



STATE OF  
**MINNESOTA**  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

900251

# DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS

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Moose Lake  
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 MOOSE LAKE STATE PARK

Moose Lake State Park is located in Carlton County, 2 miles east of the town of Moose Lake and 35 miles southwest of Duluth, on Interstate 35. The park was established 1971 and has a statutory boundary that encompasses 965 acres. Of these, 293.64 acres are privately owned.

Gently rolling hills interspersed with lakes and wetlands typify Moose Lake State Park. These physical features are the result of glacial activity that occurred between 2 million and 10,000 years ago. During this period enormous sheets of ice, thousands of feet thick, advanced and retreated four times across northern Minnesota. When the last glacier melted and retreated, accumulations of sand, gravel, rock and mineral debris carried by the glacier as bed load were deposited in the hills we see today. Moosehead and Echo Lakes were formed when huge ice blocks broke from the glacier, melted and filled depressions left by the retreating ice sheet.

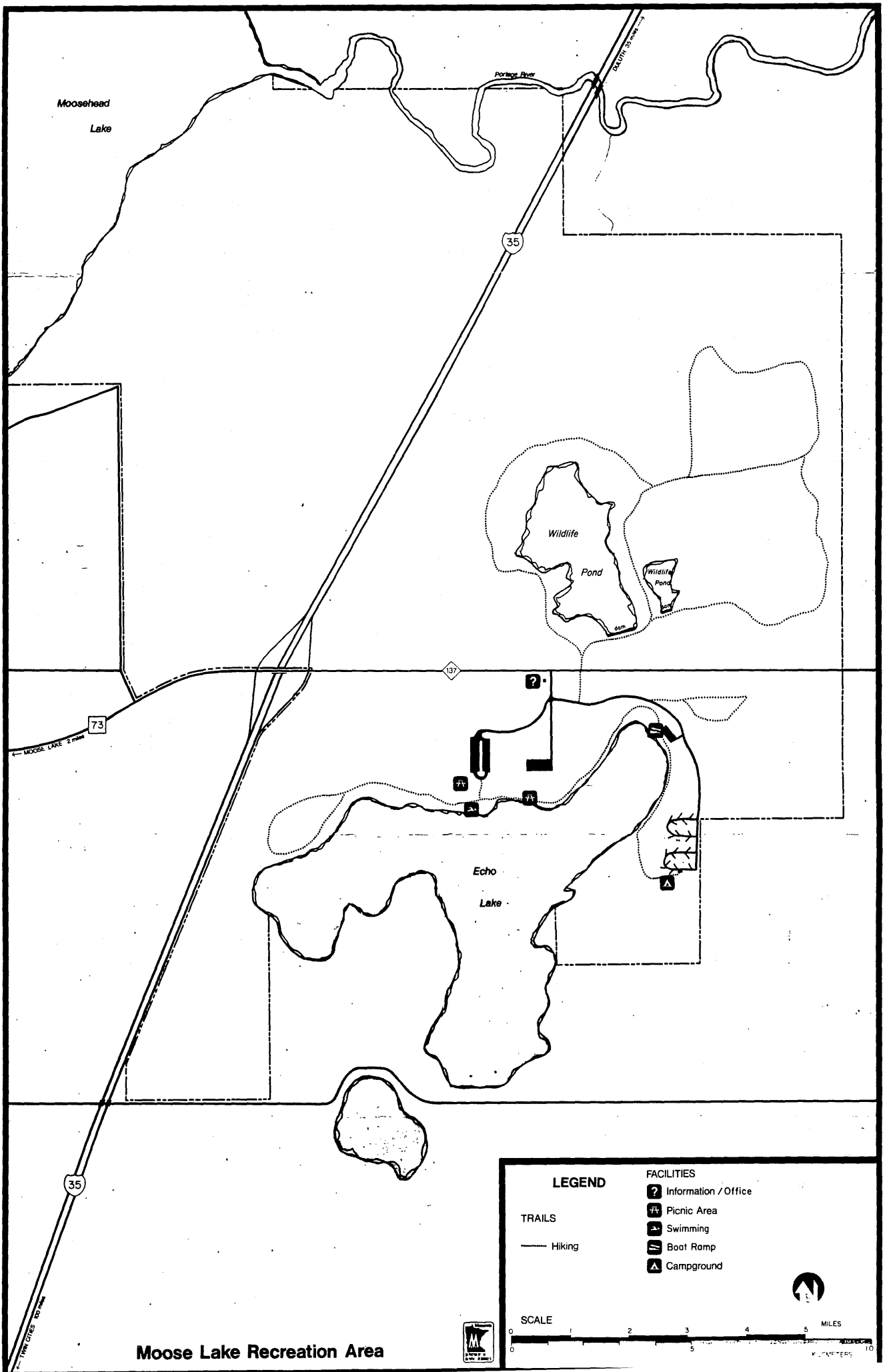
Prior to European settlement two major vegetation patterns dominated the park landscape. The northern half of the park had an overstory of white and red pine while the southern half was dominated by aspen, birch and conifers.

