

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY
3 0307 00019 6496

000251

DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS

St. Croix
State Park

November 27, 1989



SB
482
.M6
D34
v.52

This document is made available electronically by the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library as part of an ongoing digital archiving project. <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/lrl.asp>
(Funding for document digitization was provided, in part, by a grant from the Minnesota Historical & Cultural Heritage Program.)

Printed on recycled paper.

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 visitor satisfaction and 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 ST. CROIX STATE PARK

St. Croix State Park is located in east central Minnesota in Pine County. Access to the park is off Highway #48 east of Hinckley, Minnesota.

The statutory boundary encompasses 34,037 acres. Of these, 1,800 acres are in private ownership.

St. Croix St. Park's landscape was glacially formed. The St. Croix River Valley became the outlet for Glacial Lakes Duluth, now Lake Superior. The huge amount of water draining Glacial Lake Duluth eroded channels for the Kettle River, Sand, and Bear Creeks. Eventually, as Glacial Lake Duluth eroded a new outlet to the east, and the volume of water coming down the St. Croix Valley was greatly reduced.

The park had its origin in the depression era of the 1930's, when it was selected as a Federal Recreation Demonstration Area and developed by the National Park Service. Most of the park's lands were acquired in the Federal Resettlement Program between 1934 and 1937. Another large park area is subject to the terms of a 100 year lease, granted by the Northern States Power Company. This company had acquired the area in the early 1900's, speculating on the hydroelectric potential of the Kettle River.

St. Croix State Park's location is approximately equidistant from Duluth, the Twin Cities, and St. Cloud, Minnesota's primary metropolitan areas. The St. Croix is a National Wild and Scenic River, and the Kettle is designated as the first river in the State Wild and Scenic River system. These areas, retain most of their pristine qualities, and offer outstanding diverse wilderness recreation in a second growth forest area.

