



STATE OF  
**MINNESOTA**

900251

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS

Lake Maria  
State Park

January 19, 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.

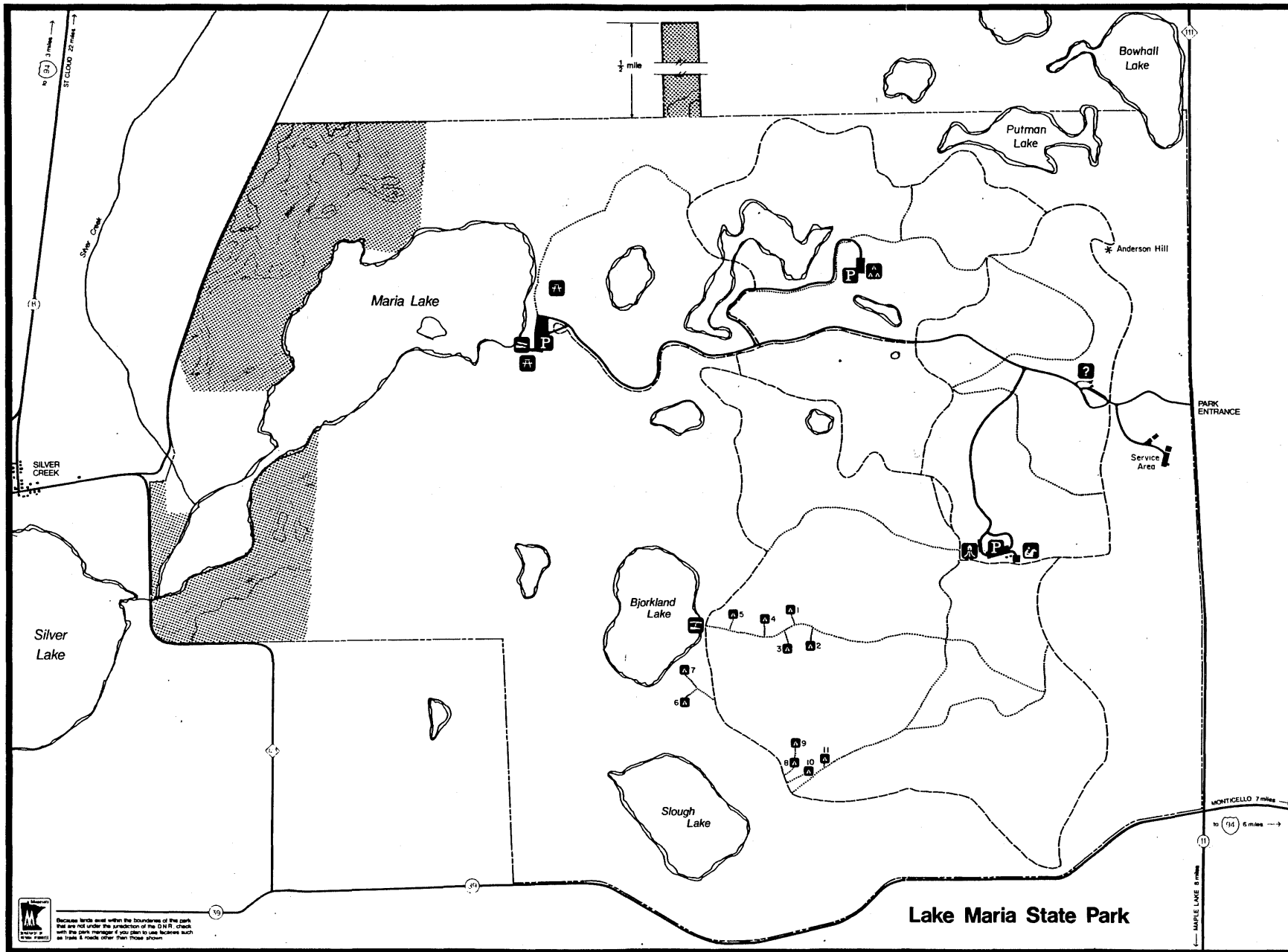
## **AN OVERVIEW OF LAKE MARIA STATE PARK**

Lake Maria State Park is located in north central Wright County, several miles west of Monticello and forty-five miles northwest of Minneapolis. Chief access to the park is on County Road #11 approximately six miles west of Interstate #94. The statutory boundary encompasses 1,590.97 acres. Of these, 171.97 acres are privately owned.

Located at the northern end of the Big Woods Moraine, the park is characterized by rough, wooded terrain, pocketed with lakes and marshes. Thousands of years ago, glaciers advanced south across Minnesota, scouring the land as they went. When the last glacier melted and receded, it deposited a layer of rock and mineral debris several feet deep in the area now occupied by the park. Underlying this glacial material is a bedrock of granite. The eastern two-thirds of the park is almost entirely wooded. Here, northern hardwood trees such as sugar maple, basswood and red oak predominate.

