

# Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area

## Recreation Implementation Plan



April 2008



# Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

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## **Department of Natural Resources Approval of Recreation Implementation Plan for Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area**

Minnesota Statutes 86A.09, Subdivision 1 requires that a master plan be prepared for units of Minnesota's outdoor recreation system, including state parks and recreation areas. The Laws of Minnesota for 1993 established the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area as part of Minnesota's Outdoor Recreation System (MS 85.013, Subd. 5c).

The management (master) plan for the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area was approved and finalized in December 1995. In July 2005 a plan amendment was completed. The recreation implementation plan augments those documents and outlines a more detailed recreation plan. The Department of Natural Resources sought input from representatives of users groups and the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area advisory council during the formation of this plan.

The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation approves the recreation implementation plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Courtland Nelson".

Courtland Nelson, Director  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Parks and Recreation

A handwritten date in black ink, reading "23 April 08".

Date



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would like to thank all who participated in the development of this recreation implementation plan. They include the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area advisory council, and representatives of the scuba diving, mountain biking, and horseback riding communities. They also include DNR staff from the Regional, Area, and Central offices. The review and input was invaluable. Thank you to you all for your time, attention and thoughtful input.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Scope**

The Recreation Implementation Plan makes recommendations for the initial phases of development of the Recreation Area. It focuses primarily on the 2,773 acres (out of almost 5000 acres within the Recreation Area boundaries) currently in state ownership. An overall management plan was completed in 1995 for the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area.

### **Methodology**

DNR staff conducted field reviews of the Recreation Area, focusing on land currently in state ownership, to aid in developing a conceptual layout for recreation facility development. Discussions were held with representatives of mountain bikers, horseback riders, scuba divers, and DNR resource staff to gather input. Additionally presentations were made to the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area Advisory Council to review the proposed recreational facility layout and seek their input. Meetings were also held with the DNR regional, area, and central offices staff and input was sought from agency subject experts.

### **Complexities of Land Ownership and Acquisition**

As stated on page 66 of the management plan, “Because of the mining history associated with this area, ownership patterns are complex. For example, one aspect of ownership in this area is that there can actually be three separate “layers” of ownership – surface ownership, mineral right ownership, and stockpile ownership.”

It also states that “Surface ownership can be broken down into three types: 100% private land, 100% public land, and “undivided interest” lands which have at least some percentage of public ownership. Undivided interest lands occur when there are multiple owners, generally strangers to each other, of a single piece of property. At Cuyuna, there are many acres in undivided ownership because of the mining history associated with the land.”

To illustrate the complexities of surface ownership, and hence acquisition within the recreation area, one existing undivided 40-acre tract currently has 9 different entities jointly owning the surface of the 40-acres: the State owns 14.28%, four private individuals own 5.36%, 21.42%, 5.36%, and 5.36% respectively, three separate trusts (where multiple owners may exist within the trusts) own 5.36%, 21.43%, and 14.29% respectively, and a private college owns 7.14%.

### **General Recommendations**

These represent the overall direction for the Recreation Area. They are described in greater detail later in the plan.

- ▶ Develop mountain biking trails/areas that accommodate a variety of skill levels.
- ▶ Develop unpaved multiple-use and single-use trails.
- ▶ Seek opportunities, both within and adjacent to the Recreation Area, to provide equestrian trails.

NOTE: In this plan this symbol ▶ denotes a recommendation or management action. This symbol is used consistently throughout the document.

## **Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan**

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- ▶ Provide an equestrian trailhead, and camping area, in the Sagamore Unit once a designated equestrian trail system is in place.
- ▶ Utilize the paved Cuyuna Lakes State Trail through the Recreation Area for a cross-country ski trail. Develop looped trails off of the state trail alignment.
- ▶ Utilize the unpaved alignment of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail through the Recreation Area for snowmobiling. Provide a snowmobile trail connection from the state trail alignment to the Cuyuna overlook in the Mahnomen Unit.
- ▶ Provide access to the natural and mine lakes via boat ramp accesses and/or carry-in accesses.
- ▶ Develop scuba diving sites and provide site amenities such as picnic areas, changing rooms, and vault toilets.
- ▶ Develop a system of signed canoe/kayak portages.
- ▶ Develop shore fishing facilities at locations that provide high quality fishing opportunities, and that have suitable terrain for the development of access pathways.
- ▶ Develop picnic areas in locations that offer physical and/or recreational amenities.
- ▶ Improve the Portsmouth Mine Lake Overlook by enhancing the views and developing additional interpretive and informational displays.
- ▶ Provide overnight use areas in the Sagamore, Mahnomen, and Portsmouth Units.

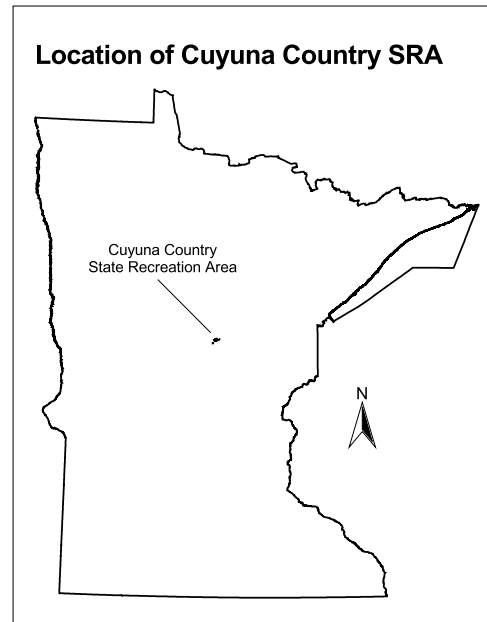




## **SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) completed the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area Management Plan for the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area (CCSRA) in December 1995. The management plan states, “The proposed development in this plan is conceptual. Site-specific, detailed development plans will be completed based on the concepts outlined in this plan (p.55).”

The statutory boundaries of the CCSRA include almost 5,000 acres of land and water surface. At the time the management plan was completed 120 acres of the CCSRA were owned by the State. Currently 2,773 acres are owned by the State. See 1995 State Land Ownership and 2007 Land Ownership maps following page 2. Of those acres the DNR Division of Parks and Recreation administers 2,681 acres and the DNR Division of Forestry administers 92 acres in State Trust. Some aspects of the management plan can be implemented now that there is more State ownership of the Recreation Area.



A Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area Management Plan Amendment was completed in July 2005. The Amendment “presents background information for the recommended campground and trails development, and boundary changes (p.1).”

### **Purpose of this Plan**

This Recreation Implementation Plan augments the above documents and outlines a more detailed recreation plan. It provides a conceptual layout for recreation facility development, makes recommendations for development and acquisition priorities based on need, ownership, and funding, and estimates development and acquisition costs.

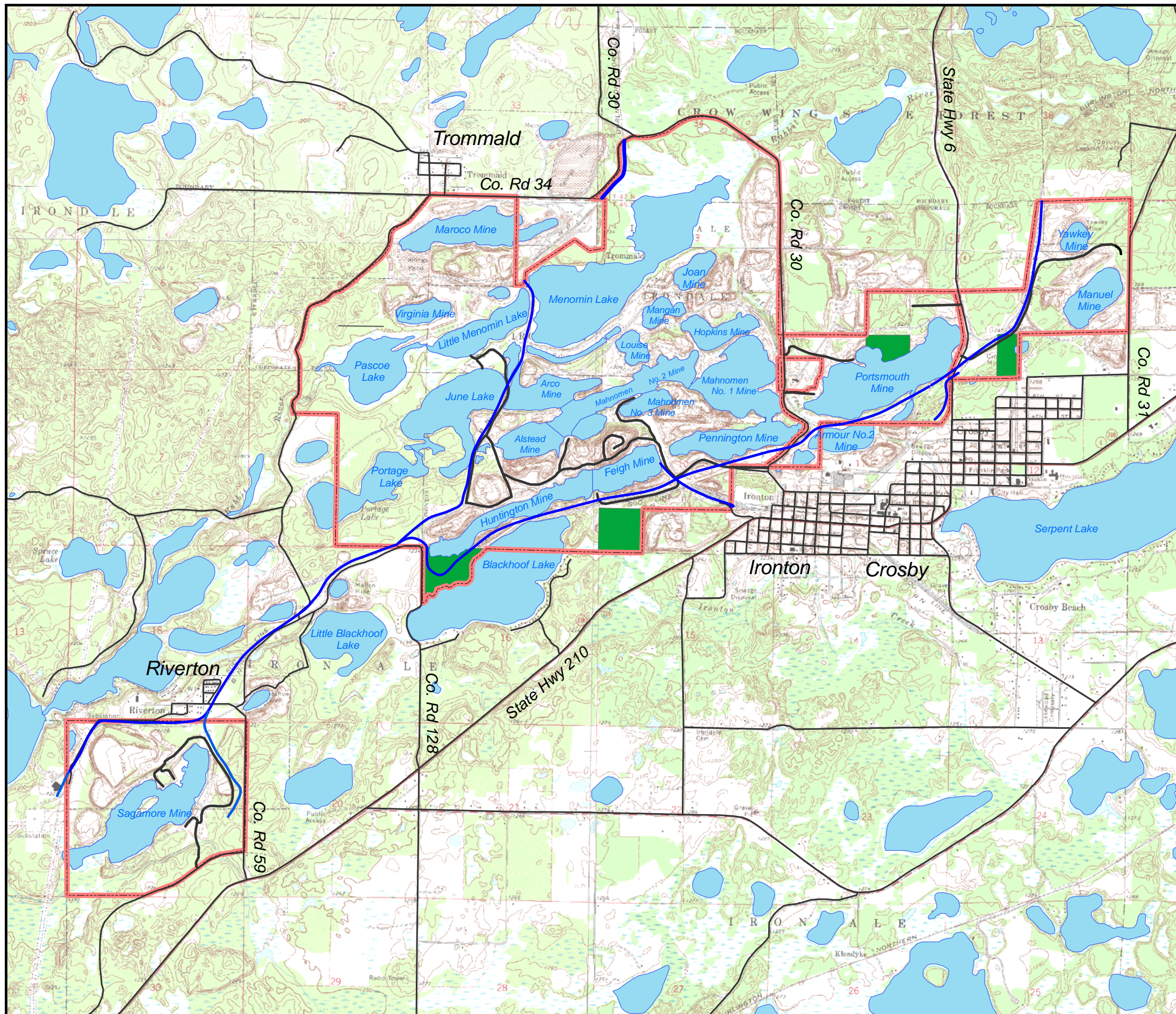
Development priorities are primarily focused on areas currently in State ownership. Recommendations for acquisitions are based on the development proposed in this plan. The Recreation Implementation Plan will guide initial recreational development. More opportunities for recreational development may exist in the future both on lands currently in State ownership and as additional property is acquired within the boundaries of the Recreation Area.

For purposes of describing components of the Recreation Implementation Plan, the Plan refers to the four units of the Recreation Area: the Sagamore, Mahnomen, Portsmouth, and Yawkey Units. See Units of the Recreation Area map following page 2.

NOTE: In this plan this symbol ► denotes a recommendation or management action. This symbol is used consistently throughout the document.



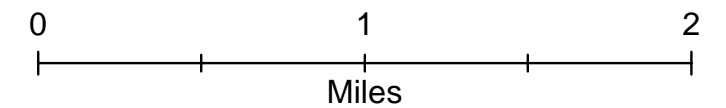




# 1995 Land Ownership Cuyuna County State Recreation Area

## Land Ownership/Type:

-  State Administered
-  State Recreation Area
-  Railroad Right-of-Way
-  Recreation Area Roads (Option A)
-  State, County, Local Roads



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2007 Land Ownership  
Cuyuna County  
State Recreation Area

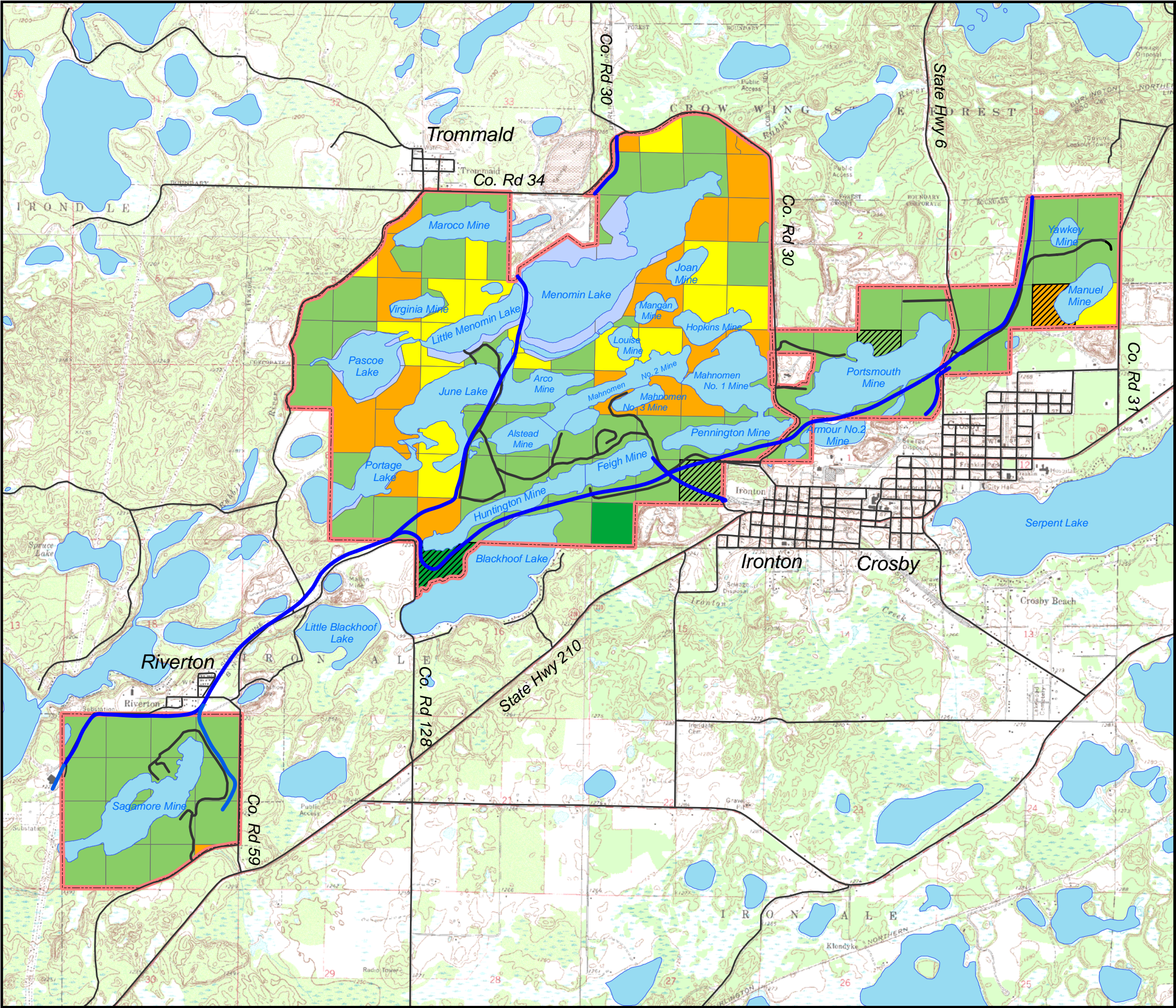
Land Ownership/Type:

- State
- State Trust Fund
- Private
- Undivided Interests
- Fill Areas
- State Owned Stockpiles
- State Recreation Area
- Railroad Right-of-Way
- Recreation Area Roads (Option A)
- State, County, Local Roads

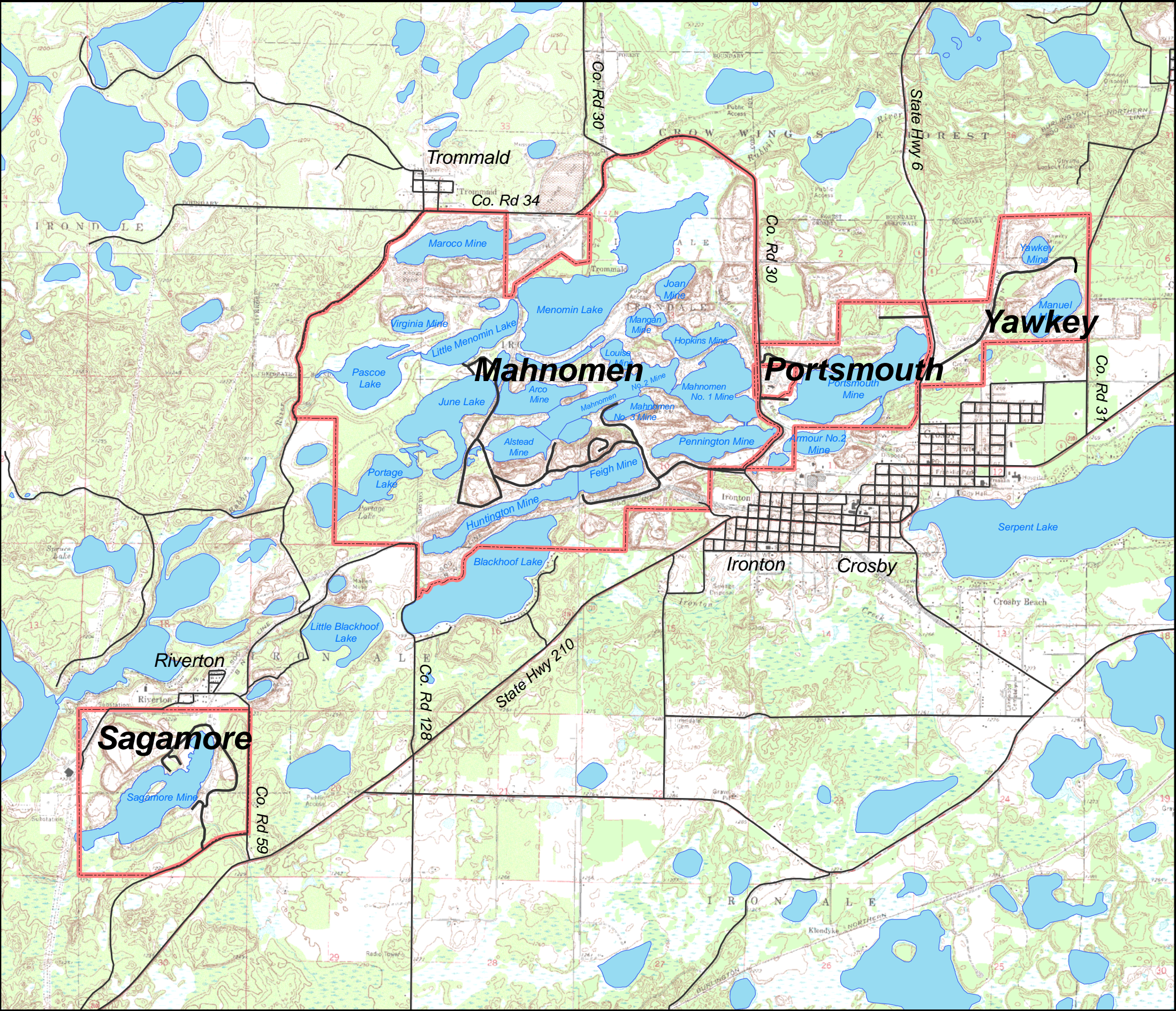


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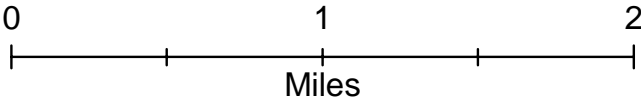






**Units of the Recreation Area**  
Cuyuna County  
State Recreation Area

-  State Recreation Area
-  Recreation Area Roads (Option A)
-  State, County, Local Roads



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## **SECTION TWO – OWNERSHIP, ACQUISITION, AND LEASING PRIORITIES**

### **a. Ownership Status of the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area**

See 2007 Land Ownership map following page 2.

The statutory boundaries for the Recreation Area include almost 5,000 acres of land and water surface. The DNR Division of Parks and Recreation administers 2,681 of those acres, and the DNR Division of Forestry administers 92 acres in State Trust (the DNR Division of Forestry administers all Trust Fund lands). The remainder is owned by private parties (763 acres), or in shared undivided ownership (1,385 acres).

### **b. Railroad Rights-of-Way Ownership**

See 2007 Land Ownership map following page 2.

The State of Minnesota has received whatever ownership interest the Burlington Northern Sante Fe (BNSF) railroad and Soo Line railroad may have had.

Due to the complexities of ownership issues at the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area, the State of Minnesota Attorney General's Office and the Crow Wing County Recorders Office have determined it is not feasible to conduct a title review for each specific parcel. Historical railroad records were not always clear in terms of fee title versus full or partial interest.

It is assumed the State of Minnesota has full interest in the rights-of-way received from the BNSF and Soo Line railroads. Because of the uncertainty of the types of land ownership the State received from the railroads, where possible the State will acquire the adjacent property.

### **c. Ownership of Fill Areas**

During mining operations fill was added to several natural lakes within the Recreation Area boundaries and created upland. These locations are: 1) the north and south sides of Menomin Lake, 2) the area between Menomin and Little Menomin Lakes, and 3) around Pascoe Lake. Menomin and Little Menomin Lakes were determined to be non-navigable which means the lakebeds are owned by the landowners adjacent to the lakes. Therefore the deposited fill is owned by the landowner who owns the portion of the lakebed the fill was deposited on. The State has acquired whatever interest the railroad had in the fill area between Menomin and Little Menomin Lakes.

### **d. Ownership of Stockpiles**

The State of Minnesota has ownership of stockpiles on four parcels of land within the Recreation Area. Two are located in the Mahnomen Unit, one is located in the Portsmouth Unit, and one is the Yawkey Unit. These areas are identified on the 2007 Land Ownership map.

**e. Acquisition Priorities**

See Land Acquisition Priorities map following page 48.

Parcels needed to control the area and for the operations and implementation of the development plan are considered high priority for acquisition. Parcels identified as medium or low priorities for acquisition are those that provide opportunities for future recreational amenities and/or help unify the land ownership within the Recreation Area. Cost estimates for high, medium, and low priorities are on page 47.

**f. Leasing Priorities**

Long-term leases of private and undivided interest property should be pursued where acquisition of property within the Recreation Area is not currently feasible due to unwilling sellers or lack of funding for acquisition. This will provide opportunities to manage entry and provide access to additional recreation resources within the Recreation Area. Priorities for leasing are the same as the priorities for acquisition.

