



900251

DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS



Frontenac
State Park



January 8, 1990

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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 FRONTENAC STATE PARK

Frontenac State Park is located in Goodhue County on the west shore of Lake Pepin. The park entrance is 10 miles southeast of Red Wing and 7.5 miles northwest of Lake City on U.S. Highway 61. The statutory boundary encompasses 2,787.00 acres. Of these, 994.40 acres are privately owned.

Hundreds of millions of years ago vast shallow seas covered much of Minnesota. At the bottom of these seas, sediments accumulated and were slowly transformed into rock. Today this rock makes up the bluffs along the Mississippi River in southeastern Minnesota.

Glacial River Warren carved the present day Mississippi River Valley in southeastern Minnesota. When the river was at its peak most of the Frontenac area was under water, and the park's two bluffs were islands.

Prior to European settlement the vegetation of Frontenac State Park was a mixture of maple basswood forest, oak woodland and brushland, flood plain forest and prairie. The maple basswood forest, vegetation, consisting primarily of mature hardwood species such as maple, basswood, oak, elm, hickory, walnut and butternut, occurred along the northern edge of the park cloaking the steep slope facing Lake Pepin. Open oak woodland, prairie and flood plain forest covered much of the park.

At one time various locations around Lake Pepin were used as sites for fur trading posts. One of them, Ft. Beauharnois (pronounced Bow-horn-wah) is purported to be located in the immediate vicinity of the park. Its precise location remains a mystery as extensive searches have proved fruitless. Perhaps its exact location is lost forever.

Frontenac State Park was established in 1957, to preserve the area's natural beauty and historical significance. Since 1680 when Father Louis Hennepin led the first European exploration to this section of the Mississippi River, the Frontenac bluffs have been an important vantage point to survey the beauty of this magnificent river valley.

