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STATE OF
MINNESOTA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS

Lake Carlos
State Park

December 4, 1989



SB
482
.H6
D34
v.29

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MINNESOTA STATE PARK SYSTEM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AN OVERVIEW OF LAKE CARLOS STATE PARK

Lake Carlos State Park is located in Douglas County in west central Minnesota, 10 miles north of Alexandria. The statutory boundary encompasses 1250 acres. Of these 59.75 acres are privately owned. Interstate 94 is the main transportation corridor serving the area. State Highway 29 and County Roads 28 and 62 provide chief access to the park.

Lake Carlos lies within the Alexandria Moraine Complex; an extensive series of ridgeland comprised of glacially deposited sand, gravel and rock debris. Situated on the northern shore of Lake Carlos, the park's landscape is dominated by hills rising 50 to 150 feet high pocketed with lakes and wetlands. The hills are blanketed with northern hardwood trees. Maple-basswood and oak-aspen are the most common associations. The lakes and wetlands originated in depressions formed when enormous slabs of ice broke from retreating glaciers and melted.

The human history of the Lake Carlos area dates back to prehistoric times. Archaeologists believe ancient people ventured into western Minnesota before the last glacial advance some 10,000 years ago. Although little is known of this early culture these people are known to have been hunters of big game like the giant bison and woolly mammoth. Later, Dakota Indians inhabited the area living a nomadic hunting lifestyle following the herds of buffalo.

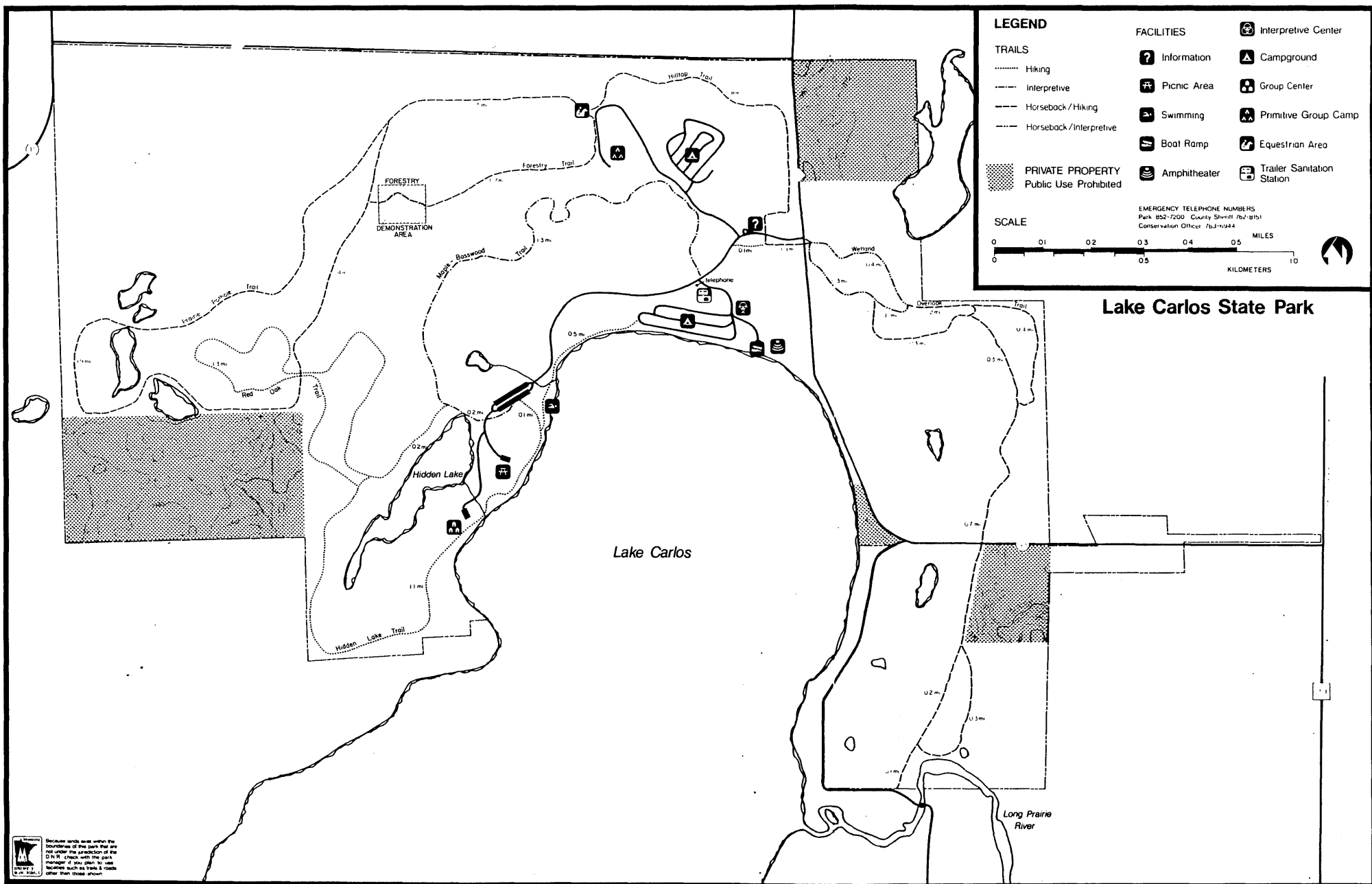
Norsemen may have explored the area centuries before other early European explorers. Some people believe the Kensington Rune Stone is a record of their travels. In 1898, a farmer near Kensington found this relic while clearing timber to plant crops. The stone's inscription, date 1362, told of an exploration by a party of Swedish and Norwegian Vikings. Today, the authenticity of the stone is still a subject of controversy. The Rune Stone is displayed in the Alexandria's Chamber of Commerce Museum and a replica appears at the National Museum in Washington D.C.