### **SECTION THREE – INFRASTRUCTURE RELATED FACILITIES**

There is the potential that future mining operations could impact any facilities or recreational development within the Recreation Area. According to the Laws of Minnesota, 1993, establishing the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area (Ch. 172, Sec. 34, Subd. 1, 85.014 Subd. 5c Subd. 3): “The commissioner shall recognize the possibility that mining may be conducted in the future within the Cuyuna country state recreation area, and that use of portions of the surface estate and control of flowage of water may be necessary for future mining operations.”

If mining operations were to commence it is likely the footprint (stockpile areas, road and rail routes) of those operations would be larger than the actual extraction area and could disrupt more than just the immediate vicinity being mined.

#### **a. Motor Vehicle Entrances**

See Motor Vehicle Entrances and Road Alignments maps following page 10.

This plan follows the philosophy outlined in the management plan of minimizing motor vehicle entrances into the Recreation Area. Due to geographic separation of the Units and mixed land ownership of the Recreation Area, and consistent with the management plan, there will not be a single entrance or interior road that serves the whole Recreation Area. Each of the four Units of the Recreation Area will have separate motor vehicle entrances.

*Criteria* for siting the entrances to the CCSRA include proximity to major roads, proximity to existing or proposed recreational features, and, especially for the primary entrance to the Recreation Area, creating a sense of place.

#### **Sagamore Unit**

The motor vehicle entrance to the Sagamore Unit is located on Sagamore Road off of County Road 59 just north of State Highway 210. This entrance is consistent with the management plan.

#### **Mahnomen Unit**

Two options are currently under consideration for the location of the main motor vehicle entrance(s) to the Mahnomen Unit:

##### **Mahnomen Unit – Option A**

- Locate the motor vehicle entrance off of County Road 30 south of the Pennington Mine. This entrance location is similar to the one recommended in the management plan. The road alignment for this option is described under the Road Alignments section below. A feasibility study, including cost estimates, has been requested to determine the viability of the proposed road alignment.

##### **Mahnomen Unit – Option B**

- If it is determined it is not feasible to develop a road along the north side of the Huntington and Feigh Mine Lakes west of the turnoff to the overlook (as described under Road Alignments, Mahnomen Unit – Option A on page 7), a secondary motor vehicle entrance will be needed to provide access to recreational facilities on the west side of the Mahnomen Unit.



- ▶ In this case, the primary motor vehicle entrance will remain off of County Road 30 south of the Pennington Mine, however, a secondary entrance, located off of County Road 128, north of State Highway 210 on the northwest end of Huntington Mine Lake, will be added. The former railroad grade will provide road access to the day and overnight use areas in this part of the Mahnomen Unit. (Note: The State has an undivided interest (96%) in the section of land the former railroad grade traverses (the SW ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 9). A private party owns the remaining 4%.)

The feasibility study, including cost estimates, needs to be completed before a final determination can be made on the main motor vehicle entrance(s) and road alignments.

- ▶ In addition to the main entrance(s) to the Mahnomen Unit, a day use entrance will be developed on the west side of County Road 30 to provide access to a scuba diving site on Mahnomen No.1 Mine Lake.

### Portsmouth Unit

- ▶ The Portsmouth Unit has two motor vehicle entrance points off of County Road 30. The northern entrance uses a former mining road and provides access to the existing Portsmouth campground and day use areas. The southern entrance provides access to an existing boat ramp access site and parking area on the west end of Portsmouth Mine Lake.
- ▶ If the proposed shooting range is developed in the Portsmouth Unit, a gated motor vehicle entrance will be added off of Highway 6, north of Portsmouth Mine Lake, to provide controlled access to the range.

### Yawkey Unit

- ▶ The Yawkey Unit will have one motor vehicle entrance. It is located off of State Highway 6 and provides access to the Croft Mine Historical Park and the Yawkey and Manuel Mine Lakes area. This is consistent with the management plan.

## b. Entrance Signage and Identification

- ▶ Each motor vehicle entrance point will be clearly marked with the Unit name and identification of the uses within that Unit.
- ▶ To provide unity to the Recreation Area it is recommended that each entrance point provide a visible connection to the rest of the CCSRA and have a consistent theme. One possibility is to use remnants of the Area's mining operations, such as large boulders or other mining artifacts, at each entrance.

## c. Road Alignments

*Criteria* used to develop recommendations for road placement include limiting exterior access roads to the Recreation Area, providing access to key features while minimizing impacts on the land, and developing one main road, though it will not provide access to all the Units of the Recreation Area, serves as access to some of the central features of the Recreation Area.

### **Sagamore Unit**

- ▶ The Sagamore Unit will have one primary two-way road. The road will generally follow the proposed development concept as laid out in the management plan. A portion of the road, from the Unit entrance to the boat ramp access site, is already built and in use. A portion of unimproved road currently exists running along the eastern edge of the Sagamore Mine Lake. This stretch will be abandoned for motor vehicle use and developed for trail purposes. The road will be developed further to the east utilizing a former railroad grade where possible.

### **Mahnomen Unit – Option A**

- ▶ The Mahnomen Unit – Option A will have a two-way main road entering off of County Road 30 south of the Pennington Mine Lake. The main road will run north between the Feigh and Pennington Mine Lakes and then southwest along the north side of Feigh and Huntington Mine Lakes. Road spurs off of the main road will provide access to use areas within the Mahnomen Unit. Motor vehicles will be confined to this road system until additional property within the Mahnomen Unit can be acquired.

### **Mahnomen Unit – Option B**

- ▶ If a road cannot physically be developed along the north side of the Huntington and Feigh Mine Lakes, a second entrance will be created off of Co. Road 128. From this entrance a road will be developed on the former railroad grade and provide access to use areas on the western side of the Mahnomen Unit. The access off of County Road 30 will provide the main access into the Mahnomen Unit with road access to the overlook area and day use areas on the southern and eastern sides of the Mahnomen Unit.
- ▶ In both Option A and Option B a two-way road will extend along the south side of the Feigh Mine Lake from the main entrance road off of County Road 30 to a carry-in boat access site and adjacent parking.

### **Portsmouth Unit**

- ▶ The Portsmouth Unit has two two-way roads off of County Road 30. The northern road uses a former mining road and provides access to the Portsmouth Campground area. The southern road provides access to the boat ramp access site and adjacent parking.
- ▶ If a shooting range is developed in the proposed location, a gated road on the west side of State Highway 6 will be developed to provide controlled access to the range.

### **Yawkey Unit**

- ▶ An old mining road to the Yawkey Unit is already in use. This alignment will be used to provide a two-way road from State Highway 6, past a trailhead parking lot by the Croft Mine Historical Park, to a parking area on the south side of the Yawkey Mine Lake and a parking area on the northeast side of Manuel Mine Lake. The parking areas will provide access to day use areas for mountain biking, scuba diving, carry-in boat access, picnic areas, trails, and shore fishing.

- The existing access road off of County Road 31 into the Yawkey Unit will be closed and removed.

### **d. Headquarters/Contact Station**

See Headquarters Options map following page 10.

The management plan states, “As a state recreation area, Cuyuna operations may differ from operations in a typical state park. For example, the DNR office in Ironton will serve as the initial headquarters for the area rather than a typical state park contact station within the area boundary. This management plan attempts to minimize the operational costs of the area, and maximize (to the extent which is practicable), local partnerships in operating and managing the area (p.76).”

Regarding the DNR office in Ironton, the management plan states, “It is assumed this park office arrangement will be adequate for providing a controlled entrance to the recreation area; however, if it does not provide adequate security, a new “contact station” location as visitors enter the area from County Road 30 should be considered in the future (p. 56, Action 5).”

The initial headquarters in Ironton is still being used as the DNR office serving the Recreation Area. It consists of one room that serves as three office spaces, a meeting room, and a counter for public contact.

From this location staff manage the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area, the Clint Converse Forest Campground and Day Use Area, the Greer Lake Forest Campground, and the Pelican Beach Forest Day Use Area. The Division of Enforcement also has a Conservation Officer stationed here.

Advantages of this location are its close proximity to the Recreation Area and the building is State owned.

A main disadvantage of this location is that it is located outside the boundaries of the Recreation Area and is not on-site to provide controlled access, visibility and a presence for Recreation Area users.

Another disadvantage is the existing facilities do not have the physical capacity to meet the immediate or future needs of managing and operating the Recreation Area. Due to lack of space, equipment and supplies are currently stored at the Ironton office, the Portsmouth Campground, the Croft Mine Historical Park, and Crow Wing State Park. This reduces the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. As the Recreation Area becomes more developed, more staff and equipment will be needed.

*Criteria* for siting a headquarters/contact station include centrally located sites, near the highest use areas, easily accessible to the Recreation Area users, preferably near a main entrance to the Recreation Area. Other criteria include a location that is not isolated, and that provides adequate space for a headquarters/contact station, and, if possible a shop and storage area. A combination headquarters/contact station and visitor’s center is a possibility if it best meets the needs of Recreation Area users and site management objectives.

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The International Mountain Biking Association (I.M.B.A.) is considering developing a training center in the vicinity of the Recreation Area. Opportunities may exist for a partnership with I.M.B.A. to develop a stand-alone training center or a combination headquarters/training center within the Recreation Area.

Two options are under consideration for a headquarters/contact station. More evaluation will be needed in terms of the physical feasibility of both locations, and in determining the desired focus for the headquarters (provide visibility and service to recreational users in a high demand use area or easy access off of Hwy. 6 and close proximity to the Croft Mine Historical Park) before a final determination is made.

- Option A is in the Mahnomen Unit just west of Co. Rd. 30, on the south side of the Pennington Mine Lake. Some of the advantages of this location are; the Mahnomen Unit is the largest unit of the Recreation Area and will provide the most recreational opportunities, the location is fairly centrally situated within the Recreation Area, staff would be located in the unit with the most land base and recreational use, and it provides an opportunity to locate the main entrance in a scenic area with elevated views along the south shore of the Pennington Mine Lake. Disadvantages include; the location is not directly off of a major highway, and the area would need to be assessed for safety and cultural aspects as it is in the vicinity of the Armour #1 shaft, office and shops complex.

Note: Option A may be more viable as a main entrance if the main entrance road connects to the roads on the north side of the Huntington-Feigh Mine Lakes (as illustrated on Motor Vehicle Entrances and Road Alignments Option A map). If a road were unable to be developed along the north side of the Huntington-Feigh Mine Lakes (as illustrated on Motor Vehicle and Road Alignments Option B map) the Mahnomen Unit will still serve as a major recreational use area however this location as a headquarters would be less convenient for some Mahnomen Unit users. It would still be fairly centrally located for personnel.

- Option B is in the Yawkey Unit, just east of Hwy. 6 in the vicinity of the Croft Mine Historical Park. Some of the advantages of this location are; the Unit and headquarters would be easily accessible to people traveling on Hwy. 6, which may draw more attention to, and interest in, the Recreation Area and the Croft Mine Historical Park, and a headquarters/contact station at this location could aid in providing oversight of the Historical Park. A gravel parking area, servicing the state trail and the Historical Park, currently exists in this location. Disadvantages include; the location is not central to the Recreation Area, staff would be stationed on the east end of the Recreation Area which may provide less of a presence to Recreation Area users overall, and, while this location has existing interpretive opportunities, it does not have the physical site amenities of the Mahnomen Unit location.

### **e. Shop/Storage Locations**

No shop, warm or cold storage areas currently exist within the Recreation Area. As mentioned under **d. Headquarters/Contact Station** equipment and supplies are currently stored at the Iron-ton office, the Portsmouth Campground, the Croft Mine Historical Park, and Crow Wing State Park.

## **Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan**

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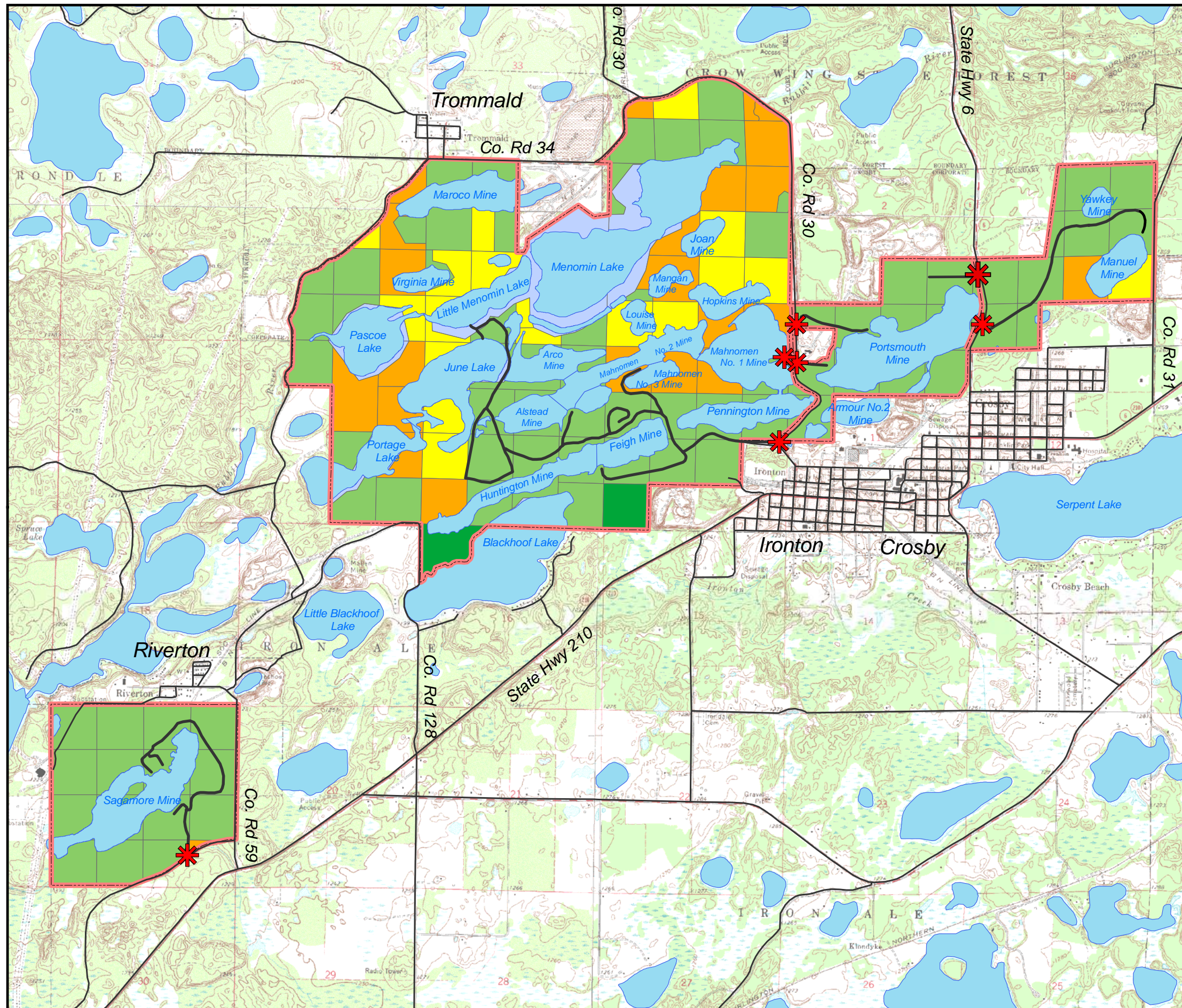
*Criteria* for siting a shop/storage location include a location that provides easy access to the high use areas of the Recreation Area (yet is not visible from the use areas), offers some security, and can provide adequate space for cold and warm storage.

For ease of administration, security, efficient operations, and to consolidate infrastructure costs, it would be preferable to have the headquarters/contact station and shop/storage locations in close proximity.

If it is not physically feasible to locate the shop and storage area near or connected to the headquarters/contact station then the preference is a location that offers some security, that is in a central location and has good access, and is not visible from high recreational use areas.

- ▶ Given the potential for future mining operations consideration should be given to developing structures that can be relocated if necessary.





# Motor Vehicle Entrances and Road Alignments Option A Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area

- Recreation Area Entrances
- Recreation Area Roads
- State, County, Local Roads
- State Recreation Area

## Land Ownership/Type:

- State
- State Trust Fund
- Private
- Undivided Interests
- Fill Areas

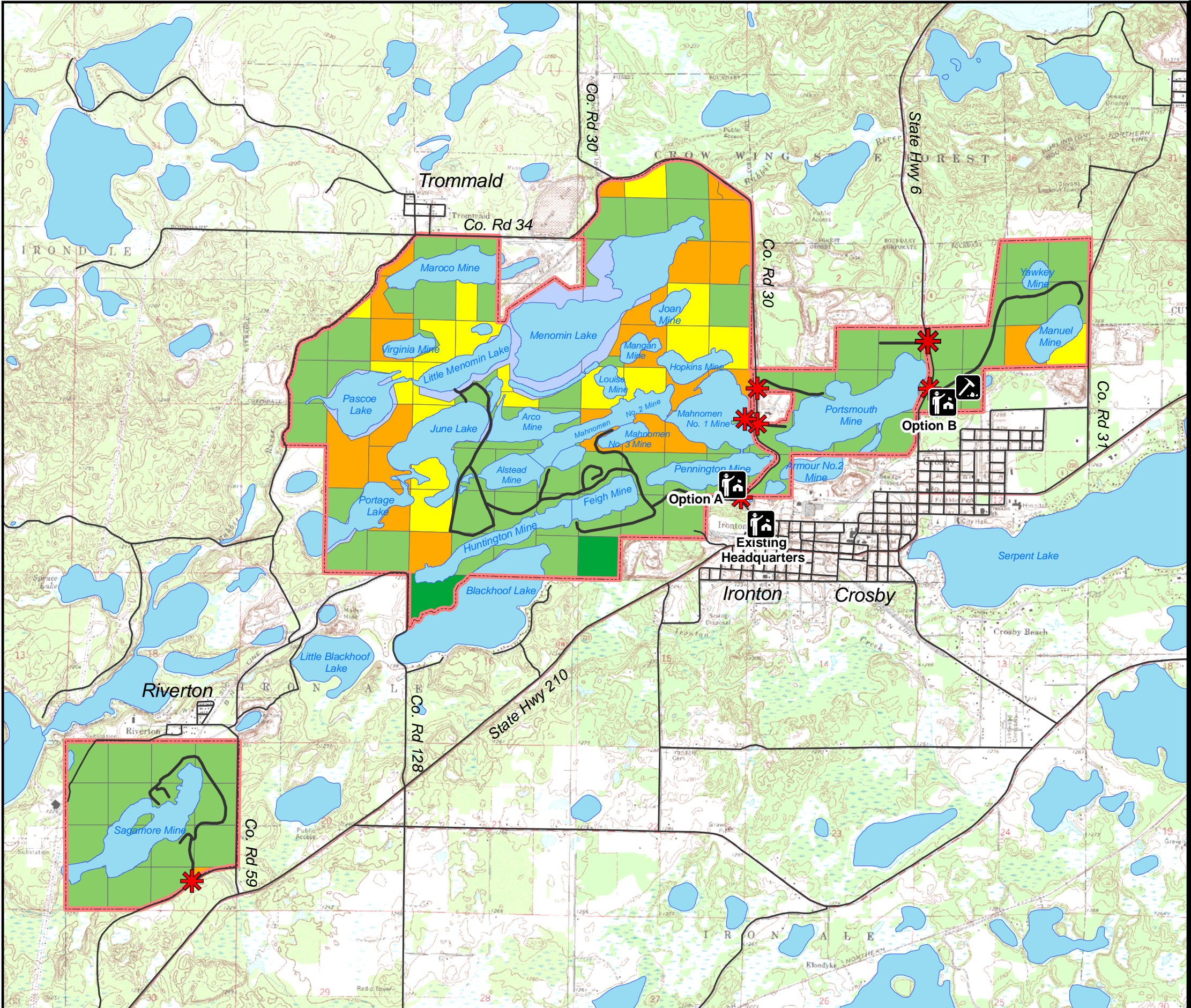


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Division of Parks and Recreation  
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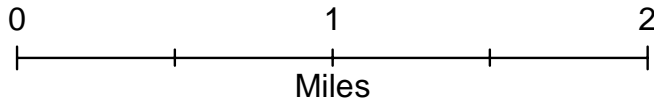


**Headquarters Options  
Cuyuna County  
State Recreation Area**

-  Recreation Area Entrances
-  State Recreation Area
-  Headquarters Options
-  Croft Mine
-  Recreation Area Roads
-  State, County, Local Roads

**Land Ownership/Type:**

-  State
-  State Trust Fund
-  Private
-  Undivided Interests
-  Fill Areas



MN Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Parks and Recreation  
Colin Kelly 3.28.08



## **SECTION FOUR – RECREATION RELATED FACILITIES**

### **a. Day Use Areas**

Day use areas are defined areas that provide access to one or more day use recreational features. Depending on location they will provide access to scenic overlooks, picnic areas, rest areas, and trails. They will also provide access to the natural and mine lakes for swimming, scuba diving, canoeing and kayaking, shore fishing, and general day use. Each day use area will have pedestrian access. Motor vehicle access will be provided as needed.

### **1. Trails**

See Trails map following page 32 for the existing and proposed Cuyuna Lakes State Trail, mountain biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobile trail alignments, as well as mountain biking areas and a horseback riding area within the Recreation Area.

The Recreation Area, with its diverse terrain and natural and mine lakes, offers an opportunity to provide a variety of land- and water-based trail experiences. Trails will provide non-motorized and snowmobile connections between the Units of the Recreation Area. They will also provide connections to day and overnight use areas.

#### **■ Cuyuna Lakes State Trail**

The Cuyuna Lakes State Trail is a legislatively authorized state trail. As stated in the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail Master Plan (2004), when completed it will be “approximately 35 miles long and connect the towns of Baxter, Brainerd, Riverton, Ironton, Crosby, Cuyuna, Aitkin and the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area (p.1).” It will provide paved and unpaved linear trail corridors and connections through all four Units of the Recreation Area.

The Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area Management Plan (1995) states, “If possible, 12-foot minimum box culvert crossings should be provided underneath C.S.A.H. 30 and TH 6 to provide a separate grade crossing for all trail users (summer and winter). Because of the expense involved, it is most likely these crossings would be installed at the time the roads are under construction (p.60).” The existing state trail alignments currently cross C.S.A.H. 30 and TH 6 at grade.

