



STATE OF
MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

900251

DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS

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ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55101

McCarthy Beach
State Park



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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 MCCARTHY BEACH STATE PARK

McCarthy Beach State Park is located in northern Minnesota, in extreme west-central St. Louis County approximately 20 miles north of Hibbing. The statutory boundary encompasses 2566 acres. Of these, 409.18 acres are privately owned. U.S. Highway 169 and state highways are the main transportation corridors serving the area. The main park access is located on County Road 915.

Rolling hills and plentiful lakes and wetlands dominate the landscape of McCarthy Beach State Park. Some 12,000 years ago, glaciers covered much of Minnesota including the McCarthy Beach area. When the last glacier retreated, it left behind deposits of sand, gravel and rock debris. The deposits make up the hills we see today. The park's numerous lakes and wetlands were formed when huge chunks of glacial ice broke off, leaving depressions which filled with water.

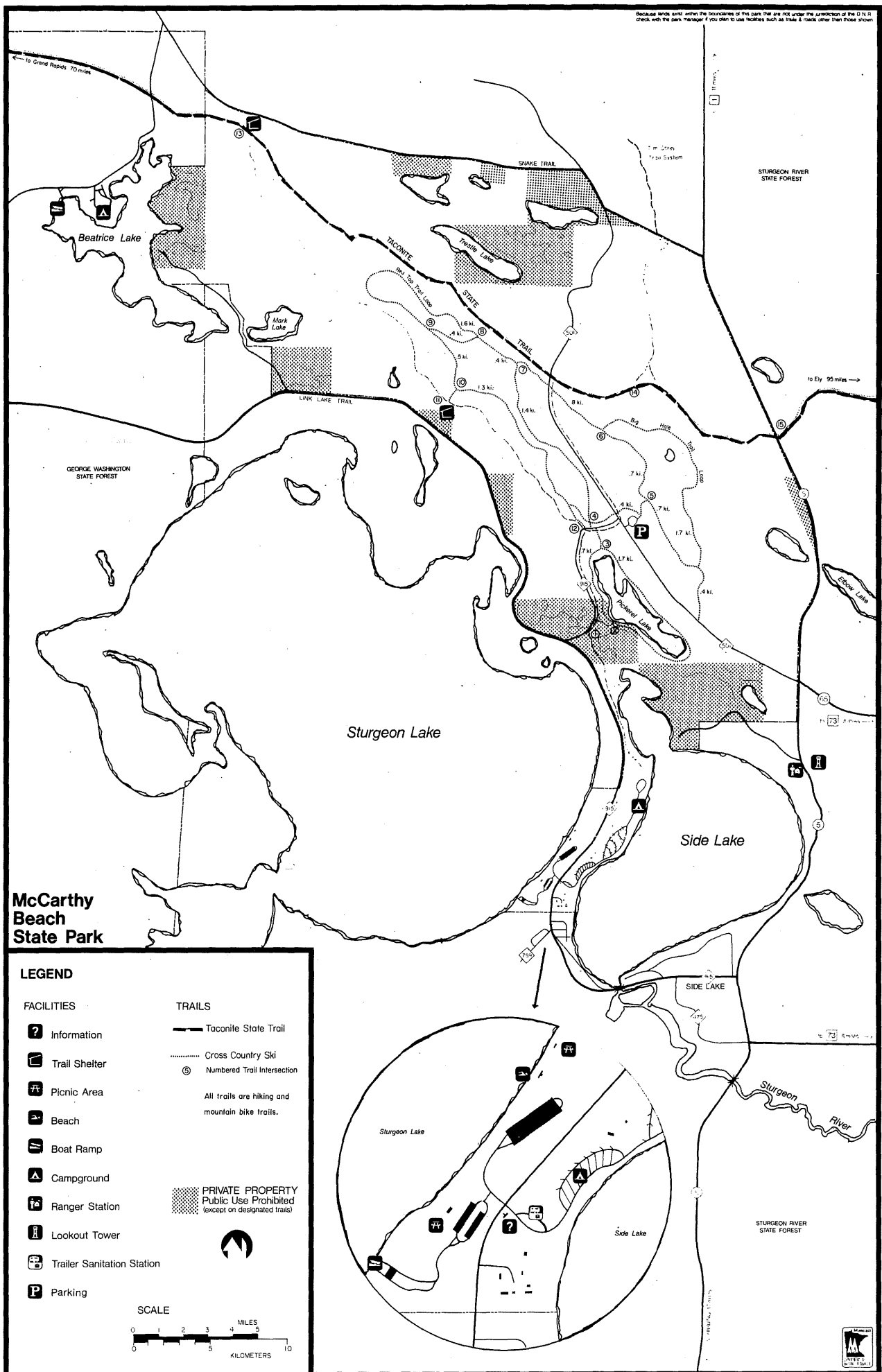
Since the retreat of the last glacier, the vegetation of northeastern Minnesota has been slowly changing. Tundra communities became established in the period following glaciation and were later succeeded by spruce forests. In time a general warming trend favored the establishment of red pine, jack pine, birch and aspen trees. And during the peak of this warming trend, white pine appeared in Minnesota.

