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- A Summary of the Upper Sioux Agency



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A Management Plan for Upper Sioux Agency State Park

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Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

A Summary of the
Upper Sioux Agency
State Park
Management Plan

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Office of Planning
Printed—November 1984

This document is a summary of the Upper Sioux Agency State Park management plan. All recommendations, both resource management and physical development, are included here. Detailed inventory data and specific instructions for implementing the recommendations have been compiled into a comprehensive management plan with technical appendices. These documents are on file in the:

Office of Planning
Department of Natural Resources
Box 10E Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

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This draft management plan for Upper Sioux Agency State Park was completed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Office of Planning, Park Planning Section, May 1983. Funding for the planning process was provided by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources.	

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 Document #1624G

Introduction

THE PLANNING PROCESS

In 1975 the Minnesota State Legislature passed the Outdoor Recreation Act (ORA). The intent of this legislation is to ensure, through long-range planning, the protection and perpetuation of Minnesota's outstanding resources. Also included in this legislation is the mandate to provide recreational facilities which are desired by the citizens of Minnesota but which do not compete with the private sector. The Park Planning Section of the DNR Office of Planning was established to formulate long-range resource management and recreation development plans for 82 state parks, recreation areas and waysides. Funds for these plans are appropriated biennially by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR).

The park planning process consists of six steps:

1. An inventory of natural resources, visitor use and existing facilities is compiled. Specialists from other DNR divisions and sections assist in collecting pertinent data. At this point the first public workshop is held.
2. Alternatives for park management and development are developed. A second public workshop may be held to review these alternatives and invite public comment. The alternatives and comments are then reviewed by the Park Planning staff and the DNR Division of Parks and Recreation.
3. The recommendation for park classification is made, the park goal is developed and the draft plan is written. This step culminates in the first interdepartmental review.
4. The draft plan is revised as necessary after the interdepartmental review. The revised plan is made available to the public for a 30-day review period, after which the final public meeting is held.
5. The draft plan is revised according to information received from the public review. The plan is then sent to the State Planning Agency for a 60-day review period. (This management plan was reviewed in July 1983.)
6. The plan is implemented by the DNR Division of Parks and Recreation.

AN OVERVIEW OF UPPER SIOUX AGENCY STATE PARK

Upper Sioux Agency State Park is founded on the historic remnants of the Indian agency which saw the last days of the Dakota Sioux as a nation. The park, established in 1963, is located approximately 8 miles southeast of Granite Falls and is situated on a bluff overlooking both the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota rivers. The present statutory boundary contains 1,280 acres, 1,066 of which are in public ownership.

Included within the park is the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site which is managed by the Minnesota Historical Society. One agency building is still standing and has been restored to its original appearance.

The wide, deep valley carved by Glacial River Warren, the Minnesota River's predecessor, provides an excellent view of the early geologic history of southwestern Minnesota. Some of the exposed bedrock in the upper valley is more than 3 billion years old, the oldest rock known on this continent.

With its broad floodplain forests and wetlands, wooded bluffs, remnant prairies and moist, forested ravines, the Minnesota River valley provides one of the last remaining major wildlife habitats in the southwestern part of the state. With much of the surrounding uplands under cultivation, wildlife species depend on the forests and wetlands along the river for food and cover.

Park facilities include undeveloped campgrounds, two picnic areas, a water access and 9 miles of snowmobile and hiking trails.

A SUMMARY MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Resource Management

Establish and maintain a cover of grasses in Old Fields 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10. (See Vegetation Management Map)

Maintain the existing grass cover in the areas where it is in good condition and no management is imminent.

Convert some of the old field areas to native prairie grasses.

Reestablish oak savanna in the areas along the ridge that were most likely oak savanna during agency days, as evidenced by old open-grown bur oaks.

Plant proposed development areas with suitable trees to enhance the recreational setting of the area.

Implement a program of prescribed burning on the prairie areas.

Monitor the effectiveness of the prescribed burn program in controlling the encroachment of woody species and undesirable non-native species.

Control noxious weeds in the park.

Remove dead and dying trees only in the major recreational use areas and along trails.

All drainage tiles and ditches not affecting private land should be located and plugged to restore original water levels.

Maintain a maximum amount of the naturally dead standing and downed wood.

Monitor the deer population in the park.

Request that the district SCS staff, in cooperation with the regional resource coordinator, develop and implement a stream bank erosion management plan for the park.

Cap off all unused wells in the park.

Verify through the Department of Health, that park wells meet health standards.

Take corrective measures to prevent staining of fixtures and encrustation of well screens.

Remove enough snags from the confluence of the Yellow Medicine to allow the passage of canoes upstream.

Field check proposed development sites for the presence of prehistoric or historic remains before any work is begun.

Identify and mark burial grounds in the park where appropriate.

Conduct research to document and locate all significant historic sites.

Recreation Management

Provide five temporary campsites at site G. (See Proposed Trails and Development Map)

Develop a vehicular campground at site J.

Expand the number of sites and provide electricity in the vehicular campground if future use warrants.

Construct a sanitation building with showers and flush toilets if future use warrants.

Develop a horseback rider campground at site B.

Develop a group camp at site J.

Modify the lower vehicular campground to accommodate canoe and walk-in camping and fishing.

Relocate the sliding hill from the present site to the end of the ridge in the east end of the park.

Develop a gravel parking area with a 30-car capacity and an overflow area.

Provide a winter shelter building approximately 20' x 25' and toilet facilities in the winter day-use area.

Plant the existing sliding hill with large trees to discourage use.

Modify the parking lot in the existing picnic grounds.

Construct a sanitation building in the picnic grounds if use warrants.

Expand and improve the picnic area near the water access at the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota rivers.

Improve the water access to the Minnesota River at the confluence of the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota rivers.

Continue to improve information dissemination at the park.

Promote the park statewide.

Develop a signed system of horseback riding trails.

Modify the existing snowmobile trails in the park.

Develop a signed system of cross-country ski trails in the park.

Upgrade the existing hiking trail system.

Include the locations of the archaeologic and historic sites on the park handout maps.

Provide two crossings of the Yellow Medicine River in the eastern portion of the park.

Develop a trail link to Renville County Park.

Construct a new entrance road.

Upgrade roads in the floodplain.

Interpretive Programs

Eliminate the interpretive building when major repairs are necessary.

Develop an interpretive booklet on the natural resources of the upper Minnesota River Country Landscape Region.

Develop three signed interpretive trails and several overlooks.

Develop an agency setting to portray the style and quality of life during agency days.

Develop a permanent slide tape program about the park resources.

Develop joint programs between MHS and the park's interpretive staff.

Provide a part-time naturalist staff person for this park.

Administrative Facilities

Construct a new contact station/park office.

Relocate the service area and construct a new storage building 40'x60', half heated.

Construct a gas/oil storage building.

Locate gas storage tanks underground in the service court.

Bury electric lines.

Remove abandoned building foundations and debris from the park.

Park Boundary

Acquire two parcels of park quality land, parcels A and B.