#### **Paved Alignment**

As specified in the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail Master Plan, recommended allowable state trail uses for the paved alignment are: hiking, bicycling, access for persons with disabilities, access to camping facilities within the Recreation Area (as well as local campgrounds), in-line skating/cross-country roller-skiing, and cross-country skiing.

Within the Recreation Area the paved portion of the state trail is currently developed through the Mahnomen, Portsmouth, and Yawkey Units. Within the Sagamore Unit the paved portion of the state trail is proposed to run along the east side of the Sagamore Mine Lake.

- It is recommended relocating the existing road in the Sagamore Unit to the east on the former railroad grade so the proposed paved state trail alignment can use a portion of the existing road closest to the Sagamore Mine Lake.

## Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan

### Unpaved Alignment

Within the Recreation Area the unpaved portion of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail is currently developed for snowmobiling. The Cuyuna Lakes State Trail Master Plan also recommends as allowable uses hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding. There may be circumstances such as trail width, lack of connector trails, or safety concerns that will limit these types of uses on certain trail segments.

### ▪ **Summer Use Trails**

#### Mountain Biking Trails/Areas

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (I.M.B.A.) in their book Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack (2004), define five levels of technical difficulty for recreational trails (see Table 3.1). The book also provides four objectives, measurable criteria to determine these ratings: "tread width, tread surface, trail grade (maximum and average), natural obstacles and technical trail features (p.72)."

**Table 3.1 Trail Difficulty Rating System**

	<b>Easiest (White Circle)</b>	<b>Easy (Green Circle)</b>	<b>More Difficult (Blue Square)</b>	<b>Very Difficult (Black Diamond)</b>	<b>Extremely Difficult (Double Black Diamond)</b>
<b>Trail Width</b>	72" or more	36" or more	24" or more	12" or more	6" or more
<b>Tread Surface</b>	Hardened or surfaced	Firm and stable	Mostly stable with some variability	Widely variable	Widely variable and unpredictable
<b>Average Trail Grade</b>	Less than 5%	5% or less	10% or less	15% or less	20% or more
<b>Maximum Trail Grade</b>	Max 10%	Max 15%	Max 15% or greater	Max 15% or greater	Max 15% or greater
<b>Natural Obstacles and Technical Trail Features (TTF)</b>	None	Unavoidable obstacles 2" tall or less  Avoidable obstacles may be present  Unavoidable bridges 36" or wider	Unavoidable obstacles 8" tall or less  Avoidable obstacles may be present  Unavoidable bridges 24" or wider  TTF's 2' high or less, width of deck is greater than 1/2 the height	Unavoidable obstacles 15" tall or less  Avoidable obstacles may be present  May include loose rocks  Unavoidable bridges 24" or wider  TTF's 4' high or less, width of deck is less than 1/2 the height  Short sections may exceed criteria	Unavoidable obstacles 15" tall or greater  Avoidable obstacles may be present  May include loose rocks  Unavoidable bridges 24" or narrower  TTF's 4' high or less, width of deck is unpredictable  Many sections may exceed criteria

The development of “skills areas” where mountain bikers can practice and improve their skills is also an important design element. IMBA defines a skill area as “A special-use area that features a variety of technical trail features (p. 260).” These areas may include boulders, earthen mounds, timber structures, and other physical challenges. Additionally it is important to develop “transition zones” between the skill levels. Transition zones provide physical features that allow users to test their skill before advancing to the next level.



**Figure 1. Example of terrain for a possible mountain biking area.**

The size and physical features of the Cuyuna Country Recreation Area provide a unique opportunity to develop quality mountain biking trails/areas for all levels of technical difficulty.

*Criteria* used to develop initial recommendations for determining mountain biking trail alignments and areas include: focusing on areas within the Recreation Area currently in state ownership, identifying appropriate terrain to provide opportunities for various skill levels (using the IMBA criteria as a guide), providing separations and/or transition zones for the different skill levels, and identifying areas with appropriate soil types and terrain.

- ▶ The paved segment of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail will provide an “easiest” level of mountain biking trail throughout the Recreation Area.
- ▶ The Sagamore Unit will have an “easiest” to “easy” paved state trail with unpaved loop trails off of the state trail providing additional opportunities for mountain bikers and hikers.



## Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan

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- ▶ In the Mahnomen Unit “easy” to “more difficult” trails will be provided on the slopes on the south side of the Huntington and Feigh Mine Lakes (between the Mine Lakes and the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail). These trails will be accessed off the state trail and will provide an opportunity to introduce people to mountain biking as well as for mountain bikers to practice and improve their skills.
- ▶ In the Mahnomen Unit an “easy” to “more difficult” trail will be provided around the north side of Huntington Mine Lake and the north and west side of Feigh Mine Lake. This trail will connect with the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail on the south side of these mine lakes.
- ▶ The Mahnomen Unit will also provide “easy” to “more difficult” trails in areas on the north side of Huntington and Feigh Mine Lakes with the option of including a basic skill development area.



**Figure 2. Example of terrain for a skills development area or more advanced mountain biking experience.**

- ▶ In the Mahnomen Unit an “easy” to “more difficult” trail will be provided around the north side of Pennington Mine Lake with connections to the Huntington and Feigh Mine Lakes trail loop, and the Portsmouth Mine Lake trail loop. The paved and unpaved alignments of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail will serve as part of the loop trail on the south side of the Pennington Mine Lake. Where feasible loop trails will be developed between the state trail alignments and the Pennington Mine Lake.
- ▶ On the north side of Pennington Mine Lake develop a bridge over the channel between Pennington Mine Lake and Mahnomen Mine Lake #1 for the loop trail described above.



## **Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan**

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- ▶ The Portsmouth Unit will have an “easiest” trail connection between the Portsmouth campground and the paved Cuyuna Lakes State Trail to the south. The trail will travel south from the campground, around the west end of Portsmouth Mine Lake, and connect to the paved state trail. This alignment is currently used by snowmobilers and is the proposed route for the unpaved state trail alignment. This trail connection will be a hiking trail as well.
- ▶ As shown in the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail Master Plan, the unpaved state trail alignment along the north side of the Portsmouth Mine Lake from the Portsmouth Campground, east to the Yawkey Unit will provide opportunities for snowmobiling, hiking and bicycling. While horseback riding is an allowable use on the unpaved state trail alignment, it is not recommended in this area due to limited public land for trail development on the west end of Portsmouth Mine Lake, and the lack of public external trail connections on the eastern end of the Recreation Area.
- ▶ It is anticipated the Yawkey Unit will be a popular area for mountain biking. The Yawkey Unit will provide “more difficult” to “extremely difficult” areas and trails for mountain biking. These areas and trails will be located on the rock and mining spoils stockpiles between the Yawkey and Manuel Mine Lakes, and in the area north and west of the Yawkey Mine Lake.
- ▶ The Yawkey Unit will also provide an advanced “skills area” where mountain bikers can practice and improve their skills. This area will be located on the plateau in the northwest corner of the Unit.

### Hiking Trails

A multiple-use paved trail and multiple- and single-use unpaved trails will be provided within the Recreation Area for hiking. The width of the trails will vary depending upon the type and location of the trail. For example, the width of the paved alignment of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail is 10 feet. The width of unpaved alignments will vary based on anticipated uses and use levels, location, and terrain.

- ▶ The Cuyuna Lakes State Trail will provide a multiple-use paved and an unpaved alignment through the Recreation Area.
- ▶ In the Sagamore Unit an unpaved hiking, mountain biking, and cross-country skiing trail will be developed off of the state trail alignments along the north side of Sagamore Mine Lake.
- ▶ In the Sagamore Unit an unpaved trail will be developed off of the paved state trail alignment to a shore fishing facility on the southwest side of Sagamore Mine Lake.
- ▶ In the Mahnomen Unit a hiking trail will parallel the mountain biking trail on the north sides of Huntington and Feigh Mine Lakes, and around the east side of Feigh Mine Lake, connecting into paved and unpaved state trails alignments on the southeast side of Feigh Mine Lake.
- ▶ In the Mahnomen Unit a hiking trail will parallel the mountain biking trail around the north side of the Pennington Mine Lake. The alignment will go around the east end

## Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan

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of the Pennington Mine Lake, connecting into the unpaved state trail alignment on the southeast side of Pennington Mine Lake.

- ▶ In the Portsmouth Unit the unpaved state trail alignment around the north side of Portsmouth Mine Lake, and the paved state trail alignment on the south side of Portsmouth Mine Lake will provide opportunities for hiking. The unpaved alignment will connect with the paved alignment on the east side of the Portsmouth Mine Lake.
- ▶ In the Yawkey Unit the hiking trail will use the unpaved state trail alignment. A looped trail will be developed around Yawkey Mine Lake for hiking and to provide access to a designated shore fishing facility on the northeast end of Yawkey Mine Lake.

### Horseback Riding Trails/Areas

*Criteria* for the placement and development of horseback riding trails/areas include the ability to provide parking lots large enough to accommodate trucks and trailers, provide intersecting and looping trail systems, provide connections between the Units of the Recreation Area, where feasible separate the trails from other summer non-equestrian trails, site trails away from busy roads, and minimize public road crossings. Water should be available near the trails for horses, and a 9-foot vertical clearance should be provided for riders.

The Recreational Trail Design and Construction manual (p.22) recommends single direction loops or multiple loops for horse trails. Additionally it recommends providing routes with a variety of scenery and terrain, and avoiding wet areas and steep slopes.

The manual also states “Horseback riders travel at average speeds ranging from 4 to 8 miles per hour. Many day-use trails are designed to cover 5 to 25 miles (p. 22).”

The Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines, describing trail use patterns of riders, states “Destination rider rides 10-15 miles per day, 25-30 miles on an average weekend trip, local riders average 7-10 miles per day” (p.4.15).

A review of existing horseback riding opportunities within a 50-mile radius of the CCSRA revealed the following:

## Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan

**Table 3.2**

**Existing Horseback Riding Opportunities within a 50-mile Radius of the Recreation Area**

See [Horseback Riding Opportunities](#) map following page 32.

Location	Miles of Trails	# of Camping Sites	Comments
Huntersville State Forest*	24*	10	Shell City horse campground. No individual camping sites.
Land O'Lakes State Forest	8		No horse camp. Washburn Lake, south trail only.
Larson Lake County Trail	6		Multi-purpose trail system for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding.
Mille Lacs Kathio State Park	27	10 (max. capacity is 25)	
Pillsbury State Forest	27	75	Walter E. Stark Assembly Area. Trails are multi-use (horseback-summer, snowmobile- winter). Shafer Lake has room for horse-trailer parking and picket lines for horses.
Wolf Lake County Trail	6.5		Multi-purpose trail system for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98.5</b>	<b>95+</b>	

\*The land ownership within the Huntersville State Forest boundaries is in transition. Some of it, previously owned by Potlatch, has been sold or leased to private owners, creating severances in the trail system. The miles of trail listed may not reflect the current situation. Horseback riding use in Huntersville State Forest occurs mainly in the spring and fall.

Mille Lacs Kathio State Park and the Pillsbury State Forest horseback riding areas are very busy in the spring and fall. At the Mille Lacs Kathio State Park, horseback riders who want to camp during these seasons are sometimes turned away due to lack of space. Both areas are less busy during the summer months due to large numbers of mosquitoes and flies.

Within the Recreation Area, local riders have historically used informal trails on a combination of public, private, and undivided properties. Riders have mentioned the bugs are not as bad at the Recreation Area as some of the locations mentioned above.

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The management plan recommended a horse camping area and horseback riding in the Sagamore Unit, horseback riding in a western portion of the Mahnomen Unit, along the southern boundaries of the Mahnomen and Portsmouth Units, and along the western edge of the Yawkey Unit. Since the management plan was completed there have been changes in land uses within and outside of the Recreation Area. Changes include development of the paved Cuyuna Lakes State Trail, and closure of some external horseback riding trails. These changes, along with existing land ownership patterns, topography, and large water bodies, currently limit access to horseback riding opportunities within the Recreation Area. The recommendations below take these existing conditions into account.

- ▶ When more state ownership exists within the Mahnomen Unit additional horseback riding trails will be sought.
  - ▶ Opportunities will be explored, working with state and county land administrators, to identify existing or proposed trail alignments outside of the Recreation Area boundaries that can be developed for equestrian uses.
  - ▶ When additional horseback riding opportunities can be provided within and/or adjacent to the Recreation Area the Sagamore Unit will provide an equestrian staging area/trailhead and trail connections. This area will include parking, vault toilets, and water.
  - ▶ When enough trail miles exist to support overnight use, an equestrian camping area, that provides connections to these trail riding opportunities, will be developed in the northwest portion of the Sagamore Unit. This location offers an area large enough to accommodate horse trailers and turnaround areas, accommodate pull-through campsites and a group camp and/or individual camping sites, as well as separation from other uses.
- **Winter Use Trails**

### Cross-Country Skiing Trails

*Criteria* for the development of cross-country ski trails depends on the type of skiing experience desired and on the type of experience that can be provided based on the available land base.

As detailed in the Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines (p. 4.45) traditional (classic) skiing trails need a width of 8- to 10-feet for a two-directional trail. Skate style skiing trails need a width of 14- to 16-feet for a two-directional trail. A combination traditional and skate style trail needs a width of 12- to 14-feet for a one-directional trail.

The management plan recommends providing about 10 miles of cross-country ski trails, separate from the snowmobile trails and providing a common parking area and warming shelter area (p.60). The Cuyuna Lakes State Trail Master Plan recommends cross-country skiing as a possibility on the paved portion of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail however states the trail will not be groomed for skiing.

## Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan

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- ▶ The 10-foot width of the paved state trail alignment will provide for a cross-country ski trail. This alignment will provide the backbone for cross-country skiing within the Recreation Area and between the Sagamore, Mahnomen, Portsmouth, and Yawkey Units of the Recreation Area.
- ▶ Grooming of the state trail within the Recreation Area is recommended if resources are available.
- ▶ In the Sagamore Unit an unpaved looped trail (used by mountain bikers and hikers in summer months) will be used for cross-country skiing. The loop will parallel the north side of the Sagamore Mine Lake, loop around a stockpile on the northwest end of Sagamore Mine Lake and connect back into the paved portion of the state trail.
- ▶ Additional loop trails will be provided off of the state trail alignment within the Recreation Area where feasible.

### Snowmobiling Trails

*Criteria* for the development and placement of snowmobile trails include locating the trail alignments within the Recreation Area so they connect to external trails, providing a separation of snowmobile trails and cross-country ski trails, physically separating the snowmobile trails from public roads where possible, providing trails over a variety of terrain, and providing access to vistas where possible. Minimum trail width, in order to accommodate two-way traffic and grooming equipment, is 10 feet. The Recreation Trail Design and Construction manual (p. 26) recommends a tread width of 8 to 10 feet for light use, one-way traffic, and a tread width of 10 to 14 feet for heavy use, two-way traffic. Hillside locations where the slope could cause a snowmobile to roll should be avoided.

The manual also states that day-use trails are often 50 to 80 miles in length. While the Recreation Area does not have the capacity to provide 50 to 80 miles of snowmobile trail alignment, it can provide trail connections, as a part of the regional grants-in-aid system, through the Recreation Area

- ▶ The management plan recommends providing about 11 miles of snowmobile trails within the Recreation Area.
- ▶ As recommended in the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail Master Plan the unpaved alignment of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail will be used for snowmobiling.
- ▶ A trail connection will be provided from the unpaved alignment of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail, north between the Feigh and Pennington Mine Lakes to the Cuyuna overlook in the Mahnomen Unit.
- ▶ The road to the Cuyuna overlook will be wide enough to accommodate a snowmobile groomer (minimum of 10' width).
- ▶ A picnic shelter and vault toilets will be provided at the overlook.
- ▶ The existing snowmobile trail alignment on the west side of the Yawkey Unit will be separated from State Highway 6.

## **2. Boat Ramp Access**

See Boat Ramp Access Sites map following page 32.

Boat ramp access sites are designated locations that provide developed boat launches to public bodies of water. Developed boat ramp access sites currently exist at the Sagamore, Pennington, and Portsmouth Mine Lakes. The management plan proposed additional boat ramp access sites at Maroco Mine Lake, Little Mahnomen (Menomin) Lake, Mahnomen (Menomin) Lake, June Lake, Alstead Mine Lake, and Huntington/Feigh Mine Lakes.

The management plan recommended “no-wake” surface use throughout the area, and to designate several mine lakes as open to non-motorized boats and those with electric motors only (Yawkey, Manuel, Joan, Mangan, Hopkins, Louise, Keller, Virginia) (p.76).”

Minnesota Rules (Chapter 6110.3000 – 6110.3800) authorize local units of government to regulate by ordinance, the use of surface waters by watercraft, upon approval of any such ordinance by the (DNR) Commissioner. The same process applies to natural lakes and mine lakes.

*Criteria* for identifying locations suitable for boat ramp access sites include lakes that provide quality fishing, canoe/kayaking, and/or scuba diving opportunities, where access to the water body can be reasonably obtained, and where suitable terrain and adequate space for nearby parking exists.

- ▶ All lakes recommended in the management plan for boat ramp access, except for Maroco Mine Lake, and Huntington/Feigh Mine Lakes, will be accessible by boat ramp access (Alstead Mine Lake will not have direct boat ramp access however it will be accessible via the Pennington Mine Lake boat ramp access – see recommendation below).
- ▶ No boat ramp access is recommended at the Maroco Mine Lake at this time. Lack of good public access to the lake and existing land ownership patterns currently isolate this area from the rest of the Mahnomen Unit.
- ▶ Huntington/Feigh Mine Lakes will have a carry-in access, with parking for 8-10 vehicles, on the south side of the Huntington/Feigh Mine Lakes. This location is easily accessible from the main road and will provide access for canoeing and kayaking and other carry-in boats. A vault toilet will be provided at this location.
- ▶ Boat ramp accesses will be developed on the south side of Little Menomin Lake and on the north side of June Lake. A central vehicle/trailer parking area for approximately 15 vehicle-trailer parking spots, and vault toilets, will service both accesses. If a channel connection can be restored between Little Menomin and Menomin Lake, the access site on Little Menomin Lake will also provide boat access to Menomin Lake.
- ▶ Although the management plan proposes a boat ramp access on the south shore of Alstead Mine Lake this location will serve as a developed scuba diving site instead. Boat ramp access to Alstead Mine Lake will be obtained via the Pennington Mine Lake boat ramp access. This will reduce development, operations, and maintenance costs.



## Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan

- Additional sites have been identified as carry-in sites for canoes and kayaks. The canoe/kayak routes and portages are listed on pages 24 to 25 and illustrated on the Canoe/Kayak Routes and Portages map following page 32.

### 3. Scuba Diving

*Criteria* for scuba diving sites include access to deep water, water clarity, interesting underwater features such as vegetation, fish, and in the mine lakes, former mining features. The water depth and water clarity of many of the Recreation Area's mine lakes make the area ideal for scuba diving. The focus will be on providing access to high quality sites. Land ownership will be a key factor in determining both the number and locations of access points that can be provided.

The charts below provide a comparison of water depth and water clarity between some of the mine lakes and natural lakes within the Recreation Area.

**Table 3.3**  
**Comparison of Selected Recreation Area Mine Lakes vs. Natural Lakes**

#### Mine Lakes\*

Lake Name	Survey Date	Lake Area (acres)	Max. Depth (ft.)	Water Clarity (ft.)
Huntington Mine Lake	07/06/92	100	258	33
Mahnomen Mine Lake	07/06/92	267	525	29
Pennington Mine Lake	07/06/92	57	259	31
Portsmouth Mine Lake	07/27/92	121	395	21
Sagamore Mine Lake	06/24/02	314	210	27
Yawkey Mine Lake	10/27/99	14	143	N/A

#### Natural Lakes\*

Lake Name	Survey Date	Lake Area (acres)	Max. Depth (ft.)	Water Clarity (ft.)
Black Hoof Lake	06/21/04	183	29	14.50
June Lake	07/07/82	41	51	12
Menomin Lake	06/27/88	253	25	12
Pascoe Lake	06/19/86	113	12	10

\* Source: DNR's lake information reports

The Management Plan Amendment states "There may be 250-300 divers in the area per weekend during the summer (p.6)." As the Recreation Area becomes more developed, it is anticipated the number of scuba divers will increase considerably.

Scuba divers are currently accessing the lakes through traditional use, user developed access points and at the few developed public water access sites. A number of the user developed access points, though within Recreation Area boundaries, are not on property currently owned by the State.

In some locations user developed and installed scuba diving platforms have been placed in the mine lakes. These are generally 8'x 8' or 12'x12' decks located in 15 to 30 feet of water 2 to 3 feet off the bottom of a lake. The platforms enable divers to learn and practice scuba diving skills. By using a platform instead of the lake bottom, divers are able to retain underwater visibility by minimizing disturbance to the lake bottom sedimentation.

### ■ **Developed Scuba Diving Sites**

Although divers can access the mine lakes at many locations, developed scuba diving areas will provide amenities such as picnic areas, changing rooms, and vault toilets as site usage warrants.

### ■ **Access to Developed Scuba Diving Sites**

Several different options exist for providing parking and access to dive sites. They include:

- 1) Parking areas located adjacent to the access.
- 2) Unloading zones at the access, parking in a nearby location away from the lake.
- 3) Central parking areas away from the lake(s) with hardened trails that provide access to more than one access.
- 4) Cart-in or carry-in accesses.

► Developed scuba diving sites will be provided on existing state owned land where high quality scuba diving opportunities exist, where adequate access to the site can be developed, and, to the extent possible, in locations that minimize conflicts with other recreational activities.

► High quality sites located on privately owned land, or land the State has an undivided interest in, will be a priority for acquisition or lease.

► Because of the amount and weight of scuba diving equipment, the ability to drive directly to the dive site is preferable.

► Where feasible, to minimize the visual and physical impact of parking areas adjacent to the lakes, unloading zones will be developed at the lakes edge with parking areas located away from the lake.

► Amenities including picnic areas, changing structures, and vault toilets will be provided, especially at higher use sites.

► Work with the scuba diving community to determine the best locations for diving platforms (a DNR Division of Waters public waters works permit is needed prior to the placement of any permanent structures).

► Some scuba diving sites may be shared with other uses such as shore fishing and canoe/kayak portages.

### ■ **Scuba Diving Site Locations**

See Scuba Diving Sites map following page 32. The numbers in parenthesis below reference the locations on the Scuba Diving Sites map.

#### **Sagamore Unit**

- (#1) Sagamore Mine Lake. This site provides scuba diving access to Sagamore Mine Lake. A picnic area, shore fishing facility and swimming area will be located to the east of this location. An unloading area will be provided near the lake with parking in close proximity yet away from the lake.

