



STATE OF
MINNESOTA

900251

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS

Crow Wing
State Park

January 10, 1990



SB
482
.M6
D34
v.10



recycled paper.

This document is made available electronically by the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library as part of an ongoing digital archiving project. <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/lrl.asp>
(Funding for document digitization was provided, in part, by a grant from the Minnesota Historical & Cultural Heritage Program.)

MINNESOTA STATE PARK SYSTEM

The mission of the Division of Parks and Recreation is to provide a state park system that perpetuates Minnesota's scenic beauty and its natural and cultural resources, while being responsive to public needs and expectations, and providing a diversity of recreational opportunities.

The Division of Parks and Recreation manages 64 state parks across Minnesota. The state park system is vital to Minnesota's tourism, an industry that is becoming the backbone of many economies in greater Minnesota. Our most unique and valuable cultural and natural resources are found within state park boundaries. It is the Division of Parks & Recreation's responsibility to acquire, protect and interpret these unique resources.

Prior to the 1989 legislative session, funding constraints and increasing visitor use seriously eroded the Division of Parks and Recreation's ability to provide quality recreational experiences and services. Since then the Governor and state legislators have responded to the need for increased funding for the operations budget. However, financing the maintenance of existing facilities and new development in the face of increasing visitor use remains a problem. This will be addressed during the 1990 legislative session when a capital bonding bill is considered.

The state park system has the Department of Natural Resource's (DNR) largest physical plant with over 2,800 major facilities requiring major rehabilitation. The Division of Parks & Recreation has identified more than \$55 million in capital budget needs. These projects include land acquisition, resource management, major rehabilitation or replacement of existing facilities and a few new facilities. Legislative funding requests to meet this need will be spread throughout future bienniums.

A recent study conducted by the Minnesota Historical Society identifies 515 historic structures located in the state park system. These structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Most of these structures are of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Work Progress Administration (WPA) vintage. The CCC/WPA structures were constructed in the 1930's. These facilities are over 50 years old and many are in need of major rehabilitation which includes the electrical, sewage, and water systems associated with these buildings.

Many years of intensive use is also a consideration when looking at the current condition of campgrounds, picnic areas, group camps and trail systems. Lack of development and rehabilitation of these and other state park facilities will reduce park use. A reduction in state park use will adversely impact the economic development of adjacent communities and Minnesota's effort to improve tourism.

As capital development funds have become available we have completed the highest priority projects. As additional needs are identified, they are reviewed and placed on the statewide priority list for future completion.

In 1991, Itasca, Minnesota's oldest state park, will be 100 years old. For 100 years Minnesota has had a park system to be proud of. The present challenge is to manage the park resources and recreational development to ensure that Minnesotans will be proud of their state park system for another hundred years.

AN OVERVIEW OF CROW WING STATE PARK

Crow Wing State Park is located in central Minnesota, nine miles south of Brainerd on Hwy. #371 and one mile west on County Road 27. The park was established during the 1959 legislative session to preserve the historically rich pioneer townsite of Crow Wing and to provide broad types of public recreational opportunities. The statutory boundaries of the park encompass 2,040 acres. Of these, 295.6 are privately owned and 316 acres are in the boundaries of the Camp Ripley Military Reservation.

Crow Wing State Park is situated at the confluence of the Mississippi and Crow Wing Rivers in what is known as the Mississippi Sandplains Landscape Region. This region is characterized by fairly level terrain, high water tables, sandy soils and numerous lakes and marshes.

