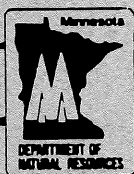




DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY
and State Office Building
P.O. Box 5400, St. Paul, MN 55154

Lake Bemidji
State Park



October 31, 1989

SB
482
.M6
D34
v.27

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 LAKE BEMIDJI STATE PARK

Lake Bemidji State Park is located in extreme south central Beltrami County, 5 miles north of Bemidji on the north shore of Lake Bemidji. Major highways serving the area are Trunk Highways 2 and 71. County Road 20 bisects the park and serves as the major access corridor.

The park was established in 1923 to conserve remnants of virgin pine forest and to provide for land and water based recreation on Lake Bemidji. The park's statutory boundary encompasses 1688 acres. Of these 126.72 acres are in private ownership.

The landforms in Lake Bemidji State Park were created as the last glaciers receded from Minnesota some 10,000 years ago. Rock material, scoured from land to the north was deposited as till when the glaciers melted and receded. The till was overlaid with pockets of sorted outwash carried by meltwater from the glaciers. Some of the outwash was deposited on a flat plain which today underlies the campground. The marshes and lakes in the park and Lake Bemidji were formed when large ice blocks broke from the glacier, melted and left depressions which filled with water.

Lake Bemidji served as the hunting and fishing grounds for generations of Dakota Indians until the westward moving Chippewa (Ojibway) arrived in the area about 1750. Armed with guns, provided by the French, the Chippewa were able to drive the Dakota into the Great Plains away from their ancestral lakes and hunting grounds. The name Bemidji came from Chief Bemidji, Chief of the Chippewa tribe which lived near the lake.

In 1883 large tracts of white and red pine dominated the landscape when Ohio lumber baron T.B. Walker acquired land in and around what is now the park. Walker's crews subsequently logged intensive areas of the lakeshore and floated the logs to the Crookston lumber mill at the south end of the lake for processing. Lake Bemidji and the Crookston lumber mill were the center of the last big white pine logging surge in the north central United States.

Only scattered stands of virgin white pine remained when the state of Minnesota purchased the land from Walker in 1924. Most of the remaining stands were on isolated hills away from the lakeshore.

Lake Bemidji State Park is located in a region of high tourist activity. In 1987 alone, over 105,000 visitors took advantage of the outstanding recreational opportunities the park has to offer.

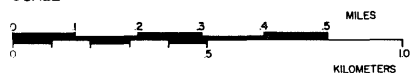
LEGEND

TRAILS

- Hiking
- 10 Trail Distances in Kilometers
- Mountain Bike/Hiking
- Interpretive
- Bog Boardwalk
- * Scenic Overlook

PRIVATE PROPERTY
Public Use Prohibited
(except on designated trails)

SCALE



FACILITIES

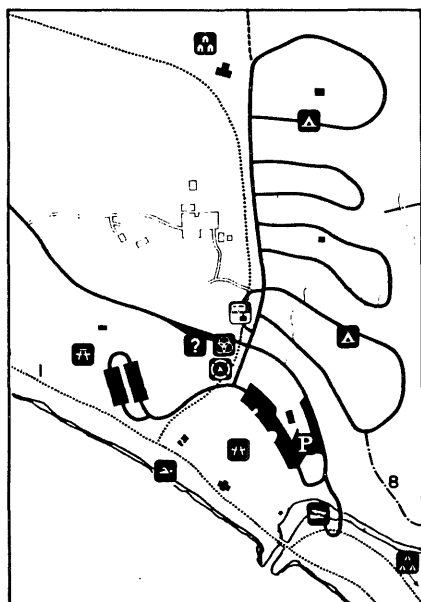
- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Information/Office | Parking |
| Picnic Area | Council Ring |
| Swimming | Campground |
| Boat Ramp | Interpretive Center
(with modern winter trail center) |
| Group Center | Trailer Sanitation Station |
| Primitive Group Camp | |

- TRAIL NAMES
1. Rocky Point
 2. Homestead
 3. Balsam
 4. Fish Hawk
 5. Pinewood
 6. Old Logging
 7. Bog
 8. Bass Creek



Lake Bemidji State Park

DNR Regional Headquarters

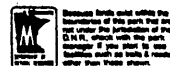


Lake Bemidji

West Arm
(Big Bass Lake)

Big Bass Lake

BUENA VISTA STATE FOREST



TURTLE RIVER 4 miles

BUENA VISTA STATE FOREST

EXISTING FACILITIES

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

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 1688
Park Administered 1287.45
State Trust Fund 273.83
Private 126.72

Campsites

Drive in - 100
Showers
Modern toilets
Campsites with electricity - 43
Group camps - 2

Miles of Trails

Self-guided Interpretive - 1.0
Hiking - 14.0
Bicycle - 6.0
Cross Country Ski - 9.0
Snowmobile - 3.0

Dining Hall

Beach

Boat Rental

Miles of Gravel Road - 2

Enclosed Picnic Shelter

Number of Picnic Tables - 50

Trailer Dump Station - 1

Visitor Center

Water Access - 1

Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 16
Under 100 sq.ft. - 15

Miles of Posted Boundary - 13

Park Utilities

Number of Sewage Lift Stations - 1
Number of Septic Tanks - 11
Number of Wells - 3
Number of Individual
Water Distribution Systems - 3

Miles of State Owned Power Line - 1.1

PROBLEMS FACING LAKE BEMIDJI STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in Lake Bemidji 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 Lake Bemidji's resources. In the past, facilities were developed in areas of ancient encampments. These encampments deserve to be protected and interpreted.