The park's western third is characterized by lakes and marshes with hardwood stands on the ridges. The marshes and lakes provide excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife, including over 200 songbird species which are either residents or seasonal migrants. Species observed include the bald eagle, Cooper's hawk, mallard, teal, wood duck, great blue heron, marsh hawk, meadow lark, goldfinch and many more. Permanent residents include the pileated woodpecker, screech and great-horned owls. Many species of mammals also inhabit the park. These include shrews, mice, bats, rabbits, woodchucks, grey red and fox squirrels, beaver, muskrats, raccoons, mink, red fox, striped skunk and white-tailed deer.

Lake Maria State Park was established as a result of the foresight and support of local citizens. These people formed the Wright County Federation of Sportsmen to promote the preservation of open space and wildlife lands. The park is fast becoming a forested island in an expanding sea of agricultural and residential development. The park's importance as a haven for wildlife and recreationists will increase as development in this area continues.



# LEGEND

## TRAILS

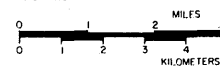
- ..... Hiking
- Horseback, Hiking

## FACILITIES

- ? Information/Office
- P Parking
- ⛶ Picnic Area
- ⛶ Trail Center
- ⛶ Equestrian Area
- ⛶ Boat Ramp
- ⛶ Canoe Access
- ⛶ Primitive Group Camp
- ⛶ Backpack Camping
- \* Overlook

- PRIVATE PROPERTY
- Public Use Prohibited

## SCALE



Lake Maria State Park

## EXISTING FACILITIES

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

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 1590.97

Acres of state land - 1419

Acres of private land - 171.97

### Campsites

Back Pack - 15

### Miles of Trails

Hiking - 13

Horse - 6

Cross Country Ski - 12

### Boat & Canoe Rental

### Miles of Road

Asphalt - 1

Gravel - 2

### Enclosed Picnic Shelter

Number of Picnic Tables - 40

Water Accesses - 1

### Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 4

Under 100 sq.ft. - 13

Miles of Posted Boundary - 5

### Visitor Center

### Park Utilities

Number of Septic Tanks - 3

Number of Wells - 4

Number of Individual

Water Distribution Systems - 2

## PROBLEMS FACING LAKE MARIA STATE PARK

Recreational facilities in Lake Maria State Park are in need of extensive maintenance. Most were constructed in the 1960's, and are now in need of rehabilitation. New facilities are needed to meet growing recreational demands. Storage facilities are currently insufficient to meet management needs. The trail center complex is not large enough to accommodate heavy visitor use while providing adequate space for interpretive efforts.

The park's natural and cultural resources are also in need of protection and management to perpetuate Lake Maria's identity. In the past, facilities may have been developed in areas of cultural significance. These resources must be protected and should be interpreted.

Most use at Lake Maria is associated with its trail system. Heavy use of this resource has caused erosion. Affected areas must be repaired and rehabilitated to maintain the quality of the resource and the outdoor recreation experience it provides.

An updated and revised management plan is needed to clarify and define the goals and management plan for horse trails and related facilities. Horse trails, facilities, and their future are not addressed in the current management plan.

Important improvements have been completed at Lake Maria State Park in recent years. However, the goals identified in the ten-year-old management plan have not been achieved. New facilities and concentrated efforts at resource management are essential to ensuring that Lake Maria State Park will provide future generations with quality recreation opportunities.

## **RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN LAKE MARIA STATE PARK**

Major development projects over the past few years have included:

1. Construction of new contact/orientation station.
2. Construction of new trail center.

## **LAKE MARIA STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS**

### **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

#### **Hazardous Tree Removal - \$15,000**

Removal of hazardous trees in park use areas.

#### **Oak Regeneration/Wetland Management - \$15,000**

Enhancement and restoration of the native oak forest and wetland areas within the park.

**Subtotal - \$30,000**

### **MAJOR REHABILITATION**

#### **Road Rehabilitation - \$35,000**

Improvement to the gravel base where needed, and improved drainage.

#### **Trail Rehabilitation - \$30,000**

General rehabilitation of the trail system including erosion control realignment where necessary, and adequate signing.

#### **Picnic Area Rehabilitation - \$20,000**

Restoration and improvement of the trails, water systems, picnic facilities and parking area in the park's picnic area.

**Subtotal - \$85,000**

### **NEW DEVELOPMENT**

#### **New Storage Building - \$25,000**

Construction of a new storage building to store supplies and equipment.

#### **Trail Center Expansion - \$200,000**

Expansion of the trail center complex to allow more space for improved interpretive displays and programming, concession service, and toilet and shower facilities.

**Subtotal - \$225,000**

**TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS - \$340,000**

## 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 reduce 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 reduce potential for public use.

### PRIVATE LANDS TO BE ACQUIRED IN LAKE MARIA STATE PARK

Parcel #	Acres
14	0.33
15	2.79
19	6.06
20	3.03
21	0.33
22	3.03
24	72.73
25	83.67

**Total 171.97 acres.**



## PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Lake Maria 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 and wetlands. These will ensure that future visitors will be able to experience Minnesota's evolving habitat diversity.

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 distract from the natural beauty of Lake Maria 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 Lake Maria 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.

Lake Maria State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

Lake Maria State Park development needs - **\$340,000**

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