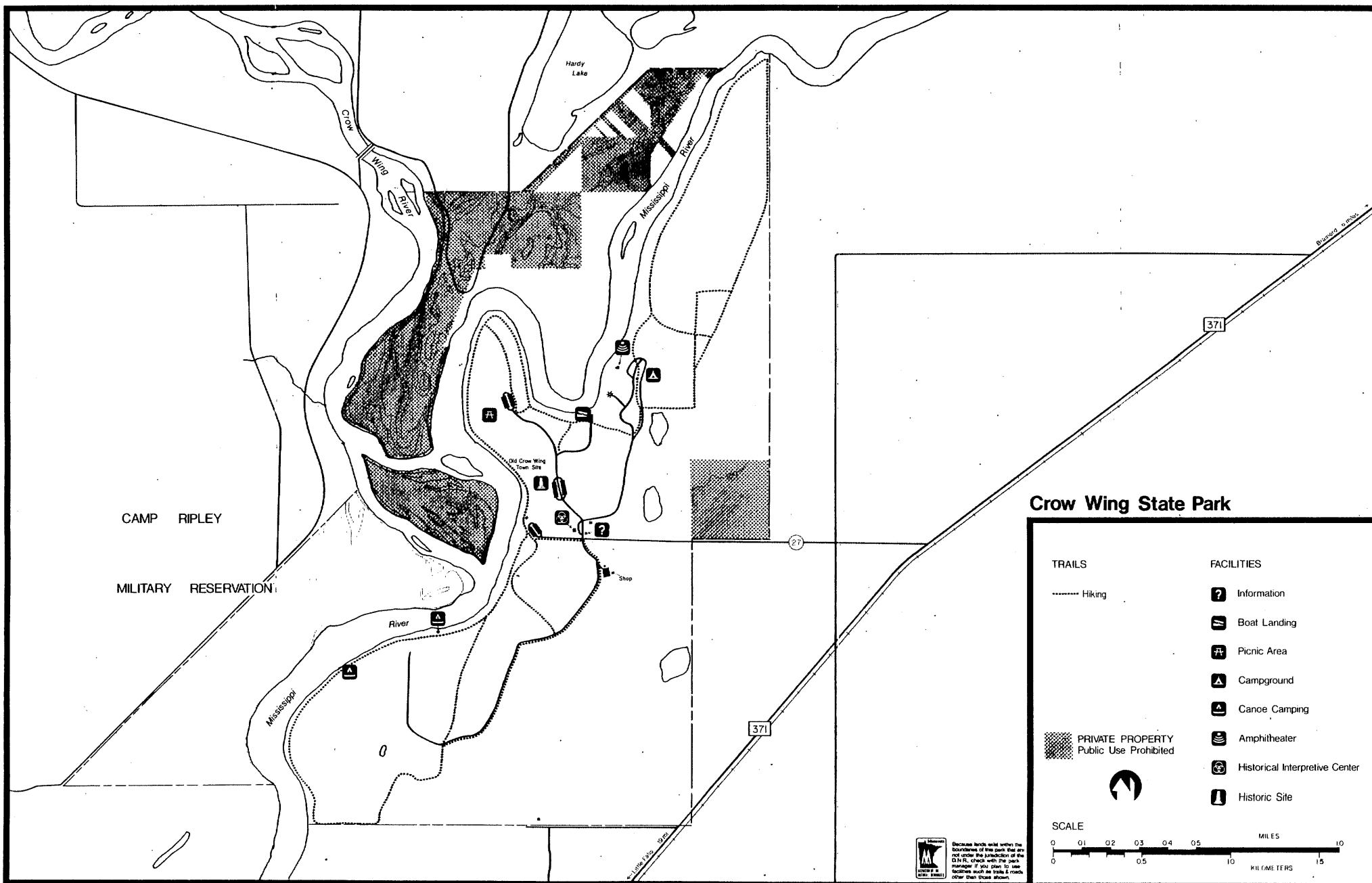
The pre-settlement vegetation in the park was composed of diverse plant communities such as native grassland and oak savanna (scattered oak trees interspersed with prairie openings), jack pine barrens, white and red pine stands, conifer bogs, swamps and deciduous forests. Today the vegetation consists of a forest of red and bur oak sprinkled with a variety of other hardwoods, in addition to jack pine, white pine and red pine; marshland; prairie and grassland. Efforts are currently underway to restore oak savanna and jack pine barrens and to manage prairie communities.

