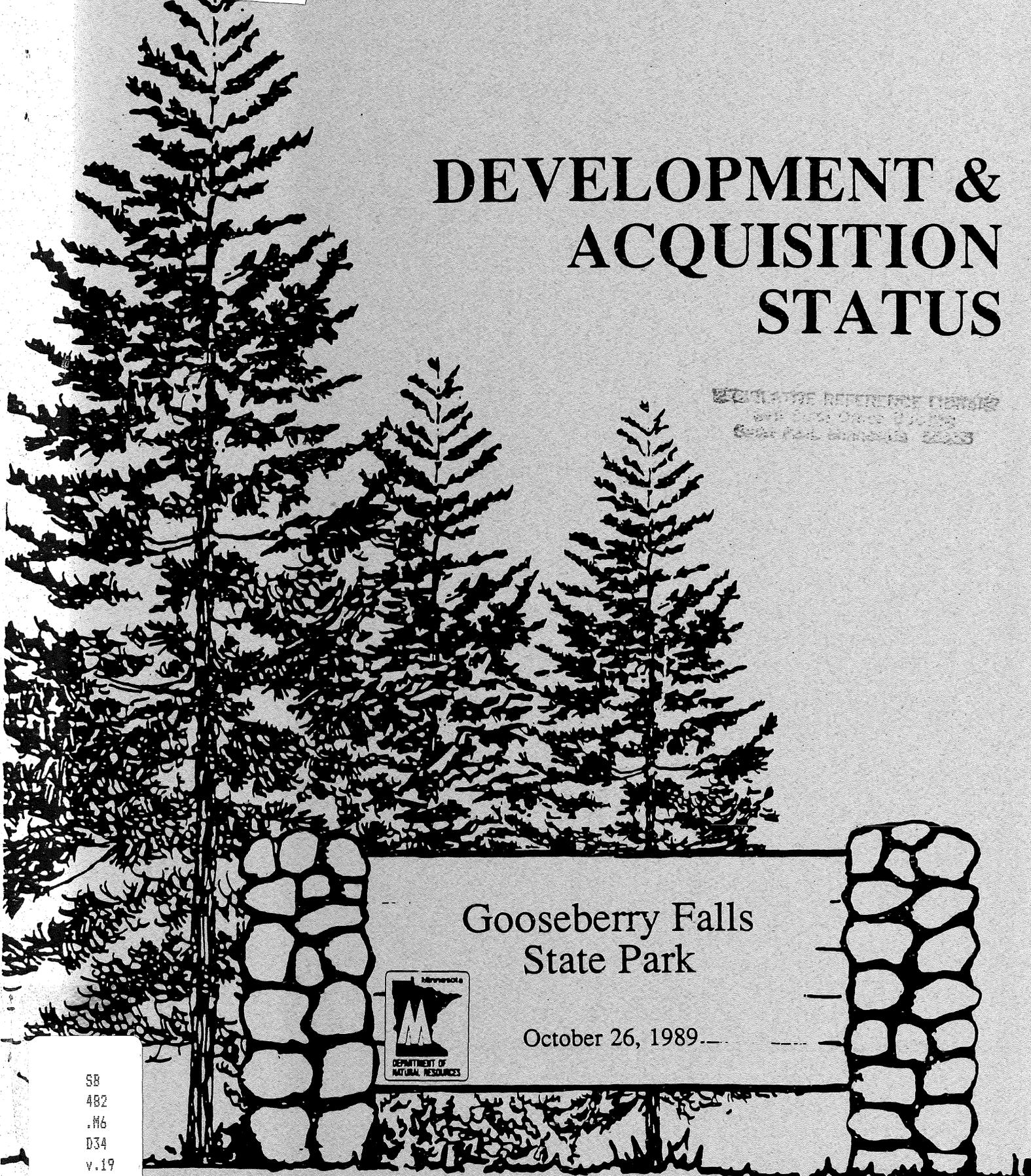


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Gooseberry Falls  
State Park

October 26, 1989



SB  
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v.19

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## MINNESOTA STATE PARK SYSTEM

The mission of the Division of Parks and Recreation is to provide a state park system that perpetuates Minnesota's scenic beauty and its natural and cultural resources, while being responsive to public needs and expectations, and providing a diversity of recreational opportunities.

