

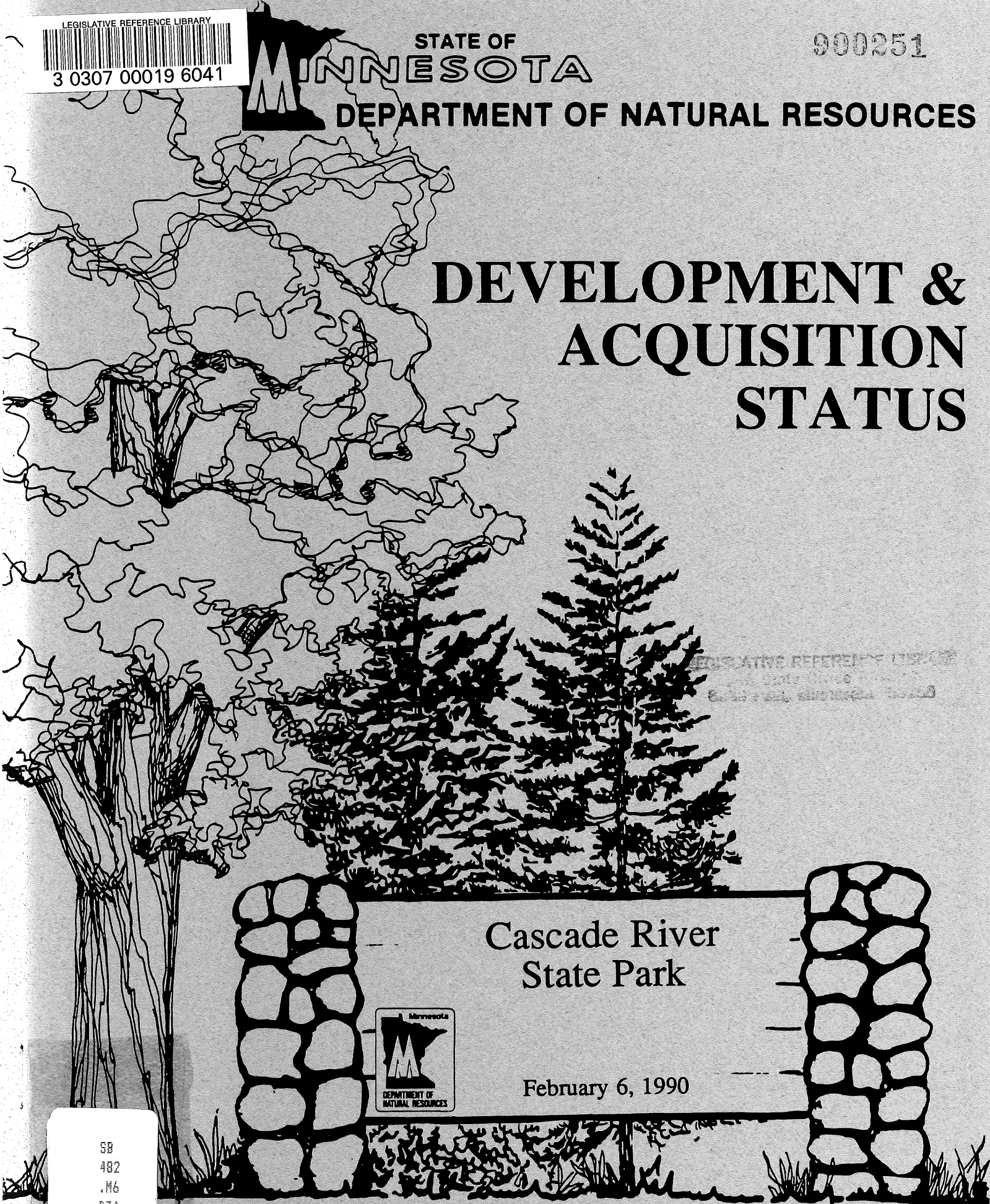
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STATE OF
MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

900251

DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS



Cascade River
State Park



February 6, 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 CASCADE RIVER STATE PARK

Cascade River State Park is located in Cook County on the north shore of Lake Superior, 9 miles southwest of Grand Marais on U.S. Highway #61. The park was established in 1957, and has a statutory boundary that encompasses 2,813 acres. Of these, 160 acres are federally owned, 3 acres are county owned, and the remaining acreage is state owned.