In 1768, Crow Wing was the scene of a major battle between the Sioux and the Chippewa. A group of about 100 Chippewa warriors laid in wait on the eastern shore of the Mississippi River for a much larger band of Sioux who had attacked the Chippewa village at Sandy Lake. The battle raged for two days until the Sioux were beaten. This is considered to be one of the greatest battles ever fought in Minnesota, and resulted in the Sioux being driven from the Upper Mississippi.

In 1823, Allen Morrison established the first permanent fur trading post in the Crow Wing area. By the 1840's, several other prominent traders including Clement Beaulieu, William Aitkin and John Fairbanks headquartered at Crow Wing. The village became the main trading center for the Chippewa people and home of the influential Chippewa leader Hole-in-the-Day II. By 1848, lumbering had also become a major enterprise at Crow Wing.

In the 1850's and 1860's Crow Wing became the site of three different missions. Reverend Father Francis X. Pierz established a Catholic mission in 1852. Reverend E. Steele Peake established an Episcopalian mission in 1860 and Reverend Ottmar Cloetter established a Lutheran mission in 1862. During this period, one of the Red River oxcart trails crossed the Mississippi at Crow Wing. This trail was used to transport furs, goods and supplies between St. Paul and the towns of Pembina and Selkirk. The demise of the colorful town of Crow Wing came about when it was bypassed by the railroads. By the 1880's, Crow Wing was a ghost town.

Today Crow Wing State Park offers its visitors a wide variety of recreational opportunities including camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing, skiing and snowmobiling. There are beautiful vistas along the Mississippi River, especially at the historical Chippewa Lookout. The park's natural and cultural history can be discovered along a self-guided interpretive trail, interpretive signs at major historical sites, a kiosk about the Red River oxcart trail and interpretive programs. The park holds a wide variety of vegetation, bird and animal life. Birds seen may include the least flycatcher, loggerhead shrike, great-horned owl, belted kingfisher, pileated woodpecker, osprey, bald eagle and a wide variety of shorebirds and waterfowl. Mammals found in the park include the black bear, coyote, white-tailed deer, raccoon, bobcat and river otter.



Crow Wing State Park

TRAILS

..... Hiking

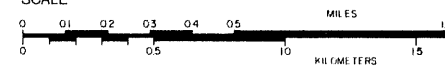
FACILITIES

- Information
- Boat Landing
- Picnic Area
- Campground
- Canoe Camping
- Amphitheater
- Historical Interpretive Center
- Historic Site

PRIVATE PROPERTY
Public Use Prohibited



SCALE



Because birds nest within the boundaries of this park that are not under the jurisdiction of the DNR, check with the park manager if you plan to use facilities such as trails & roads other than those shown.

EXISTING FACILITIES

The following is an inventory of the existing physical plant of Crow Wing State Park.

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 2,040
Acres of state land - 1,427.40
Acres of private land - 295.60

Campsites

Drive in - 61
Canoe in - 1
Showers
Modern toilets
Campsites with electricity - 12

Miles of Trails

Hiking - 20
Cross Country Ski - 6.4
Snowmobile - 11.5
Self-guided Interpretive - 0.4

Playgrounds - 2

Amphitheater
Boat & Canoe Rental
Interpretive Display Area
Trailer Dump Station
Water Accesses - 2
Miles of Posted Boundary - 10

Miles of Road

Asphalt - 1
Gravel - 3

Open Picnic Shelter

Number of Picnic Tables - 40

Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 11
Under 100 sq.ft. - 11

Park Utilities

Number of Septic Tanks - 5
Number of Wells - 4
Number of Individual
Water Distribution Systems - 3
Miles of State Owned Power Line - 1

PROBLEMS FACING CROW WING STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in Crow Wing State Park to maintain. Many are in need of replacement or major rehabilitation. Most were constructed in the 1960's, and are now in need of rehabilitation. Many new facilities are needed to meet growing recreational demands.

