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Mille Lacs Kathio
State Park



November 27, 1989

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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 MILLE LACS KATHIO STATE PARK

Mille Lacs Kathio State Park is located in central Minnesota in the northwest corner of Mille Lacs County. The park is 5 miles northwest of Onamia and approximately 90 miles north of the Twin Cities Metropolitan area. It is accessible from the east via County Road 26 one mile off of U.S. Highway #169.

Established in 1957 in response to local support the park has a statutory boundary encompassing 10,585.16 acres. Of this 947.06 acres are privately owned and 237.6 acres are held in trust by the Federal Government for the Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe.

The park's rolling, hilly terrain is a testament to Minnesota's glacial history. As the last glaciers receded about 10,000 years ago a massive C-shaped terminal moraine was left behind and today serves as a dam to hold back Mille Lacs Lake along the lake's southwest shore. This type of moraine was formed by the deposition of glacial materials at the point of the farthest advance of the glacier. These materials range from fine clay particles to boulders. The moraine contains numerous lakes, ponds and the source of the Rum River which cuts through, providing the only outlet of Mille Lacs Lake.

The pre-European settlement vegetation cover was dominated by conifer forest comprised largely of white pine in pure stands and in stands mixed with red pine and hardwoods. Some of the pine has regenerated in the logged-off areas but today second growth forest of oak, maple, basswood, birch and aspen are the predominant forest species.

Mille Lacs Kathio is the most archeologically significant state park in Minnesota. So far, 19 sites have been identified, covering over 4,000 years of continuous habitation. The earliest site, dating from the Archaic Period, shows evidence of copper tool manufacture associated with the "old copper tradition". Prehistoric village sites, identified as Mdewakanton Dakota, date from early A.D. 1200 to European contact. It is this "Ancestral Dakota Homeland" component, along with the European contact period for which the park is designated a National Historic Landmark. These sites, located primarily along the shores of Ogechie and Shakopee lakes, provide an outstanding opportunity to interpret native American history.

Mille Lacs Lake was one of Minnesota's earliest resort and vacation areas. Demand for outdoor recreation in this area has risen dramatically. The result has been an increase in annual visitor use from less than 10,000 visitors in 1962, when the park was dedicated; to over 121,000 in 1988. Mille Lacs Kathio, with its rich historical background and scenic qualities, is well suited to fulfill this great need. Existing facilities include a 70 site campground, a 4 site group canoe camp, an interpretive center, boat launching facilities on the Rum River and 42 miles of trails.

LEGEND

TRAILS

- Hiking
- - - - Interpretive
- Horseback/Hiking

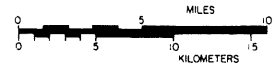
FACILITIES

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Information | Trail Center | Primitive Group Camp |
| Picnic Area | Canoe Landing | Canoe Campground |
| Interpretive Center | Campground | Trailer Sanitation Station |
| Swimming Pool | Observation Tower | Public Access |

PRIVATE PROPERTY
Public Use Prohibited
(except on designated trails)