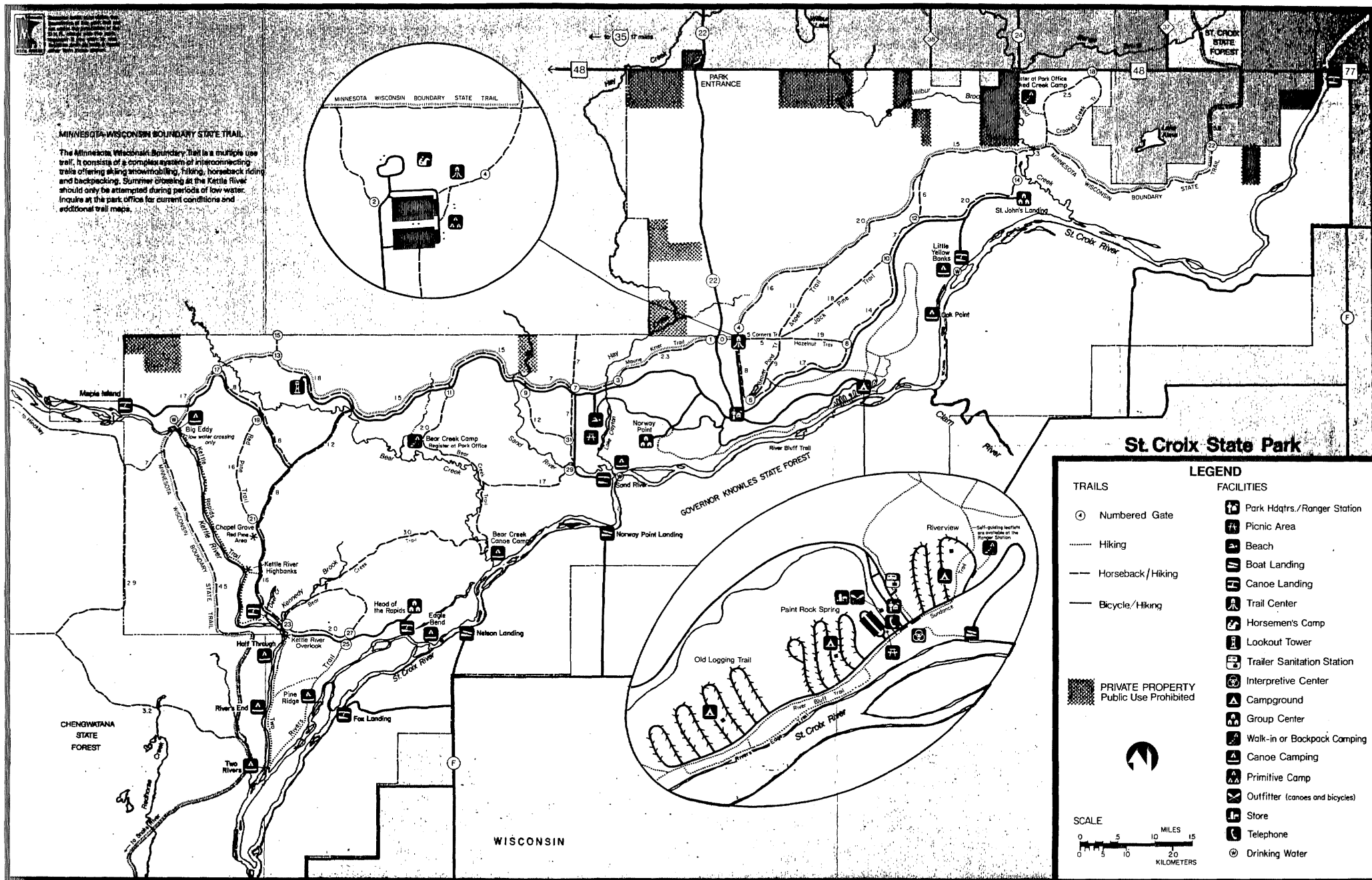
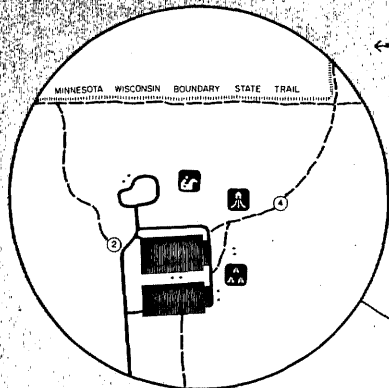
The park was managed by the National Park Service until 1943, when it became a member of the Minnesota State Parks System. St. Croix State Park offers a variety of activities for both day users and overnight visitors. Visitors enjoy the rich scenic attractions along the St. Croix and Kettle Rivers, but the park also has a swimming beach, visitor center with interpretive exhibits, trail center, and many miles of trails. St. Croix's trails accommodate many forms of recreation, including hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, snowmobiling, and cross country skiing.

With ski touring and snowmobiling, winter use of St. Croix is quite popular. Those hardy souls who favor winter camping use the facilities in Riverview campground or the all seasons trail center year round.



MINNESOTA-WISCONSIN BOUNDARY STATE TRAIL

The Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Trail is a multiple use trail. It consists of a complex system of interconnecting trails offering skiing, snowmobiling, hiking, horseback riding and backpacking. Summer crossing at the Kettle River should only be attempted during periods of low water. Inquire at the park office for current conditions and additional trail maps.



St. Croix State Park

LEGEND

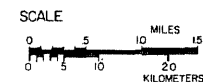
TRAILS

- ① Numbered Gate
- Hiking
- - - Horseback / Hiking
- ... Bicycle / Hiking

PRIVATE PROPERTY
Public Use Prohibited

FACILITIES

- Park Hdqtrs./Ranger Station
- Picnic Area
- Beach
- Boat Landing
- Canoe Landing
- Trail Center
- Horsemen's Camp
- Lookout Tower
- Trailer Sanitation Station
- Interpretive Center
- Campground
- Group Center
- Walk-in or Backpack Camping
- Canoe Camping
- Primitive Camp
- Outfitter (canoes and bicycles)
- Store
- Telephone
- Drinking Water



