishing a new state park. The main common elements are a broad base of support, and tenacity. But the diverse benefits that are generated for individuals, communities and the state are significant.

Speaking to your legislator about how important state parks are to you, is very helpful. State parks compete with other organizations each year for funding for operations, development and land acquisition. State legislators must balance diverse funding needs based on the desires of their constituents. If they understand the priorities of their constituents, they can reflect them in the decisions they make.

Bibliography

- 1) Anderson, D.H.; Stein, T.V.; and Thompson, D. (1995, December). Community Benefits Study: Minnesota State Parks. Report presented to Minnesota DNR Division of Parks and Recreation personnel, Rochester, MN.
- 2) Bureau of Planning, Minnesota Department of Conservation. (1969, June). Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Plan - 1968. Saint Paul, MN.
- 3) Higgins, V.B. (1999). Building Towards the Senior Boom: Twin Cities Area Seniors and their Housing Needs, from Now to 2030, [Online] Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, Wilder Research Center. Available: <http://www.wilder.org/wrc/reports/sailrep.html> [8/9/99].
- 4) Hunt, J.B., Jr. and Howes, J.B. (1994). Systemwide Plan for the North Carolina State Parks System. North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources: Division of Parks and Recreation. Raleigh, NC.
- 5) Hutchinson, R. (1993). Hmong Leisure and Recreation Activity. In: Managing Urban and High-Use Recreation Settings (pp. 87-92). Green Bay, WI.
- 6) Jaakko Poyry Consulting, Inc. (1993, March). Recreation and Aesthetic Resources: A Technical Paper for a Generic Environmental Impact Statement on Timber Harvesting and Forest Management in Minnesota. Prepared for: Minnesota Environmental Quality Board. Saint Paul, MN.
- 7) Lime, D.W. (1990). Selected Trends Associated with Outdoor Recreation Demand. From: Outdoor Recreation Management Short Course. University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.
- 8) Minnesota Center For Survey Research, University of Minnesota. (1987, February). A Continuous Survey Of Participation And Expenditures In Outdoor Recreation By Minnesota Residents. Minneapolis, MN.
- 9) Minnesota Department of Conservation, Division of State Parks. (1939). The Minnesota State Park and Recreational Area Plan. Saint Paul, MN.
- 10) Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. (1988, December). A Survey of Minnesotans on their Attitudes, Perceptions and Use of Minnesota State Parks. Saint Paul, MN: Office of Planning.
- 11) Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. (1998). 1998 Minnesota State Park Summer Visitor Survey. Saint Paul, MN: Office of Planning.
- 12) Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Ecological Classification System. [On Line] <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ebm/ecs/index.html>
- 13) Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources and Trade and Economic Development. (1990). Minnesota's Outdoor Legacy: Strategies for the '90's. Saint Paul, MN.
- 14) Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Resources Commission. (1965). Parks and Recreation in Minnesota. M.O.R.R.C. Report #12. Saint Paul, MN.
- 15) Minnesota Statutes and Session Laws, Office of Revisor of Statutes, 1999 Edition of Minnesota Statutes. [On Line] <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/statutes.htm>
- 16) Minnesota Planning State Demographic Center. (1998). City and Township Estimates, [Online] Available: http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us/demography/docu_est.html [7/22/99].
- 17) Minnesota Planning State Demographic Center. (1998). Faces of the Future: Minnesota County Population Projections 1995-2025. Saint Paul, MN: Martha McMurry.
- 18) Minnesota Planning State Demographic