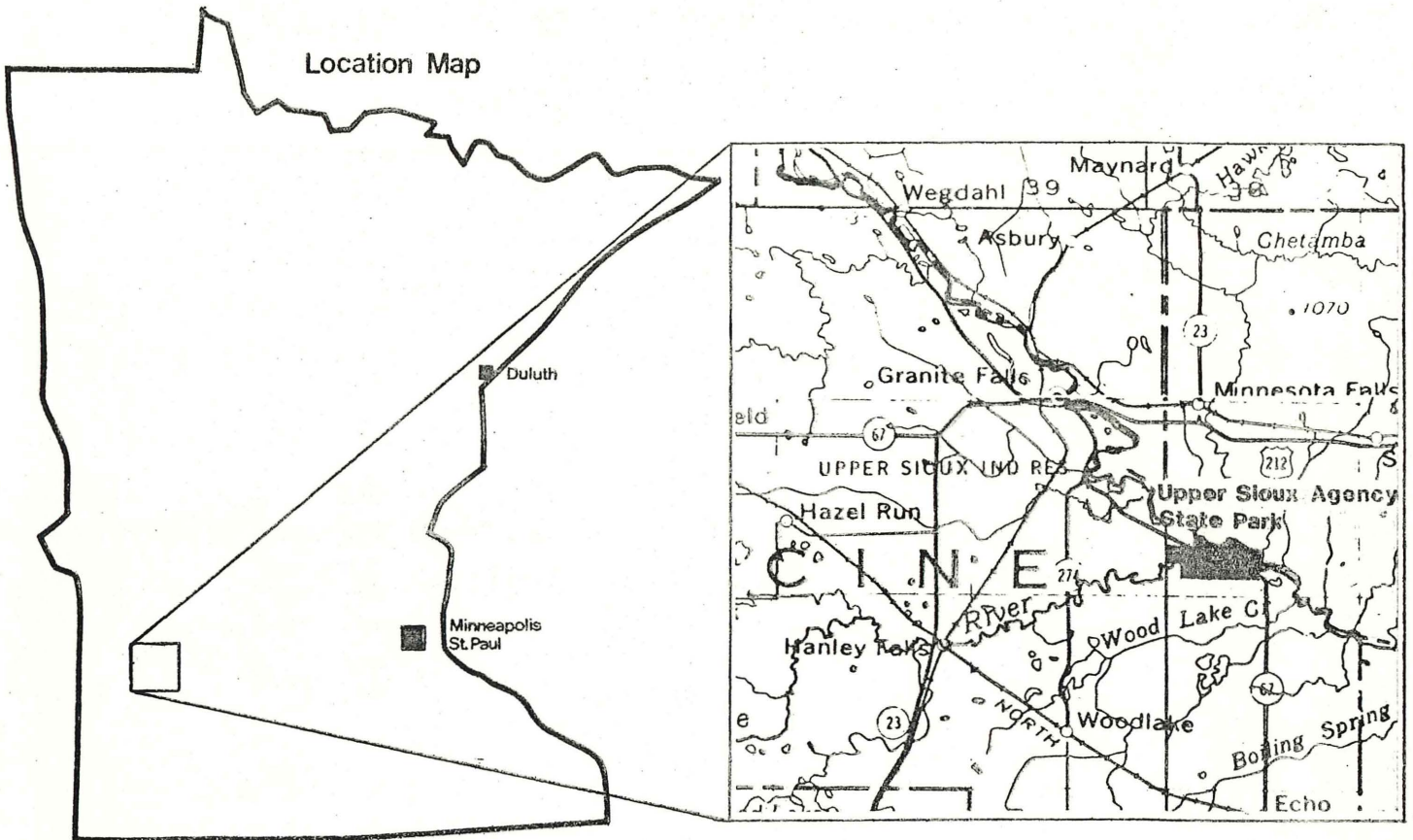
Acquire ownership of or trail easement on Parcel D.

Delete parcel E from the statutory boundary sometime in the future.

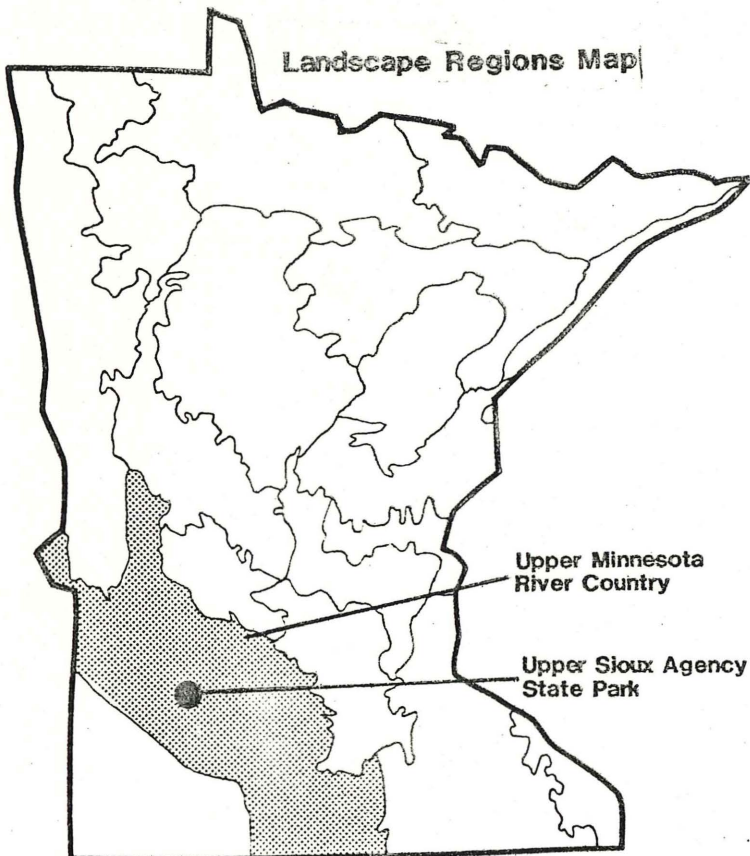
Consider parcels F, G, H and I for potential land exchanges or transfer to the Division of Wildlife.

Consider parcel J for expansion of the statutory boundary and for acquisition through land exchange.

Location Map



Landscape Regions Map



The landscape region system divides the state into 18 regions. These regions are differentiated according to the characteristic plant and animal life, landforms, and cultural patterns which existed before, during, and after European settlement. This system is a framework which provides information valuable in the planning of Minnesota's state parks.

Upper Sioux Agency is located in the Upper Minnesota River Country Landscape Region. This region covers 7.8 million acres or 14.6% of the state. The area is relatively flat and covered by glacial till deposits. Presettlement vegetation consisted mostly of prairie with river bottom forests.

Classification

CLASSIFICATION

There is a delicate balance which must be maintained when recreational facilities are provided for large numbers of people in areas of outstanding and often sensitive resources. Inappropriate development can result in irreparable damage to the resource. To help ensure this recreation/resource balance, the Minnesota State Legislature established, through the Outdoor Recreation Act of 1975 (ORA), a classification process whereby each unit in the state recreation system can be identified as one (or more) component in the system. These components are: natural state park; recreational state park; state trail; state scientific and natural area; state wilderness area; state forest and state forest sub-area; state wildlife management area; state water access site; state wild, scenic and recreational rivers; state historic site; and state rest area. Included in this legislation are general criteria for classifying, planning, and managing each of these components.

Criteria for a Recreational State Park Designation

DNR policy identifies four criteria based on ORA '75 which a park must substantially meet to qualify for classification as a recreational state park. Upper Sioux Agency State Park meets these criteria:

Possess natural resources, or artificial resources in a natural setting, with outstanding outdoor recreation potential.