The rugged terrain of Cascade River State Park is the result of a complex series of geologic processes. Approximately 1.1 billion years ago, volcanic activity created extensive lava flows that covered the ancient bedrock. Later, vast shallow seas formed layers of sedimentary rock over the lava beds. Over time these rock layers were subjected to powerful metamorphosis processes that folded and uplifted the rock into mountains. Other complex processes occurred before glaciers scoured the area several times, leaving the landscape exposed to the effects of weathering and erosion; two processes that continue today.

Elevation in the park ranges from 602 feet at the surface of Lake Superior to just under 1,200 feet along the northern boundary. The major topographic feature of the park is the steep walled Cascade River gorge which was formed by powerful downcutting forces of the river through volcanic bedrock of varying resistance. In the final quarter-mile stretch, the river plunges 120 feet through a deep, twisting gorge to Lake Superior, forming the spectacular series of cascades for which the river is named.

The original park vegetation was comprised primarily of red and white pine stands and spruce fir communities, interspersed by aspen, birch and white cedar. Today, much of the park is a mixture of cedar and maple with pockets of aspen and birch. The entire park was cutover after 1900 for the white pine, and is largely second growth. A Scientific and Natural Area, Butterwort Cliffs, has been established along the lake to protect rare plant locations and outcrops of Thompsonite, a semi-precious mineral.

From wooded uplands and conifer bogs to streams, rivers, and rocky shoreline and sheer cliffs of the North Shore, Cascade River State Park possesses a variety of ecological settings that provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife. Many species of birds inhabit or visit the park, including some rare or unusual species such as the harlequin duck, black scoter, Cooper's hawk, peregrine falcon, great-grey owl, boreal owl, and gyrfalcon. Most of the northern forest animals are also known to inhabit the park area. These include moose, timber wolf, white tailed deer, snowshoe hare, little brown bat, civerous and short tailed shrews and boreal red-back mole. The park also includes part of the Jonvik Deer Yard, one of the largest winter deer concentration areas in the state.

The park's river, streams and creeks are managed for trout species. The Cascade River contains rainbow, brook, and brown trout. Chinook salmon have been stocked since 1974. Spruce, Indian Camps, Deer Yard, and Cutface Creek are also managed for trout.

Rugged beauty and a variety of terrain features make Cascade River State Park a favorite getaway for thousands of visitors each year. Popular activities include viewing the waterfalls of the Cascade River, hiking to Lookout Mountain, 500 feet above Lake Superior, exploring the rugged Lake Superior shore and trout fishing in the park's designated trout streams and fall salmon fishing.

SUPERIOR

NATIONAL

FOREST

Moose Mountain 

Lookout Mountain

Cascade Falls

Lake Superior

**Indian Camp
Creek**

POWER LINE

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

TRAILS

..... Hiking

***** Superior Hiking Trail

FACILITIES

? Information / Office

 Picnic Area

 Campground

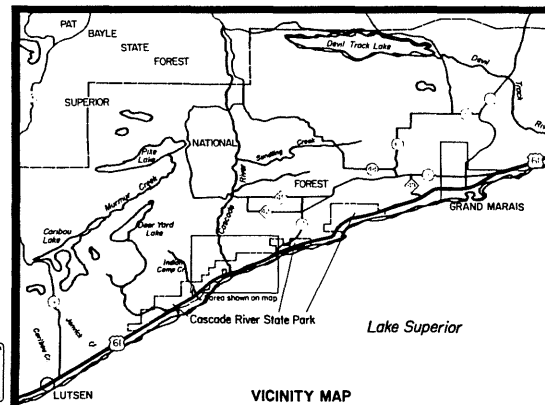
 **Shelter - INCLUDES**
Pit Toilet, Picnic Table, Fire Ring, Wind Break Primitive Group Camp Trailer Sanitation Station

P Parking

 Backpack Camping

- * Overlook

SCALE



VICINITY MAP

EXISTING FACILITIES

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

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 2,813
Acres of state land - 2,650

Campsites

Drive in - 39
Back Pack - 5
Group Sites - 2
Modern toilets - Yes

Miles of Trails

Hiking - 18
Cross Country Ski - 17
Snowmobile - 2

Miles of Road

Gravel - 2

Enclosed Picnic Shelter with four tables
Picnic sites along lake - 7
Trailer Dump Station - 1

Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 8
Under 100 sq.ft. - 14
Miles of Posted Boundary - 12

Park Utilities

Number of Sewage Lift Stations - 2
Number of Septic Tanks - 4
Number of Wells - 3
Number of Individual
Water Distribution Systems - 3
Miles of State Owned Power Lines- .5

PROBLEMS FACING CASCADE RIVER STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in Cascade River State Park to maintain. Many are in need of replacement or major rehabilitation. Most were constructed in the 1950'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 to perpetuate Cascade's identity. In the past, facilities may have been developed in areas of cultural significance. These resources must be protected and interpreted.