- Center. (1998). Population Projections: State of Minnesota, [Online] Available: <http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us/cgi-bin/da>. [5/18/99].
- 19) National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance. (1991). Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails and Greenway Corridors: A Resource Book. (2nd ed.) Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- 20) National Recreation and Park Association. (1998). Discover the Benefits of Parks and Recreation. [Brochure]. Ashburn, VA.
- 21) National Resources Inventory, United States Department of Agriculture (1992). National Resource Conservation Service.
- 22) Nickerson, R.G. (1998). Understanding the Personal Onsite Beneficial Experiences of Minnesota State Park Visitors. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.
- 23) Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission. (1995). Outdoor Recreation in the United States: Results from the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment [Online] USDA Forest Service and the University of Georgia. Available: <http://www.fs.fed.us/research/rvut/recreation> [3/4/1999].
- 24) Stein, T.V. (1997). Understanding How Rural Community Stakeholders Value and Benefit from Natural Landscapes. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.
- 25) The Canadian Parks/Recreation Association. (1992). The Benefits of Parks and Recreation: A Catalogue. The Parks and Recreation Federation of Ontario. Ontario, Canada.
- 26) The Legislative Manual for the State of Minnesota. (1901). The Pioneer Press Co. St. Paul, MN: Peter E. Hanson, Secretary of State.
- 27) The Legislative Manual for the State of Minnesota. (1911). Harrison and Smith Co. Minneapolis, MN: Julius A. Schmahl, Secretary of State.
- 28) The Legislative Manual for the State of Minnesota. (1921). Harrison and Smith Co. Minneapolis, MN: Julius A. Schmahl, Secretary of State.
- 29) The Legislative Manual for the State of Minnesota. (1933). Harrison and Smith Co. Minneapolis, MN: Mike Holm, Secretary of State.
- 30) The Legislative Manual for the State of Minnesota. (1941). State of Minnesota, State Capitol-St. Paul, MN: Mike Holm, Secretary of State.
- 31) The Legislative Manual for the State of Minnesota. (1951). State of Minnesota, State Capitol-St. Paul, MN: Mike Holm, Secretary of State.
- 32) The Legislative Manual for the State of Minnesota. (1959-60). State of Minnesota, State Capitol-St. Paul, MN: Joseph L. Donovan, Secretary of State.
- 33) The Legislative Manual for the State of Minnesota. (1969-70). State of Minnesota, State Capitol-St. Paul, MN: Joseph L. Donovan, Secretary of State.
- 34) The Nature Conservancy. (1996). Land Protection Options: A Handbook for Minnesota Landowners. [Handbook] Minneapolis, MN: Allmann, L.
- 35) University of Minnesota Extension Service Tourism Center. (1995, Fall). Centerpoint: A Newsletter for the Tourism Industry, v.3, issue 2.

36) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1996). Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA.

37) U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. (1995). Landscape Aesthetics: A Handbook for Scenery Management. Agriculture Handbook #701.

38) U.S. Geological Survey, Environmental Management Technical Center. (1998, June). Upper Midwest Gap Analysis Program Image Processing Protocol. Onalaska, WI: Lillesand, T.; Chipman, J.; Nagel, D.; Reese, H.; Bobo, M.; Goldmann, R. [98-G001].

39) Wellner, A.S. (1997). Americans at Play: Demographics of Outdoor Recreation and Travel. Ithaca, NY: New Strategist Publications, Inc.

Addendum

A significant period of time passed between the completion of this study and its final printing. During this time two new state recreation areas - River and Big Bog - were established. These new state recreation areas were justified with the analysis from early drafts of this study. The establishment of these units has addressed several of the identified resource preservation needs, although they do not have a major impact on addressing future outdoor recreation demand needs because they are not located in areas that are projected to have high recreational demand in 2025.

Red River State Recreation Area (1,230 acres) will be a model of responsible and sustainable flood plain development and a gateway to Minnesota. At the request of local citizens, the Minnesota DNR joined efforts with the City of East Grand Forks, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and many other local, state, and national agencies to create recreational amenities in the flood prone area in East Grand Forks between the levees and the rivers. Recreational development will provide opportunities for camping, a variety of trail uses, fishing and boat access to Red Lake River and Red River of the North, and educational and interpretive opportunities. The campground will be built where over 300 houses were inundated during the flood of 1997.

Big Bog State Recreation Area (9,200 acres) is the last true wilderness in Minnesota. The southern unit (100 acres) in Waskish, Minnesota contains a campground, day use area, and a swimming beach on Upper Red Lake. The Northern Unit (9,100 acres) is six miles north of Waskish and contains extensive bogs with many unusual bog features and rare species of orchids. Board walks through the bog, and a visitor center are planned to allow visitors to view and learn about this rare ecosystem and its special cultural, natural, and scenic resources.

Land Study Recommendation #1 is: The areas of Minnesota with the highest need for new or expanded state parks or state recreation areas are those that have both high recreational demand and high need for resource protection.

With the addition of these two state recreation areas, many of the resource preservation needs are now adequately addressed in the Agassiz Lowlands and Red River Lowlands Ecological Subsections. In the Red River Lowlands Ecological Community Subsection there is some lowland hardwood forest now preserved. In the Agassiz Lowlands Ecological Community Subsection some resources identified as having a high need for preservation: open sphagnum bog, black spruce bog, white cedar swamp, peat bog, and lake beaches are now preserved. Of the high geological needs relict coastal features, peatlands and interstream wetlands are now preserved. Of the cultural resource preservation needs, extensive pre-European contact habitation sites and burial sites have been identified near the Tamarac River.

Land Study Recommendation #2 is to: Work in partnership with citizens, other public agencies, and other DNR divisions to support conservation connections and identify potential state parks and state recreation areas that meet established criteria.

Both these units were established because of the efforts of local citizens supported by other public agencies and DNR divisions, and both foster the expansion of conservation connections.

Land Study Recommendation #3 is to: Establish additional state parks or state recreation areas so there is one within 30 miles of all Minnesota residents.

There are several areas of the state where people are more than 30 miles from a state park. The largest of these areas that was not served by a state park is now adequately addressed with the addition of these two state recreation areas.