In 1851 the Traverse de Sioux treaty opened much of central Minnesota to white settlement. During the summer of 1858 Alexander and William Kinkaid settled at the junction of Lakes Agnes and Winona. This settlement became known as Alexandria. Later that year, it became the county seat for the newly established Douglas County.

By the turn of the century, tourists were already coming to the area and lakeshore property was being purchased. During the 1930's, the State of Minnesota recognized the need for a state park in the Alexandria region. In 1936 the state emergency relief administration acquired land for the park. Many of the parks facilities were developed through the Work Progress Administration (WPA) during the years 1937 to 1941.

Located in a hardwood transition zone between prairie areas to the southwest and coniferous forests to the northeast, the park provides diverse aquatic and upland habitat for an abundance of wildlife. One third of Minnesota's mammal species inhabit the park. These include white-tailed deer, beaver, mink, raccoon, red fox and coyote. Common loons, red-tailed hawks, great-horned owls, and grey partridge are among the over 150 species of birds that inhabit the park on a seasonal or year round basis.

Lake Carlos State Park offers visitors a variety of recreational experiences in an area high in recreational demand. Scenic attributes, high quality fishing lakes, abundant wildlife combined with excellent access via Interstate 94 makes this park a popular recreation area for thousands of Minnesotans and out of state visitors each year.



Because lands never within the boundaries of this park that are not under the jurisdiction of the DNR check with the park manager if you plan to use facilities such as trails & roads other than those shown.

EXISTING FACILITIES

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

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 1,250

Acres of state land - 1,121.75

Acres of private land - 128.25

Campsites

Drive in - 125

Walk in - 2

Horse

Showers

Modern toilets

Campsites with electricity - 68

Miles of Trails

Self-guided Interpret - 3

Hiking - 12

Horse - 8

Cross Country Ski - 5

Snowmobile - 9

Beaches - 1

Miles of Road

Asphalt - 1

Gravel - 3

Number of Picnic Tables - 50

Trailer Dump Station - 1

Water Accesses - 1

Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 27

Under 100 sq.ft. - 21

Miles of Posted Boundary - 11

Seasonal Visitor Centers

Park Utilities

Number of Sewage Lift Stations - 3

Number of Wells - 7

Number of Individual

Water Distribution Systems - 6

Miles of State Owned Power Line - 3.5

PROBLEMS FACING LAKE CARLOS STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in Lake Carlos State Park to maintain. Many are in need of replacement or major rehabilitation. Most were constructed in the 1930's, and are now in need of rehabilitation. Many new facilities are needed to meet growing recreational demands.

