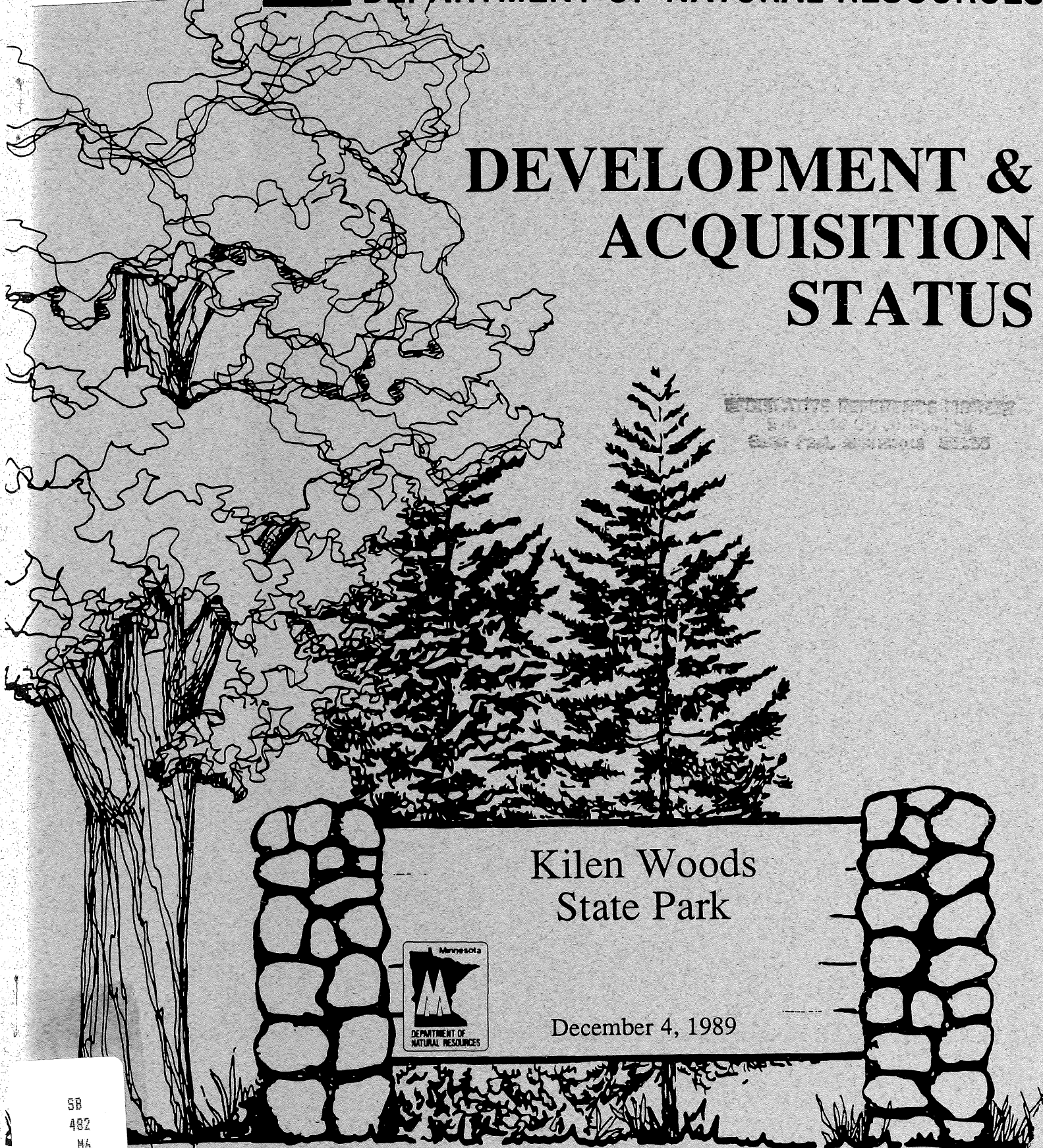




STATE OF  
**MINNESOTA**  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

900251

# DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS



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D34  
v.25

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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 KILEN WOODS STATE PARK**

Kilen Woods State Park is located in southwestern Minnesota in Jackson County. The park is situated along the Des Moines River 11 miles south of Win-don on CSAH 24. Established in 1945 the park was named after Agil Kilen, from whom most of the park land was purchased. Today the park's statutory boundary encompasses 228 acres. Of these 17 acres are privately owned.