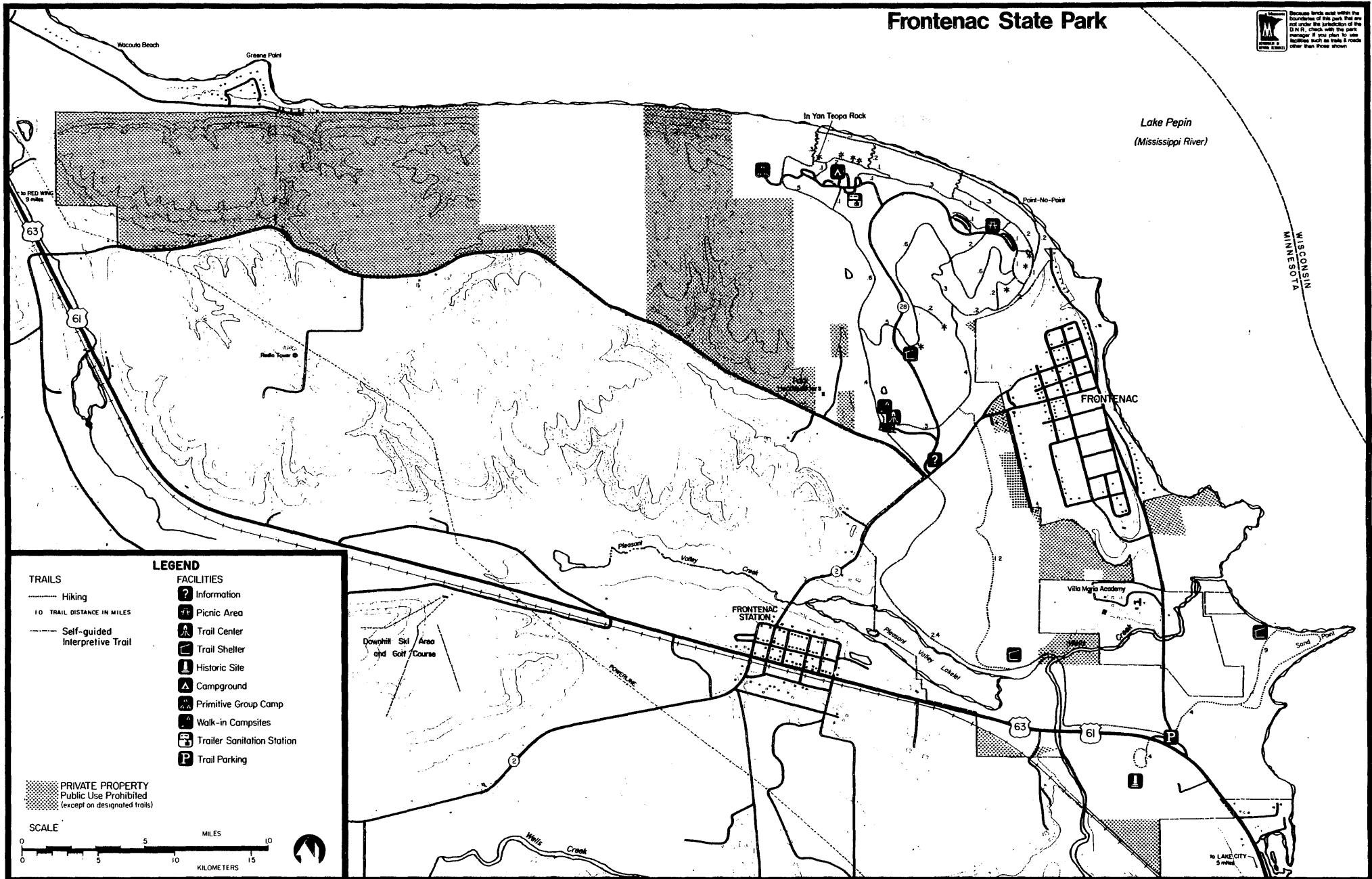
Prior to becoming a state park, most of the land other than steep slopes and wet areas were cleared of the original oak woods and native prairie, and put into agricultural production. Today, efforts are underway to control the invasion of problem plants and to re-establish prairie and oak woods consistent with presettlement vegetation.

Frontenac State Park provides habitat for a variety of wildlife. Sand Point is well known for the variety of birds species that can be observed, including two of the world's longest travelers, the sanderling and the ruddy turnstone. These robin-size shorebirds migrate from southern South America to the Arctic and back every year.

Today the park offers a variety of outdoor recreational experiences including, hiking, camping, fishing, picnicking, and nature study.

Frontenac State Park

Because lands used 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 if roads other than those shown.



TRAILS

- Hiking
- Trail distance in miles
- - - Self-guided Interpretive Trail

LEGEND

FACILITIES

- Information
- Picnic Area
- Trail Center
- Trail Shelter
- Historic Site
- Campground
- Primitive Group Camp
- Walk-in Campsites
- Trailer Sanitation Station
- Trail Parking

PRIVATE PROPERTY
Public Use Prohibited
(except on designated trails)

SCALE
0 5 10 15
MILES
0 5 10 15
KILOMETERS



EXISTING FACILITIES

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

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 2,772.38

Acres of state land - 1,770.55

Acres of private land - 1,001.55

Campsites

Drive in - 58

Walk in - 6

Showers

Modern toilets

Campsites with electricity - 19

Miles of Trails

Self-guided Interpret - .7

Hiking - 15.5

Cross Country Ski - 6.1

Snowmobile - 8

Miles of Road

Asphalt - 2

Gravel - 2

Enclosed Picnic Shelter

Number of Picnic Tables - 40

Trailer Dump Station

Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 10

Under 100 sq.ft. - 11

Miles of Posted Boundary - 30

Park Utilities

Number of Septic Tanks - 6

Number of Wells - 3

Number of Individual

Water Distribution Systems - 3

PROBLEMS FACING FRONTENAC STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in Frontenac 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.