Provide outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities that will attract visitors from beyond the local area.

Contain resources which permit intensive recreational use by large numbers of people and be of a size sufficient to provide for effective management and protection of the natural and/or artificial outdoor recreational resources, so that they will be available for both present and future generations.

Be located in areas where they appropriately accommodate the outdoor recreational needs of the state population, provided that they complement but are not in place of recreational service normally offered by local or regional units of government or the private sector.

Within the park's boundary is some acreage of historic significance. It lies adjacent to the existing state historic site (the Upper Sioux Agency). This area qualifies for classification as a historic site secondary unit within the park because it meets the following ORA historic site criteria:

- (1) Is the site of or directly associated with a significant historical event.
- (4) Has yielded, or is likely to yield, historical or archaeological artifacts, records, or other original data or information.

Recommended Classification

Because Upper Sioux Agency State Park substantially fulfills all of the above criteria, it is recommended that the park be classified as a recreational state park, with a historic site secondary unit.

The Goal for the Park

The goal for Upper Sioux Agency State Park follows the overall goal for recreational state parks as stated in the DNR policy:

It is the goal of the Department of Natural Resources in recreational state parks to:

Provide lands and waters which offer a broad selection of outdoor recreational activities in a natural setting and which may be used by large numbers of people.

The goal for the historic site secondary unit is:

A state historic site shall be established to preserve, restore, and interpret buildings and other structures, locales, sites, antiquities, and related lands which aptly illustrate significant events, personalities, and features of the history and archaeology of the state or nation.

Park Resources

CLIMATE

Upper Sioux Agency State Park has a mid-continental climate characterized by warm moist summers and cold dry winters. Temperatures for the month of July range from an average high of 84 degrees F to an average low of 60 degrees F. In January the average high is 20 degrees F, the average low 2 degrees F. The annual precipitation averaged 25.58 inches between 1931 and 1980.

GEOLOGY

Toward the end of the Ice Age, 12,000 to 13,000 years ago, the last advance of glacial ice had melted back to a location just north of where Ortonville is now situated. Here was deposited a broad ridge of till several miles wide which is now called Big Stone Moraine.

As glacial melting increased, meltwater accumulated behind the Big Stone Moraine, beginning the huge Glacial Lake Agassiz. As the lake level rose, it overflowed the Big Stone Moraine and drained southward for thousands of years, cutting the deep valley of Glacial River Warren, one of the largest glacial rivers in the Midwest. The volume of water that flowed in Glacial River Warren was tremendous. It quickly removed the loose surface glacial deposits and the underlying thin layers of sedimentary rock (shale, sandstone and conglomerates), exposing the more durable granitic rocks below. Numerous exposures of granitic rock still exist along the river valley between Brown's Valley and New Ulm.

The erosion of Glacial River Warren during the last Ice Age has provided an excellent view of the early geologic history of southwestern Minnesota. The age of dominant rocks in the upper part of the valley, granite and gneiss, has been determined by various radiometric dating methods. Some have been found to be more than 3 billion years old, the oldest rocks known on this continent.

SOILS

The soils in the park were formed from glacial till, lacustrine deposits in Glacial Lake Benson (a shallow temporary glacial lake in eastern Yellow Medicine County) and from alluvium deposited by the Minnesota and Yellow Medicine rivers. A complete discussion of soils and their limitations for development is in the comprehensive management plan.

VEGETATION

Before white settlement the vegetation along the Minnesota River was dominated by two major plant communities: the floodplain forest found along the river corridor, and the tall-grass prairie located on the uplands. Patches of mixed hardwood forest were also found on the uplands; marshes and wet meadows were scattered throughout the river valley.

None of these original plant communities has entirely escaped the logging, grazing and cultivation that came with settlement of the river corridor. However, the park typifies some key features of these two original plant communities. Areas which were at one time cultivated or in pasture are also in the park.

WILDLIFE

An abundance and diversity of wildlife are found in Upper Sioux Agency State Park because of its variety of habitats, including prairie, floodplain forest, hardwood forest and old fields. The Minnesota River corridor is used for nesting, feeding and during migration for resting by many birds. Some birds which may be observed include wood ducks, mallards, blue-winged teal, Canadian geese, pelicans, herons, bitterns, hawks, bluebirds, goldfinches and other songbirds.

Game mammals which are likely to occur in the park include white-tailed deer, red and gray foxes, mink, raccoon, muskrat and beaver.

The park plays an important role in providing winter habitat for deer. The park encompasses portions of both the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota River valleys which, when combined with the nearby Hawk Creek valley, provide a very large wintering habitat for deer. Overbrowsing of park vegetation and crop depredation are not apparent problems at this time, although crop damage complaints have been received in the past.

SURFACE WATER

The Minnesota and the Yellow Medicine rivers are the two most important water resources in the park. The Minnesota River flows through a wide valley cut by Glacial River Warren. The Minnesota River has an average gradient of 0.8 feet per mile and drains portions of Iowa, South Dakota and Minnesota. The entire watershed of 16,920 square miles is intensively farmed, with row crops predominating. The fertile valley floor is also intensively farmed, but has low areas which periodically flood and stay wet for extended periods of time.

Canoeists and fishermen use the Minnesota River for recreation. Swimming in the river is not advisable. Water-quality tests conducted by the State Board of Health show coliform bacteria counts in excess of state safety levels.

The Yellow Medicine River flows from the eastern edge of the Coteau des Prairies to its confluence with the Minnesota River. The Yellow Medicine flows gently across the lowland plains, then drops 85 feet in its final 10 miles. The Yellow Medicine has a drainage basin of 665 square miles. The highest flows on the Yellow Medicine usually occur in late March as a result of spring snow melt. The greatest fluctuations in flow occur during the early summer months. The Minnesota River fluctuates more intensely in the spring when the entire region has snow-melt runoff and during times of widespread thunderstorms. The large storage capacity and overall size of the drainage area of the Minnesota River typically reduces the

effects of a localized storm. The minimal flows and smallest fluctuations in discharge for both rivers occur during the winter. Flooding occurs on both rivers.

Turbidity is the Minnesota River's most noticeable water-quality feature. The Minnesota and Yellow Medicine frequently exceeds Pollution Control Agency (PCA) water-quality standards for turbidity, residue total for nonfilterable suspended particles and fecal coliform.

GROUNDWATER

Groundwater in the Yellow Medicine River valley generally moves northeastward, ultimately discharging into the Minnesota River. The water table typically parallels the topography and on an average is probably less than 100 feet below the surface throughout the watershed.

Groundwater quality is dependent upon the aquifer from which the water is obtained and on the subsurface flow system. Groundwater throughout the watershed is generally very hard, with high concentrations of dissolved solids.

Records indicate that in the area of the park along the Minnesota River bottom most glacial drift and alluvial water supplies are from wells commonly less than 40 feet in depth. In the bluffs adjacent to the Minnesota River bottom, wells can be from 40 to more than 200 feet in depth.