### Mahnomen Unit

- ▶ (#2) Huntington Mine Lake. This location provides scuba diving access to two access points on the north side of Huntington Mine Lake. A parking area will be developed between the two sites with vehicle unloading areas at the lake.
- ▶ (#3) Huntington/Feigh Mine Lakes. This site provides scuba diving access to two access points on the north sides of Huntington/Feigh Mine Lakes. It also serves as a portage point between Huntington Mine Lake and Alstead Mine Lake. Access to these sites is contingent on the ability to develop a road in this portion of the Recreation Area. One parking area will serve both sites with unloading areas at the lake. The eastern site is a priority for development as it provides access to a large area of Feigh Mine Lake.
- ▶ (#4) Alstead Mine Lake. This site provides scuba diving access to the south side of Alstead Mine Lake. This is a popular scuba diving site. A picnic area will be provided and a road will be developed into this site. A vehicle-unloading zone will be provided at the lake with parking provided away from the lake.
- ▶ (#5) Alstead Mine Lake. This site provides scuba diving access to the northwest side of Alstead Mine Lake. A road into this site and a parking area away from the lake will need to be developed. A picnic area and vault toilets will be developed in this area that will serve both this scuba diving access and a shore fishing access located to the northeast.
- ▶ (#6) Arco, Alstead, and Mahnomen #2 Mine Lakes. This location provides scuba diving access to Arco, Alstead, and Mahnomen #2 Mine Lakes. This is a desirable access for scuba divers as it provides the opportunity to dive in a number of different directions. Parking will be provided in close proximity. Vault toilets/changing area, and a picnic area will also be provided.
- ▶ (#7) Mahnomen Mine Lakes #2 and #3. This location provides scuba diving access to Mahnomen Mine Lakes #2 and #3. This is a location where scuba diving certification training currently takes place. Ownership of this property is in undivided interest and a priority for acquisition. A vehicle-unloading zone will be developed at the lake with parking away from the lake.
- ▶ (#8) Mahnomen #1 Mine Lake. This location provides scuba diving access to Mahnomen #1 Mine Lake. Gated vehicular access to this site will be considered as it is accessed off County Hwy. 30 and provides an additional entry point to the Recreation Area. Vault toilets/changing areas will be provided.

### Portsmouth Unit

- ▶ (#9) Portsmouth Mine Lake. This location provides scuba diving access to Portsmouth Mine Lake. A picnic/day use area will be provided in the vicinity.

### Yawkey Unit

- ▶ (#10) Yawkey Mine Lake. This location provides scuba diving access to Yawkey Mine Lake. Shore fishing will be provided on the north and east sides of the Lake, accessible via a walking path, in areas previously landscaped by the Iron

Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB). A picnic area will be developed on the west side of the Yawkey Mine Lake with vault toilets/changing structures and water.

#### **4. Canoe/Kayak Routes and Portages**

See Canoe/Kayak Routes and Portages map following page 32. The numbers in parenthesis below reference the locations on the Canoe/Kayak Routes and Portages map.

Informal carry-in boat accesses currently exist within the Recreation Area. As part of the Recreation Implementation Plan a signed system of canoe/kayak portages will be developed. The goal is to provide quality access points and experiences for canoers, kayakers and others to enjoy the natural and mine lakes of the Recreation Area.

*Criteria* for determining the location of portages include: state ownership of the property, proximity to other water bodies, and navigable terrain between water bodies. Some portage locations may also include picnic areas and vault toilets depending on site usage.

A series of canoe/kayak portages providing access to a number of mine lakes and natural lakes will be provided as follows:

- ▶ (#1) Huntington Mine Lake to Blackhoof Lake – less than 10 rods (165 feet).  
From Huntington Mine Lake the portage crosses the paved state trail to Blackhoof Lake.
- ▶ (#2) Feigh/Huntington Mine Lakes to Alstead/Arco Mine Lakes – 52 rods (858 feet).  
From the Feigh/Huntington Mine Lakes, the portage ascends a short hill and follows a ravine down to Alstead Mine Lake. This will provide access to the Alstead and Arco Mine Lakes.
- ▶ (#3) Arco Mine Lake to June Lake – 33 rods (544.5 feet).  
From Arco Mine Lake, the portage crosses a gravel road to June Lake.
- ▶ (#4) June Lake to Little Menomin Lake – 78 rods (1287 feet).  
From the proposed June Lake boat ramp access proceed north to the proposed Little Menomin Lake boat ramp access.
- ▶ (#5) Pennington Mine Lake to the Feigh/Huntington Mine Lakes – 47 rods (775.5 feet).  
From the public water access at the Pennington Mine Lake, the portage follows a slight incline across the paved access road, down a bank of steps, to the east end of the Feigh/Huntington Mine Lakes.
- ▶ (#6) Mahnomen No. 1 Mine Lake to Hopkins Mine Lake – 8 rods (132 feet).  
From Mahnomen Mine Lake the portage crosses the road to Hopkins Mine Lake. Ownership of this property is in undivided interest with the State having 95% interest. The remaining 5% is a priority for acquisition.

## Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan

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- ▶ (#7) Portsmouth Mine Lake to Armour No. 2 Mine Lake – less than 15 rods (247.5 feet).  
From Portsmouth Mine Lake the portage crosses the paved state trail to Armour No. 2 Mine Lake.
- ▶ (#8) Portsmouth Mine Lake to Thompson Cave – less than 10 rods (165 feet).  
From Portsmouth Mine Lake the portage crosses the paved state trail to Thompson Cave.
- ▶ It is recommended a water surface connection be restored between Menomin Lake and Little Menomin Lake. This would allow for public water access between the two lakes and reconnect the natural flow from Rabbit Lake (northeast of the Recreation Area) southwest through the Rabbit River, Menomin Lake, Little Menomin Lake, Pascoe Lake, and to the Mississippi River.

### **5. Shore Fishing Facilities**

See Shore Fishing Facilities map following page 32.

As discussed in the Design Handbook for Recreational Boating and Fishing Facilities (May 2006) “Fishing facilities can take a variety of forms - from landside access such as banks, bulkhead, and jetties to structures that provide access out over the water. Pier structures can be parallel or perpendicular to the shoreline and can be either fixed or floating (p.89).”

The Design Handbook describes banks as natural shorelines that provide “an ideal setting for bank fishing, often with only the modest investment necessary to establish fishing facilities along the shore and to provide access to the site (p. 89).” Bulkheads are vertical walls separating land and water, with fishing taking place on the landside behind the bulkhead. Platforms are “fixed structures attached at the landside and extending over the water with fishing allowed from three sides. Fishing piers are typically longer structures that provide access out over the water body (p. 91).”

Examples of shore fishing facilities are shown on pages 26 and 27.



Figure 3. Bank fishing facility: Wakefield Lake, Ramsey County



Figure 4. Bank fishing facility: Coffee Channel, Lake Minnetonka, Hennepin County





Figure 5. Fishing platform facility: Otter Tail River, Otter Tail County



Figure 6. Fishing pier facility: Lake Sallie, Becker County

While shore fishing can occur at many locations within the Recreation Area, shore fishing facilities will be developed at locations that provide high quality fishing opportunities and have suitable terrain for the development of access pathways. Vault toilets will be provided as demand and location warrant.

Locations for shore fishing sites are as follows (the numbers in parenthesis below reference the locations on the Shore Fishing Facility map):

#### **Sagamore Unit**

- ▶ (#1) Sagamore Mine Lake. Develop a walk-in shore fishing facility at the southwest end of Sagamore Mine Lake. Parking will be provided at the boat ramp access site.
- ▶ (#2) Sagamore Mine Lake. A shore fishing facility will be provided on the northwest side of Sagamore Mine Lake. A picnic area and swimming beach will be located nearby.



### **Mahnomen Unit**

- ▶ (#3) Huntington Mine Lake. Develop a bike-in, walk-in shore fishing facility, accessible off of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail on the south side of the Huntington Mine Lake.
- ▶ (#4) Huntington/Feigh Mine Lakes. Develop a shore fishing facility on the north side of Huntington/Feigh Mine Lakes. This location also serves as the portage between Huntington/Feigh Mine Lakes and Alstead Mine Lake.
- ▶ (#5) Feigh Mine Lake. Develop shore-fishing structures on the east end of Feigh Mine Lake. This location also serves as a carry-in portage between Pennington and Feigh Mine Lakes. The shore fishing structures will need to be located so they allow adequate room for a portage access.
- ▶ (#6) Alstead Mine Lake. Develop a shore fishing facility on the west end of the Alstead Mine Lake. There is road access into this site however a small parking area will need to be developed. A picnic area and vault toilets will be developed in this area that will serve both the shore fishing facility and a scuba diving site located to the southwest.
- ▶ (#7) Pennington Mine Lake. This is an existing shore fishing area at the Pennington boat ramp access site. The shore fishing area will be upgraded and opportunities for expanding the area will be explored.

### **Portsmouth Unit**

- ▶ (#8) Portsmouth Mine Lake. Develop a shore fishing facility at the boat ramp access site.

### **Yawkey Unit**

- ▶ (#9) Yawkey Mine Lake. Shore fishing will be provided on the north and east sides of the lake, accessible via a walking path, in areas previously landscaped by the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB). A picnic area will be developed on the west side of the Yawkey Mine Lake with vault toilets/changing structures and water.
- ▶ (#10) Manuel Mine Lake. A shore fishing facility will be provided on the northeast shoreline of the lake. Access to the site will be from the main road into the Yawkey Unit off of State Hwy. 6.

## **6. Picnic Areas/Shelter**

See Development of Mahnomen Unit map following page 32.

*Criteria* for the placement of picnic areas/shelters include locations where there are physical site amenities such as vistas, water bodies, cultural areas and/or recreational facilities such as trails, developed scuba diving sites, developed shore fishing facilities, or swimming areas. Most picnic areas will consist of picnic tables and grills (where warranted), however a picnic shelter will be provided at the following location:

### **Mahnomen Unit**

- Mahnomen Overlook. The overlook is a key feature and attraction of the area. It is situated on the north side of Feigh Mine Lake and, as stated in the management plan, “Spectacular views of the surrounding area can be seen in most directions (p. 57).” These views are enjoyed year-round and have made it a popular location for holding events, including weddings, and a destination point for snowmobilers in the winter months. A picnic shelter, vault toilet, and other day use amenities (such as perimeter trails, viewing platforms, benches, picnic tables, and interpretive displays) will be developed at the overlook area.

### **7. Portsmouth Mine Lake Overlook**

#### **Portsmouth Unit**

The Portsmouth Mine Lake Overlook is located within the boundaries of the Recreation Area on the west side of Hwy. 6. In 1973, Hwy. 6 was moved east (to its current location) because water action in the mine “was washing away ground around the edges of the pit” and it appeared the roadway might be lost (letter dated September 9, 1983 from E.C. Schlink, P.E., MnDOT District Right of Way Engineer, to Philip C. Taylor, Attorney at Law). Remnants of pavement from old Highway 6 are still present in the overlook area. An interpretive monument, installed by the Minnesota Geological Society, exists at the overlook telling the story of the geology of the Portsmouth mine and the Cuyuna Range in general. In August 2007, in commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a historic balloon launch from the Portsmouth Mine, an information kiosk was developed and installed at the overlook that describes the historic balloon flight and launch.

The paved and unpaved alignments of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail pass through this area with the paved alignment crossing Hwy. 6 to the Yawkey Unit, and the unpaved alignment heading north on the west side of Hwy. 6.

Recent legislation (Minnesota Session Laws 2007, Chapter 57-S.F. 2096, Article 1, Sec. 41, Subd. 13) exempted the Portsmouth Mine Lake Overlook in the Recreation Area from the requirement of a state park permit or fees for motor vehicle entry or parking, except for overnight camping.

- Improve the Portsmouth Mine Lake Overlook to enhance the views.
- Develop and install additional interpretive and informational displays about the geological and historic events that have occurred in the area, and about the Recreation Area and the recreational opportunities it offers.

### **8. Shooting Range Options**

See Shooting Range Options map following page 32.

Shooting facilities and ranges are not typical State Parks or State Recreation Area facilities.

As discussed in the NRA’s Range Source Book (p. I-3) “The purpose of a shooting range is to provide a location where people can enjoy various shooting sports. A shooting range should satisfy a number of goals, including the following: recreational shooting sports enjoyment; reasonable cost of construction and operation of the range facilities; and reasonable accommodations for the safety of both those utilizing the range and the general public.”

*Criteria* for a shooting range vary depending on the intended use of the range. For example, as stated in So You Want To Build A Shooting Range by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (1998) criteria for “a 25-position, 100-yard rifle/pistol range requires an area 367 ft. deep by 239 ft. wide (approx. 2 acres). Spectator seating, set-backs and sound buffers (which may be required by local building codes) may increase those requirements (p.10).”

The management plan “recommends the provision of a shooting range within the recreation area across from the sewage treatment ponds along CSAH 30...(p. 60).” It also recommends to “Consider an alternative shooting range location, inside or outside of the recreation area, if a more appropriate location can be found (p. 60).”

- ▶ Within the Recreation Area two options will be given further consideration for a shooting range: A) the location in the Mahnomen Unit as described in the management plan, and B) a site in the Portsmouth Unit located north of Portsmouth Mine Lake, and east of the Serpent Lake Sewer District’s sewage treatment plant.
- ▶ A detailed site analysis is needed before any location is developed for a shooting range. The analysis should include defining the type of shooting range desired and its design requirements, compatibility with the other uses within and in close proximity to the Recreation Area, and other potential nearby sites outside of the Recreations Area.

### **b. Overnight Use Areas**

#### **▪ Definitions of Types of Camping**

Within the Minnesota State Parks System different types of camping are defined as follows:

Primitive campsites are those accessible by boat, backpacking in, cart-in, horseback riding in, biking in, or walking in. They are generally not accessible by vehicle. They will have a campfire ring with a vault toilet nearby.

Rustic campsites generally are accessible by vehicle. Rustic campsites include a campfire ring or grill and a picnic table, with a nearby water supply and vault toilets. Camping may be by tent, camper cabin, or recreational vehicle (RV).

Semi-modern campsites are accessible by vehicle. They will have a central sanitation building with flush toilets and showers, grill or camp fire rings, and picnic tables. Camping may be by tent, camper cabin, or recreational vehicle (RV). Semi-modern camping areas may or may not have electricity.

Group campsites are rustic facilities for group camping. Most are for tent camping only but some can accommodate other camping units such as recreational vehicles (RV’s) or trailers.

*Criteria* for the placement of overnight use areas include: settings that have adequate space and terrain to accommodate the use, close proximity to recreational day use opportunities, physical features such as vistas, proximity to water, and the ability to buffer from public roads.

Overnight use areas are proposed for the Sagamore, Mahnomen, and Portsmouth Units of the Recreation Area.



### ■ Camping Locations and Types

#### **Sagamore Unit**

- ▶ A three to four-acre rustic camping area is proposed for the northwest side of Sagamore Mine Lake. This is in close proximity to the camping area proposed in the management plan.
- ▶ When additional horseback riding opportunities can be provided within and/or adjacent to the Recreation Area (per *Profiles of Nine Trail User Populations, A Component of the Border to Border Trail Study* (p.69) destination riders ride 25-30 miles on an average weekend trip), the feasibility of providing equestrian camping in the northwest portion of the Sagamore Unit should be considered. This location offers an area large enough to accommodate horse trailers and turnaround areas, accommodate pull-through campsites, and a group camp and/or individual camping sites, as well as separation from other uses.

#### **Mahnomen Unit**

- ▶ An approximately eight-acre rustic camping area for group and individual camping is proposed north of the Huntington Mine Lake and west of the Alstead Mine Lake. This location will serve the proposed mountain biking areas to the south and east, as well as other recreational users in the vicinity. If additional property to the west (just south of June Lake) can be acquired in the future, that area should be considered for a semi-modern overnight use area.

#### **Portsmouth Unit**

The Portsmouth Unit has an existing campground located on the northwest side of the Portsmouth Mine Lake. The property is a recent addition to the Recreation Area and was purchased with the campground on it. The campground has 16 rustic sites and one group site. There are opportunities for a developed scuba diving site and a swimming beach nearby.

Directly north of the campground outside of the boundary of the Recreation Area is a municipal sewage treatment area and pond. An occasional odor can be detected in the campground area from the treatment area and pond. On the south side of the campground area outside of the Recreation Area boundary an industrial site exists. Given the adjacent uses outside of the Recreation Area, major investments in infrastructure at the campground are not recommended.

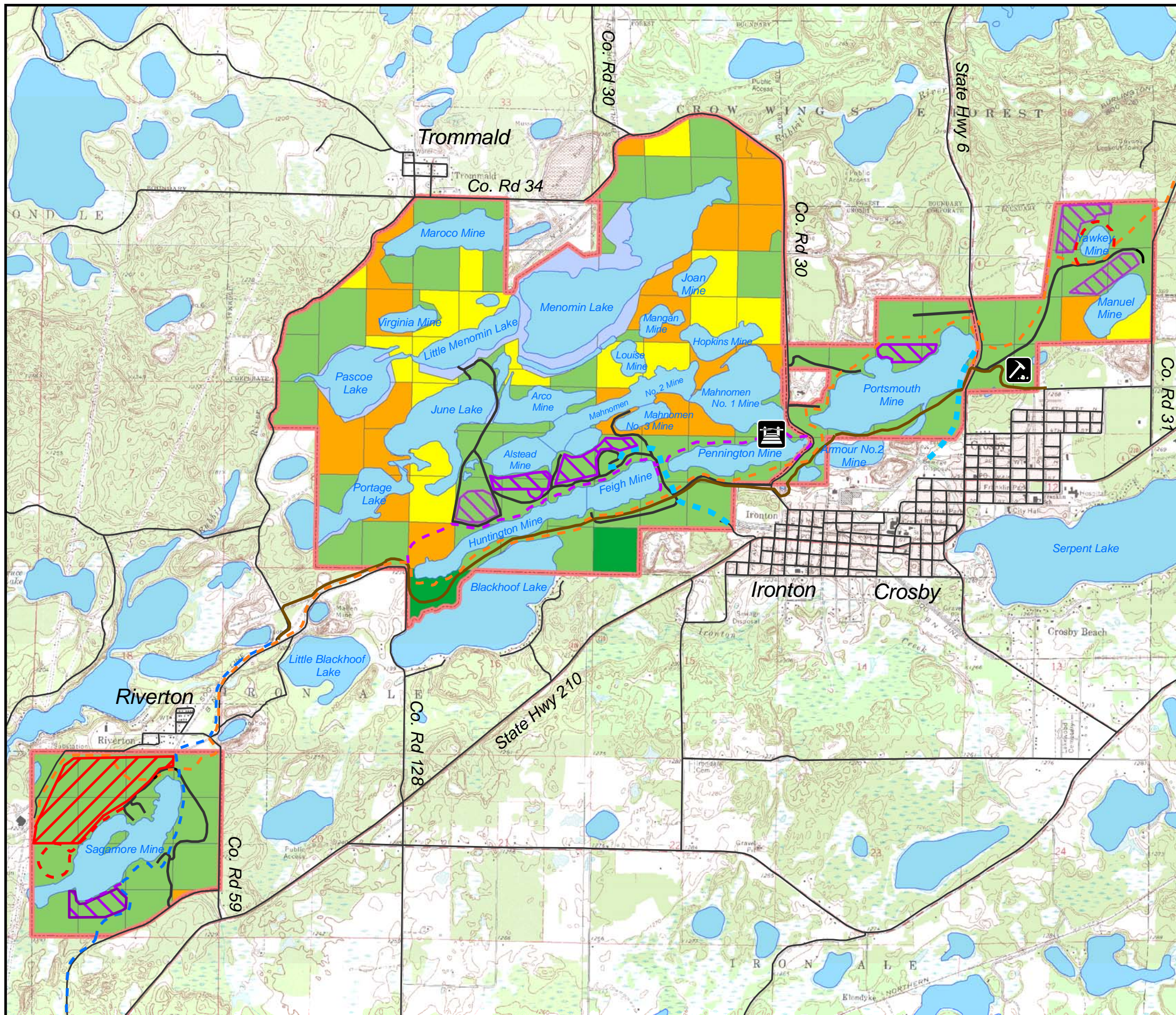
- ▶ Continue to operate the Portsmouth campground as a rustic camping area with one or two group camps and individual sites (minor changes only). Separate day use and overnight use areas.
- ▶ Provide for swimming and scuba diving.
- ▶ Develop an unpaved mountain biking/hiking trail to the campground connecting up to the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail to the south and around the north and east sides of the Portsmouth Mine Lake.
- ▶ Provide a vegetative buffer between the camping area and the sewage treatment ponds, and between the camping area and the industrial site.

## **Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan**

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- ▶ Long term, once more state ownership and access control exists, evaluate alternative locations for camping within the Recreation Area, with this area being converted to a day use area.