The parks natural and cultural resources are also in need of protection and management to perpetuate Lake Carlos' resources. In the past, facilities were developed in prehistoric and historic use areas. These areas deserve to be protected and interpreted.

A major problem currently facing the park is the deterioration of existing WPA era buildings. Stone walls need to be tuck pointed, fixtures are in need of replacement and utilities need to be upgraded. These structures and their unique design cannot be replaced. They are an integral part of the state park system and must be preserved.

With both winter and summer attendance increasing there is a pressing need for an interpretive/trail center at Lake Carlos. This facility could help serve the needs of area schools for environmental education.

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

RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN LAKE CARLOS STATE PARK

Major development projects over the past few years have included:

1. Rehabilitation of the upper campground.
2. Remodel of the upper campground sanitation building.
3. Construction of a new sanitation building.

LAKE CARLOS STATE PARK CAPITAL NEEDS

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Historical and Cultural Survey \$15,000

A detailed investigation of cultural resources is needed to correctly interpret the early history of the park as well as protect significant sites.

Replace Drought Killed Trees - \$14,000

Replace trees in the high use areas of the park that have been killed by drought.

Native Communities Management - \$2,000

Manage wetlands and meadows in the park to maintain and re-establish native plant species.

Seal Wells - \$2,000

Seal abandoned wells throughout the park to ensure they do not contaminate ground water supplies.

Identify Plant Species \$2,000

Inventory plant species within the park to identify if there are plants or communities that justify special management.

Subtotal \$35,000

MAJOR REHABILITATION

WPA Building Restoration \$75,000

Project includes tuck pointing of stone buildings, upgrading utilities, replacement of fixtures and refurbishing of interior wall and floor finishes.

Sewer System Rehabilitation \$50,000

Project includes upgrading lift station pumps, replacement of some lines and general rehabilitation.

Beach Rehabilitation \$25,000

Project includes erosion repair, addition of sand to beach and landscaping.

Office Contact Station Rehabilitation \$25,000

Remodel of existing building to improve efficiency and public service.

LAND AQUISITION

Campground Rehabilitation \$20,000

Project includes lengthening of some sites, improved drainage, replacement of tables and fire rings and landscaping.

Subtotal \$195,000

NEW DEVELOPMENT

New Interpretive/Trail Center \$1,000,000

This new facility would serve park campers, local school groups, and trail users.

Campground Loop - \$40,000

Develop a new campground loop adjacent to the upper campground to replace the 23 campsites lost when the upper campground was rehabilitated.

Boardwalk - \$25,000

Develop a boardwalk, southwest of Hidden Lake, to provide access to a beautiful and interesting bog area that is not accessible now.

Subtotal \$365,000

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS - \$1,295,000

There are approximately 20,000 acres of private land within the boundaries of Minnesota State Parks. Acquisition of these lands is an ongoing process that occurs as parcels become available for purchase and funds are available. Present acquisition costs are averaging about a \$1,000 per acre across the state. It would cost about \$20,000,000 to acquire all the private land within state parks at present values.

The park map shows the location of private holdings within the park. These properties should be purchased before private development increases within the park's statutory boundary.

The following issues highlight problems associated with private property within state parks.

- * Private lands within state parks are being sought out by developers.
- * Subdivision for residential use will cause such lands to be too expensive to acquire in the future.
- * Land uses such as gravel extraction and extensive clear cut logging adversely impact state parks and adjoining public lands.
- * Some private lands reduce public use of existing park facilities and lands because of their location.

These issues associated with privately owned lands within state parks threaten existing public investment and reduce potential for public use.

PRIVATE LANDS TO BE AQUIRED IN LAKE CARLOS STATE PARK

Parcel #	Acres
5	40.00
7	2.75
8	2.75
9	2.75
12	80.00
Total 128.25 acres.	

PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on Lake Carlos 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 forests and prairies. These will ensure that future visitors will be able to experience the diverse nature of Minnesota's flora and fauna.

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 Lake Carlos 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 Lake Carlos 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.

Lake Carlos State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

Lake Carlos State Park development
needs - **\$1,295,000**

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