The main park well, in the Minnesota Historical Society site located on the bluff adjacent to the Minnesota River, is 246 feet deep with a static water level at 173 feet. Five additional wells are in the park. Three wells are located below the bluff in the east end of the park. Two of them provided moderate volumes of water when they were in operation. The well at the manager's residence has limited

capacity for a water supply. The old homesite in the southwest quarter of the park along the Yellow Medicine River had a well which provided moderate supplies of water when in operation.

FISHERIES

The Minnesota and Yellow Medicine rivers provide opportunities for fishing in the park. These rivers can be considered good warm-water fisheries. More than 60 species of fish have been documented in the Minnesota and its tributaries.

Flathead catfish, channel catfish, walleye and sauger are the species of primary interest to the angler. Catfishing is one of the most popular types of fishing in this area. Anglers in the park also report good catches of largemouth bass and northern pike.

Little is known about fish spawning in the Minnesota River. The river's periodically heavy silt load and extreme water level fluctuations adversely affect reproduction, feeding and the general health of many fish species.

ARCHAEOLOGY/HISTORY

The Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) has recorded 57 archaeological sites in the Minnesota River valley between Redwood Falls and Montivideo. Records do not indicate any significant prehistoric sites in the park. Since the Minnesota River was a major travel route and hunting area for prehistoric cultures, it is not uncommon to find Indian artifacts along its bluffs. Some artifacts found during historical research excavations by the MHS may indicate use of park bluffs for Indian camps prior to European settlement.

The Minnesota River was once an essential highway for Indians, explorers, traders and settlers. During the 1840s, the U.S. government started putting pressure on the Indians to sell some of their lands for white settlement. In 1851, the tribes living along the upper Minnesota met at Traverse des Sioux,

near the town of St. Peter, to discuss a treaty. An agreement was reached that sold 24 million acres of land to the government and created a reservation that would be known as the Upper Sioux Agency Reservation. The tribes that lived along the lower Minnesota River also signed a treaty which sold land and created for them a reservation called the Lower Sioux Agency Reservation.

The Upper Sioux Agency, in existence between 1854 and 1862, was the headquarters for the administration of Indian affairs of the two bands residing on the upper reservation along the Minnesota River. In 1857 the agency became the headquarters for both the upper and lower reservations. It was at the Upper Sioux Agency that the Indians were paid their annuities and trading took place.

The Upper Sioux Agency was established in hopes of teaching the Indians the white man's way of living. This proved to be unsuccessful. The insensitivity and arrogance of the reservation agents caused hardship between the Dakota and the settlers.

In 1862 tensions reached a breaking point. That summer, the government annuity payments were late, food supplies were extremely low, and the crops were not producing. The Dakota finally lost patience.

In August, the killing of five white settlers by Dakota hunters triggered the series of events leading to the Dakota uprising of 1862. When Chief Little Crow realized he could not talk the young braves out of war, he ordered an attack on the lower agency.

When news of the attack reached the Upper Sioux Agency a council was held to decide whether the Upper Sioux should join the Lower Sioux in warring against the settlers. There was

heated discussion but no decision. John Otherday, spokesman of the Upper Sioux, warned the white agency residents of the possible attack. Otherday gathered the whites into the brick warehouse and stood guard outside all night, while the Indians attacked and burned the agency trading stores. The next morning, Otherday led the 62 white refugees from the warehouse across the Minnesota River to Cedar City in McLeod County.

Many famous battles were fought near the Minnesota River between August and October of 1862. The war was almost over by mid-September. The uprising resulted in the destruction of the Upper Sioux Agency and also led to the expulsion of the Dakota Indians from Minnesota.

Included within the park's statutory boundary is the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site. One agency building is still standing, and has been restored to its original appearance.

The MHS conducted extensive archaeological surveys and excavations at the Upper Sioux Agency site between 1968 and 1972. A 1968 survey located the foundations of five brick structures and several wood-frame buildings. These archaeological excavations have provided good records of the agency buildings, their size, use and architectural structure. Only minor work has been done to locate and document the many archaeological sites in the area surrounding the agency.

The Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site is on the national register of historic places.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

To minimize soil loss through erosion.

To establish and maintain a diverse cover of grasses in the old field areas on a short-term basis.

To eventually reestablish native prairie on some upland old field areas.

To manage the prairie vegetation in the park.

To control noxious weeds.

To reestablish oak savanna.

To increase the diversity of wildlife and maximize the opportunities for park visitors to observe wildlife.

To ensure the survival, in a natural state, of any element identified by the DNR, Natural Heritage Program.

To create and maintain waterfowl habitat by recreating the wetlands which were present before the land was drained and tilled for agriculture.

To manage deer, both the resident and winter populations, to minimize crop depredation on adjacent farmland and to minimize overbrowsing of vegetation in the park.

To improve the water quality of the Yellow Medicine River in the area of the park.

To provide an adequate supply of good-quality drinking water for park use.

To protect groundwater from contamination by park development.

To enhance the fishery of the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota rivers.

To preserve and protect all prehistoric and historic sites in the park.

To interpret prehistoric and historic use of the park and surrounding area for park visitors.

To encourage archaeological and historical research that will increase the existing knowledge of prehistoric and historic human activity in Minnesota.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The following cost estimates were generated in December 1982. They were based on current prices and available information.

Action	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Total	Conditional
<u>Soils</u>							
1 Develop a stream bank erosion management plan							(See Surface Water Action #1)
<u>Vegetation</u>							
1 Establish and maintain a cover of grasses in Old Fields 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10.	\$5,200	\$5,200	\$5,200			\$15,600	
2 Maintain the existing grass cover where it is in good condition and no management is imminent.							(Conditional \$5,720)
3 Convert some of the old field areas to native prairie grasses.							To be determined
4 Reestablish oak savanna in the areas along the ridge that were most likely oak savanna during agency days, as evidenced by old open grown bur oaks.				10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	30,000 (ongoing)
5 Reestablish wetlands.							(See Wildlife Action #1)
6 Plant proposed development areas with suitable trees to enhance the recreational setting of the area.							(See Proposed Development)

Action	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Total	Conditional
7 Implement a program of prescribed burning on the prairie areas.	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$5,000	(ongoing)
8 Monitor the effectiveness of the prescribed burn program in controlling the encroachment of woody species and undesirable non-native species.				3,000	3,000	6,000	(ongoing)
9 Control noxious weeds in the park.	2,000	1,000				3,000	
10 Remove dead and dying trees only in the major recreational use areas and along trails.							