### Trails

#### Cuyuna County State Recreation Area

- Hiking and Mountain Biking
- Hiking, Mtn. Biking, and XC Skiing
- Snowmobile Only

- Mountain Biking Area
- Horseback Riding Area

#### Cuyuna Lakes State Trail System:

- Existing Paved
- Proposed Paved
- Proposed Unpaved

- Croft Mine
- Land Bridge

- State Recreation Area
- Recreation Area Roads (Option A)
- State, County, Local Roads

#### Land Ownership/Type:

- State
- State Trust Fund
- Private
- Undivided Interests
- Fill Areas

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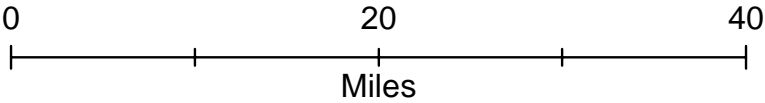
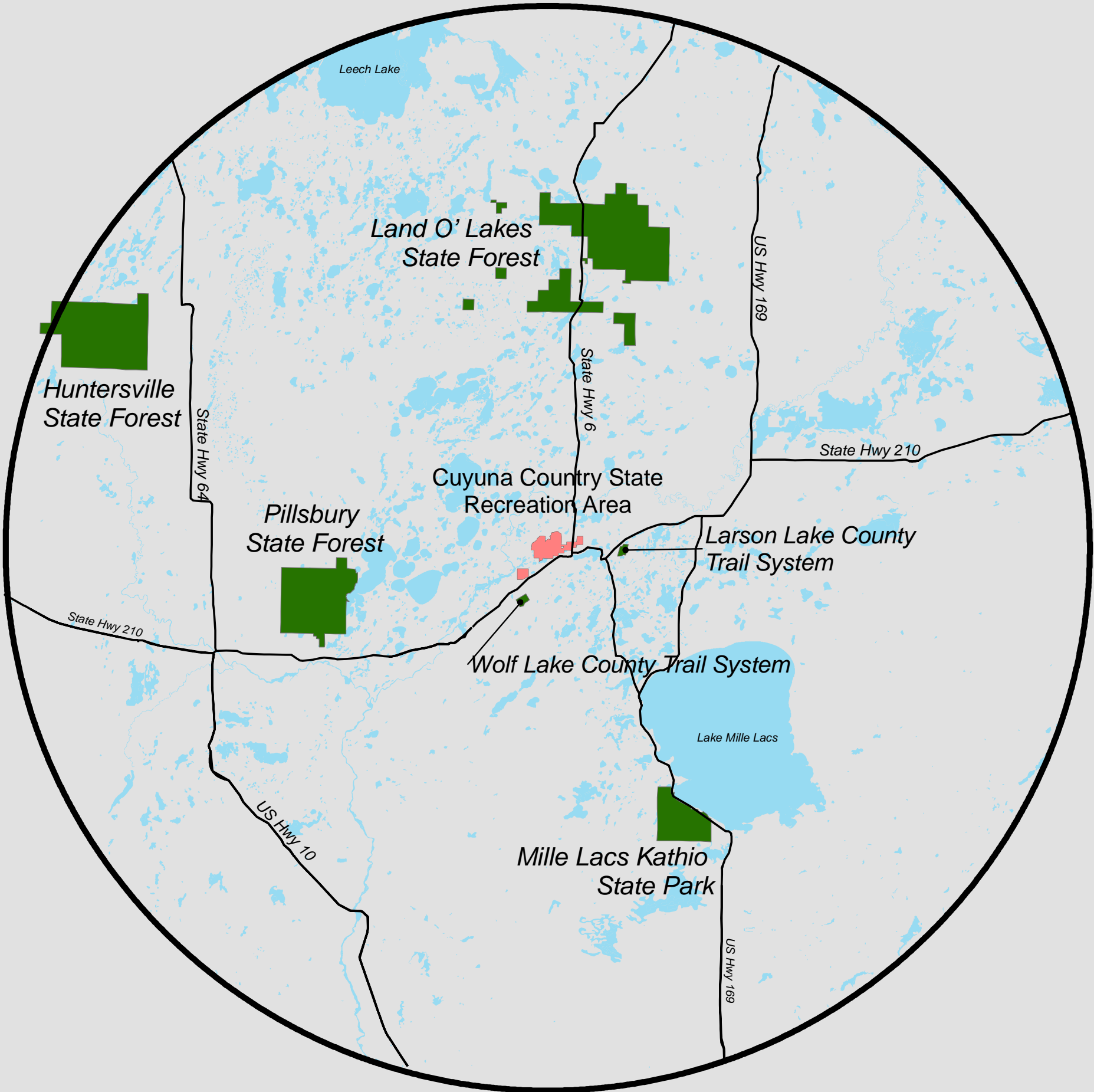
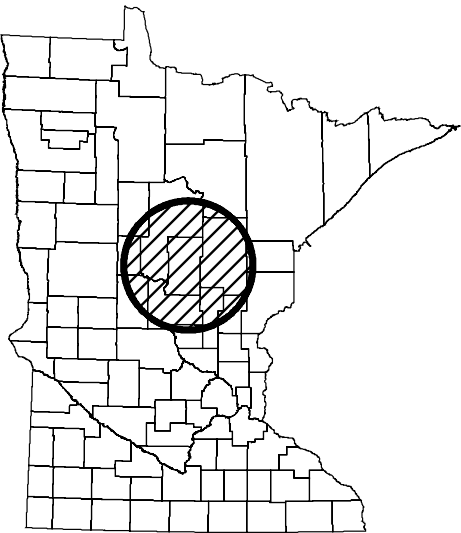
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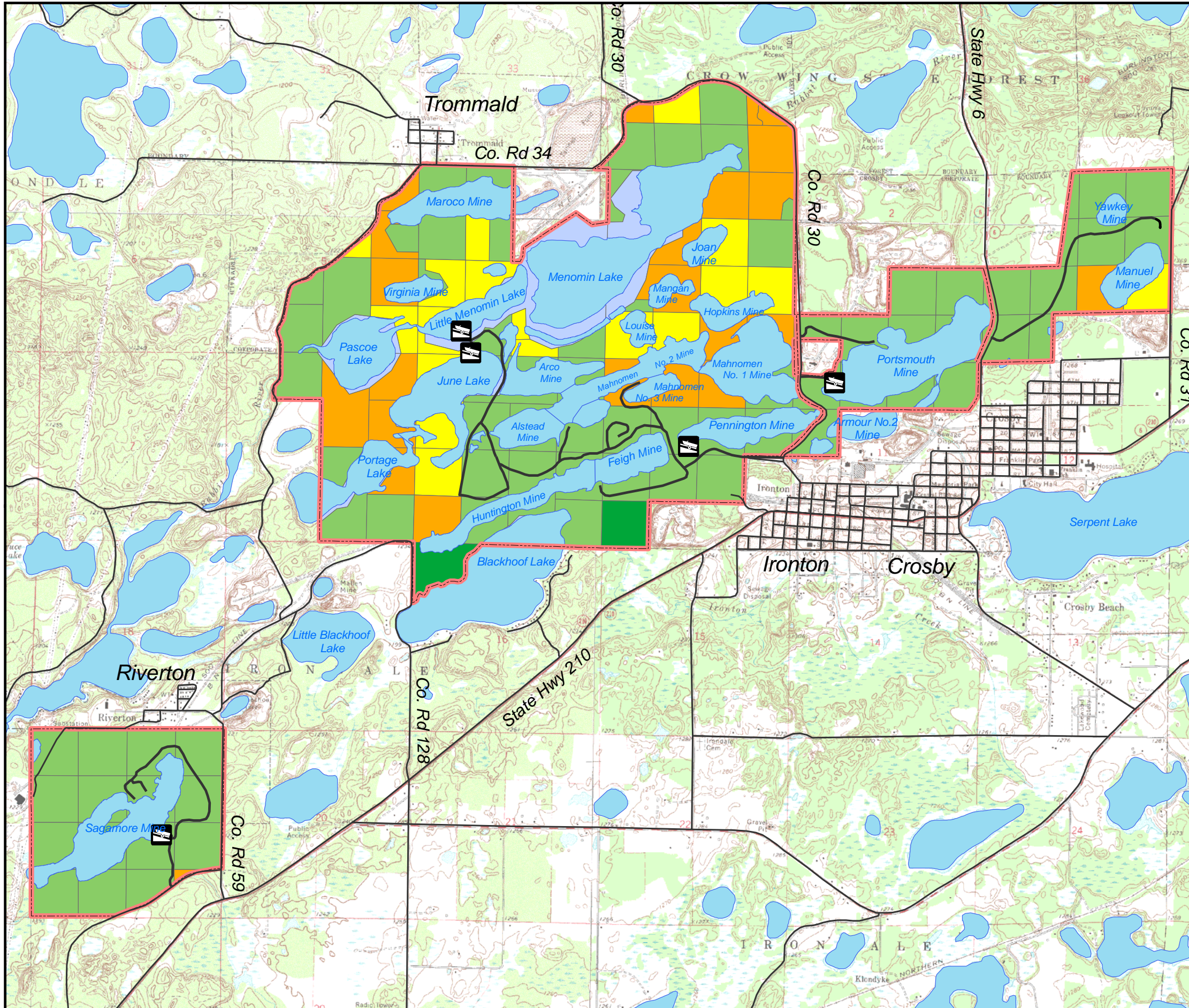
**Horseback Riding Opportunities  
(Within 50-Mile Radius)**  
Cuyuna Country  
State Recreation Area












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# Boat Ramp Access Sites Cuyuna County State Recreation Area

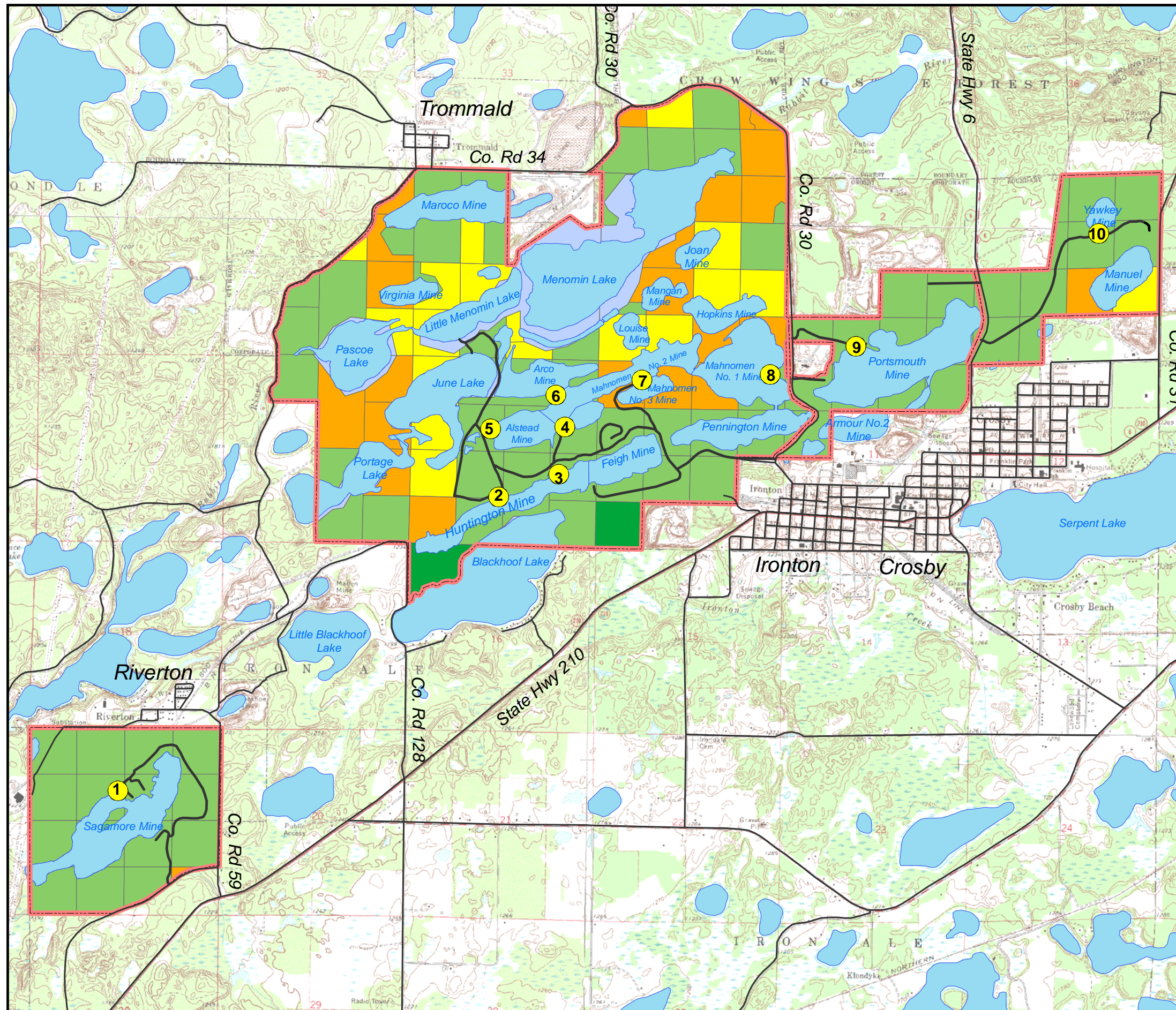
-  Boat Ramp Access
-  State Recreation Area
-  Recreation Area Roads (Option A)
-  State, County, Local Roads
- Land Ownership/Type:**
  -  State
  -  State Trust Fund
  -  Private
  -  Undivided Interests
  -  Fill Areas



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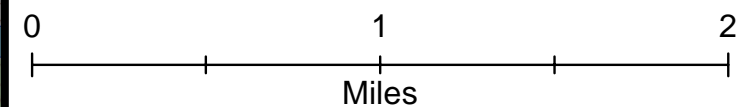
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# Scuba Diving Sites Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area

- Scuba Diving Sites
- State Recreation Area
- ~ Recreation Area Roads (Option A)
- ~ State, County, Local Roads
- Land Ownership/Type:**
  - State
  - State Trust Fund
  - Private
  - Undivided Interests
  - Fill Areas



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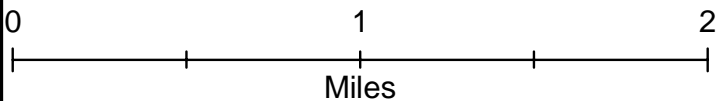


Canoe/Kayak Routes  
and Portages  
Cuyuna Country  
State Recreation Area

- 1 Portages
- Carry-in Access
- Canoe/Kayak Routes
- State Recreation Area
- Recreation Area Roads (Option A)
- State, County, Local Roads

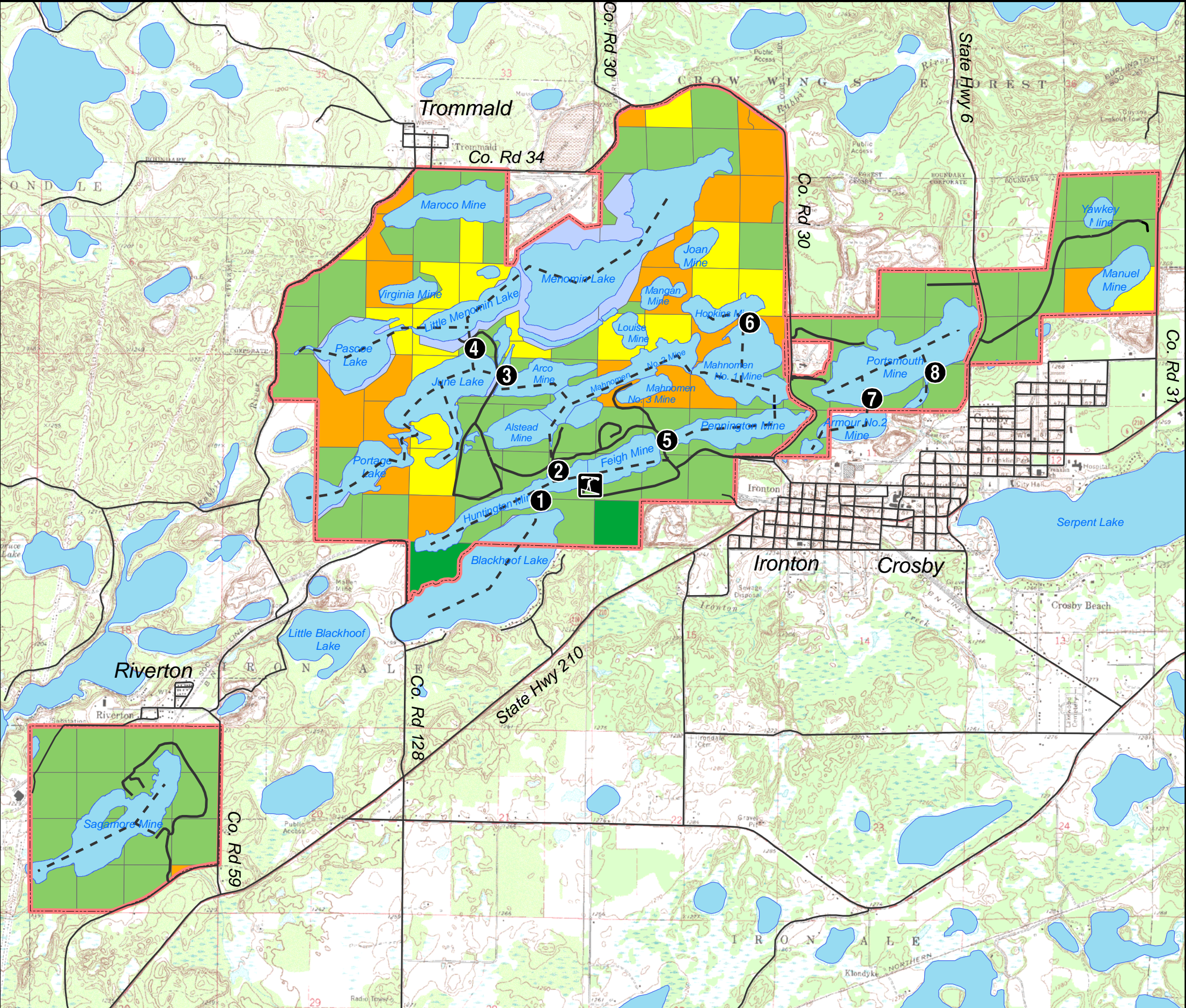
Land Ownership/Type:

- State
- State Trust Fund
- Private
- Undivided Interests
- Fill Areas

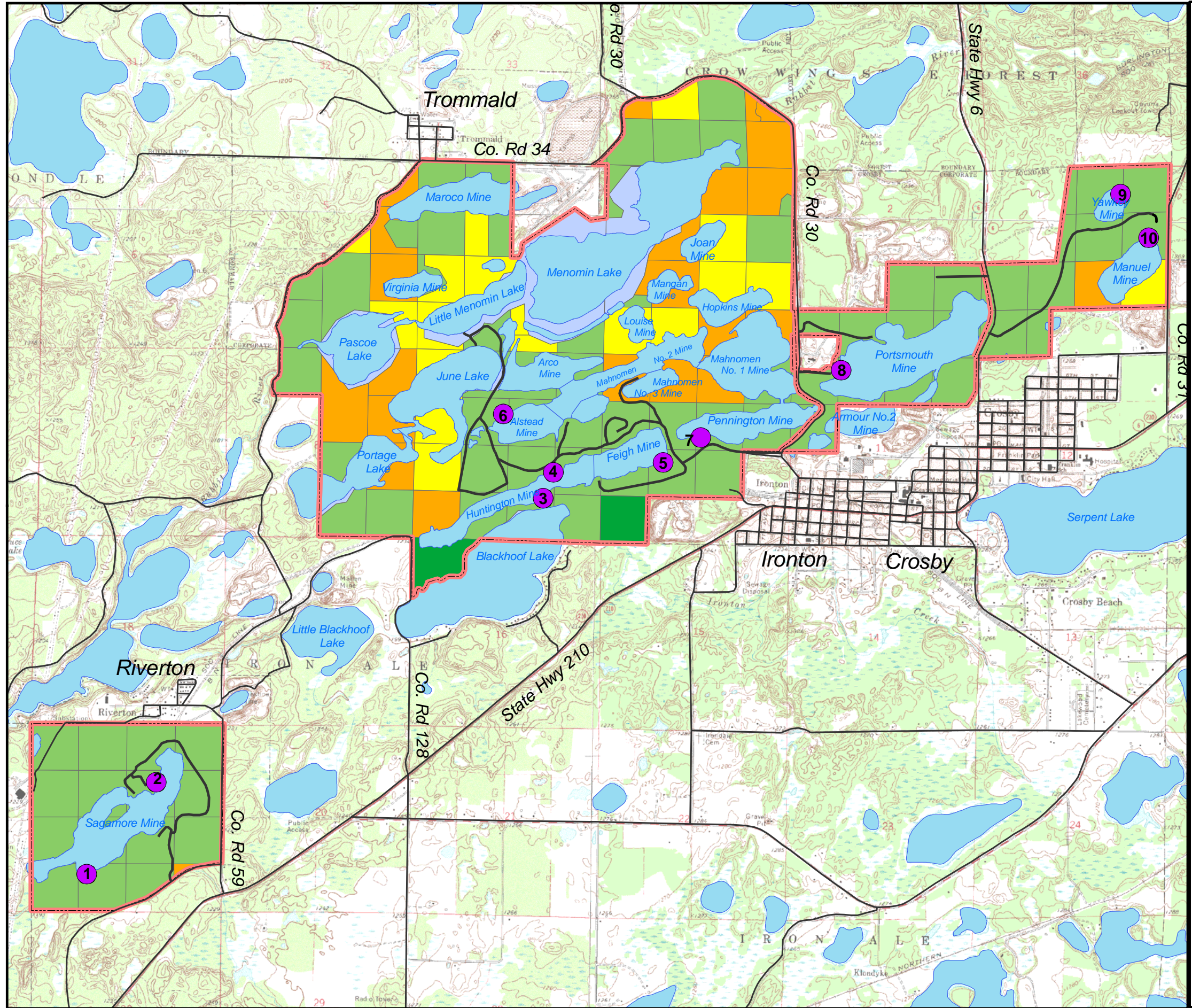


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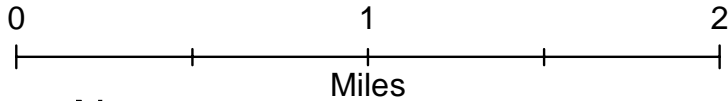


# Shore Fishing Facilities Cuyuna County State Recreation Area

- Shore Fishing Facilities
- State Recreation Area
- Recreation Area Roads (Option A)
- State, County, Local Roads

