



STATE OF

MINNESOTA

900251

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS

Sibley
State Park

December 4, 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 SIBLEY STATE PARK

Sibley State Park is located in west central Minnesota in northwestern Kandiyohi County, 4 miles west of New London and 15 miles north of Wilmar. The park is accessible via State Highway 9 from the north, U.S. Highway 71 from the east and County Road 38 from the south. The statutory boundary encompasses 2,926 acres. Of this 660.26 acres are in private ownership.

Named in honor of Henry Hastings Sibley, Minnesota's first Governor, Sibley State Park was created from land initially set aside as a game reserve in 1917. In 1919 the state legislature appropriated funds to buy land for the park. Unfortunately no funds were allocated for maintenance or development. Local citizens joined Kandiyohi County in maintaining the park for several years. One fundraising technique involved auctioning the use of public fields for haying each year with the proceeds used to help maintain the park. The state assumed full responsibility for the park's maintenance and development in 1931. Much of the present development was completed by Veterans Conservation Crews who worked in the park from 1935-1938.

Sibley State Park's rolling, lake studded terrain was formed some 10,000 years ago by receding glaciers. One of the most notable glacial after effects is Mt. Tom which rises to an elevation of 1373 feet above sea level and is the highest point for 50 miles around. Historically, native American Indians used Mt. Tom as a lookout and signal station. Today it affords an excellent view of the surrounding forest, lakes, prairie knolls and agricultural fields.

The park is located in a transition zone between prairie and northern hardwoods. In the portion of the park directly north of Lake Andrew, the frequency and intensity of forest fires had dictated species composition for centuries before European settlement. In years when fires were frequent or intense the prairie grasses flourished at the expense of the hardwood forest. During other years the hardwoods regenerated and expanded their range. In the area surrounded by Andrew, Middle, Games, Norway, Swan, and Heinschien lakes big woods vegetation evolved. Here the lakes provided a fire break from prairie fires and allowed the establishment of a mature hardwood forest.

Sibley State Park's location on the threshold of the northern lakes country makes it a popular vacation retreat. For people from southern Minnesota and Iowa, this is a tourist's first opportunity to experience clear, sand and rock bottom lakes. The popularity of this park is reflected by high user demand. In fiscal year 1989 alone, 432,645 visitors took advantage of the park's varied recreational opportunities. Sibley State Park is well suited to accommodate this demand. Existing facilities include a 138-site campground, modern, primitive and horseback group camps, swimming beach, boat and canoe rental, water access, interpretive center and 45 miles of trails.

Sibley State Park



TRAILS

- Hiking
- Horseback / Hiking
-

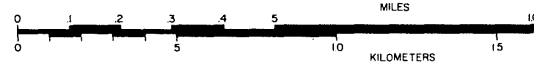
* Overlooks

TRAIL NAMES

- 1 Pondview
- 2 Parker - Fremberg
- 3 Mount Tom
- 4 Lakeview
- 5 Oak Hills

PRIVATE PROPERTY
Public Use Prohibited
(except on designated trails)