The Division of Parks and Recreation manages 64 state parks across Minnesota. The state park system is vital to Minnesota's tourism, an industry that is becoming the backbone of many economies in greater Minnesota. Our most unique and valuable cultural and natural resources are found within state park boundaries. It is the Division of Parks & Recreation's responsibility to acquire, protect and interpret these unique resources.

Prior to the 1989 legislative session, funding constraints and increasing visitor use seriously eroded the Division of Parks and Recreation's ability to provide quality recreational experiences and services. Since then the Governor and state legislators have responded to the need for increased funding for the operations budget. However, financing the maintenance of existing facilities and new development in the face of increasing visitor use remains a problem. This will be addressed during the 1990 legislative session when a capital bonding bill is considered.

The state park system has the Department of Natural Resources's (DNR) largest physical plant with over 2,800 major facilities requiring major rehabilitation. The Division of Parks & Recreation has identified more than \$55 million in capital budget needs. These projects include land acquisition, resource management, major rehabilitation or replacement of existing facilities and a few new facilities. Legislative funding requests to meet this need will be spread throughout future bienniums.

A recent study conducted by the Minnesota Historical Society identifies 515 historic structures located in the state park system. These structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Most of these structures are of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Work Progress Administration (WPA) vintage. The CCC/WPA structures were constructed in the 1930's. These facilities are over 50 years old and many are in need of major rehabilitation which includes the electrical, sewage, and water systems associated with these buildings.

Many years of intensive use is also a consideration when looking at the current condition of campgrounds, picnic areas, group camps and trail systems. Lack of development and rehabilitation of these and other state park facilities will reduce park use. A reduction in state park use will adversely impact the economic development of adjacent communities and Minnesota's effort to improve tourism.

As capital development funds have become available we have completed the highest priority projects. As additional needs are identified, they are reviewed and placed on the statewide priority list for future completion.

In 1991, Itasca, Minnesota's oldest state park, will be 100 years old. For 100 years Minnesota has had a park system to be proud of. The present challenge is to manage the park resources and recreational development to ensure that Minnesotans will be proud of their state park system for another hundred years.

## **AN OVERVIEW OF GOOSEBERRY FALLS STATE PARK**

Gooseberry Falls is located on the North Shore of Lake Superior in Lake County. This 1,662 acre park offers visitors a spectacular dynamic series of waterfalls, the rocky shoreline of Lake Superior and the tranquility of the inland northern hardwood forests. A short stop to look at Gooseberry Falls has long been a "must" for visitors to the North Shore.

The documented history of the Gooseberry River area is long. The Gooseberry River is one of the first Minnesota Rivers to appear on a map. It has been on French charts since 1670. After the explorers and trappers came the fishermen, and then the loggers. Logging began in earnest along the Gooseberry River in about 1890 and continued for thirty some years.

In 1933, the state legislature authorized preservation of the area around Gooseberry Falls. The state conservation commission and the state highway department jointly purchased 637.83 acres in the area that year. In 1934 a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp was set up. Gooseberry Falls State Park was officially established in 1937. The CCC workers completed many projects in the park including mapping; laying out campgrounds, picnic area, and trails; and building the visitors center, refectory, picnic shelters, toilets and stone picnic tables. Most of these facilities are still used today.

## **EXISTING FACILITIES**

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

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 1,662

Acres of state land - 1,652

### **Campsites**

Drive in - 70

Showers

Modern toilets

### **Miles of Trails**

Self-guided Interpretive - 1.5

Hiking - 18

Cross Country Ski - 15

Snowmobile - 9

### **Miles of Road**

Asphalt - 1

Gravel - 2

### **Enclosed Picnic Shelter**

Number of Picnic Tables - 120

Trailer Dump Station - 1

### **Number of Buildings**

Over 100 sq.ft. - 24

Under 100 sq.ft. - 15

Miles of Posted Boundary - 7

### **Visitor Centers**

### **Park Utilities**

Number of Sewage Lift Stations - 2

Number of Septic Tanks - 5

Number of Wells - 5

Number of Individual

Water Distribution Systems - 6

Miles of State Owned Power Line - .5

# LEGEND

## TRAILS

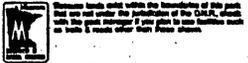
- Hiking
- - - - Interpretive

## FACILITIES

- Information
- Interpretive Center
- Picnic Area
- Amphitheater
- Trail Shelter
- Campground
- Primitive Group Camp
- Trailer Sanitation Station