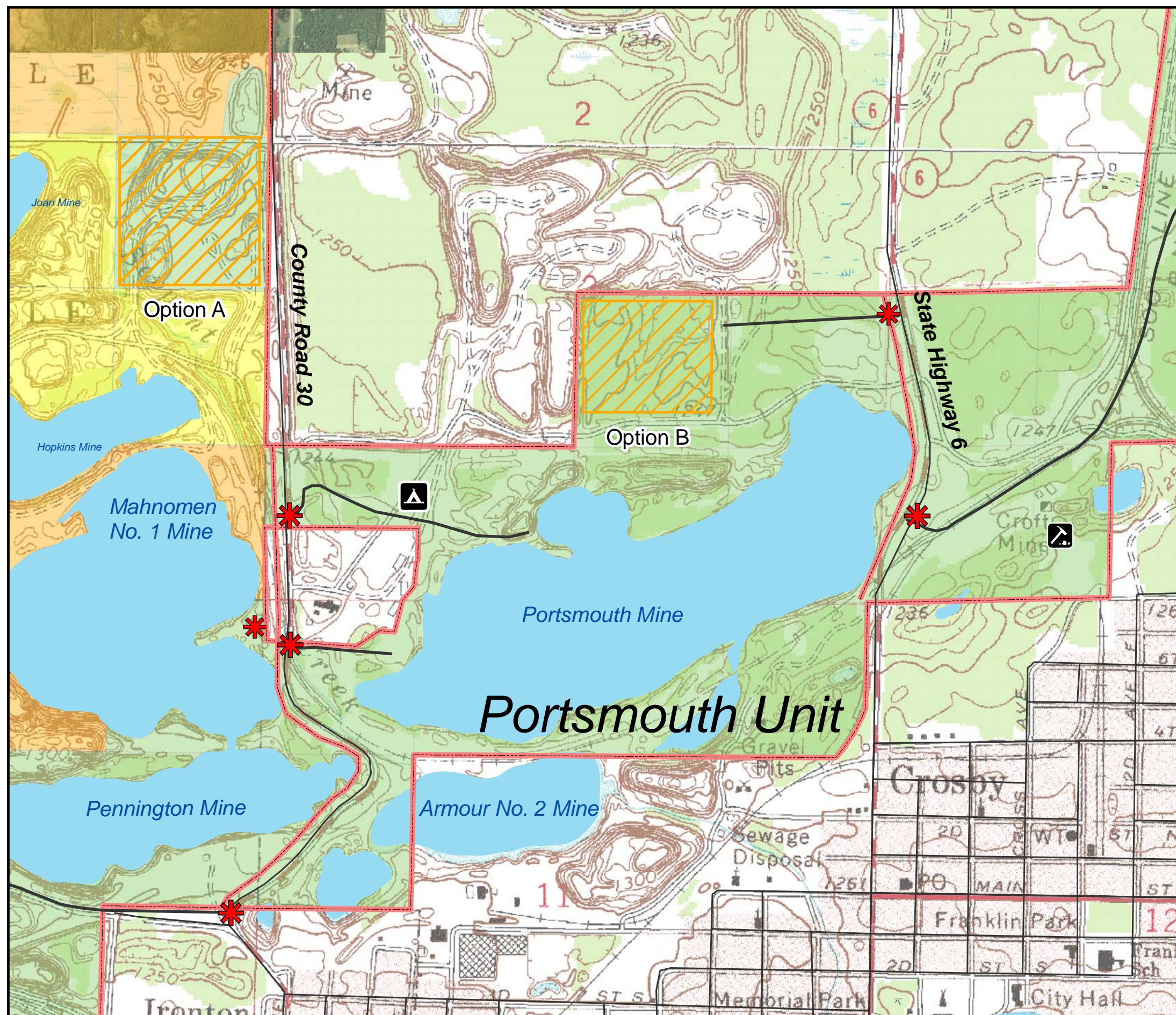
**Land Ownership/Type:**

- State
- State Trust Fund
- Private
- Undivided Interests
- Fill Areas



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# Shooting Range Options Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area

- Shooting Range Options
- Recreation Area Entrances
- Portsmouth Campground
- Croft Mine
- State Recreation Area
- Water Bodies
- Recreation Area Roads
- State, County, Local Roads
- Land Ownership/Type:
  - State
  - Private
  - Undivided Interests

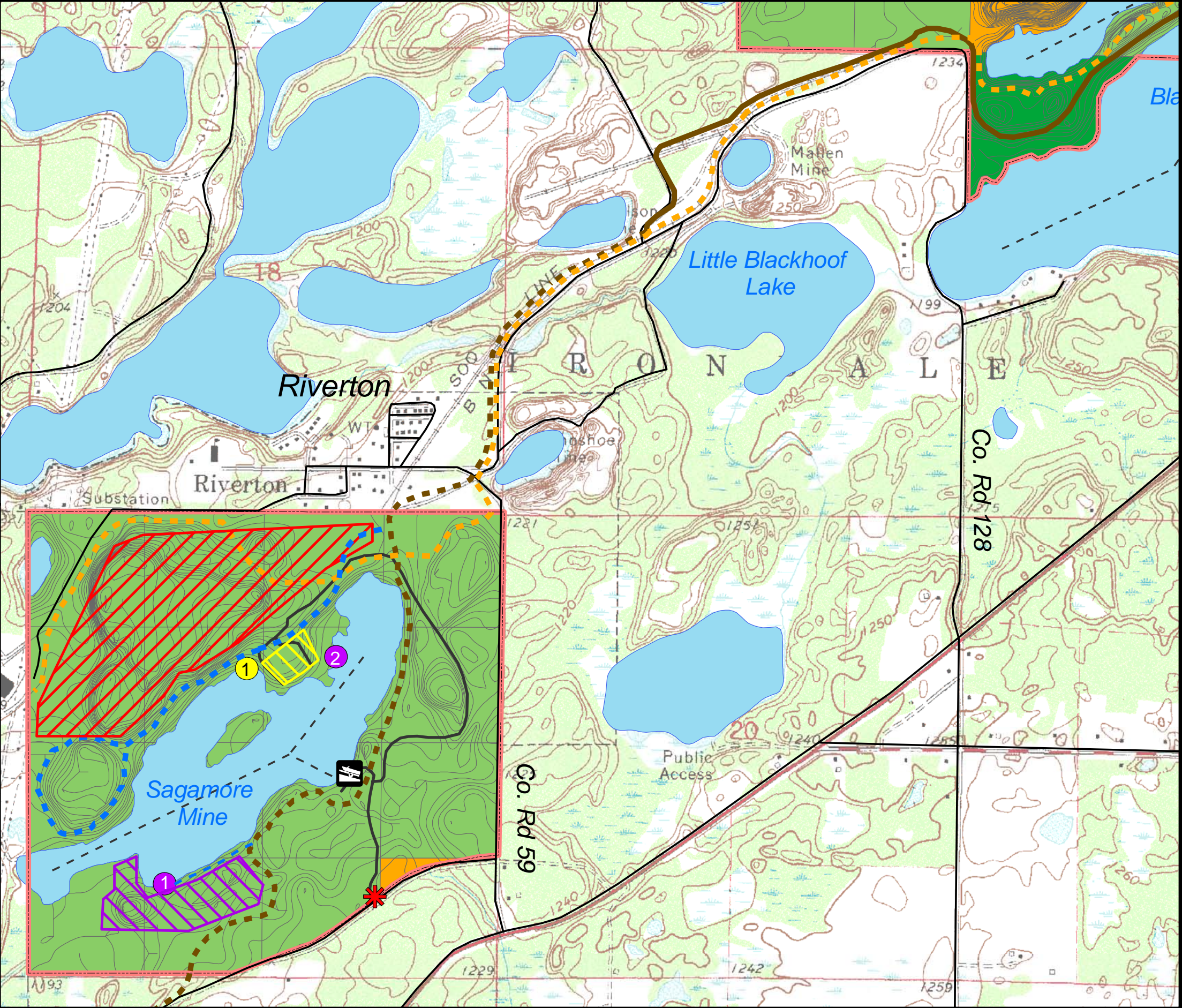
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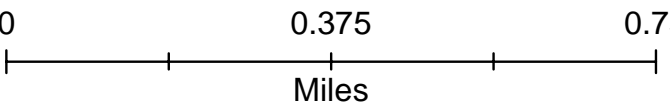
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**Development of Sagamore Unit**  
Cuyuna County  
State Recreation Area

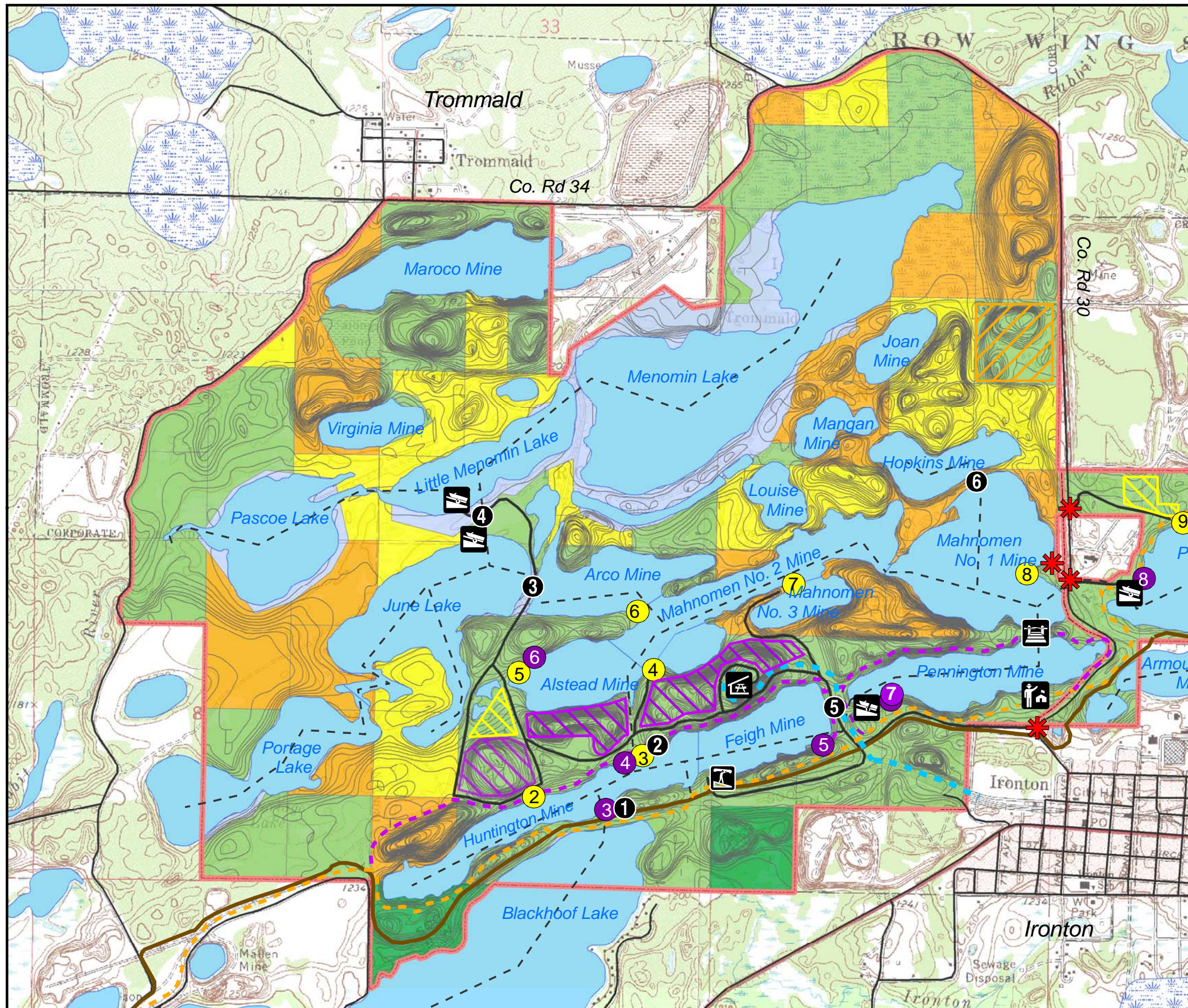
- Boat Ramp Access
- Recreation Area Entrances
- Shore Fishing Facilities
- Scuba Diving Sites
- Canoe/Kayak Routes and Portages
- Hiking, Mtn. Biking, and XC Skiing
- Cuyuna Lakes State Trail System:**
  - Existing Paved
  - Proposed Paved
  - Proposed Unpaved
- Overnight Use Areas
- Mountain Biking Area
- Horseback Riding Area
- Recreation Area Roads
- Contours (5 Foot Interval)



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### Development of Mahnomen Unit Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area

- Headquarters (Option A)
- Boat Ramp Access
- Picnic Shelter
- Carry-in Access
- Land Bridge
- Recreation Area Entrances
- Shore Fishing Facilities
- Scuba Diving Sites
- Portages
- Snowmobile Only
- Hiking and Mountain Biking
- Canoe/Kayak Routes and Portages

#### Cuyuna Lakes State Trail System:

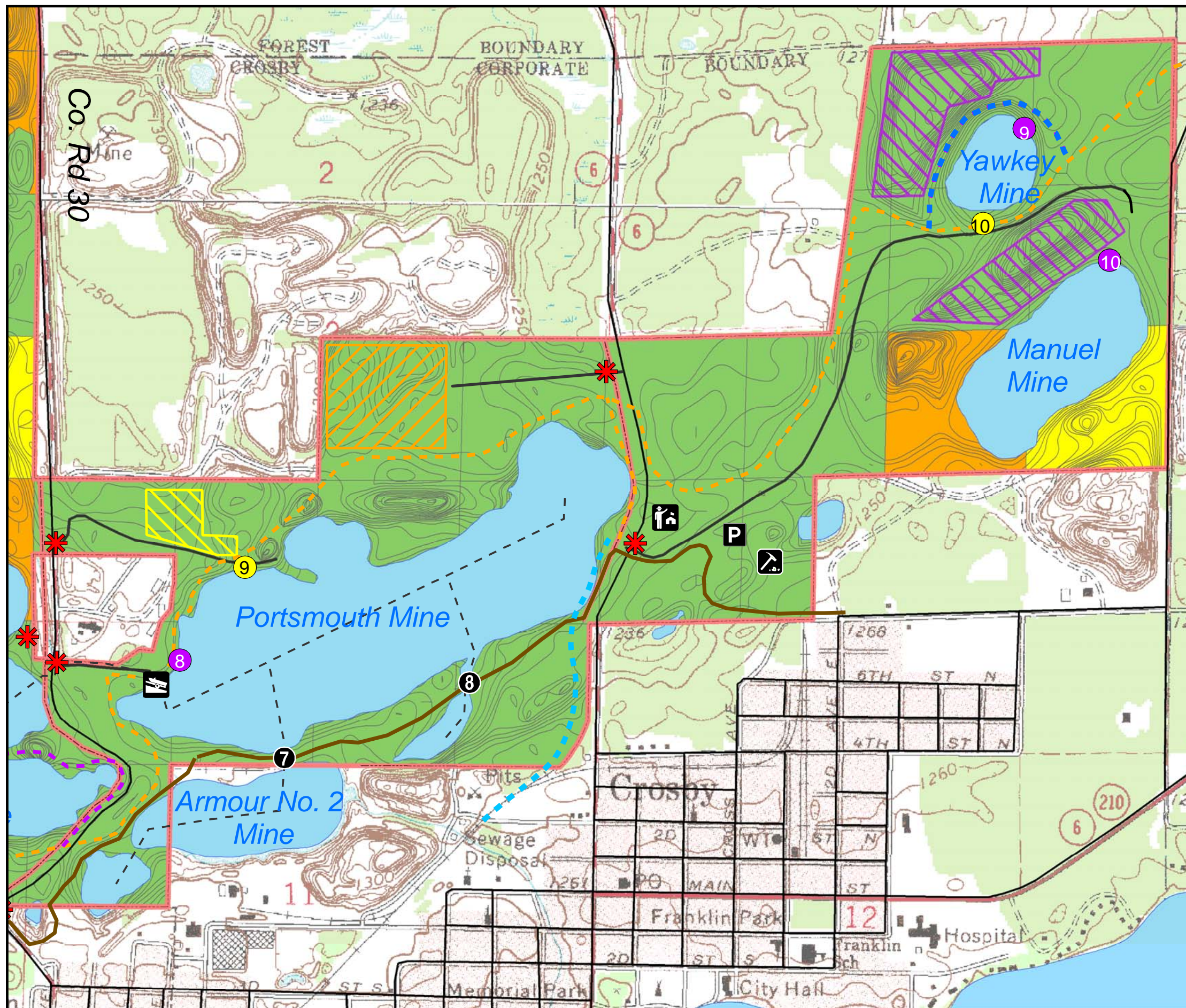
- Existing Paved
- Proposed Unpaved
- Overnight Use Areas
- Mountain Biking Area
- Shooting Range (Option A)
- Recreation Area Roads
- Contours (5 Foot Interval)
- Wetlands

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## Development of Portsmouth and Yawkey Units Cuyuna County State Recreation Area

- Headquarters (Option B)
- Existing Trailhead Parking Area
- Boat Ramp Access
- Croft Mine
- Recreation Area Entrances
- Shore Fishing Facilities
- Scuba Diving Sites
- Portages
- Snowmobile
- Hiking, Mtn. Biking, and XC Skiing
- Hiking and Mountain Biking
- Canoe/Kayak Routes and Portages
- Cuyuna Lakes State Trail System:**
  - Existing Paved
  - Proposed Unpaved
- Overnight Use Areas
- Shooting Range (Option B)
- Mountain Biking Area
- Recreation Area Roads
- Contours (5 Foot Interval)

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## SECTION FIVE – OPERATIONS

### a. Permitting

Unless exempted by statute, all vehicles entering a state park or state recreation areas must display a valid Minnesota State Park vehicle permit. As the Recreation Area consists of four units with separate access points, alternatives for selling State Park permits were explored. They include:

- 1) Self-registration. Welcome and (non-electronic) self-registration stations could be located at the entrances to each of the Recreation Area Units.
- 2) On-site electronic vending-type machine(s). On-site electronic vending type machines could be located at the main entrances to the Recreation Area and/or at the DNR Recreation Area headquarters. It would have the capability of providing permits at any time.
- 3) Electronic Licensing System (ELS). This system is currently available for hunting and fishing licenses, cross-country ski passes and snowmobile trail stickers, and applying for hunting lotteries. ELS provides three options for buying licenses: online, by phone, or in person.
- 4) Consignment to local businesses. Local businesses such as bait shops, bike shops, scuba shops, and convenience stores could be consigned to sell permits.

As exempted by Minnesota Session Laws 2007, Chapter 57-S.F. 2096, Article 1, Section 41, Subd. 13, [85.054], a state park permit is not required and a fee may not be charged for motor vehicle entry or parking at Croft Mine Historical Park and Portsmouth Mine Lake Overlook in Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area, except for overnight camping.

### b. Communications

- A repeater tower is needed for radio coverage to enable staff to effectively communicate throughout the Recreation Area and the state Forest Units under the areas jurisdiction.





## SECTION SIX - OTHER ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED

### **a. Future Mining Potential in the Recreation Area**

The DNR updated its 1995 future mining potential map in 2004 (see map on page 37) and provided an expanded discussion of the geology and mineral resources for the entire recreation area (see below). Mining potential maps are updated on a continual basis and are available from the DNR.

The DNR Division of Lands and Minerals staff provided the following information for the July 2005 Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area Management Plan Amendment concerning the geology and mineral resources present at the Recreation Area;

“There are currently four resources existing in the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area that may lead to future mining within the recreation boundary: construction stone, landscape stone, natural iron ore (nonmagnetic), and manganese ore. Construction stone and landscape stone is the most likely resource to be mined in the near future, but the remaining manganese ore deposits have the highest potential for long-term mining. There is also potential for exploration and mining of non-ferrous metallic minerals such as copper, zinc, and gold.

For the dual purpose of the conservation of stone resources and land, existing brown field sites of disturbed land from past mining should be utilized to the maximum extent possible in order to delay the need to disturb new land for mining. Therefore, the stockpile materials and existing mines in this area should be available for future mining.

#### *Construction Stone*

The State of Minnesota owns millions of tons of stockpiled material within the state recreation area. These state-owned stockpiles contain school and tax-forfeit trust fund minerals. These stockpiles, and many other stockpiles which exist throughout the state recreation area, may be marketable for various construction stone purposes and for landscape stone. Further, there may be a need to quarry new stone for these purposes.

#### *Iron Ore Mining Potential*

The majority of iron ore processing facilities in the United States switched from processing natural ore to processing taconite in the 1960's. The Cuyuna Range contains manganese-rich natural iron ore, which differs from the magnetic taconite ores on the Mesabi Range. However, within the state recreation area, “lean iron ore stockpiles” and unmined, in-place resources may contain enough natural iron ore to make removal profitable using new technologies. Minnesota has recently been benefiting from dramatic increases in world demand for steel. The increased demand is largely due to increasingly high levels of Chinese steel production and consumption. Increasing the quantity of iron unit consumption has led to significant increases in the value of iron units of all types. Such increased value could lead to the development of alternative sources of iron, such as from sources in the Cuyuna Range.

#### *Manganese Mining Potential*

Manganese is a critical defense-related element used as a hardening agent in the steel-making process. For every ton of steel produced, six to nine pounds of manganese is required. The United States began importing large amounts of manganese in the early 1960's and currently



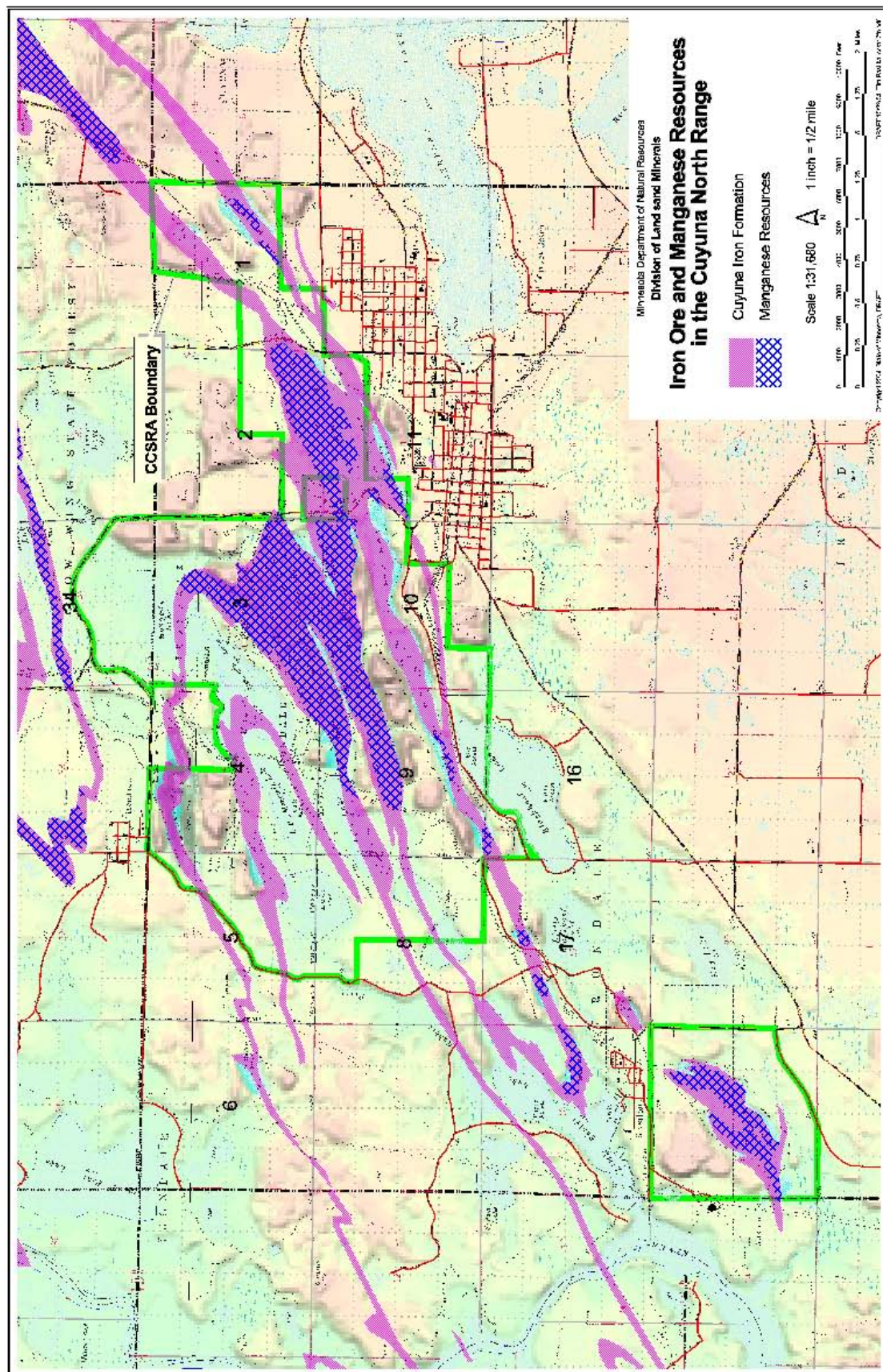
imports all manganese used in its steel production. The Cuyuna Range was a critical supplier of manganese in W.W.I and W.W.II when foreign supplies were threatened, and at times drastically reduced by wartime activities. The Cuyuna Range has the largest and highest grade reserves of the four identified areas of manganese within the borders of the United States.