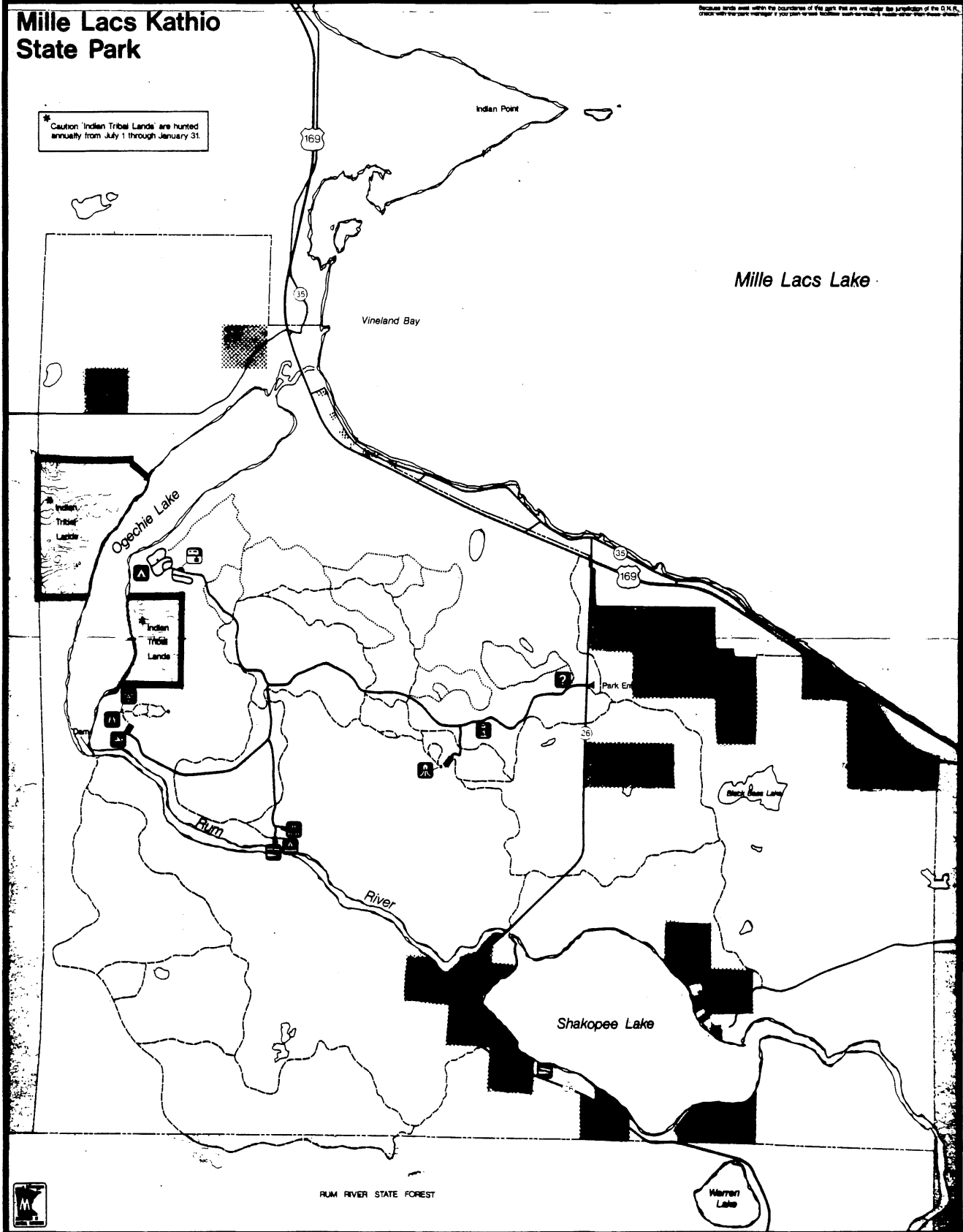
SCALE



Mille Lacs Kathio State Park

* Caution: Indian Tribal Lands are hunted annually from July 1 through January 31.

Because lands exist within the boundaries of the park that are not under the jurisdiction of the DNR, consult with the park manager if you plan to visit facilities such as roads, trails, or other areas within these areas.



EXISTING FACILITIES

The following is an inventory of the existing physical plant of Mille Lacs Kathio State Park.

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 10,585.16	Playgrounds - 1
Park Administered 8,864.68	Beaches - 1
State Trust Fund 400.00	Boat & Canoe Rentals
State Owned Other 44.06	
Private 947.06	Miles of Road
County 6.76	Asphalt - 4.0
Tribal 237.60	Gravel - 1.0
Township 80.00	
Campsites	Number of Picnic Tables - 44
Drive in - 70	Trailer Dump Station - 1
Group camp - 4	Water Accesses - 2
Horse	Number of Buildings
Showers	Over 100 sq.ft. - 19
Modern toilets	Under 100 sq.ft. - 17
	Miles of Posted Boundary - 19
Miles of Trails	Visitor Centers
Self-guided Interpret - 2.0	
Hiking - 35.0	Park Utilities
Horse - 27.0	Number of Septic Tanks - 11
Cross Country Ski - 19.6	Number of Wells - 9
Snowmobile - 19.0	Number of Individual
	Water Distribution Systems - 6

PROBLEMS FACING MILLE LACS KATHIO STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in Mille Lacs Kathio 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 park's natural and cultural resources are also in need of protection and management. In Kathio, park development has often proved incompatible with resource management responsibilities and objectives. A primary example is the present campground, which intrudes upon an early Dakota cemetery, and which must be removed and/or relocated at great expense.

The park vegetation is now very different from the original large conifer forests of pre-european settlement times. A vegetation management plan must be developed to restore original pine forests.

The park boundaries on the entire south, west, and north sides have not been surveyed and posted, and problems resulting from trespass, poaching of game, and illegal dumping, have resulted. The park boundaries are in need of surveying and posting.

The picnic area adjacent to the beach gets very heavy use but has no shelter. The trail system has been improved as funds have been available, still much work is needed. These are just a couple of examples of the improvements needed at the park.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN MILLE LACS KATHIO STATE PARK

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

Major development projects over the past few years have included:

1. Complete rehabilitation and expansion of the trail center.
2. Initiated comprehensive archaeological investigation of park use areas.
3. Remodeling of park interpretive center.

MILLE LACS KATHIO STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Cultural Resource Assessment \$40,000

This project is a continuation of an ongoing cultural resource assessment to determine archaeological significant areas of the park for development and interpretive reasons.

Vegetation Management \$20,000

Includes tree planting in use areas, restoration of pre-european settlement vegetation types, removal of exotic species, and wetland management.

Park Boundary Survey and Sign Posting \$5,000

Includes survey and posting of the entire south, west, and north boundaries of the park to prevent trespass and dumping problems.

Subtotal \$65,000

MAJOR REHABILITATION

Campground Relocation \$250,000

Relocation of existing campground. This will include the phased construction of a new campground. The intent is to remove the existing campground from an archaeologically sensitive area.

Trail Rehabilitation \$25,000

Project includes repair of washouts, culvert replacement, rerouting of some ski trails to improve safety.

Subtotal \$275,000

NEW DEVELOPMENT

New Picnic Shelter \$40,000

Project includes the construction of a picnic shelter in the picnic area. This will allow school groups, family reunions and other group use in inclement weather.

Subtotal \$40,000

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS \$380,000

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 park 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 investments and reduce potential for public use.

PRIVATE LANDS TO BE ACQUIRED IN MILLE LACS KATHIO STATE PARK

Parcel #	Acres
15	80.00
19	0.38
24	7.50
27	74.20
27A	40.00
27B	16.40
38	63.70
40	34.00
41	50.20
43	62.78
44	40.00
46	45.00
49, 57, 59-63	10.82 (lots)
66	32.33
66A	88.14
68	44.93
72	40.00
73	40.00
74	75.76
75	40.00
80, 82-87	3.53 (lots)
89	5.20
90	5.00
91	6.00
98	5.90
92	11.90
99	0.32
93	5.22
94	1.46
95	1.50
96	4.01
97	0.48

Total 936.66 acres.

PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Mille Lacs Kathio 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.

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 distract from the natural beauty of Mille Lacs Kathio 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 Mille Lacs Kathio 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.

Mille Lacs Kathio State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

Mille Lacs Kathio State Park development
needs - **\$380,000**

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