Natural and cultural resources are in need of protection and management to insure perpetuity of Frontenac's resources. In the past, facilities were developed in prehistoric and historic areas. These areas deserve to be protected and interpreted.

Resource management including restoration of prairie areas is critical. There is a variety of problem species such as buckthorn, purple loosestrife and boxelder that must be controlled. The extremely steep slopes in the park are subject to erosion and must be carefully managed. There is also a need to improve vehicular circulation into and through the park. A detailed management plan has not been completed for recent acquisitions.

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

RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN FRONTENAC STATE PARK

Major development projects over the past few years have included:

1. Installation of campground electric service (1984).
2. Major hiking trail improvements, 2.5 miles (1981).

FRONTENAC STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Natural History Survey - \$10,000

Research the park's natural history, changes and impacts to help direct resource management.

Oak Woods Management - \$13,000

Remove and control the invasion of problem species such as European buckthorn. Replant old fields with native hardwood trees and shrubs.

Oak Woods and Prairie Restoration - \$13,000

Initial planting of native prairie grasses and wildflowers to restore old fields.

Hardwood Reforestation - \$27,000

Replant 150 acres of newly acquired land to native tree and shrubs.

Subtotal \$63,000

MAJOR REHABILITATION

Entrance Road Realignment - \$50,000

Realign existing entrance road to allow access to south end of park.

Campground Rehabilitation - \$50,000

Remodel interior of existing sanitation building and revise several campsites.

Rehabilitate Campground Loop Roads - \$50,000

Minor redesign of the existing campground roads and surfacing them with asphalt.

Campground Expansion - \$150,000

Add additional campsites and a modern sanitation building to the existing campground.

Picnic Area Parking Lot - \$60,000

Surface the parking lot in the picnic area with asphalt.

Play Area - \$20,000

Develop a creative play area in the picnic area for the enjoyment of young park visitors.

Water Line - \$10,000

Replace large segments of the campground water line and the line to the sanitary dump station.

Trail Rehabilitation - \$50,000

Rehabilitate the steep bluff side trails, which will include steps, railings, water bars, side bars, low retaining walls, and leveling the tread surface.

Subtotal \$440,000

NEW DEVELOPMENT

Contact/Orientation Station - \$50,000

New facility to serve as combination interpretive/office/trail center. This combination will make efficient use of staff.

Amphitheater - \$40,000

Construct new amphitheater to serve outdoor interpretive programs. Facility to include lighting and electrical.

Picnic Area - \$20,000

Construct new picnic area on Pleasant Valley Lakelet.

Fishing Pier - \$5,000

Install a fishing pier in Pleasant Valley Lakelet and develop an access trail to it.

Construct Shop/Warehouse - \$55,000

Construct a shop/warehouse building at a central location to facilitate efficient use of staff time.

Subtotal \$170,000

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS \$673,000

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.
- * Difficulty in carrying out effective and consistent resource management.

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

PRIVATE LANDS TO BE ACQUIRED IN FRONTENAC STATE PARK

Parcel #	Acres	Parcel #	Acres
3c	.69	28	.24
7	3.00	30	2.50
8	13.85	31	1.00
9	3.00	32	1.58
10	20.00	33	19.77
11b	5.00	34a	6.03
11c	5.00	34b	5.17
11d	5.00	35	95.38
13	273.90	36	103.74
18a	5.00	37	385.43
19	1.08	38	4.00
20	.37	39	4.55
21	17.75	40	.86
22	.38	41	.69
23	.34	42	.69
24	.90	43	1.50
25	7.81	44	1.69
26	.10	45	.69
27a	.26	46	.69
27b	.26	47	1.66

Total 1,001.55 acres.

PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Frontenac 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 and 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 customer 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 Frontenac 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 Frontenac 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 through funding support to meet this need over the next several bienniums.

Frontenac State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

Frontenac State Park development needs **\$185,000**.

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