The Cuyuna Range contains a large but low-grade resource of manganese. There have been many attempts to estimate the potential deposits of manganese remaining. Beltrame, et al performed the most recent estimation in 1981. They estimated that the Range contains a minimum of 170 million metric tons of manganiferous rock with an average grade of 10.46 weight percent manganese. However, there are many inferred resources on the Cuyuna Range that have not been fully explored. The glacial drift covering the Cuyuna area is generally less than 100 feet thick; however, in some areas the glacial drift thickness reaches 200 feet thick.

In the foreseeable future, the two most likely scenarios for re-starting mining on the Cuyuna Range would be a metallurgical breakthrough or a U.S. crisis. In the event of a national emergency, at least part, if not all, of the reserves of the manganese-bearing ore on the Cuyuna Range may need to be put back into production. Ores of the Emily District north of Cuyuna (near Emily, Minnesota) have a much higher percentage of manganese than that which is found on the North Range (where the state recreation area is located). Within the immediate boundary of the state recreation area, there are large amounts of low-grade manganese-bearing ore ranging from 3-5% manganese. High-grade ore usually contains above 12% manganese. Large stockpiles exist within the state recreation area which may contain low-grade ore. This material was considered waste at the time of mining during the 1940's, '50's and '60's. However with technological advances, these stockpiles may become valuable, especially in the event of a U.S. crisis. Moreover, the former LTV minesite on the Mesabi Range may reopen as a plant for producing iron nuggets (pig iron). The addition of iron/manganese concentrates from the Cuyuna Range would be a significant "value-added" step for Mesabi pig iron production.

The Cuyuna Range could be put back into production. Many railroad beds exist throughout the region, leading directly to large ports along Lake Superior and mining operations on the Mesabi Range. Opening of any new mining activity would require permitting and environmental reviews. The state, local taxing authorities, and school districts could receive significant royalty income as a result of reopening old mines and starting new operations. The State of Minnesota is the largest mineral owner on the North Range.

Within the State Recreation Area, the Louise, Hopkins, and Sagamore mine areas have the best chance to be put back into production. Portions of these areas include manganese ore greater than 10%. Immediately to the north of the State Recreation Area, the Pontiac, Merritt, Gloria-Zeno, Milford and Colonization properties show the greatest potential for mineable manganese resources. These areas have the highest concentrations of mineable manganese ore on the North Range (pp. 14-16)."





### b. Interpretive Opportunities

Recommendations for interpretive opportunities can be found in the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area Management Plan, the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area Management Plan Amendment, and the draft Cuyuna County State Recreation Area Interpretive Plan. The latter identifies interpretive themes, “summarizes existing visitation and interpretive services, and identifies opportunities for additional interpretation. (p.2).”

#### **Croft Mine Historical Park**

The Croft Mine Historical Park is located in the Yawkey Unit east of Hwy. 6 and is currently managed and operated by the Crosby-Ironton Joint Powers Board. The area consists of a re-creation of a mine tunnel (with interpretive exhibits), an original dry house (that now houses mining related artifacts and historical photographs), a typical miner’s house, and the Cuyler Adams house. The miner’s house and Adams house are located south of the dry house and mining tunnel and connected by pathways. The dry house is in its original location. The exhibits and artifacts provide historical information about mining activities at the Croft Mine and on the Cuyuna Iron Range.

- ▶ Provide improved directional signage to the Croft Mine Historical Park.
- ▶ If the headquarters/contact station is developed in the Yawkey Unit it should be designed to provide controlled access to the Croft Mine Historical Park.
- ▶ Coordinate and initiate additional planning efforts with local interpretive entities to determine more specific direction for the Croft Mine Historical Park.



Figure 7. Croft Mine dry house.

**c. Natural and Cultural Resources**

Recommendations for management of natural and cultural resources can be found in the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area Management Plan, the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area Management Plan Amendment, and the draft Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area Interpretive Plan. Areas proposed for development will need to be reviewed to ensure that natural and cultural resources are identified and appropriately managed and protected.





## **SECTION SEVEN – DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ESTIMATED COSTS**

Groupings are in sequential order by geographical area.

These are recommendations and may be adjusted or reprioritized to meet the realities of land ownership, efficiencies of grouping some projects together for lower construction costs, availability of funding, results of feasibility studies and events such as mining activities.

<b>Group A- Initial Infrastructure Development</b>	<b><u>Estimated Cost</u></b>
----------------------------------------------------	------------------------------

A.1. Surveying and signing of boundaries, including clearing and installing boundary signs. Additional surveying where there may be ownership issues.	25k
A.2. Provide landscaping, berms and barriers to confine vehicles to designated roads, and gates to keep snowmobiles off of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail.	50k
A.3. Directional exterior roads signed to main entrances in each Unit (off of Hwy. 210, Hwy. 6, and County Rds. 59, 128 and 30).	20k
A.4. Main Unit entrances (four) developed with interpretive themes.	30k
A.5. Development of a headquarters/contact station.	350k
A.6. Development of a shop/garage, warm and cold storage, secure equipment.	200k
A.7. Welcome station/orientation at entrance points.	20k
A.8. Interior traffic signs for the roads.	5k
A.9. Reliable radio tower with a repeater.	20k
A.10. Develop and install permit/fee collection system.	100k

### **Group B – Cuyuna Lakes State Trail Development**

B.1. Complete the development of the paved (from Iverson Road to the Sagamore Unit boat ramp access and parking area) and unpaved Cuyuna Lakes State Trail alignments between the Sagamore and Mahnomen Units. This will connect all four units of the Recreation Area by trail.	<b>Division of Trails &amp; Waterways</b>
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## Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan

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- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| B.2. Sagamore Unit. Develop the paved Cuyuna Lakes State Trail alignment through the Sagamore Unit.                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Division of Trails &amp; Waterways</b> |
| B.3. Sagamore Unit. Develop the unpaved Cuyuna Lakes State Trail alignment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Division of Trails &amp; Waterways</b> |
| B.4. Mahnomen Unit. Develop the unpaved Cuyuna Lakes State Trail alignment on the south side of the Pennington Mine in the vicinity of the Pennington coniferous tree plantation.                                                                                                             | <b>Division of Trails &amp; Waterways</b> |
| B.5. Portsmouth Unit. Develop a bridge for the creek crossing at Portsmouth/Armour #2 Mine Lakes for the unpaved Cuyuna Lakes State Trail alignment.                                                                                                                                          | <b>Division of Trails &amp; Waterways</b> |
| B.6. Portsmouth Unit. Develop aggregate surfaced trail on the east end of Portsmouth Mine Lake from the unpaved Cuyuna Lakes State Trail south along the west side of Hwy. 6 to the paved alignment of the state trail. This will complete a trail alignment around the Portsmouth Mine Lake. | <b>25k</b>                                |

### Group C – Mahnomen Unit

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| C.1. Mahnomen Unit. Decision needed on motor vehicle entrance(s) and road alignments (Option A or Option B) for Mahnomen Unit. Cost varies depending upon decision made. Estimate is based on unpaved road 5-10 miles in length. See C.3 and C.5.                          | <b>1,000k</b>          |
| C.2. Mahnomen Unit. Develop mountain biking trails off of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail between the state trail and the Huntington/Feigh Mine Lakes.                                                                                                                        | <b>25k</b>             |
| C.3. Mahnomen Unit. Develop an unpaved road from the Pennington access to the top of the overlook (snowmobilers will use this road in winter months).                                                                                                                      | <b>included in C.1</b> |
| C.4. Mahnomen Unit. Develop a first-class day use facility at the Cuyuna overlook to include a picnic shelter, vault toilet, and other day use amenities such as perimeter trails, viewing platforms, benches, picnic tables, and interpretive displays.                   | <b>300k</b>            |
| C.5. Mahnomen Unit. Develop the remaining proposed roads in the Mahnomen Unit. Cost will vary depending on the entrance and road option selected. Two entrance options are under consideration. See plan and maps for details. Option A provides one entrance only, off of | <b>included in C.1</b> |

## **Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan**

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- Co. Rd. 30, into the Unit. This is contingent upon stabilizing the erosion on the north side of Huntington/Feigh Mine Lakes where cave-ins have been occurring to provide for a main road. If road option A is feasible then develop the road from the overlook to Little Menomin Lake. If stabilizing the area is not possible then two entrances into the Unit will need to be developed. Option B provides access off of County Rd. 30 and County Rd. 128.
- C.6. Mahnomen Unit. Develop the road to the carry-in boat access at the Huntington/Feigh (Hillcrest) Mine Lakes (south side of Feigh Mine Lake). **75k**
- C.7. Mahnomen Unit. Develop a carry-in boat access at the Huntington/Feigh (Hillcrest) Mine Lake, including a small parking area and a vault toilet. **150k**
- C.8. Mahnomen Unit. Develop hiking trails and overlooks around the Hillcrest access area between the state trail and the mine lakes. **15k**
- C.9. Mahnomen Unit. Develop the boat ramp access sites at June Lake and Little Menomin Lake: one parking area with a ramp to June Lake and a ramp to Little Menomin Lake. Cost may be higher if mitigation is needed. **150k**
- C.10. Mahnomen Unit. Restore water surface connection between Little Mahnomen and Mahnomen Lakes. Culverts currently connect the two water bodies. **75k**
- C.11. Mahnomen Unit. Develop the overlook/day use area at east end of Feigh Mine Lake: improve/expand the parking area and stairs, develop a picnic area overlooking the lake, develop shore fishing facilities (#5 on map) on the east end of the lake. **150k**
- C.12 Mahnomen Unit. Improve the bank shore fishing facility (#7 on map) at the Pennington Mine Lake located at the boat ramp access site. Improve trail accessibility, new retaining wall, new shore fishing facilities. **50k**
- C.13. Mahnomen Unit. Begin development of scuba diving sites and shore fishing facilities in the Mahnomen Unit in areas of initial focused development (where roads are being developed). Scuba diving site #8. Shore fishing facility #3. **125k**
- C.14. Mahnomen Unit. As the roads and other major facilities **400k**



## **Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan**

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in the unit are developed, develop scuba diving sites #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, and #7, and shore fishing facilities #4 and #6.

### **Group D – Mahnomen Unit Mountain Biking & Hiking Trails**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| D.1. Mahnomen Unit. Develop aggregate surfaced mountain biking and hiking trails around the west, north, and east sides of Huntington/Feigh Mine Lakes that connect to the paved and unpaved Cuyuna Lakes State Trail on the south side of these lakes. (The unpaved Cuyuna Lakes State Trail is developed in the Mahnomen, Portsmouth, and Yawkey Units although some realignment may be needed). | <b>mountain biking trails –<br/>Federal funding (SAFETEA-LU)<br/>secured, local match needed</b> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>hiking trails - 100k</b>                                                                      |
| D.2. Mahnomen Unit. Develop mountain biking trails and skill development area in the Mahnomen Unit north of Huntington and Feigh Mine Lakes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Federal funding (SAFETEA-LU)<br/>secured, local match needed</b>                              |
| D.3. Mahnomen Unit. Develop aggregate surfaced trail around the Pennington Mine Lake to include a bridge over the channel between Pennington Mine Lake and Mahnomen #1 Mine Lake. The channel is a maximum of 20' wide. Estimate bridge at 40' long by 6' wide.                                                                                                                                    | <b>200k</b>                                                                                      |

### **Group E – Yawkey Unit**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| E.1. Yawkey Unit. Develop intermediate to extremely difficult mountain biking trails and a skills area in the vicinity of the Yawkey and Manual Mine Lakes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Federal funding (SAFETEA-LU)<br/>secured, local match needed</b> |
| E.2. Yawkey Unit. Block the east entrance off of County Road 31 to the Yawkey Unit. Improve an unpaved road (from Hwy. 6 to two defined parking areas – one at Yawkey Mine Lake and one near Manuel Mine Lake). Improve pedestrian access, using the existing trail, to Manuel Mine Lake for shore fishing. Develop scuba diving site (#10), shore fishing facilities (#9 and #10), and a picnic area (on the west side of the Yawkey Mine Lake). | <b>300k</b>                                                         |
| E.3. Yawkey Unit. Upgrade the parking lot at the Croft Mine Historical Park. Pave the road from Hwy. 6 to the parking lot, pave the parking lot, pave the trail to the Croft Mine and vault toilet. Request assistance from Iron Range Resources (IRR).                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>125k</b>                                                         |

## **Group F – Sagamore Unit**

F.1. Sagamore Unit. Use the State Park Road Account to improve the township gravel road from County Road 59 to the entrance road at the southeast end of Sagamore Unit (@1,438 feet or .27 miles).	<b>State Park Rd. Acct.</b>
F.2. Sagamore Unit. Develop a road (approx. one mile in length) from the boat ramp access site north around the east side of Sagamore Mine Lake and around the north side to the day and overnight use areas.	<b>100k</b>
F.3. Sagamore Unit. Develop a shore fishing facility (#2) with a nearby parking area for 6+/- vehicles.	<b>50k</b>
F.4. Sagamore Unit. Develop a scuba diving site (#1) and approximately 8 cart-in camping sites. Develop a parking area for approximately 16 camper vehicles plus additional parking spaces for scuba divers.	<b>50k</b>
F.5. Sagamore Unit. Develop a hiking, mountain biking, and cross-country ski trail on the northwest side of the Sagamore Unit. Develop horse trails that connect into the unpaved alignment of the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail and/or other exterior designated horse trails. Develop a horse trailhead with vehicle/trailer parking, vault toilets and water. Development of a horse trailhead may need to be delayed until more land can be acquired for interior horse trails or connections can be made to exterior horse trails.	<b>175k</b>
F.6. Sagamore Unit. Develop easiest/easy unpaved hardened surfaced trails off of the state trail for mountain biking.	<b>Federal funding (SAFETEA-LU) secured, local match needed.</b>
F.7. Sagamore Unit. Develop a walk-in/bike-in shore fishing facility (#1) on the south side of Sagamore Mine Lake.	<b>30k</b>

## **Group G- Mahnomen Unit Camping**

G.1. Mahnomen Unit. Develop an approximately 8-acre rustic camping area southwest of Alstead Mine Lake. Vault toilets, water supply as needed, spurs and roads (no central sanitation building). Other opportunities for camping in this area may exist in the future if additional property to the west can be acquired. If further land acquisition is possible, future expansion of this campground area to a full service campground may be desirable.	<b>400k</b>
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## Group H – Sagamore Unit Camping

- H.1. Sagamore Unit. Development of approximately 3 to 4 acres of rustic camping area on the “plateau.” 150k

## Group I – Portsmouth Unit Camping, Recreational Facilities, and Wayside

- I.1. Minor improvements to the existing campground to keep it as a viable option in the short-term. Provide a vegetative buffer between the camping area and the sewage treatment ponds, and between the camping area and the industrial site. 50k
- I.2. Develop scuba diving site (#9) and shore fishing facility (#8). 100k
- I.3. Improve the Portsmouth Mine Lake Overlook to enhance views. Develop and install informational displays and additional interpretive displays. Stabilization may be needed at the edge of the lake. w/MnDOT/IRR?

**Total Estimated Cost: \$5,190k (\$5.190 million)**

## SECTION EIGHT – ACQUISITION PRIORITIES AND ESTIMATED COSTS

### **Acquisition Priorities**

### **Estimated Cost**

See Land Acquisition Priorities map following page 48.

Priorities for acquisition are defined as high, medium, or low priority.

#### **High priority acquisitions (738 acres; 313 acres are undivided)**

**\$2 to 3 million**

*Criteria* for high priority acquisitions include properties that have high resource potential or unique features, where acquisition of the site eliminates existing fragmentation that negatively affects park management, or where there is urgency such as an immediate threat of development.

In the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area this includes areas where State ownership would help control access to the Recreation Area, provide opportunities for trail linkage and development, provide access to high quality scuba diving sites, and provide continuity of State ownership in areas of high recreation potential.

#### **Medium priority acquisitions (302 acres; all undivided)**

**\$.4 to .5 million**

*Criteria* for identifying properties for medium priority acquisitions include properties that are key to improving park operations, or provide a buffer area adjacent to existing operations.

Within the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area this includes areas where acquisition would consolidate ownership to maximize recreational resource management opportunities.

#### **Low priority acquisitions (318 acres; all undivided)**

**\$.5 to 1.5 million**

*Criteria* for identifying properties for low priority acquisitions include high cost acquisitions, areas where resource management could be improved or restoration expanded, or the quality of existing resources is low.

Within the Recreation Area these sites may be isolated parcels, may be marginal for recreational development, or have opportunities for recreational development however are not central to the Recreational Area.

**Total Estimated Cost: \$2.9 to \$5 million**

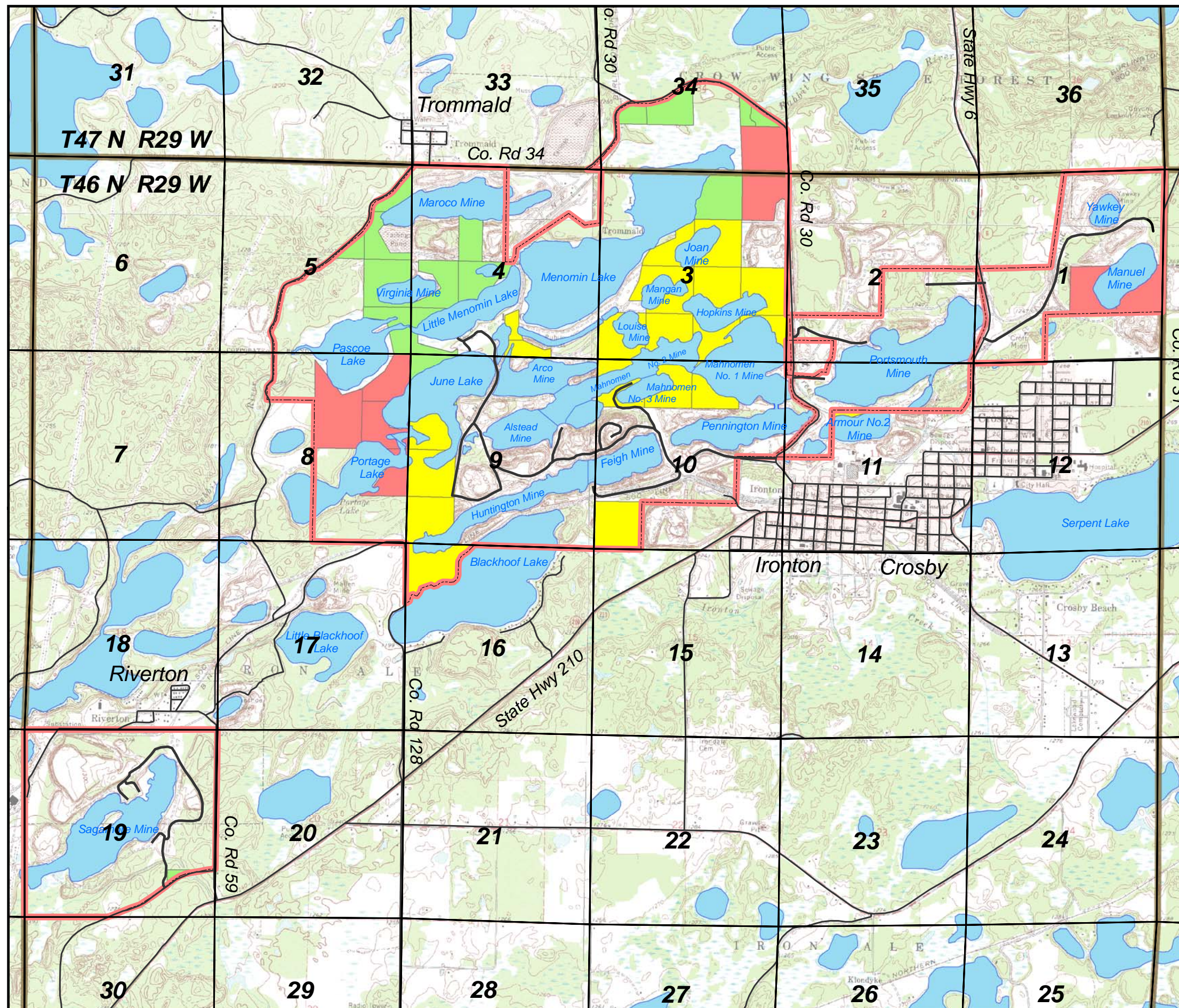
### **Leasing Priorities**

Leasing property within the Recreation Area should be considered for high priority acquisition locations where acquiring the property are not currently an option.