Covered in Development

Wildlife

1 All drainage tiles and ditches not affecting private land should be located and plugged to restore original water levels.	To be determined
2 Maintain a maximum possible amount of naturally dead standing and downed wood.	No cost
3 Monitor the deer population in the park.	No cost

Surface Water

1 Request that the district SCS staff, in cooperation with the regional resource coordinator, develop and implement a stream bank erosion management plan for the park.	No cost
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Action	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Total	Conditional
2 Reestablish wet-lands within the park.		(See Wildlife Action #1)					
<u>Ground Water</u>							
1 Cap off all unused wells in the park.	\$4,000					\$4,000	
2 Verify through the Department of Health, that park wells meet health standards.		No cost					
3 Take corrective measures to prevent staining of fixtures and encrustation of well screens.		To be determined					
<u>Fisheries</u>							
1 Stabilize stream-bank erosion.		(See Surface Water Action #1)					
2 Remove enough snags from the confluence of the Yellow Medicine to allow the passage of canoes upstream.		Covered under Park Operations					
<u>Archaeological and Historical Sites</u>							
1 Field check proposed development sites for the presence of pre-historic or historic remains before any work is begun.	5,000					5,000	
2 Identify and mark burial grounds in the park where appropriate.	5,000					5,000	
3 Conduct research to document and locate all significant historic sites.		\$ 15,000				15,000	
4 Develop joint programs between the MHS and the DNR.	6,000	6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	30,000 (ongoing)	

Action	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Total	Conditional
5 Develop a permanent slide/tape program to be presented at the Historic Site in conjunction with the Historic Site presentation.			\$4,000			\$4,000	
6 Develop a historical agency setting to portray the style and quality of life during agency days.		\$1,500	3,000	\$3,000		7,500	

Physical Development and Recreation Management

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

Lower Campground (Undesignated)

- 30 sites (semi-developed)
- 4 pit toilets

Upper Campground (Undesignated)

- 7 sites (primitive)
- 2 pit toilets

Upper Picnic Area

- 20 tables
- 7 fire rings
- shelter building, 20' x 50'
- 3 water spigots
- 50 parking spaces
- 2 vault toilets (handicap accessible)

Lower Picnic Area

- 3 tables
- 3 fire rings
- 1 pit toilet
- 7 parking spaces

Water Access

- concrete ramp in campground w/o designated parking

Trails

- 9 miles snowmobile
- 9 miles hiking

Sliding

- single run, steep slope

Interpretive Facilities

- building with flush toilets/manager's office/meeting room

Administrative Facilities

- contact station
- garage/storage building
- manager's residence
- manager's office in interpretive building

Historic Site

- 19.3 acres MHS-administered
- DNR park building, 36' x 20'

RECREATION MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

To ensure the opportunity for the public to experience, study and enjoy the natural and historical resources of the park in the most efficient manner of management and operations possible.

To locate park development where it will have the least impact on sensitive natural or historical resources, will not detract from the enjoyment of other users, and will allow easy access to areas of high scenic or study value.

To ensure physical accessibility and the opportunity to participate in programs by special populations (i.e., persons with physical disabilities, the elderly and the very young).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The following cost estimates were generated in December 1982. They were based on current prices and available information.

Action	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Total	Conditional
<u>Camping</u>							
1 Provide five temporary campsites at site G.		To be determined					
2 Develop a vehicular campground at site J.	\$ 55,000					\$ 55,000	
3 Expand the number of sites and provide electricity in the vehicular campground if future use warrants.		Conditional					
4 Construct a sanitation building with showers and flush toilets if future use warrants.		\$ 85,000				85,000	
5 Develop a horse-back rider campground at site B.		9,000				9,000	
6 Develop a group camp at site J.		9,000				9,000	
7 Modify the lower vehicular campground to accommodate canoe and walk-in camping and fishing.	2,000	3,500				5,500	
<u>Sliding</u>							
1 Relocate the sliding hill from the present site to the end of the ridge in the east end of the park.	1,000					1,000	
2 Develop a gravel parking area with a 30-car capacity and an overflow area.	11,000					11,000	

Action	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Total	Conditional
3 Provide a winter shelter building approx. 20'x25' and toilet facilities in the winter day-use area.	\$ 22,000					\$ 22,000	
4 Plant the existing sliding hill with large trees to discourage use.	3,000	\$ 3,000				6,000	
<u>Picnicking</u>							
1 Modify the parking lots in the existing picnic grounds.		To be determined					
2 Construct a sanitation building in the picnic grounds if use warrants.					\$ 85,000		\$ 85,000
3 Expand and improve the picnic area near the water access at the confluence of the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota rivers.		1,000		\$ 2,500			3,500
<u>Water Activities</u>							
1 Improve the water access to the Minnesota River at the confluence of the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota rivers.				10,000			10,000
<u>Visitor Orientation</u>							
1 Continue to improve information dissemination at the park.		2,000			1,000	3,000 (ongoing)	
2 Promote the park statewide.		Covered by Department Publications					

Action	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Total	Conditional
<u>Interpretive Programs</u>							
1 Eliminate the interpretive building when major repairs are necessary.	Covered in Operational Budget						
2 Develop an interpretive booklet on the natural resources of the upper Minnesota River Country Landscape Region.		\$4,000				\$4,000	
3 Develop three signed interpretive trails and several overlooks.	\$1,000	2,000	\$3,500		\$1,000	7,500 (ongoing)	
4 Develop an agency setting to portray the style and quality of life during agency days.	(See History Action #6)						
5 Develop a permanent slide tape program about the park resources.	(See History Action #5)						
6 Develop joint programs between MHS and the park's interpretive staff.	(See History Action #4)						
7 Provide a part-time naturalist staff person for this park.	(See Operations and Staffing Action #1)						
<u>Trails</u>							
1 Develop a signed system of horseback riding trails.	10,000					10,000	
2 Modify the existing snowmobile trails in the park.	(See Trails Action #1)						

Action	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Total	Conditional
3 Develop a signed system of cross country ski trails in the park.	\$5,000					\$5,000	
4 Upgrade the existing hiking trail system.		\$ 2,000				2,000	
5 Include the locations of the archaeological and historic sites on the park handout maps.							Cost covered in Operational Budget
6 Provide two crossings of the Yellow Medicine River in the eastern portion of the park.							Conditional
7 Develop a trail link to Renville County park.							To be determined
<u>Roads and Parking</u>							
1 Construct a new entrance road.		125,000				125,000	
2 Upgrade roads in the floodplain.							To be determined
3 Develop a parking lot near the relocated sliding hill.							(See Sliding, Action #2)
<u>Administrative Facilities</u>							
1 Relocate and construct a new contact station/park office.				\$ 85,000		85,000	
2 Relocate the service area and construct a new storage building 40'x60', half heated.		2,000			\$ 82,000		
3 Construct a gas/oil storage building.					8,000	8,000	

Action	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Total	Conditional
4 Locate gas storage tanks underground in the service court.					\$5,000	\$5,000	

5 Bury electric lines. To be determined

6 Remove building foundations and debris from the park. \$8,000 8,000

PARK BOUNDARY

- 1 Acquire two parcels of park-quality land, parcels A and B.
- 2 Acquire ownership of or trail easement on Parcel D.
- 3 Delete parcel E from the statutory boundary, sometime in the future.
- 4 Consider parcels F, G, H and I for potential land exchanges or transfer to the Division of Wildlife.
- 5 Consider parcel J for expansion of the statutory boundary and for acquisition through land exchange.

OPERATIONS AND STAFFING

- 1 Provide a part-time shared naturalist with this park.

(See Archaeological and Historical Sites Action #4)

Park Boundary

PARK BOUNDARY

Upper Sioux Agency State Park was established in 1963, when 330 acres were acquired for park purposes. The present statutory boundary, established by the state legislature, includes 1,280 acres. Within this boundary the DNR can negotiate and buy land from willing sellers for park purposes. Of the total 1,280 acres, 1,066 acres are state-owned and 214 acres are in private ownership. Of the 1,066 acres of state-owned land, 19.3 acres are administered by the Minnesota Historical Society and 1,046.7 acres are administered by DNR.