In the mid 1800's loggers entered the area to harvest the abundant pines. Today little of the original white and red pine remain. The only mature pine present in the park are concentrated along the shore of Moosehead Lake. These trees were probably too young to harvest when the rest of the park was logged.

When the park was established much of the land was old farm fields. Many of these fields have been planted with white and red pine and some spruce. The remaining portions of the park are occupied by mature aspen stands intermixed with maple, basswood and birch.

The open areas of the park combined with mature hardwood stands provide habitat for a variety of wildlife. Over 200 bird species use the park area either as residents or seasonal migrants. Most notable of these include the bald eagle, goshawk, great-horned owl, pileated woodpecker, chestnut-sided warbler, and northern oriole. Forty-nine species of mammals also inhabit the park area including white-tailed deer, black bear, red fox, porcupine, mink and northern flying squirrel.

Moose Lake State Park offers visitors a variety of recreational experiences. Moosehead and Echo Lakes provide fishing for northern pike, walleye and panfish. Miles of trails provide opportunities for hiking, cross county skiing and snowmobiling. Other popular activities include swimming, picnicking and camping.



Moosehead  
Lake

Portage River  
35

Wildlife

Pond

Wildlife

Pond

73

← MOOSE LAKE 2 miles

137

?

Echo  
Lake

35

← THUNDER BAY 50 miles

### LEGEND

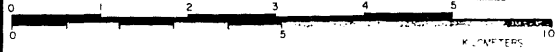
#### TRAILS

— Hiking

#### FACILITIES

- Information / Office
- Picnic Area
- Swimming
- Boat Ramp
- Campground

#### SCALE



Moose Lake Recreation Area



## EXISTING FACILITIES

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

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 965

Acres of state land - 671.36

Acres of private land - 293.64

### Campsites

Drive in - 18

### Miles of Trails

Hiking - 4

Cross Country Ski - 7

Snowmobile - 2.1

Playgrounds - 1

Beaches - 1

Boat & Canoe Rental

### Miles of Road

Asphalt - 1

Gravel - 2

Number of Picnic Tables - 30

Water Accesses - 1

### Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 4

Under 100 sq.ft. - 13

Miles of Posted Boundary - 10

### Park Utilities

Number of Septic Tanks - 2

Number of Wells - 2

Number of Individual

Water Distribution Systems - 2

## PROBLEMS FACING MOOSE LAKE STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in Moose Lake 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 in need of protection and management to perpetuate Moose Lake's identity. In the past, facilities may have been developed in areas of cultural significance. These areas must be protected and should be interpreted.

The park is currently turning away many campers on weekends as a result of inadequate facilities. With adequate management and facilities, the presence of large quantities of agate in the park may eventually be promoted as an attraction to rock hounds.

Very few improvements have been completed at Moose Lake State Park in recent years. The goals identified in the ten-year-old management plan have not yet been achieved.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN MOOSE LAKE STATE PARK

No significant improvements to Moose Lake State Park have occurred in recent years.

## **MOOSE LAKE STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS**

### **MAJOR REHABILITATION**

#### **Campground Rehabilitation - \$15,000**

Rehabilitation to include campsite improvement, installation of electrical outlets, tree planting and road rehabilitation.

**Subtotal \$15,000**

### **NEW DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Shelter/Change Buildings for**

#### **Picnic Beach - \$125,000**

New facility with toilets and change rooms to serve picnic area and beach area.

#### **Campground Sanitation Building - \$90,000**

New sanitation building to serve existing campground and future campground expansion.

#### **Shop/Storage Building - \$53,000**

Construct a new shop, cold storage building and gravel service court. Equipment and supplies are currently stored outside.

#### **Campground Expansion - \$30,000**

Expand existing campground to serve increasing demand.

#### **Accessible Fishing Pier - \$15,000**

Construct handicapped accessible fishing pier near picnic area to provide shore fishing.

**Subtotal \$313,000**

**TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS \$328,000**

## 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 MOOSE LAKE STATE PARK

Parcel #	Acres
1	120.00
2	40.00
3	19.68
5	45.36
6	9.20
7	39.40
8	20.00

**Total 293.64 acres.**



## PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Moose Lake 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 native plant communities. These will ensure that future visitors will be able to experience the diverse nature of Minnesota's wetlands and 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 Moose Lake 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 Moose Lake 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.

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

Moose Lake State Park development needs **\$328,000**

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

