



STATE OF  
**MINNESOTA**  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

900251

# DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS

Beaver Creek Valley  
State Park



January 8, 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 BEAVER CREEK VALLEY STATE PARK

Beaver Creek Valley State park is located in extreme southeastern Minnesota in Houston County, four miles west of Caledonia. The park was established in 1937 and has a statutory boundary that encompasses 1,214 acres, of these, 479.55 acres are privately owned.

Beaver Creek Valley State Park is situated in the driftless area, which covers 10,000 square miles in adjoining parts of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois. This area was untouched by most recent glacial advances. However, as the glaciers to the north and west receded, torrents of meltwater poured into area streams and rivers, carving deep, rugged valleys with tremendous power. Valley walls were cut 250 feet deep down to the present Beaver Creek. These rock walls are made up a layer of sandstone and two layers of dolostone, a sedimentary rock similar to limestone. These formations were deposited by inland seas between 450 and 500 million years ago. The porous nature of these rocks is responsible for numerous freshwater springs that occur along the valley walls.

Areas in the park were used by early native Americans. Stone tools have been found and preliminary archaeological surveys indicate a village site just outside the park's western boundary. European settlers arrived during the early 1800's, and the remains of an old homestead can be seen in the park.

An important area attraction is Scheck's Mill, a two story stone grist mill which is located north of the park. While privately owned, it is open for tours. The mill was constructed in 1875-1876, in the heart of Minnesota's milling region during the middle of what is known as the new process era. Scheck's Mill is historically significant for three reasons: it is the only flour or grist mill in Minnesota known to contain complete, unaltered and operational equipment for new process milling; it is the only water power mill in Minnesota known to contain original, operational millstones; it is one of only three historic mills still using water power.

The vegetation prior to European settlement was similar to that in the park today. The valley was occupied by lowland hardwoods including willow, boxelder, cottonwood and elm and northern hardwoods such as maple, basswood, oak and walnut. Northern hardwoods also grew on the valley slopes and on the flat areas above the valley.

The park has an abundance of rare plant species and also contains small native goat prairies on the south and west facing valley slopes.

A variety of plant communities combined with numerous microclimates, make the park area attractive to a great diversity of wildlife. Many species of birds use the park either as residents or seasonal migrants, including bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, bobwhite quail, and numerous songbirds. Many mammals also inhabit the park including the white-tailed deer, red and grey fox, badger, beaver, mink, woodchuck, fox squirrel and little brown bat. There are also 37 species of reptiles and amphibians native to this region of Minnesota including the timber rattlesnake, five-lined skink and western painted turtle.

Beaver Creek Valley State Park offers visitors a variety of recreational experiences in a quiet, unspoiled environment. Miles of trails provide opportunities to observe up close, the park's wildlife, uncommon plants and interesting geologic formations. Beaver Creek is designated as a blue ribbon trout stream, and supports a natural population of brown trout that provides excellent fishing for approximately 20% of park users who are anglers. Additional popular activities include hiking, picnicking, camping, and cross county skiing.

Because trails cross within the boundaries of the park that are not under the jurisdiction of the D.N.R., check with the park manager if you plan to use facilities such as trails & picnic areas.

# TRAILS

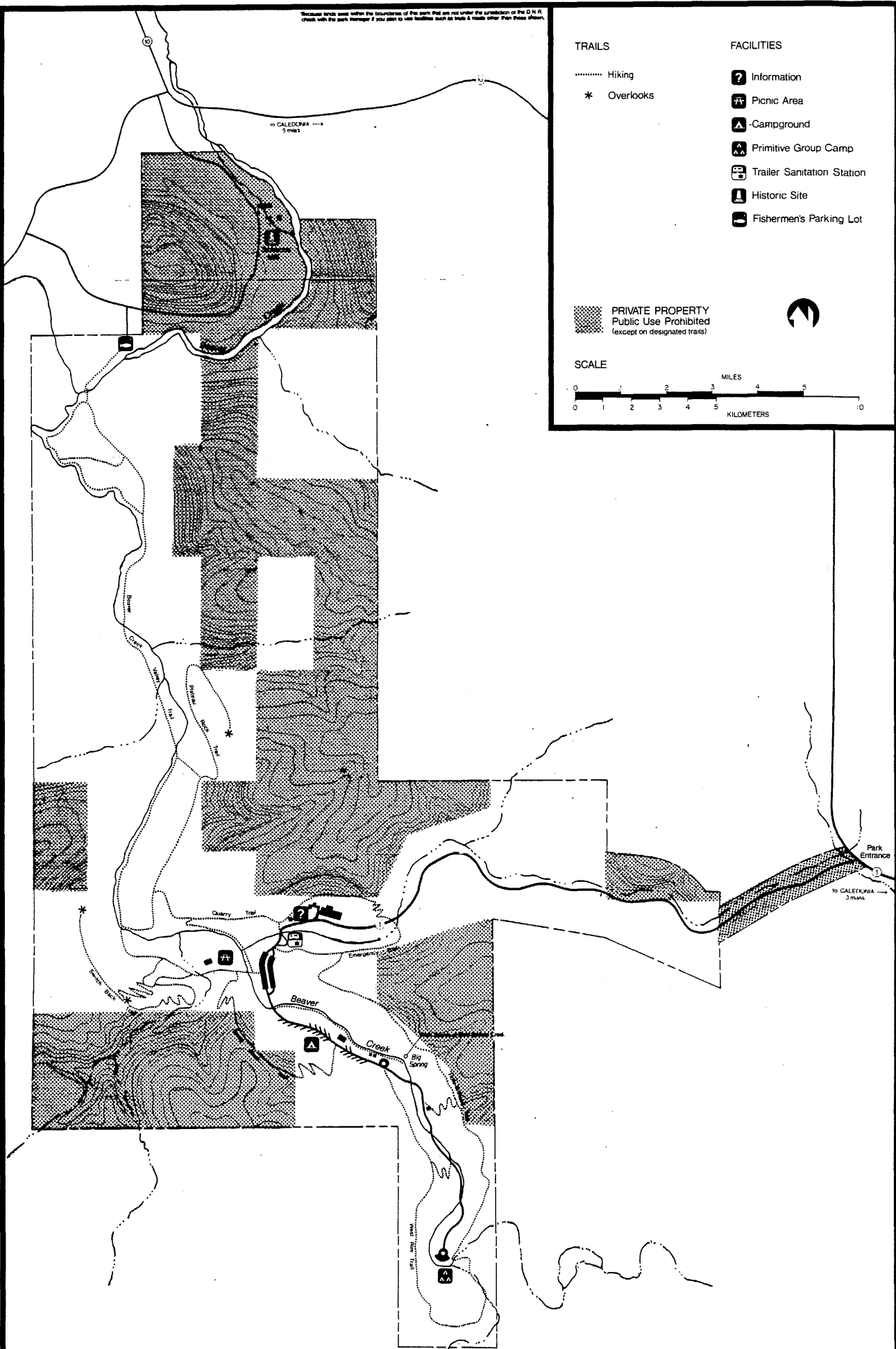
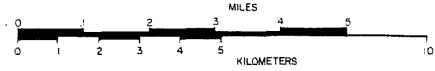
- ..... Hiking
- \* Overlooks