Proposed Boundary Modifications

During the park planning process, lands adjacent to the park and privately owned land within the statutory boundary were evaluated in terms of their suitability for park purposes. The results identify park-quality lands that have resource value and recreation potential and lands which are necessary to ensure protection of the park's natural resources and recreation developments.

Parcels A and B on the Boundary Map (p. 55), both privately owned land within the statutory boundary, are of park quality and are recommended for acquisition. Parcel A is necessary for construction of the new entrance road. Parcel B, which includes a segment of the Yellow Medicine River, has both resource value and recreation potential. This land is also necessary for the development of a trail between Upper Sioux Agency State Park and Renville County Park #1.

Additional private land within the statutory boundary may be considered for acquisition along with parcel B. Parcel C is of low priority for acquisition, but is under the same ownership as parcel B. Frequently landowners do not separate a parcel of land when a sale is considered. It is recommended that parcel C remain in the statutory boundary until parcel B is acquired.

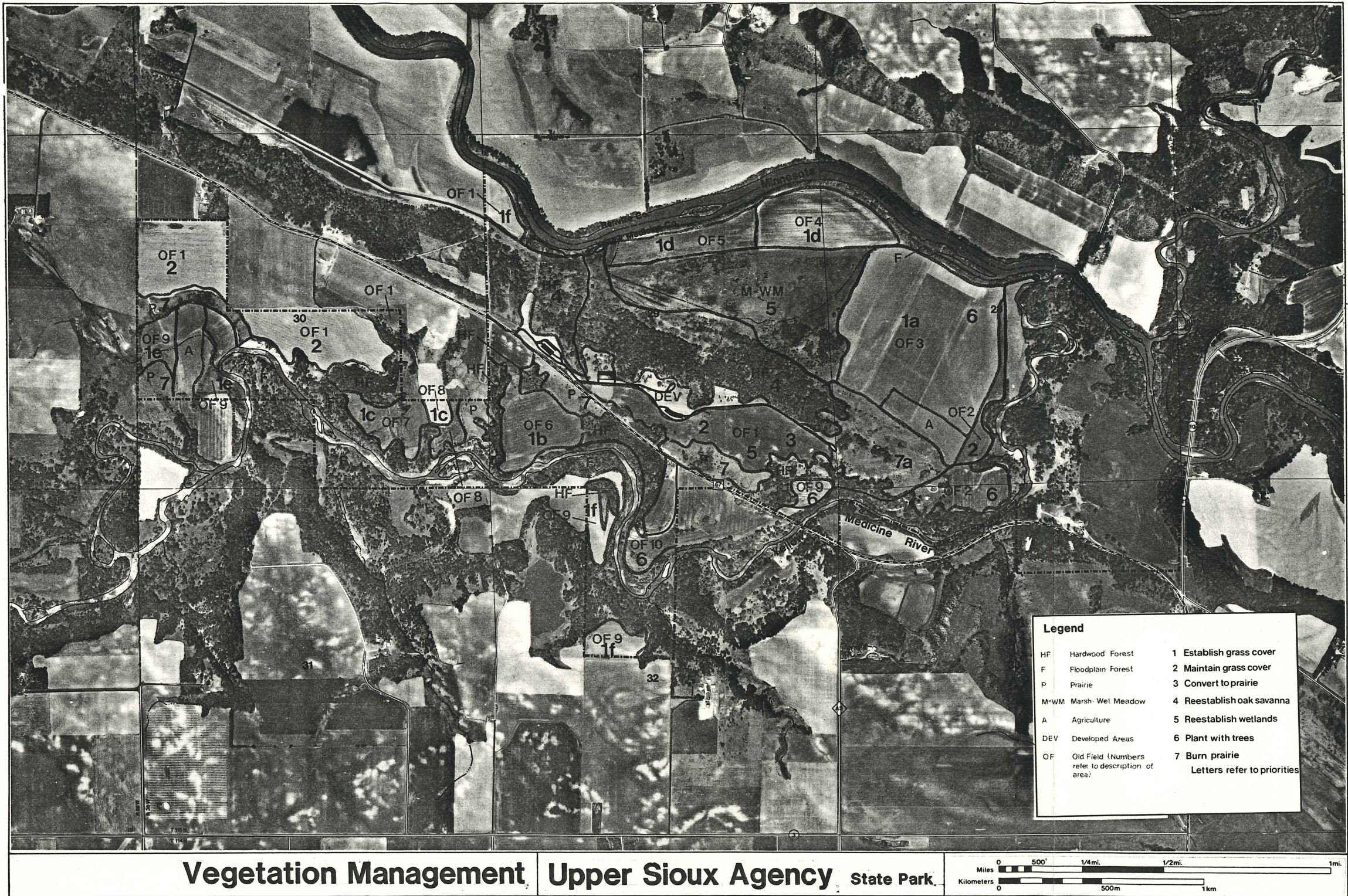
After parcel B is acquired, if no potential uses are identified for parcel C, it may be deleted from the statutory boundary. If parcel C is purchased, it may be transferred to the DNR Division of Wildlife or resold for agricultural purposes. Parcel D is needed as an important link in both the winter and summer trail system and for access to the horseback riders campground. Acquisition of this parcel would require legislative action to relocate the statutory boundary. Parcel E is low-quality park land, and can be eliminated from the statutory boundary.

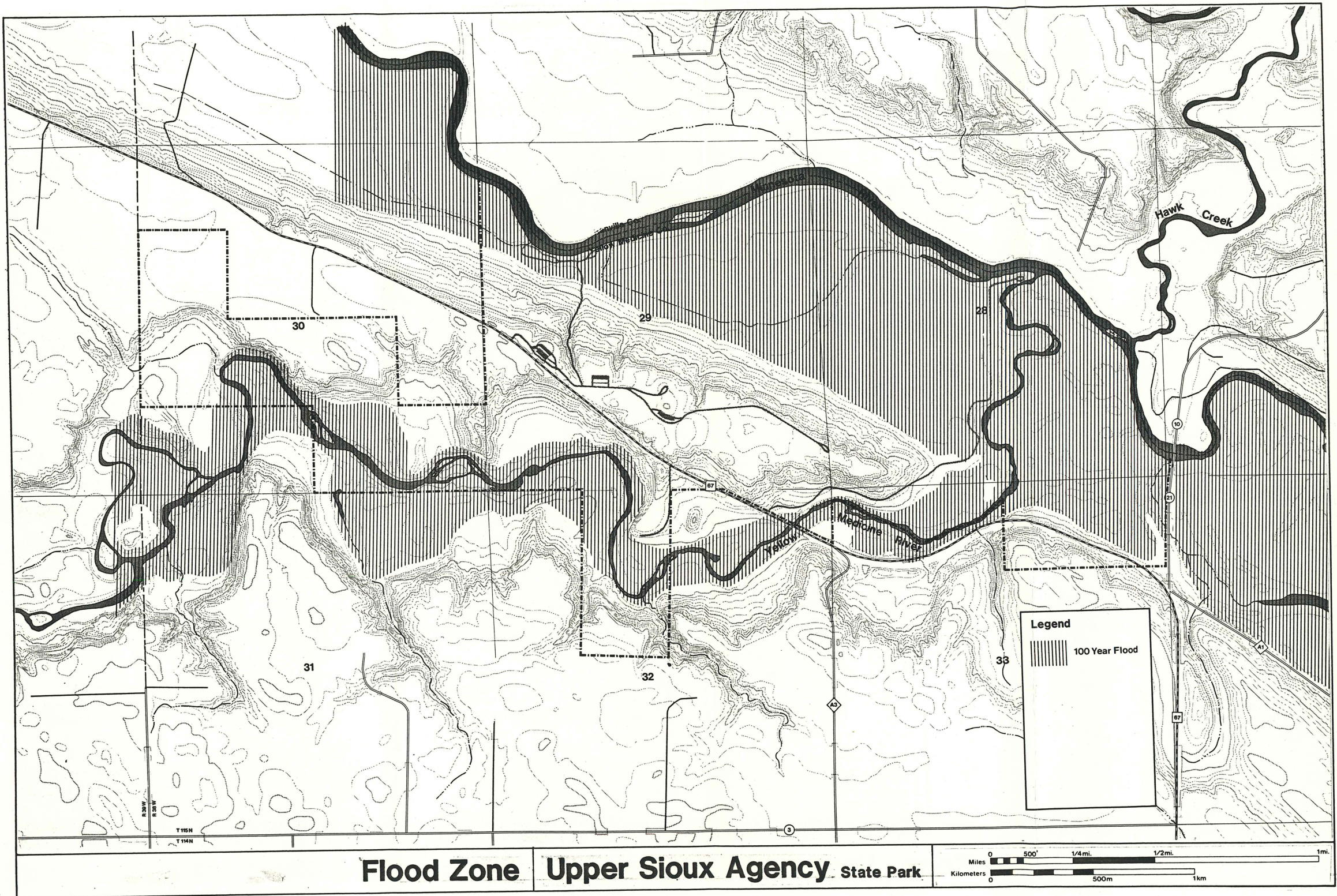
Parcels F, G, H and I may be considered for potential land exchanges or transfer to the Division of Wildlife. These parcels have been identified as being lower in park quality. They may be considered for land exchange in the acquisition of parcels A, B, D and J. After parcels A, B and D have been acquired, F, H and I could be transferred to the Division of Wildlife.