SCALE



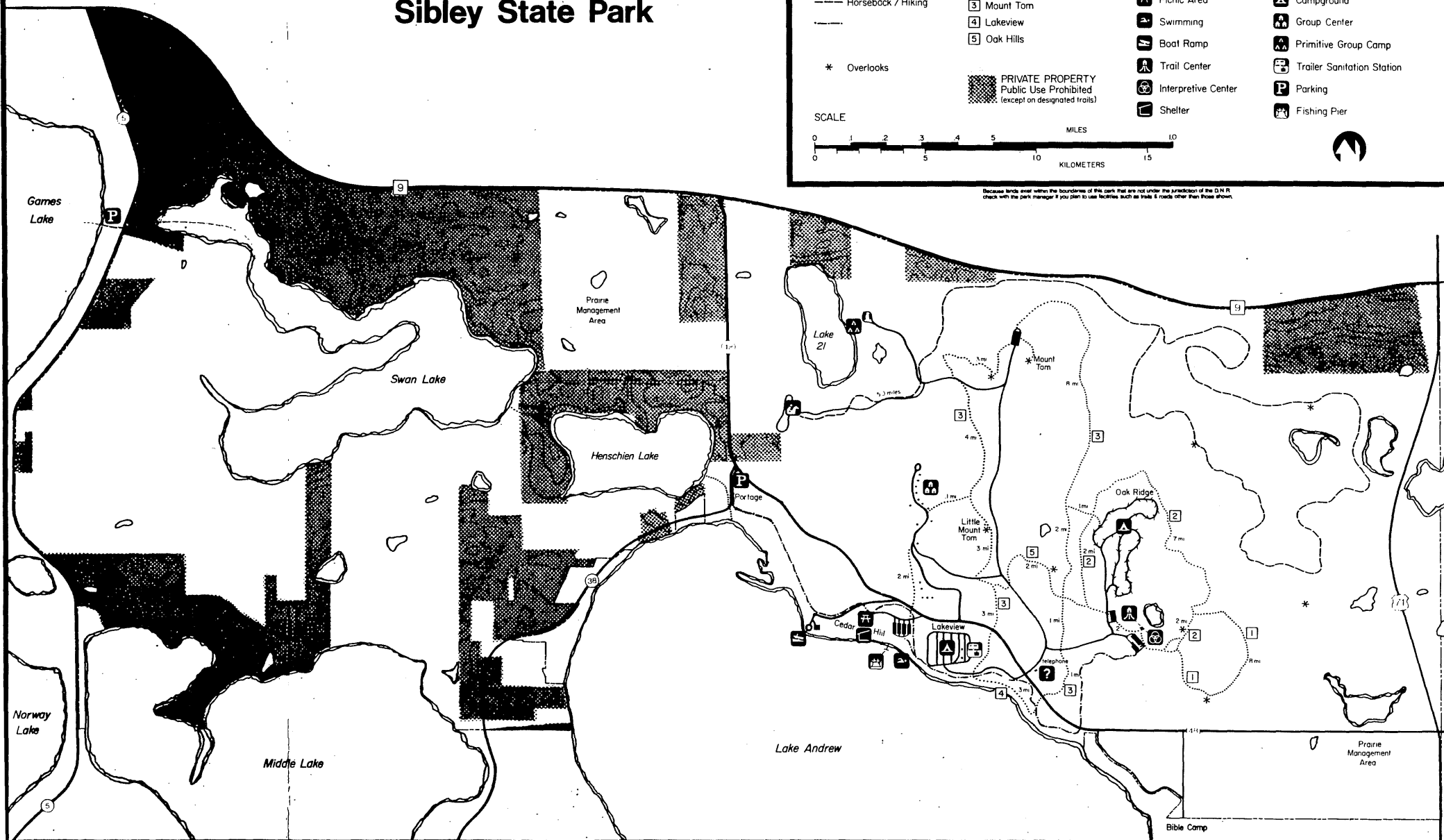
LEGEND

FACILITIES

- ? Information
- ⛶ Picnic Area
- 🏊 Swimming
- ⚓ Boat Ramp
- 🏠 Trail Center
- 📖 Interpretive Center
- 🛖 Shelter
- 🐎 Equestrian Area
- ⛳ Campground
- 👥 Group Center
- ⛳ Primitive Group Camp
- 🚻 Trailer Sanitation Station
- P Parking
- 🎣 Fishing Pier



Because birds cross within the boundaries of this park that are not under the jurisdiction of the DNR, check with the park manager if you plan to use facilities such as trails & roads other than those shown.



EXISTING FACILITIES

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

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 2,926

Acres of state land - 2,255.74

Campsites

Drive in - 138

Horse - Yes

Showers - Yes

Modern toilets - Yes

Campsites with electricity - 52

Miles of Trails

Self-guided Interpret - 1

Hiking - 18

Horse - 6

Bicycle - 5

Cross Country Ski - 10

Snowmobile - 6

Playgrounds - 1

Beaches - Yes

Boat/Canoe Rentals

Miles of Road

Asphalt - 1

Gravel - 4

Number of Picnic Tables - 140

Trailer Dump Station - 1

Water Accesses - 1

Fishing Piers - 1

Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 30

Under 100 sq.ft. - 16

Miles of Posted Boundary - 15

Visitor Centers

Park Utilities

Sewage Lagoon - 1

Number of Sewage Lift Stations - 1

Number of Septic Tanks - 9

Number of Wells - 9

Number of Individual

Water Distribution Systems - 12

Miles of State Owned Power Line - 1

PROBLEMS FACING SIBLEY STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in Sibley 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.

Sibley State Park is also experiencing increased rural residential development and the subdivision of private lands within the park boundary. In order to preserve many of the parks resources, the acquisition of private lands within the park is becoming critical.