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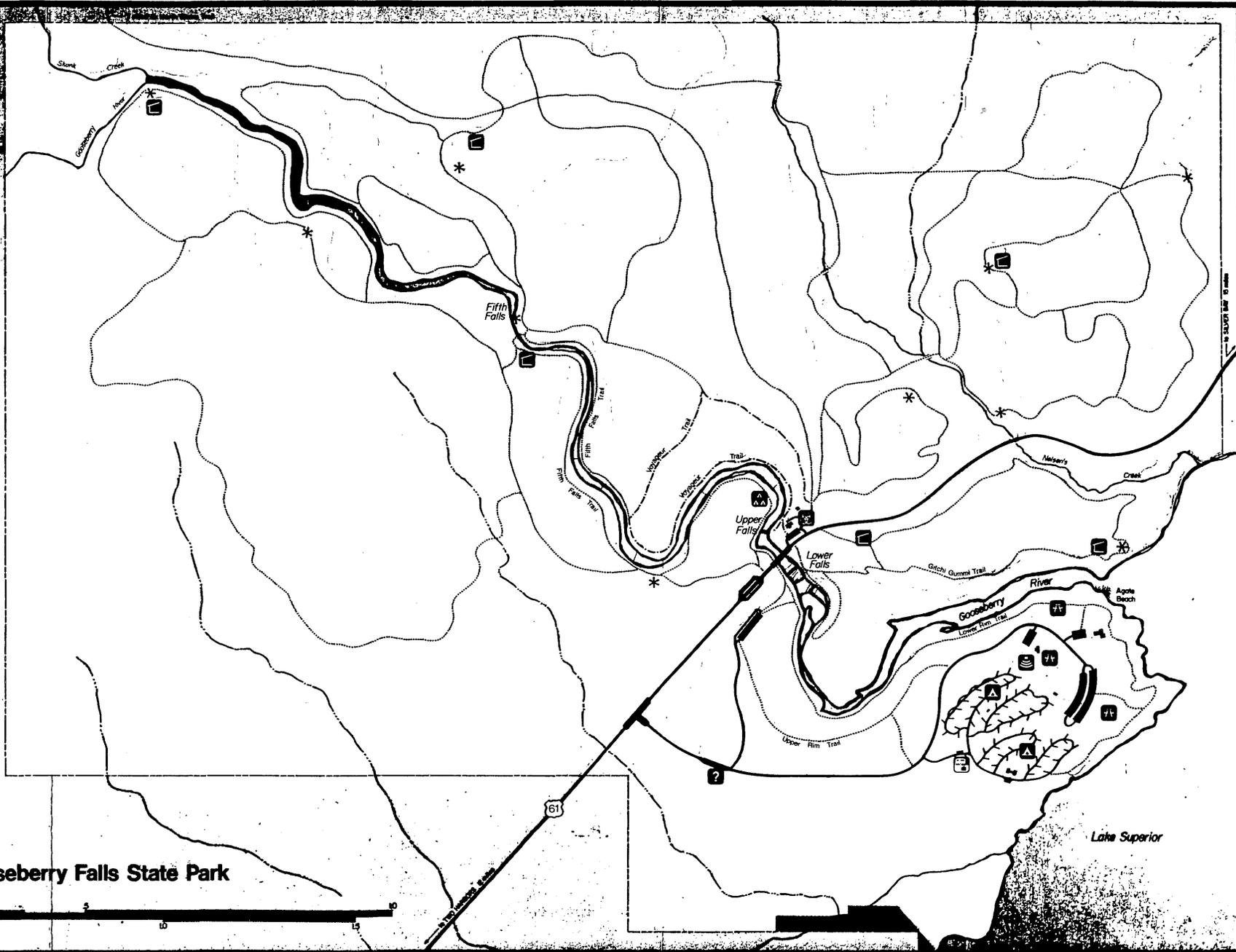


SCALE

IN MILES

IN KILOMETERS

# Gooseberry Falls State Park



## **PROBLEMS FACING GOOSEBERRY FALLS STATE PARK**

There are many public recreational facilities in Gooseberry Falls State Park to maintain. Many are in need of replacement or major rehabilitation. Most were constructed in the 1960's, and are now in need of rehabilitation. Many new facilities are needed to meet growing recreational demands.

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

Many of the park's existing facilities will be reconstructed when highway #61 is realigned and a new bridge over the Gooseberry River is constructed. The relocation of many of these facilities will be funded by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN/DOT). The project needs identified in this report will not be funded by MN/DOT and will require state park funding.