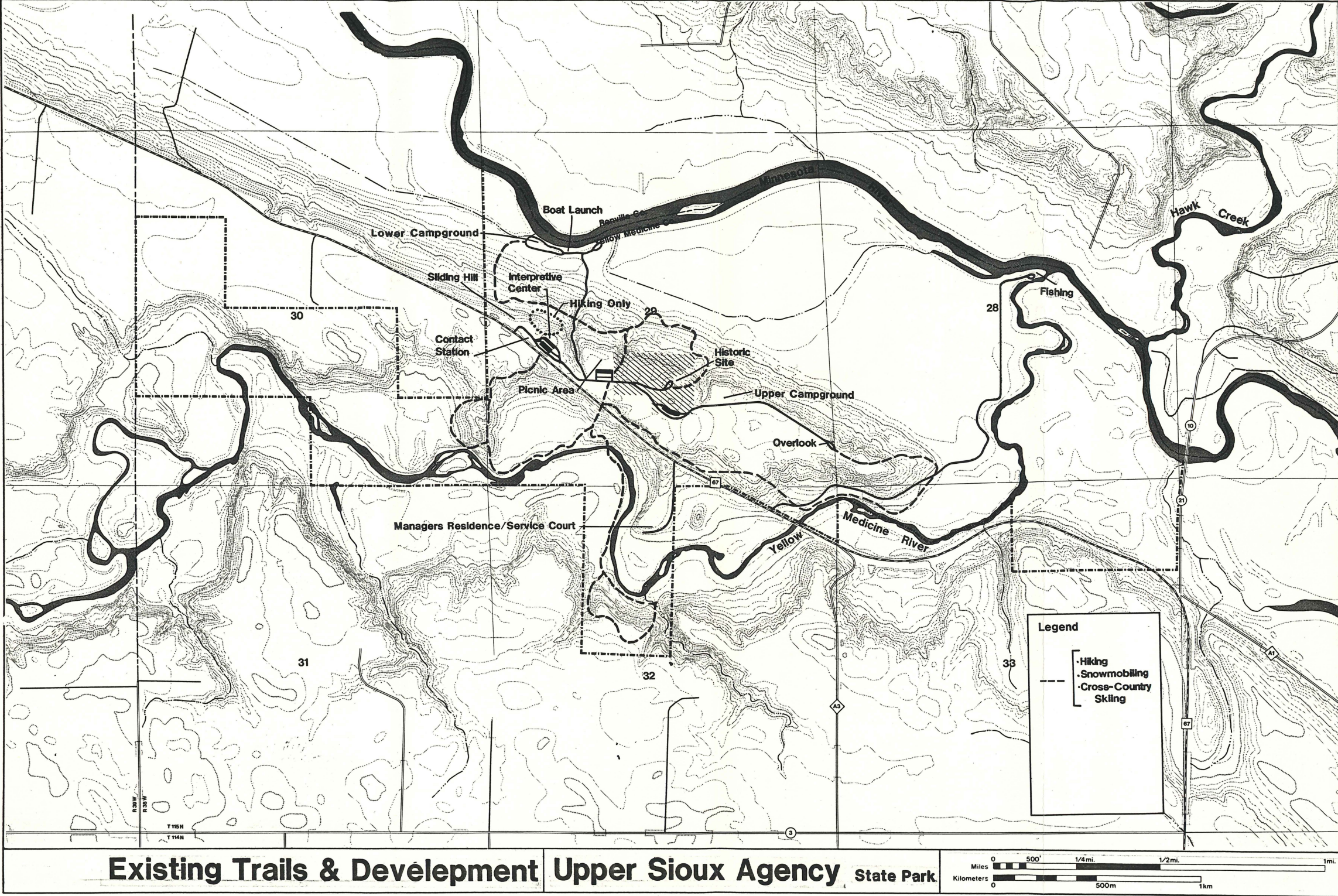
The Yellow Medicine River valley and its adjacent wooded banks and bluffs are park-quality lands. The valley is valuable wildlife habitat and has recreation potential. It also is a large natural area in a region that is predominantly agricultural. However, no recommendation to include it in the statutory boundary will be made at this time. The valley's resources are being protected by the current land practices and topography, and additional acreage is not needed for the recreational developments proposed in this plan.

Parcel J should be considered for expansion of the statutory boundary and acquisition through land exchange. This parcel is of moderate resource and recreational value. It contains some grazed prairie hillsides and some wooded ravines. Acquisition of this parcel would allow removal of agricultural fields from this portion of the park and restore the natural qualities of the Yellow Medicine River valley.