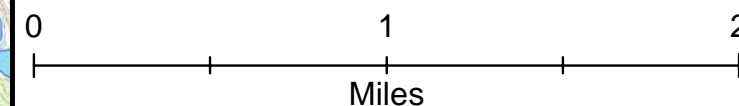
# Land Aquisition Priorities

## Cuyuna County

### State Recreation Area

Aquisition Priorities:

- High
- Medium
- Low
- State Recreation Area
- State, County, Local Roads
- PLS Township Lines
- PLS Section Lines



MN Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Parks and Recreation

Colin Kelly 3.28.08



## APPENDICES

### a. Related Legislation

**Minnesota Statutes  
CHAPTER 86A  
OUTDOOR RECREATION SYSTEM  
86A.05 CLASSIFICATION AND PURPOSES.**

Subd. 3. **State recreation area; purpose; resource and site qualifications; administration.**

- (a) A state recreation area shall be established to provide a broad selection of outdoor recreation opportunities in a natural setting which may be used by large numbers of people.
- (b) No unit shall be authorized as a state recreation area unless its proposed location substantially satisfies the following criteria:
  - (1) contains natural or artificial resources which provide outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities that will attract visitors from beyond the local area;
  - (2) contains resources which permit intensive recreational use by large numbers of people;
  - and
  - (3) may be located in areas which have serious deficiencies in public outdoor recreation facilities, provided that state recreation areas should not be provided in lieu of municipal, county, or regional facilities.
- (c) State recreation areas shall be administered by the commissioner of natural resources in a manner which is consistent with the purposes of this subdivision primarily to provide as broad a selection of opportunities for outdoor recreation as is consistent with maintaining a pleasing natural environment. Scenic, historic, scientific, scarce, or disappearing resources within state recreation areas shall be recommended for authorization as historic sites or designated scientific and natural areas pursuant to section [86A.08](#) to preserve and protect them. Physical development shall enhance and promote the use and enjoyment of the natural recreational resources of the area.

Minnesota Session Laws 1993  
CHAPTER 172 – S.F.No. 1570

Sec. 34. CUYUNA COUNTRY STATE RECREATION AREA.

**Subdivision 1. [85.013] [Subd. 5c.] CUYUNA COUNTRY STATE RECREATION AREA.** Cuyuna country state recreation area is established in Crow Wing county.

**Subd. 2. ACQUISITION.** The commissioner of natural resources is authorized to acquire by gift or purchase the land for Cuyuna country state recreation area. The commissioner must manager the area for multiple recreational use, including allowance of hunting and provide for limited timber harvest.

**Subd. 3. MINING.** The commissioner shall recognize the possibility that mining may be conducted in the future with the Cuyuna country state recreation area, and the use of portions of the surface estate and control of the flowage of water may be necessary for future mining operations.

**Subd. 4. ADVISORY COMMITTEE.** (a) A local area advisory committee is established to provide direction on the establishment, planning, development, and operation of the Cuyuna country state recreation area.

- (b) Membership on the advisory committee shall include:
- (1) a representative of the Cuyuna range mineland recreation area joint powers board;
  - (2) a representative of the Croft Mine historical joint powers board;
  - (3) a designee of the Cuyuna range mineland reclamation committee who has worked as a miner in the local area;
  - (4) a representative of the Crow Wing county board;
  - (5) a state representative appointed by the speaker of the house or representatives;
  - (6) a state senator appointed by the senate committee on committees;
  - (7) a representative of the Brainerd regional office of the department of natural resources;
  - (8) a designee of the Iron Range resources and rehabilitation board;
  - (9) a designee of the local business community selected by the area chambers of commerce;
  - (10) a designee of the local environmental community selected by the Cuyuna country conservation club;
  - (11) a designee of a local education organization selected by the school board; and
  - (12) a designee of the local tourism community selected by the Cuyuna country tourism group.
- (c) The advisory committee shall elect its own chair and meetings shall be at the call of the chair.
- (d) The advisory committee shall serve as volunteers and accept no per diem.

**Subd. 5. MANAGEMENT PLAN.** The commissioner and local area advisory committee must cooperatively develop a comprehensive management plan that provides for multiple use recreation, protection of natural resources, allowances of hunting, snowmobiling, horse trails and forest management, interpretation of cultural and historic resources, land acquisition needs, fee structure, and road and facility development. The completed management plan shall serve as the master plan for purposes of Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.09.

**Subd. 6. BOUNDARIES.**  
**See authorizing legislation for described lands located with the boundaries of Cuyuna country state recreation area.**

**Subd. 7. FEE.** Notwithstanding Minnesota Statutes, section 85.053, subdivision 2, no fee may be charged by the commissioner for use of the state recreation area before May 1, 1994.



## Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan

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Subd. 8. **ADOPT-A-RECREATION AREA.** The commissioner must utilize Minnesota Statutes, section 85.045, as much as possible in development and operation of the Cuyuna country state recreation area.

Minnesota Session Laws 2007

CHAPTER 57 - S.F. No. 2096

Article 1

Sec. 40. **[85.0146] CUYUNA COUNTRY STATE RECREATION AREA; CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL.**

Subdivision 1. **Advisory council created.** The Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area Citizens Advisory Council is established. Membership on the advisory council shall include:

- (1) a representative of the Cuyuna Range Mineland Recreation Area Joint Powers Board;
- (2) a representative of the Croft Mine Historical Park Joint Powers Board;
- (3) a designee of the Cuyuna Range Mineland Reclamation Committee who has worked as a miner in the local area;
- (4) a representative of the Crow Wing County Board;
- (5) an elected state official;
- (6) a representative of the Grand Rapids regional office of the Department of Natural Resources;
- (7) a designee of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board;
- (8) a designee of the local business community selected by the area chambers of commerce;
- (9) a designee of the local environmental community selected by the Crow Wing County District 5 commissioner;
- (10) a designee of a local education organization selected by the Crosby-Ironton School Board;
- (11) a designee of one of the recreation area user groups selected by the Cuyuna Range Chamber of Commerce; and
- (12) a member of the Cuyuna Country Heritage Preservation Society.

Subd. 2. **Administration.** (a) The advisory council must meet at least four times annually. The council shall elect a chair and meetings shall be at the call of the chair.

(b) Members of the advisory council shall serve as volunteers for two-year terms with the ability to be reappointed. Members shall accept no per diem.

(c) The state recreation area manager may attend the council meetings and advise the council of issues in management of the recreation area.

(d) Before a major decision is implemented in the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area, the area manager must consult with the council and take into consideration any council comments or advice that may impact the major decision.



**Minnesota Session Laws 2007  
CHAPTER 57 - S.F. No. 2096  
Article 1**

Sec. 41. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 85.054, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 13. **Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area.** A state park permit is not required and a fee may not be charged for motor vehicle entry or parking at Croft Mine Historical Park and Portsmouth Mine Lake Overlook in Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area, except for overnight camping.

**Minnesota Rules**  
**6110.3000 – 6110.3800**

**6110.3000 POLICY.**

It is the policy of this state to promote full use and enjoyment of waters of the state, to promote safety for persons and property in connection with such use, and to promote uniformity of laws relating to such use.

STAT AUTH: MS s [361.25](#)  
*Current as of 09/26/07*

**6110.3100 SCOPE.**

As part of implementing that policy, Minnesota Statutes, sections [86B.205](#), subdivisions 2 to 5; [103G.605](#); [103G.621](#); and [459.20](#) authorize counties, cities, and towns to regulate by ordinance the use of surface waters by watercraft, upon approval of any such ordinance by the commissioner. Minnesota Statutes, section [86B.205](#), subdivision 9, paragraph (a), authorizes the commissioner to regulate such use by rule, upon request of a county, city, or town, and after the rule is approved by the majority of the counties affected. Parts [6110.3000](#) to [6110.4200](#), however, shall not apply to units of government other than counties, cities, and towns, or to counties, cities, or towns adopting ordinances identical to and on the same body of water as a lake conservation district ordinance.

STAT AUTH: MS s [361.25](#); [86B.211](#)  
*Current as of 09/26/07*

**6110.3200 GOAL OF WATER SURFACE USE MANAGEMENT.**

The goal of water surface use management shall be to enhance the recreational use, safety, and enjoyment of the water surface of Minnesota and to preserve these water resources in a way that reflects the state's paramount concern for the protection of its natural resources. In pursuit of that goal, an ordinance or rule shall:

- A. where practical and feasible, accommodate all compatible recreational uses;
- B. minimize adverse impact on natural resources;
- C. minimize conflicts between users in a way that provides for maximum use, safety, and enjoyment; and
- D. conform to the standards set in part [6110.3700](#).

STAT AUTH: MS s [361.25](#)  
*Current as of 09/26/07*

**6110.3300 STATUTORY AUTHORITY.**

Parts [6110.3000](#) to [6110.4200](#) are required by Minnesota Statutes, section [86B.211](#). They provide procedures for the development and approval of rules and ordinances for resolving water surface use conflict by regulating:

- A. type and size of watercraft;
- B. type and horsepower of motors;
- C. speed of watercraft;
- D. time of use;
- E. area of use; and



F. the conduct of other activities on the water body where necessary to secure the safety of the public and the most general public use.

STAT AUTH: MS s [361.25](#); [86B.211](#)  
*Current as of 09/26/07*

#### **6110.3400 JURISDICTION OF COMMISSIONER.**

The commissioner shall exercise the commissioner's discretion under Minnesota Statutes, section [86B.205](#), subdivision 9 to regulate a water body when so requested by a county, city, or town only when the water body:

- A. is traversed by a state or international boundary; or
- B. is within the jurisdiction of two or more counties which cannot agree on the content of ordinances; and
- C. regulation is necessary to achieve the goals in part [6110.3200](#).

In all other cases, water surface use regulation shall be by county, city, or town ordinance as specified in Minnesota Statutes, sections [86B.205](#), subdivisions 2 to 5; [103G.605](#); [103G.621](#); and [459.20](#). If a body of water is located within the jurisdiction of two or more cities or towns which cannot agree on the content of ordinances, any such city or town may petition the county in which they are located to adopt an ordinance.

STAT AUTH: MS s [361.25](#); [86B.211](#)

HIST: 17 SR 1279  
*Current as of 09/26/07*

#### **6110.3500 EXISTING ORDINANCES AND RULES.**

All existing ordinances and rules adopted on or after January 1, 1975 affecting water surface use shall be brought into compliance with parts [6110.3000](#) to [6110.4200](#) within a reasonable time period after promulgation of these parts.

STAT AUTH: MS s [361.25](#)  
*Current as of 09/26/07*

#### **6110.3600 ASSESSMENT OF CONDITIONS.**

Subpart 1. **Factors to consider.** The commissioner of any governmental unit formulating, amending, or deleting controls for surface waters shall acquire and consider the following information, noting factors that are not relevant:

- A. Physical characteristics:
  - (1) size: normal surface acreage, if available, or the basin acreage listed in the Division of Waters Bulletin No. 25, An Inventory of Minnesota Lakes;
  - (2) crowding potential: expressed as a ratio of water surface area to length of shoreline;
  - (3) bottom topography and water depth;
  - (4) shore soils and bottom sediments;
  - (5) aquatic flora and fauna;

## Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Recreation Implementation Plan

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(6) water circulation: for lakes, the existence and locations of strong currents, inlets, and large water level fluctuations; for rivers and streams, velocity and water level fluctuations;

(7) natural and artificial obstructions or hazards to navigation, including but not limited to points, bars, rocks, stumps, weed beds, docks, piers, dams, diving platforms, and buoys; and

(8) regional relationship: the locations and the level of recreational use of other water bodies in the area.

B. Existing development:

(1) Private: to include number, location, and occupancy characteristics of permanent homes, seasonal homes, apartments, planned unit developments, resorts, marinas, campgrounds, and other residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

(2) Public: to include type, location, size, facilities, and parking capacity of parks, beaches, and watercraft launching facilities.

C. Ownership of shoreland: to include the location and managing governmental unit of shoreline in federal, state, county, or city ownership as well as private, semipublic, or corporate lands.

D. Public regulations and management: to include federal, state, or local regulations and management plans and activities having direct effects on watercraft use of surface waters.

E. History of accidents which have occurred on the surface waters.

F. Watercraft use: to include information obtained in the morning, afternoon, and evening on at least one weekday and one weekend day, concerning the number and types of watercraft in each of the following categories: kept or used by riparians, rented by or gaining access through resorts or marinas, using each public watercraft launching facility, in use on the waterbody.

G. Conflict perception and control preferences: to include opinions gained by surveys or through public meetings or hearings of riparians, transients, local residents, and the public at large.

Subp. 2. **Written statement.** Any governmental unit formulating, amending, or deleting controls for surface waters shall submit to the commissioner the following:

A. the information requested in subpart 1, portrayed on a map to the extent reasonable;

B. a statement evaluating whether the information reveals significant conflicts and explaining why the particular controls proposed were selected;

C. the proposed ordinance; and

D. a description of public hearings held concerning the proposed controls, including an account of the statement of each person testifying.

Subp. 3. **Commissioner review and approval.** The commissioner shall require the ordinance proposer to provide additional information of the kind described in subpart 1 when needed in order to make an informed decision. The commissioner shall approve the ordinance if it conforms with these rules.

STAT AUTH: MS s [361.25](#)

*Current as of 09/26/07*

### 6110.3700 WATER SURFACE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS.

Subpart 1. **Purpose.** To promote uniformity of ordinances or rules on the use of watercraft on surface waters of this state, to encourage compliance and to ease enforcement, the commissioner and any government unit formulating such ordinances or rules shall follow these standards. When formulating an ordinance or rule, it is not required that all the standards listed below be incorporated into every ordinance or rule. Rather, the commissioner or governmental unit shall select from the standards listed below such standard(s) as are needed to regulate the surface use of waters.



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Subp. 2. **Watercraft type and size.** Controls may be formulated concerning the type and/or size of watercraft permissible for use on surface water body(ies) or portions thereof.

Subp. 3. **Motor type and size.** Controls, if any, concerning the maximum total horsepower of motor(s) powering watercraft on surface waters shall utilize one or more of the following horsepower cutoffs or motor types: 25 hp; 10 hp; electric motors; no motors.

Subp. 4. **Direction of travel.** Directional controls, if used, shall mandate watercraft to follow a counterclockwise path of travel.

Subp. 5. **Speed limits.** Controls, if any, concerning the maximum speeds allowable for watercraft on surface waters shall utilize one or more of the following miles-per-hour cutoffs:

A. "Slow-No Wake" means operation of a watercraft at the slowest possible speed necessary to maintain steerage and in no case greater than five mph.

B. 15 mph.

C. 40 mph.

Subp. 6. **Effective time.** Controls must use one or more of the following time periods.

A. sunrise to sunset or sunset to sunrise the following day;

B. 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. the following day;

C. noon to 6:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. to noon the following day;

D. all 24 hours of the day.

Controls must be in effect during one of the following calendar divisions: all year; Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend; on all weekends and legal holidays occurring within Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

Controls governing the use of watercraft may be adopted which are placed into effect based upon specific water elevations.

Subp. 7. **Area zoning.** Controls shall clearly specify which portion of the water body is affected by such controls.

Area controls may be formulated concerning any of the subject matter covered in the water surface management standards in subparts 2 to 9.

Controls concerning a "Slow-No Wake" shall be established for the entire water body or portion thereof according to the following criteria: within 100 feet or 150 feet from the shore; or where watercraft speed or wake constitutes a hazard to persons, property, or the natural resources; or where it has been determined that such control(s) would enhance the recreational use and enjoyment of the majority of users.

Subp. 8. **Conduct of other activities on a body of water.** Controls formulated by a governmental unit which restricts other activities (such as swimming or scuba diving) shall conform to part [6110.3200](#).

Subp. 9. **Emergencies.** In situations of local emergency, temporary special controls may be enacted by a county, city, or town for a period not more than five days without the commissioner's approval. The commissioner shall be notified, however, as soon as practicable during this five-day period.

Subp. 10. **Additional evidence.** A government unit may submit additional evidence if it feels that variance from the afore-stated standards is necessary to best address a particular problem. The commissioner will review such evidence and shall grant a variance if there are circumstances peculiar to the body or bodies of water in question of such magnitude as to overshadow the goal of uniformity.

STAT AUTH: MS s [361.25](#)

*Current as of 09/26/07*

### 6110.3800 ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.

Subpart 1. **Enforcement and penalties.** Any government unit adopting ordinances pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, sections [86B.205](#), subdivisions 2 to 5; [103G.605](#); [103G.621](#); and [459.20](#) shall provide for their enforcement and prescribe penalties for noncompliance. Rules established pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section [86B.201](#), subdivisions 1 and 2, or [86B.205](#), subdivisions 1 and 9, shall be enforced by conservation officers of the Department of Natural Resources and the sheriff of each county.

Rules or ordinances shall contain a provision exempting authorized resource management, emergency, and enforcement personnel when acting in the performance of their assigned duties. They may also provide for temporary exemptions from controls through the use of permits issued by the unit of government adopting the ordinance or rule.

Subp. 2. **Commissioner's approval for proposed ordinances.** Any governmental unit formulating ordinances or desiring amendments and deletions to existing ordinances shall submit the written statement required by these rules with the proposed ordinance to the commissioner pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section [86B.205](#), subdivisions 2 to 5, for approval or disapproval. Determination of approval or disapproval shall be based upon the written statement and the compatibility of the ordinance with these rules. If the proposed ordinance is disapproved by the commissioner and a satisfactory compromise cannot be established, the governmental unit may initiate a contested case hearing to settle the matter.

The commissioner shall notify the governmental unit in writing of approval or disapproval of proposed ordinances within 120 days after receiving them pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section [86B.205](#), subdivisions 2 to 5. Failure to so notify shall be considered approval.

Subp. 3. **Public notice.** Any governmental unit adopting ordinances shall provide for adequate notification of the public, which shall include placement of a sign at each public watercraft launching facility outlining essential elements of such ordinances, as well as the placement of necessary buoys and signs. All such signs and buoys shall meet requirements specified in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 86B, and parts [6110.1500](#) to [6110.1900](#).

The commissioner shall publish and update at the commissioner's discretion a listing of watercraft use rules and ordinances on surface waters of the state for distribution to the public.

STAT AUTH: MS s [361.25](#); [86B.211](#)

HIST: 17 SR 1279  
*Current as of 09/26/07*



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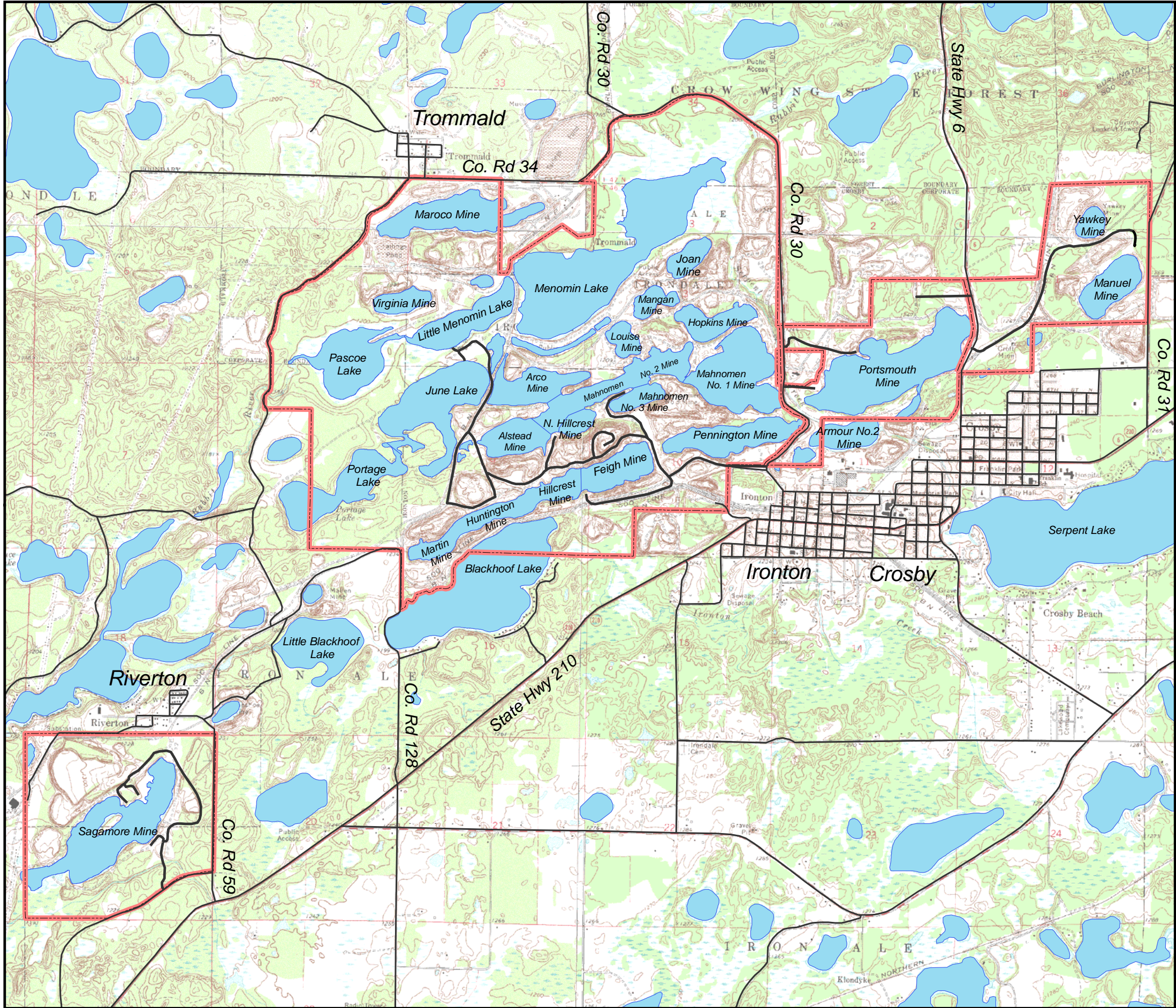
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Profiles of Nine Trail User Populations, A Component of the Border to Border Trail Study, funded by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources. Performed under contract with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources by Gordon Kimball, Recreation Professionals, Inc. June 30, 1998.

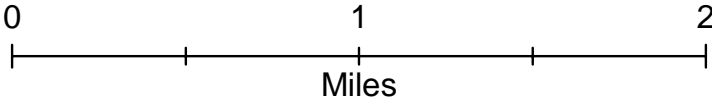






**Historic Mine Names**  
Cuyuna County  
State Recreation Area

-  State Recreation Area
-  Recreation Area Roads (Option A)
-  State, County, Local Roads



MN Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Parks and Recreation  
Colin Kelly 3.28.08