Many years of use is also a factor when we consider the current condition of campgrounds, picnic areas, group camps, and trail systems. These items also need extensive rehabilitation. Also, more than 3 miles of roads in the park need development and rehabilitation.

The protection and restoration of the natural and cultural resources in the park is most important. This includes restoring the big pine areas along with a balance of vegetation types that typifies pre-european settlement times. Many of the birch and aspen stands that became established after the logging have reached the end of their life cycle and are experiencing wholesale dieback. This, combined with severe drought stress and several years of successive forest tent caterpillars deforestation has left the future of the forest very much in question. In many places the dieback has exceeded 75% and the trees are not regenerating. Unless something is done soon, the forest of the year 2000 may be largely comprised of

brush species. There is also a need to find, document, and interpret the cultural resources of the park.

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

## RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN GOOSEBERRY FALLS STATE PARK

Major development projects over the past few years have included:

1. Major rehabilitation of the hiking trail system adjacent to the Gooseberry River.
2. The construction of a new campground shower/toilet building.
3. Reconstruction of the park's sewage disposal system.
4. Construction of a new equipment and supply building.

The Division of Parks and Recreation is currently working closely with the Department of Transportation (MN/DOT) in the relocation of several park facilities. This project includes the construction of the following facilities.

- \* combination office/interpretive/trail center
- \* group camp relocation
- \* snowmobile, ski, hiking trail relocations
- \* camper registration station
- \* new parking facilities

The construction of these facilities will be funded through MN/DOT. The projects listed on the following pages of this report will need to be funded by state parks.

## GOOSEBERRY FALLS STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

#### **Re-establish Trees - \$82,000**

This project will include re-establishing pine stands within the park and replanting within the major use areas of the park. Many trees have been removed from the use areas in the past few years and if these are not replaced it will have a major impact on the park's natural features.

**Subtotal \$82,000**

### MAJOR REHABILITATION

#### **Rehabilitate Campground and Roads - \$120,000**

This project will include the general rehabilitation of the 70 unit campground. The campground fills up each night during the summer months creating damage to vegetation. Larger tent pads need to be constructed to accommodate the increased pressure. Electrical sites need to be added to fill the need. Campground roads need to be resurfaced to provide better access.

#### **Rehabilitate Showers at Campground Building - \$15,000**

This project includes installing tiled shower stalls with dressing areas to provide better service and ease of cleaning.

#### **General Rehabilitation of CCC Buildings and Facilities - \$75,000**

This project will include the general rehabilitation of five CCC era log and stone buildings and thirty stone and log structures such as bridges, wells, water fountains and tables.

**Subtotal \$210,000**

## **NEW DEVELOPMENT**

### **Partial Funding of New Office/Interpretive/Trail Center - \$300,000**

Although MN/DOT is providing funding for this structure their funds will only cover the replacement of the existing building area lost due to the Highway #61 realignment. In order to provide an adequate interpretive and trail center area additional funds will be needed. These funds will be used to supplement MN/DOT building funds.

### **Beach Access Trail - \$10,000**

This project includes the construction of a trail to provide safe access for underwater divers and other visitors to the area adjacent to the mouth of the Gooseberry River.

### **Wood Storage Buildings - \$20,000**

Construct a large open sided building to store bundled firewood, and a gravel access road.

**Subtotal 330,000**

**Total Development Needs \$622,000**

## **PARK POTENTIAL**

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Gooseberry Falls State Park? These projects along with the acquisition of private lands within the park will assure the preservation of these unique resources and facilities for future generations. Active management will be required to maintain and regenerate existing forest stands. These will ensure that future visitors will be able to experience the ever-changing forests.

Some improvements will not only increase park use but will greatly increase the quality of the visitors experience. Many of the rehabilitation projects will increase staff efficiency and cut the costs of maintaining facilities.

New facilities will improve customer service while giving the visitor a greater opportunity to learn about Minnesota's natural and cultural resources.

The acquisition of private lands within the park will assure that private and commercial development do not distract from the natural beauty of Gooseberry Falls State Park.

A stable funding source is essential for effective long term resource management and capital budget planning for the Minnesota State Park system and Gooseberry Falls State Park.

## **SUMMARY**

Currently, statewide capital needs for development and acquisition are **\$55,000,000**. The mission of the Minnesota State Park System can be achieved by funding support to meet this need over the next several bienniums.

Gooseberry Falls State Park development needs - **\$622,000**.

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