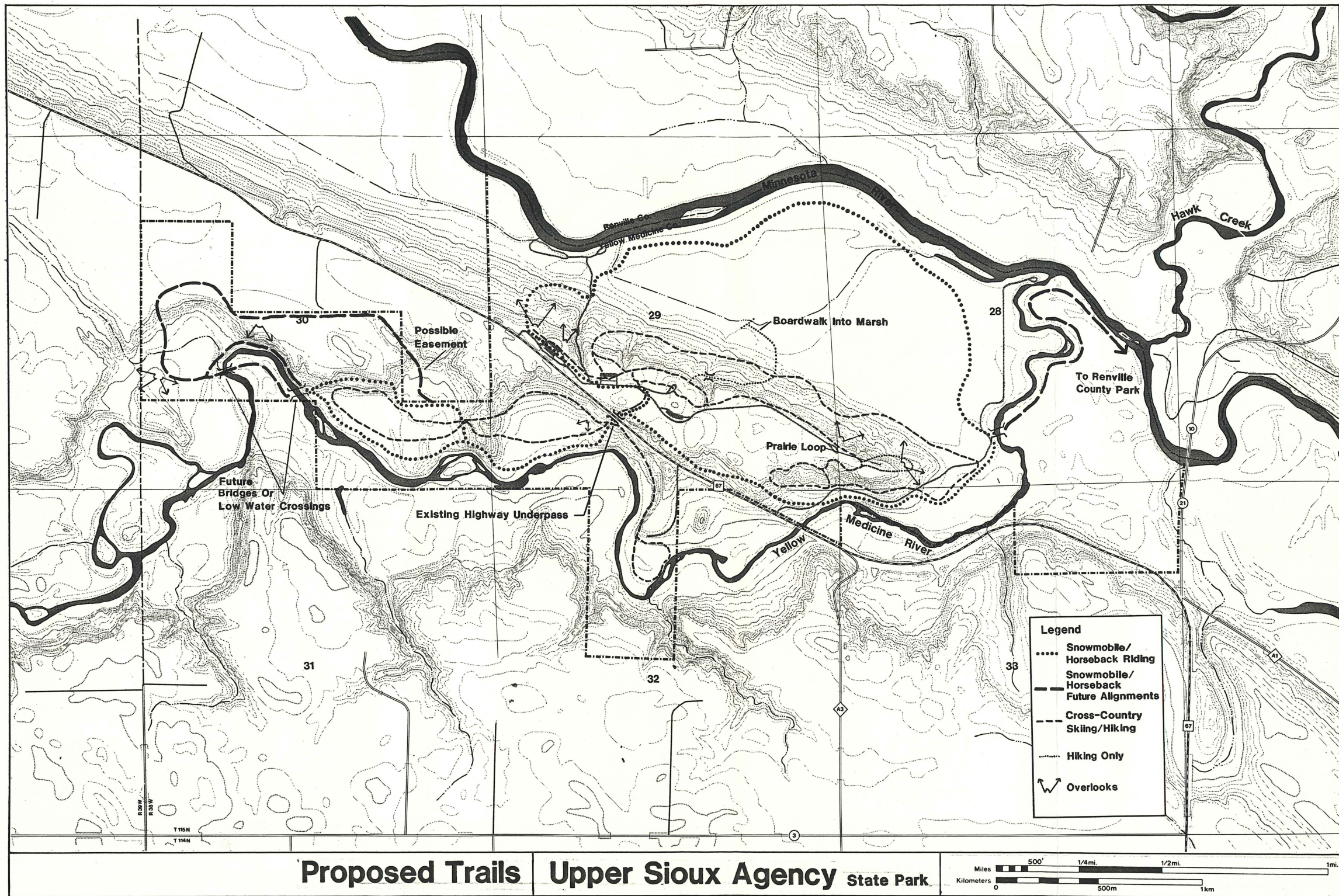
Maps

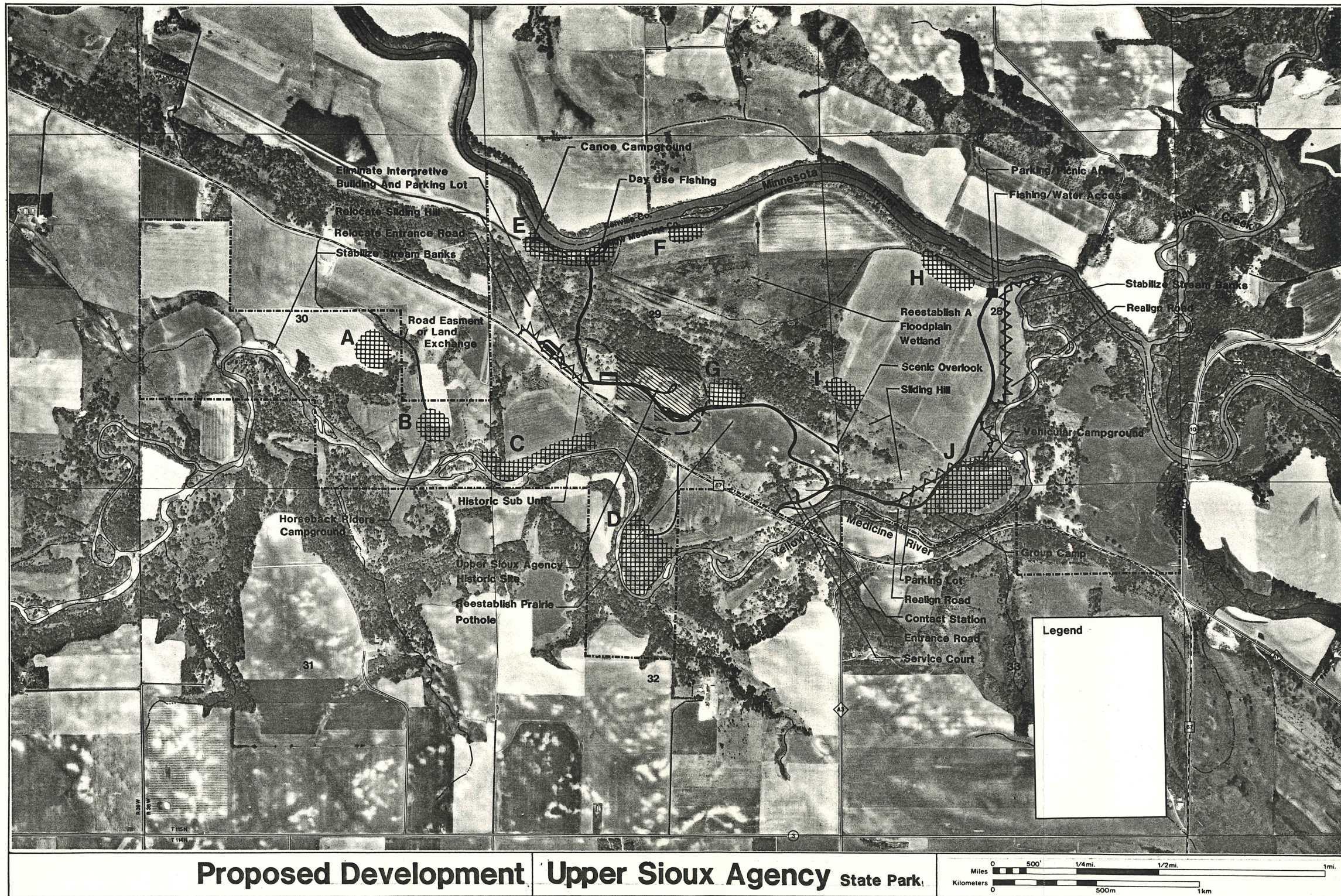






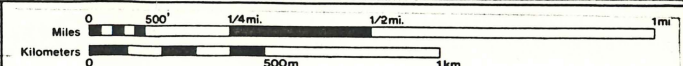
Existing Trails & Develepment Upper Sioux Agency State Park.







Park Boundary **Upper Sioux Agency state Park**





Historical Resources

Upper Sioux Agency state Park