Significant resource management needs demand attention. A heavy mortality of trees resulting from spruce budworm infestations and stress from several years of forest tent caterpillar invasions has led to the need for extensive forest resource management. The dieback is particularly acute in the campground, and a number of hazard trees were removed. Deer kills along Highway 61 have been a constant problem, aggravated by the feeding of deer on the lake-side of the highway by private individuals.

Of the major concern at Cascade River State Park is the need to rehabilitate the campground facilities. Heavy use for many years has led to campsite deterioration. Major reconstruction is necessary to restore the quality of recreation opportunities provided. Some crowded sites need to be eliminated, and new ones installed.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN CASCADE RIVER STATE PARK

In addition, many facilities are in need of minor repairs as a result of age and a lack of maintenance staff and funding. For example, most of the park's 22 building exteriors were last painted an average of seven years ago.

A Civilian Conservation Corps Camp was located within the park in the 1930's. The majority of trails along the river gorge were constructed at this time. These trails feature many stairways comprised of stone steps, which are in a state of disrepair. The trails now suffer serious erosion and drainage problems. These resources need significant rehabilitation.

Interpretive programming is not available in the park at this time. The Minnesota State Park Interpretive Services Plan calls for a seasonal position in interpretation. Visitors desire and expect opportunities to learn about the park's resources. Interpretation is known to help reinforce appropriate use of the area's resources by visitors.

Important improvements have been completed at Cascade River State Park in recent years. However, management goals identified in ten-year-plan have yet to be achieved.

Major development projects over the past few years have included:

1. Improvements to shop.
2. Two new class III group campsites, accommodating 25 people each, with road and parking.
3. New contact/office facility.
4. Realignment of park entrance road.
5. Constructing trailer dump station.
6. Restoration of a 20-acre gravel pit to wildlife habitat.
7. Deer browse has been enhanced through habitat management.

CASCADE RIVER STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Forest Management - \$23,000

Tree planting to maintain shade for park visitors and preserve the aesthetic qualities of the park.

Campground Revegetation - \$10,000

Including tree-spade transplants, planting of seedlings, fertilization and browse protection for transplants.

Browse Cuts - \$4,000

Regenerate appropriate deer browse habitats through cutting.

Wildlife Opening Maintenance - \$2,000

Cutback vegetation to make permanent opening and treat with herbicide to maintain.

Deer/Car Collision Reduction - \$5,000

Install reflectors along Highway 61 and cut back vegetation.

Subtotal - \$44,000

MAJOR REHABILITATION

Campground Rehabilitation - \$80,000

Realign campsites and roads, pave roads, improve drainage, landscape and install new fire rings and tables and make sanitation building handicap accessible.

Trail Rehabilitation - \$20,000

Project includes installation of steps, boardwalks and erosion control devices where necessary. Also, some brushing of trail alignments to improve ski opportunities.

Subtotal - \$100,000

NEW DEVELOPMENT

Day Use Picnic Area - \$230,000

Create a day use picnic area adjacent to the Cascade River. This would include a road and parking lot, tables, fire grates, water and a trail shelter.

Pave Entrance Road - \$38,000

Pave the existing gravel entrance road to reduce dust and long-term maintenance.

Interpretive Displays - \$30,000

Project includes interpretive signs both at the campground and along trails. Also, displays in the trail center and park office for outdoor education, interpretation.

Group Camp Well - \$7,000

Install a well with a hand pump for convenience of campers by eliminating their need to transport water.

Exterior Lighting Park Office - \$6,000

Install four exterior lights on entrance road/contact station/walkway/ exit land area to light and secure the area for visitors and park staff.

Garage/Storage Building - \$35,000

Construct garage/storage building at the service court for vehicle and equipment protection and security.

Subtotal - 346,000

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS - \$490,000

PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Cascade River State Park? These projects 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 diverse nature of Minnesota's habitats.

Some improvements will not only increase park use but will greatly enhance the quality of 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.

A stable funding source is essential for effective long-term resource management and capital budget planning for the Minnesota State Park System and Cascade River 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.

Cascade River State Park
development needs - **\$490,000**

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