The gently rolling hills that typify this park are the result of glacial movements. Approximately 15,000 years ago a huge glacier, thousands of feet thick, covered much of southern Minnesota. When the great ice sheet retreated it left thick deposits of sand, gravel, rock and mineral debris in the form of hills. Through these hills the Des Moines River flows through a deep narrow valley carved by glacial meltwater on its way to join the Mississippi River.

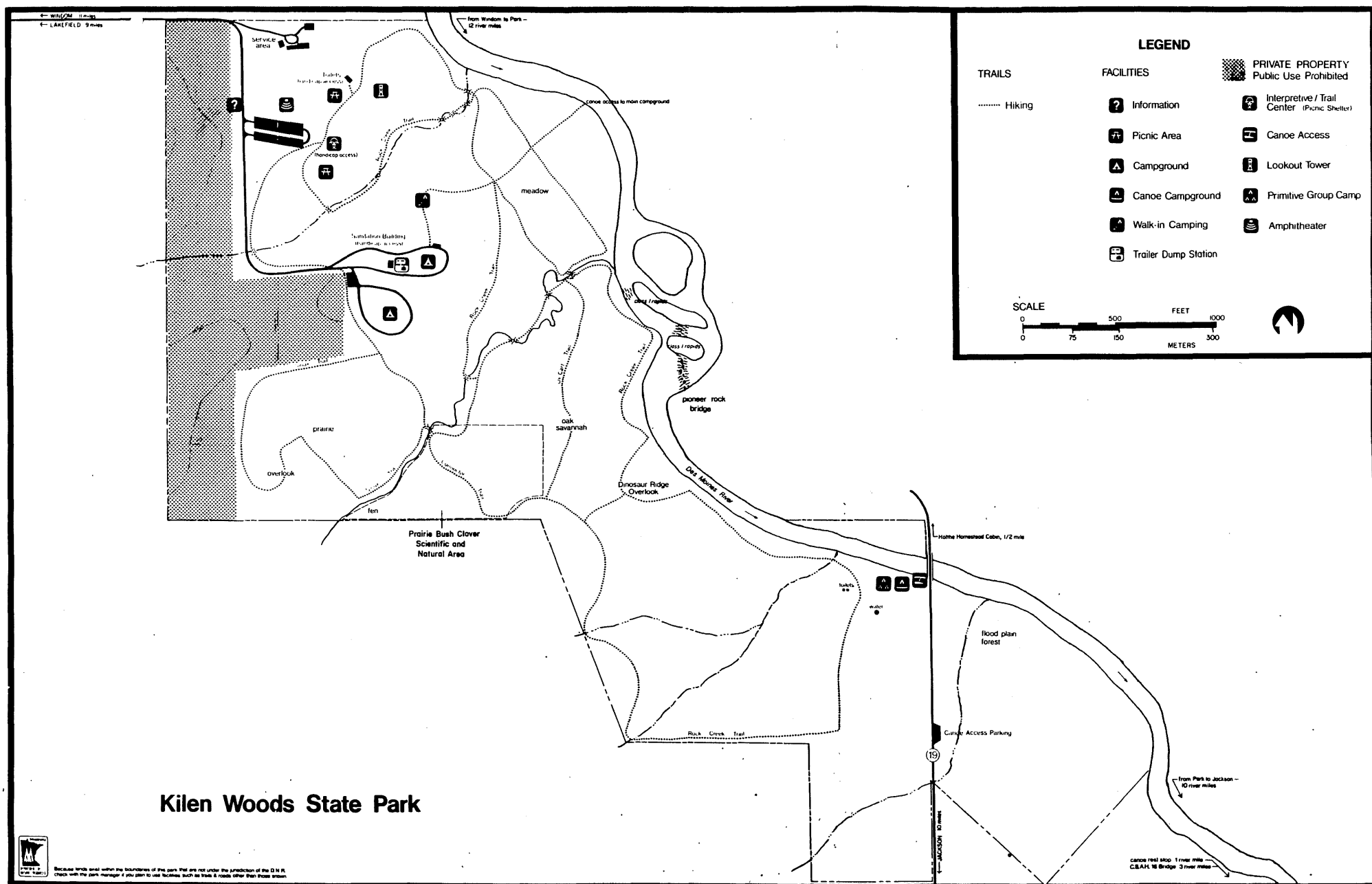
Originally, prairie areas covered the hill tops and side slopes of the park. Moving down the slopes the bluffland prairie met oak savanna which eventually gave way to dense oak woods towards the bottom of the ravines. Along the riverbottom there was a dense mixed woods of elm, cottonwood, ash, silver maple, box elder, basswood and walnut.

