

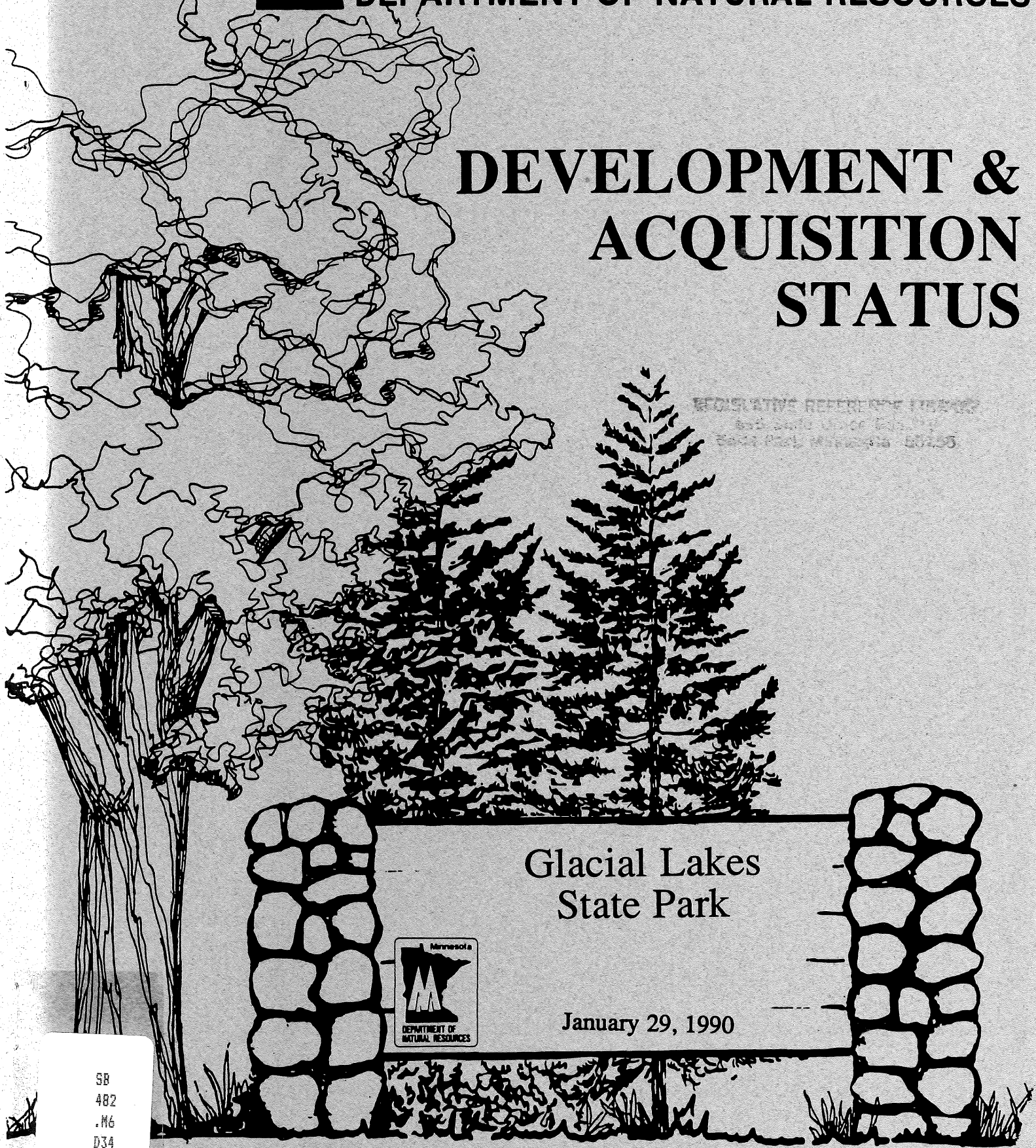
LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY  
3 0307 00019 6017



STATE OF  
**MINNESOTA**  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

900251

# DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS



Glacial Lakes  
State Park

January 29, 1990



SB  
482  
.M6  
D34  
v.18

ed on 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 GLACIAL LAKES STATE PARK

Glacial Lakes State Park is located in Pope County in west central Minnesota four miles south of Starbuck on CSAH 41. The statutory boundary encompasses 2,423 acres.

The park is situated in the Alexandria Moraine Complex, a series of gently rolling hills pocketed with lakes and marshes that were formed by glaciers between 100,000 and 10,000 years ago. During this period three major ice movements shaped the present landscape. As the glaciers advanced south, hills and bluffs were sheared off down to the bed rock. When the glaciers retreated to the north they deposited sand, gravel, and rock debris referred to as glacial till. The till deposits in the park, hundreds of feet thick, are some of the deepest found anywhere in the state. This glacial action filled depressions, formed hills and created the high, rolling lands that stretch across west central Minnesota. The lakes and marshes found in the park formed in depressions created when large blocks of ice melted after becoming separated from a glacier and covered with glacial debris. Lakes formed in this manner are called kettles.