Recurrent wildfires provided conditions conducive to red and jack pine regeneration. These species, along with the white pine, were able to remain a part of the regional vegetation until timber harvesting began in the late 1800's. Between 1880 and 1930 this region of Minnesota was extensively logged. Loggers removed most of the accessible pine leaving isolated stands that were not economically feasible to harvest, because of rough terrain or distance to transportation. The removal of nearly all of the mature pines severely reduced seed sources and left the land open to increased inhabitation by pioneer hardwood species such as aspen and birch.

Today, much of the park's uplands are occupied by quaking aspen and paper birch, with conifer bogs and marshes in the lowland areas. Scattered stands of pine remain, the most notable of which is an impressive red pine grove located between Sturgeon and Side Lakes, at the south end of the park.

An array of ecological communities from pine and birch forests, to deep clear lakes and spruce bogs provide a variety of habitats for abundant wildlife. Over 175 species of birds visit the area including northern goshawks, great-grey owls, bald eagles, common loons, and great-blue herons. Many species of mammals also inhabit the park. These include white-tailed deer, black bear, timber wolves, raccoons, mink, red squirrels, northern-flying squirrels and chipmunks.

McCarthy Beach State Park provides a variety of recreational experiences in a scenic and ecologically diverse setting. The many hills and wetlands attract hikers and wildlife enthusiasts. Sturgeon and Side Lakes are popular with swimmers, anglers, boaters, campers and picnickers and are just two of the seven lakes accessible through the park. The park's location in a region of high recreational demand, combined with excellent transportation corridors serving the area, make it a popular choice for thousands of visitors annually.



EXISTING FACILITIES

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

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 2566

Acres of state land - 2156.82

Acres of private land - 409.18

Campsites

Drive in - 59

Showers

Modern toilets

Miles of Trails

Hiking - 18

Bicycle - 17

Cross Country Ski - 5

Snowmobile - 12

Beaches - 1

Boat and Canoe Rental

Water Accesses - 2

Miles of Road

Asphalt - 2

Gravel - 1

Enclosed Picnic Shelter

Number of Picnic Tables - 150

Trailer Dump Station

Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 13

Under 100 sq.ft. - 12

Miles of Posted Boundary - 20

Park Utilities

Number of Septic Tanks - 6

Number of Wells - 2

Number of Individual

Water Distribution Systems - 4

Miles of State Owned Power Line - 1

PROBLEMS FACING MCCARTHY BEACH STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in McCarthy Beach State Park to maintain. Many are in need of replacement or major rehabilitation. Most were constructed in the 1930'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 if they are to be perpetuated. In the past, facilities may have been developed in areas of cultural significance. These areas must to be protected and should be interpreted.

A major need facing the park is the rehabilitation of the existing campground. Many years of use have deteriorated campsites to a point where they should be completely rebuilt. Existing pine stands are becoming senescent, and regeneration efforts should be undertaken to preserve the aesthetic qualities of the park.

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

RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN MCCARTHY BEACH STATE PARK

Major development projects over the past few years have included:

1. Rehabilitation of one of the campground sanitation buildings.
2. Rehabilitation of Beatrice Lake campground.
3. Construction of a new park shop and storage building.

MCCARTHY BEACH STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Resource Management - \$20,000

Restoration of pre-settlement species, through planting seedlings and managing dying stands.

Subtotal \$20,000

MAJOR REHABILITATION

Campground Rehabilitation - \$65,000

Complete rehabilitation of the existing campground, including lengthening spurs, landscaping, improving drainage, and providing new tables and fire rings.

Beach Erosion Control - \$10,000

Construction of retaining walls to eliminate beach sand erosion and improve pedestrian traffic circulation.

Subtotal \$75,000

NEW DEVELOPMENT

Contact Station/Orientation Center - \$250,000

This facility would be a combined office and orientation/interpretive center. This would maximize use of staff and allow visitors to learn more about the park and the surrounding area.

Campground Sanitation Building - \$120,000

This project would construct a new campground toilet/shower building to serve campers.

Group Camp/Picnic Area

Toilet Facilities - \$100,000

Project would construct a new toilet/shower facility at the group camp.

Bicycle Trail - \$60,000

A paved trail would reduce safety problems on existing roadways. It would also greatly enhance the user's experience.

Side Lake Fishing Pier - \$20,000

New fishing pier on Side Lake to accommodate handicapped, children and elderly wanting to fish.

Fire Tower Relocation - \$10,000

An existing D.N.R. fire tower would be relocated to the park to allow visitors to see the park from the tower.

Subtotal \$560,000

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS \$635,000

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 MCCARTHY BEACH STATE PARK

Parcel #	Acres	Parcel #	Acres
1	39.20	17	38.50
4	5.50	18	40.00
6a-6k	48.00	19	8.50
7	0.38	21	56.10
8	20.00	22	40.00
9	10.00	23	26.70
11	11.00	23a	13.30
13	3.50	25	10.50
14	5.20	26	10.50
15	6.00	27	14.80
16	1.50		

Total 409.18 acres.

PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on McCarthy Beach 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 habitats. These will ensure that future visitors will be able to experience the diverse nature of Minnesota's forests.

Some improvements will not only increase park use but will greatly increase the quality of the visitor's 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 McCarthy Beach 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 McCarthy Beach 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.

McCarthy Beach State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

McCarthy Beach State Park
development needs **\$635,000**.

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