Probably most important is the protection and restoration of the natural and cultural resources in the park. This includes restoring the native prairie areas along with a balance of vegetation types that typifies pre-European settlement times. This also includes finding, documenting, and interpreting the cultural resources of the area.

The parks natural and cultural resources are also in need of protection and management to perpetuate Sibley State Park resources. In the past, facilities were developed in areas of ancient encampments. These encampments deserve to be protected and interpreted.

We have completed some important improvements at Sibley State Park in recent years yet have fallen far behind our goals as identified in the first management plan completed twelve years ago.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN SIBLEY STATE PARK

Major development projects over the past few years have included:

1. Reconstruction of the park entrance road and associated contact station parking.
2. Completion of paved bicycle trail.
3. Construction of a fishing pier on Lake Andrew.
4. Rehabilitation of a campground sanitation building.

SIBLEY STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

Resource Management

Invading shrub and tree control - \$15,000

Many native prairie areas are being overrun by trees and shrubs. This project will control nonprairie plants in a way that will allow less expensive prairie management in the future.

Old Field Restoration - \$25,000

This project includes planting old farm fields with native grasses and forbs.

Oak Woods Restoration - \$30,000

Restoration of areas suffering extensive oak losses in appropriate places, including replanting, and control of undesirable brush and weeds.

Natural Resources Assessment - \$15,000

Includes plant and wildlife inventories, permanent plot studies and releve's.

Subtotal \$85,000

Major Rehabilitation

Major Rehabilitation of Lakeview Campground Roads - \$80,000

This project includes improving drainage, grading, replacing base and paving campground roads.

Trail System Rehabilitation - \$43,000

Project includes erosion control, widening improving drainage and replacing base where needed on the existing trail system.

Remodel Concession Facility - \$85,000

This project includes a complete rehabilitation of the existing building to improve efficiency, services to the public and health code compliance.

VCC Building Rehabilitation - \$20,000

General tuck-pointing of stonework and improvement of building utilities.

Interpretive Services - \$35,000

Development of interpretive signs and displays focusing on geology, natural succession, history and prehistory of Kandiyohi County, wetlands, park orientation, forest and prairie communities at the interpretive center and the concession facility.

Utility System Rehabilitation - \$25,000

Repairs to the water, electrical, and sewage systems.

Mt. Tom Viewing Platform - \$15,000

Modification of the existing structure to allow an elevated panoramic view of the surrounding area, which is currently blocked by the surrounding forest. Project to include interpretation of the area.

Subtotal \$303,000

New Development

Pave Road and Parking Areas - \$300,000

Project includes improving drainage, grading and asphalt surfacing of park roads. This will improve safety conditions and reduce dust.

Storage Building - \$30,000

Construct a new storage building to house park equipment now stored outside.

Subtotal \$330,000

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS \$718,000

LAND ACQUISITION

There are 19,365 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.

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. Specifically, of the privately owned lands listed, acquisition should be concentrated on ten interior parcels, including TR-27, 28, 29, 38a, 38c, 39, 40, 45, 60, and 14b. There are also two additional parcels, TR-7a and 44, that are presently under negotiation.. With the acquisition of these twelve parcels, comprising 467 acres, a large part of the western half of Sibley State Park can be made available for recreational opportunities to a large number of tourists.

PRIVATE LANDS TO BE ACQUIRED IN SIBLEY STATE PARK

Parcel #	Acres	Parcel#	Acres
7a	7.00	46a-2	5.00
14b	19.90	46a-3	2.18
15	5.00	46a-4	5.51
18	28.79	51	4.61
19	2.66	52	4.61
20	10.00	53a	3.91
21	2.00	56	34.00
22	17.32	57	0.41
25a	4.90	58	0.77
26	6.79	59	0.80
27	114.76	60	4.91
28	106.00	61	6.75
29	71.65	63	0.50
32	9.24	67	2.35
34	5.50	73	10.00
35	5.20	74	13.74
36	5.21	75	3.50
37	15.20	76	4.90
38a	10.10	77	6.76
38b	10.70	78	0.55
38c	22.87	79	1.00
39	6.02	81	4.60
40	11.18	81a	2.50
42a	4.80	82	1.15
45	40.00	83	1.30
46a	16.38	84	0.95
46a-1	7.49		
Total		660.26 Acres	

PARK POTENTIAL

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

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 Sibley 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.

Sibley State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

Sibley State Park development needs - **\$718,000**.

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