Some of the buildings in the park have been nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. These buildings are a very important part of the state park history and must be preserved. Other facilities including the campground and picnic area are heavily used and in need of major rehabilitation.

The current vegetation of the park includes old pine stands that should be managed to ensure natural pine stands in the future.

The many miles of trail also need work to prevent erosion and to provide quality experiences for hikers and cross country skiers. The bog boardwalk trail, a unique feature and major park attraction, needs to be extended to take full advantage of the park's extensive Spruce-Tamarack bog environment.

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

RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN LAKE BEMIDJI STATE PARK

1. Construction of a combination contact station/trail/interpretive center.
2. Expansion of the existing campground.
3. Construction of a boardwalk through the bog.
4. Improvements to the existing boat launch.

LAKE BEMIDJI STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Hazardous Tree Removal \$20,000

Remove identified hazardous trees from the use areas.
Plant 100 young trees to replace those removed.

Clean up and Monitor Ten Dumpsites \$25,000

Clean up ten dumpsites in the park and drill test wells as necessary to sample for hazardous waste contamination.

Subtotal \$45,000

MAJOR REHABILITATION

Restore WPA Buildings \$110,000

Rehabilitate three WPA buildings. These will include actions necessary to stabilize them and to meet Department of Health standards.

Upgrade Campground Electrical Outlets \$15,000

Bring the electrical service for twenty-three campsites up to code.

Campground Rehabilitation \$25,300

Includes gravel spurs, improved fire rings, adequate drainage and erosion repair.

Replace Campground Sanitation Building \$150,000

Replace the undersized deteriorating toilet and shower building with one large enough to accommodate the demand.

Remodel Picnic Area Sanitation Building \$30,000

Complete renovation of building interior including new floor and wall finishes, new fixtures and replace old plumbing. Make handicapped accessible.

Install Handicapped Accessible Vault Toilets \$25,000

Replace seven standard pit toilets with handicapped accessible vault toilets. These will be in the picnic area, group camp, campground and at the boat launch.

Replace Picnic Tables \$28,000

Replace 140 deteriorated tables with new low maintenance, stable picnic tables.

Harbor Improvement \$23,000

Dredge existing harbor and repair or replace docks.

Complete Bike Trails \$75,000

Complete paved bicycle trail.

Pave Parking Areas and Roads \$175,000

Asphalt surface roads and parking lots to eliminate dust and decrease maintenance.

Remodel Shop Building \$40,000

Convert unheated storage area to heated work space.

Office Space Addition/Remodel \$25,000

Expand office space to provide better working conditions and public service.

Residence Addition/Remodel \$26,000

Revise managers residence to provide adequate living space, remodel kitchen and bathroom.

Subtotal \$747,00

NEW DEVELOPMENT

Playground Equipment \$10,000

Install rustic playground equipment in the campground and beach/picnic area.

Interpretive Displays and Amphitheater \$28,000

Complete interpretive displays at existing center and provide adequate seating at the amphitheater.

Trail Expansion \$25,000

Construct six miles of skiing and hiking trails through very scenic areas of the park, including completion of a bog area boardwalk.

Lighted Ski Trail \$125,000

construct two miles of lighted ski trails. Lights will be low level and will be removed after the ski season.

Storage Building \$30,000

Construct an unheated storage building near the park shop to store equipment and supplies.

Wood Storage Building \$30,000

Construct a simple pole barn type storage building for bundled wood and lumber.

Remote Group Camp \$20,000

Develop a primitive group camp on Bass Lake with a hand pump well handicapped accessible vault toilets, a shelter, tent sites and improve the access road.

Subtotal \$268,000

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS \$1,050,300

LAND ACQUISITION

There are 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. Prices of land vary greatly depending on location, amenities and improvements. 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 faced with private property within state parks.

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

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

PRIVATE LANDS TO BE ACQUIRED IN LAKE BEMIDJI STATE PARK

Parcel #	Acres
6	40.00
7a	30.00
11	8.82
13	20.00
14	10.00
17	.96
18	.26
19	.26
20	.43
21	.76
22	3.30
23	.76
24	1.20
25	.53
26	.51
27	.78
28	.50
30	3.15
31	4.50
<hr/>	
Total	126.72

PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Lake Bemidji 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 forest stands. These will ensure that future visitors will be able to experience the ever-changing 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.

Major rehabilitation of facilities constructed during the CCC/WPA era is critical. To lose these structures would be to lose an important part of our state park history. The addition of new facilities is also critical to protect resources as well as meet user demands.

The acquisition of private lands within the park will assure that private and commercial development do not distract from the natural beauty of Lake Bemidji State Park.

A stable funding source is essential for effective long term resource management and planning for the Minnesota State Park System and Lake Bemidji 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.

Bemidji State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

Lake Bemidji State Park development
needs - **\$1,060,300**

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