The parks natural and cultural resources are also in need of protection and management to perpetuate Crow Wing's resources. In the past, facilities were developed in prehistoric and historic use areas. These areas must be protected and interpreted.

Of major concern is the location and establishment of the Town of Old Crow Wing. This includes the relocation of the Beaulieu House which is being restored and is currently in the park.

Important improvements have been completed at Crow Wing State Park in recent years. However, the goals identified in the ten year old management plan have not been achieved.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN CROW WING STATE PARK

Major development projects over the past few years have included:

1. Campground electricity.

CROW WING STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Cultural Assessment - \$35,000

Detailed mapping of the Crow Wing Townsite, land use and ownership tract research, and field survey and verification. This baseline information is currently lacking, and is essential for management actions.

Vegetation Management - \$20,000

Management of native prairie and oak savannah remnants, naturalization of pine plantations, and oak management.

Erosion Control - \$3,000

Erosion control along the sandy riverbank areas adjacent to boat landings, trails, and picnic areas.

Subtotal \$58,000

MAJOR REHABILITATION

Campground Rehabilitation - \$30,000

Gravel spurs, improved drainage and landscaping, replacement of tables and fire rings, and addition of twelve electric sites.

Subtotal \$30,000

NEW DEVELOPMENT

New Interpretive/Trail Center - \$400,000

New building to function as interpretive/trail center for interpretation of Old Crow Wing site.

Interpretive Historical Displays - \$5,000

Develop displays that would aid in the interpretation of the historical significance of the Crow Wing townsite.

Subtotal \$405,000

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS \$493,000

LAND ACQUISITION

There are approximately 20,000 acres of private land within the boundaries of Minnesota State Parks.

Acquisition of these lands is an ongoing process that occurs as parcels become available for purchase, and funds are available. Present acquisition costs are averaging about a \$1,000 per acre across the state. It would cost about \$20,000,000 to acquire all the private land within state parks at present values.

The park map shows the location of private holdings within the park. These properties should be purchased before private development increases within the park's statutory boundary.

The following issues highlight problems associated with private property within state parks.

- * Private lands within state parks are being sought out by developers.
- * Subdivision for residential use will cause such lands to be too expensive to acquire in the future.
- * Land uses such as gravel extraction and extensive clear cut logging adversely impact state parks and adjoining public lands.
- * Some private lands limit public use of existing park facilities and lands because of their location.

These issues associated with privately owned lands within state parks threaten existing public investment and limit public use.

PRIVATE LANDS TO BE ACQUIRED IN CROW WING STATE PARK

Parcel #	Acres
7	35.85
8	40.00
10	142.49
13	0.65
14	0.77
16	0.98
27	1.80
28	2.60
31	1.10
34	0.60
40	44.44
41	2.03
43	1.94
44	13.08

Total 288.33 acres.

PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Crow Wing State Park? These projects along with the acquisition of private lands within the park will assure the preservation of these unique resources and facilities for future generations. Active management will be required to maintain and regenerate existing plant communities. These will ensure that future visitors will be able to experience the diverse nature of Minnesota's prairies and forests.

Some improvements will not only increase park use but will greatly increase the quality of the visitors experience. Many of the rehabilitation projects will increase staff efficiency and cut the costs of maintaining facilities.

New facilities will improve service while giving the visitor a greater opportunity to learn about Minnesota's natural and cultural resources.

The acquisition of private lands within the park will assure that private and commercial development do not detract from the natural beauty of Crow Wing State Park.

A stable funding source is essential for effective long term resource management and capital budget planning for the Minnesota State Park system and Crow Wing State Park.

SUMMARY

Currently, statewide capital needs for development and acquisition are **\$55,000,000**. The mission of the Minnesota State Park System can be achieved by funding support to meet this need over the next several bienniums.

Crow Wing State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

Crow Wing State Park development needs **\$493,000**

**Help us celebrate the 100th anniversary of the
Minnesota State Park System in 1991!**