# FACILITIES

- ? Information
- ⛺ Picnic Area
- ⛳ Campground
- ⛶ Primitive Group Camp
- 🚻 Trailer Sanitation Station
- 🏠 Historic Site
- 🚗 Fishermen's Parking Lot

PRIVATE PROPERTY  
Public Use Prohibited  
(except on designated trails)

# SCALE



# Beaver Creek Valley State Park



## EXISTING FACILITIES

The following is an inventory of the existing physical plant of Beaver Creek Valley State Park.

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 1,214  
Acres of state land - 734.45  
Acres of private land - 479.55

### Campsites

Drive in - 42  
Walk in - 6  
Showers  
Campsites with electricity - 16

### Miles of Trails

Hiking - 8  
Cross Country Ski - 3  
Snowmobile - .5

### Playgrounds - 1

Miles of Road  
Gravel - 1

Enclosed Picnic Shelter  
Number of Picnic Tables - 100  
Trailer Dump Station

### Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 6  
Under 100 sq.ft. - 10  
Miles of Posted Boundary - 8

### Seasonal Visitor Center

### Park Utilities

Number of Septic Tanks - 2  
Number of Wells - 2  
Number of Individual  
Water Distribution Systems - 2

Miles of State Owned Power Line - .8

## PROBLEMS FACING BEAVER CREEK VALLEY STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in Beaver Creek Valley State Park to maintain. Many are in need of replacement or major rehabilitation. Most were constructed in the 1940's, and are now in need of rehabilitation. Many new facilities are needed to meet growing recreational demands. There is limited land in Beaver Creek Valley available for intensive recreational use, which limits future development options.

The parks natural and cultural resources are also in need of protection and interpretation to perpetuate Beaver Creek Valley's resources. In order to carry out the management and interpretive plans, an inventory of natural and cultural resources in the park is imperative. To date, biological and historical data collection in the park has been negligible.

Of major concern is the access to the campground. Occasional flooding can potentially cut off access, thus confining visitors and creating access difficulties for staff. This problem can be eliminated by implementing projects identified in this document.

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

## RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN BEAVER CREEK VALLEY STATE PARK

Major development projects over the past few years have included:

1. Installation of campground electrical sites.
2. Construction of children's play area.

## BEAVER CREEK VALLEY STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

#### **Resource Assessment - \$20,000**

Inventory the natural and cultural resources in the park to enable appropriate resource management.

**Subtotal \$20,000**

### MAJOR REHABILITATION

#### **General Park Building Rehabilitation - \$20,000**

Project includes replacement of fixtures, upgrading of interior and exteriors and utility systems.

**Subtotal \$20,000**

### NEW DEVELOPMENT

#### **Campground/Picnic Area Bridges - \$40,000**

Construct bridges to provide access from the campground and picnic areas to the park entrance.

#### **Low Water Crossings - \$10,000**

Construct low water crossing to allow easy access across Beaver Creek during low water periods.

**Subtotal \$50,000**

### TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS \$90,000

## 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.
- \* Difficulty in the implementation of consistent and effective resource management.

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

### **PRIVATE LANDS TO BE ACQUIRED IN BEAVER CREEK VALLEY STATE PARK**

| Parcel # | Acres  |
|----------|--------|
| 3        | 87.50  |
| 5        | 25.33  |
| 10       | 10.00  |
| 11       | 10.00  |
| 13       | 40.00  |
| 15       | 20.00  |
| 16       | 51.05  |
| 18       | 12.50  |
| 20       | 50.00  |
| 21       | 40.00  |
| 22       | 110.10 |
| 23       | 18.94  |
| 24       | 4.13   |

**Total 479.55 acres.**

## PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Beaver Creek Valley 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 natural communities. These will ensure that future visitors will be able to experience the diverse nature of Minnesota's resources.

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 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 resources can be managed more effectively and that private and commercial development do not detract from the natural beauty of Beaver Creek Valley 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 Beaver Creek Valley 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.

Beaver Creek Valley State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

Beaver Creek Valley State Park  
development needs **\$90,000**

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