Since the time of European settlement the vegetation pattern of the park has remained relatively constant with the exception of the prairie areas. Most of the prairie lands with their fertile soils, were cultivated and pastured leaving little native prairie vegetation present today. Efforts are currently underway to re-establish native prairie species in the park.

The park's river, woods, meadows, and scattered grasslands provide habitat for a variety of wildlife. Over 150 species of birds are known to use the park including: the red-tail hawk, great horned owl, cooper's hawk, gray partridge, ring-necked pheasant, sora and Virginia rails, red-headed woodpecker, eastern kingbird and great blue heron.

Because of the abundance of winter cover and available food, Kilen Woods provides one of the few places in Jackson County where deer can successfully winter. The park is home to a resident deer population of 20 to 30 animals. This number increases four or five fold during the winter with about 20% of the deer in Jackson County wintering in the park area. Many other species of mammals make their homes in the park. These include red and gray fox, raccoon, beaver, mink and woodchuck.

Kilen Woods State Park offers a variety of recreational experiences among rolling wooded hills, grasslands, flood plain forests, and along the Des Moines River. visitor attractions include dinosaur ridge overlook, prairie meadow and the lookout tower. Other popular activities include hiking the parks many trails, canoeing and fishing on the Des Moines River, camping, picnicking and bird watching.



## EXISTING FACILITIES

The following is an inventory of the existing physical plant of Kilen Woods State Park

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 228

Acres of state land - 211

Acres of private land - 17

### Campsites

Drive in - 33

Walk in - 4

Canoe in - 3

Showers

Campsites with electricity - 11

### Miles of trails

Hiking - 5

Cross Country Ski - 1.5

Snowmobile - 3.5

### Miles of Road

Gravel - 1

### Enclosed Picnic Shelter

Number of Picnic Tables - 28

Trailer Dump Station

Water Accesses - 1

### Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 6

Under 100 sq.ft. - 7

Miles of Posted Boundary - 5

Seasonal Visitor Centers

### Park Utilities

Number of Septic Tanks - 3

Number of Wells - 2

Number of Individual

Water Distribution Systems - 2

Miles of State Owned Power Line - .5

## PROBLEMS FACING KILEN WOODS STATE PARK

There are some public recreational facilities in Kilen Woods State Park to maintain. Many are in need of replacement or major rehabilitation. Most were constructed in the 1950'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 Kilen Woods 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 preservation of the remaining small parcels of native prairie still left in the park. This along with the establishment of new prairie in existing old farm fields will show a representation of what southwest Minnesota was before settlement.

Agricultural runoff and encroachment threatens the scientific and natural area within the park's boundary and affects the atmosphere and feeling of the entire park.

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

## RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN KILEN WOODS STATE PARK

Very little development has occurred at Kilen Woods in the last few years.

## KILEN WOODS STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

#### **Establishment of Prairie - \$10,000**

Convert old farm fields and pastures to prairie vegetation.

#### **Oak Savannah Restoration - \$42,000**

Restore oak communities to old fields, pastures and woodlots.

#### **Natural Resources Assessment - \$15,000**

Including intensive study and inventory of vegetation.

**Subtotal \$67,000**

### MAJOR REHABILITATION

#### **Campground Toilet Rehabilitation - \$40,000**

Rehabilitate existing campground toilet building including new fixtures, floor and wall finishes and upgrading utilities.

#### **Dinosaur Ridge Trail Rehabilitation - \$10,000**

Rehabilitation of the severely eroded ridge trail. Restoration of contours and instillation of steps.

**Subtotal \$50,000**

### NEW DEVELOPMENT

#### **Office/Contact Station - \$200,000**

New facility will serve as public contact building including park offices, interpretation and visitor orientation.

#### **Shop Building - \$50,000**

New combination shop/storage building. Currently state equipment and supplies are stored outside.

**Subtotal \$250,000**

**TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS - \$367,000**

## 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 KILEN WOODS STATE PARK**

Parcel #	Acres
25	17.00
<u>Total 17.00 acres.</u>	

## PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Kilen Woods 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 prairies and forests. These will ensure that future visitors will be able to experience the diverse nature of Minnesota's native flora and fauna.

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 Kilen Woods 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 Kilen Woods 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.

Kilen Woods State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

Kilen Woods State Park development needs - **\$367,000**

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