EXISTING FACILITIES

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

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 34,037
Acres of state land - 32,236
Campsites
 Drive in - 213
 Walk in - 4
 Back Pack - 4
 Canoe in - 13
 Horse - Yes
 Showers - Yes
 Modern toilets - Yes
 Campsites with electricity - 42
Miles of Trails
 Self-guided Interpretive - 1
 Hiking - 127
 Horse - 75
 Hard Surfaced Bicycle - 6.5
 Mountain Bicycle - 23.5
 Cross Country Ski - 21
 Snowmobile - 75
Playgrounds - 1
Beaches - 3
Canoe Rental
Miles of Road
 Asphalt - 10
 Gravel - 23
Enclosed Picnic Shelter - 1
Number of Picnic Tables - 50
Trailer Dump Station - 1
Water Accesses - 1
Number of Buildings
 Over 100 sq.ft. - 151
 Under 100 sq.ft. - 30
Miles of Posted Boundary - 48
Visitor Centers
Park Utilities
 Number of Sewage Lift Stations - 1
 Number of Septic Tanks - 15
 Number of Wells - 15
 Number of Individual
 Water Distribution Systems - 9
 Miles of State Owned Power Line - 3.8

PROBLEMS FACING ST. CROIX STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in St. Croix 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 parks natural and cultural resources are also in need of protection and management to perpetuate St. Croix's resources. These areas must be protected and interpreted.

The park contains the largest collection of CCC/WPA era buildings in the state park system. These facilities were constructed in the 1930's and are now over 50 years old. These structures along with their utility systems are in need of major rehabilitation.

There are also more than 25 miles of roads in the park that also need upgrading along with 75 miles of trail and over 200 campsites. Important improvements have been completed at St. Croix State Park in recent years. However, the goals identified in the fifteen year old management plan have not been achieved.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN ST. CROIX STATE PARK

Major development projects over the past few years have included.

1. The remodeling of River Inn including an addition to the building to serve as a park interpretive center.
2. Rehabilitation of the campground electrical system.
3. Winterization of two cabins at Norway Point group camp.
4. Construction of a concession building near the picnic area.

ST. CROIX STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Forest Management \$30,000

Restoration of pre-european settlement pine forests, exclosures to protect vegetation from deer depredation, and control of pine bark beetle and other forest insect and disease problems

Whitetail Deer Management \$13,000

Provides for annual population survey and development of a long range deer management plan.

Cultural Resource Survey \$35,000

Examine histories and primary documents to identify cultural resources and conduct initial field checks of sites (prehistoric and historic) to determine current condition and/or verify existence of sites.

Subtotal \$78,000

MAJOR REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation of park roads \$165,000

Project includes grading and shaping to improve drainage to park secondary roads, replacement of culverts and bridges, asphalt surfacing of some of the more heavily used roads.

Sanitation building rehabilitation \$80,000

Complete rehabilitation of existing toilet/shower building including inside wall finishes, replacement of fixtures, utility repair and roof and siding replacement.

Parking area and campground rehabilitation \$30,000

Project includes parking lot resurfacing, campground road and camping spur rehabilitation. Campground work will include improved drainage, gravel surfacing and landscaping.

Trail Center Addition \$80,000

Project includes adding shower facilities and expanding trail center use area. Increased use in recent years by snowmobile and horse groups has created a big demand for additional space.

Rehabilitation of CCC Buildings \$250,000

Project includes upgrading plumbing, electrical service, log replacement, general roof repair, and general upgrading of all CCC buildings. These buildings are a cultural resource that we must preserve.

Rehabilitate or Replace Garage \$15,000

This project would replace or repair the garage for two park residences.

Subtotal \$620,000

NEW DEVELOPMENT**New Campground \$250,000**

Project includes the development of a new 50 site semi-modern campground to meet the growing demand for camping opportunities.

Subtotal \$250,000

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS - \$980,000

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
ST. CROIX STATE PARK**

Parcel #	Acres
2	140.00
3	80.00
5	240.00
9	199.87
13	169.31
14	160.00
16	320.00
18	2.00
19	40.00
20	2.00
22	78.55
23	80.00
26	280.00 (Tribal)

Total 1,800.73 acres.

PARK POTENTIAL

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

St. Croix State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals

St. Croix State Park development needs - **\$980,000**.

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