Prior to European settlement, the vegetation pattern in what is now the park included four major plant communities. They are prairie, oak savanna, aspen-oak lands, marshes and sloughs. During this period prairie dominated the park landscape and most of east central Minnesota as well. A variety of grasses and flowering plants characterized this community including big and little bluestem, Indian grass, gramma grass, prairie clover, pasque flower, asters and goldenrod. Oak savanna was found at the transition of prairie to woodland. These areas were comprised of scattered oak trees with prairie ground cover. Aspen-oak lands consisted of dense stands of aspen and some oak, elms, ash, and basswood. Marsh species included reeds, marshgrasses, cattail, willow and alder.

As the area was settled much of the prairie was converted to agricultural uses. Today prairie remains on ridges in the park. This prairie is of high quality and is one of the park's most outstanding resources. Some areas have been relatively undisturbed except for grazing and two areas which have never been plowed or grazed. Efforts are being undertaken to reestablish native prairie species on old fields that were cultivated. Other plant communities present in the park include oak woods, basswood, lowland shrub, wet meadow and cattail marsh.

The park's prairie, forests and wetlands provide habitat for a variety of wildlife. Over 165 species of birds are known to use the park. Most notable of these are the common loon, little blue heron, burrowing owl, pileated woodpecker, king rail, horned grebe, upland plover, marbled godwit, and the loggerhead shrike. Mammals inhabiting the park include the white tailed deer, beaver, grey fox, red fox, raccoon, jack rabbit and coyote. Mountain lake provides good fishing. Species present in the lake include northern pike, walleye, largemouth bass, sunfish, yellow perch and crappie.

Glacial Lakes State Park offers visitors a variety of outdoor recreational experiences in an ecologically diverse setting. The park's terrain offers abundant opportunities to observe effects of glaciation that had an enormous impact on Minnesota's landscape. Miles of trails provide ample opportunity for hikers, horse-back riders, snowmobilers, and naturalists to enjoy the park's scenic attributes and abundant wildlife. Other popular activities include fishing, camping, picnicking and swimming.



## EXISTING FACILITIES

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

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 2,410  
Acres of state land - 1,895

### Campsites

Drive in - 39  
Back Pack - 2  
Showers  
Modern toilets  
Campsites with electricity - 14

### Miles of Trails

Self-guided Interpretive - .6  
Hiking - 14  
Horse - 11  
Cross Country Ski - 6  
Snowmobile - 11

### Playgrounds

Beaches  
Boat & Canoe Rental

### Miles of Road

Gravel - 2

Number of Picnic Tables - 30

Trailer Dump Station

Water Accesses - 1

Fishing Piers - 1

### Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 8  
Under 100 sq.ft. - 16  
Miles of Posted Boundary - 8

### Park Utilities

Number of Septic Tanks - 10  
Number of Wells - 4  
Number of Individual  
Water Distribution Systems - 6

## PROBLEMS FACING GLACIAL LAKES STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in Glacial Lakes State Park to maintain. 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 park's natural and cultural resources are also in need of protection and management to perpetuate Glacial Lakes' resources. In the past, facilities were developed in prehistoric and historic use areas. These areas deserve to be protected and interpreted.

Of special concern is the conversion of existing old farm fields to prairie vegetation. This includes plugging drain tiles to re-establish wetlands that existed prior to farming.

There is also a need for new facilities such as a trail center which is particularly needed in the winter. Only very limited interpretive displays are now provided for park visitors.

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

## RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN GLACIAL LAKES STATE PARK

Very little development work has been completed at Glacial Lakes State Park in recent years. Some minor campground rehabilitation and limited road work is all that has been accomplished.

## GLACIAL LAKES STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

#### **Old Field Conversion to Prairie - \$10,000**

Project includes planting prairie grass and flowers in old fields to establish prairie.

**Subtotal \$10,000**

### MAJOR REHABILITATION

#### **Campground Rehabilitation - \$25,000**

Project includes lengthening spurs, improving drainage, landscaping, and installing new tables and fire rings.

#### **Office/Contact Station Remodel - \$30,000**

Project includes an addition to allow for public orientation displays, information bulletin boards, adequate office space and utility rehabilitation.

**Subtotal \$55,000**

### NEW DEVELOPMENT

#### **Pave Parking Areas and Roads - \$100,000**

This project would reduce yearly road maintenance and greatly reduce existing dust problems.

#### **Develop All Season Trail Center - \$125,000**

Project includes construction of a winterized trail/interpretive center at the existing trail parking area. Building would include a heated meeting area.

#### **Trail Improvements - \$10,000**

Project includes erosion control, widening trails where needed and general rehabilitation of existing trail system.

**Subtotal \$235,000**

**TOTAL DEVELOPMENT  
NEEDS - \$300,000**

## 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 therefore 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 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 GLACIAL LAKES STATE PARK

Parcel #	Acres
1	320
2	208
Total	528 acres.

## PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Glacial Lakes 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 enhance 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 Glacial Lakes 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 Glacial Lakes 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.

Glacial Lakes State park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

Glacial Lakes State Park  
development needs - **\$300,000**

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

