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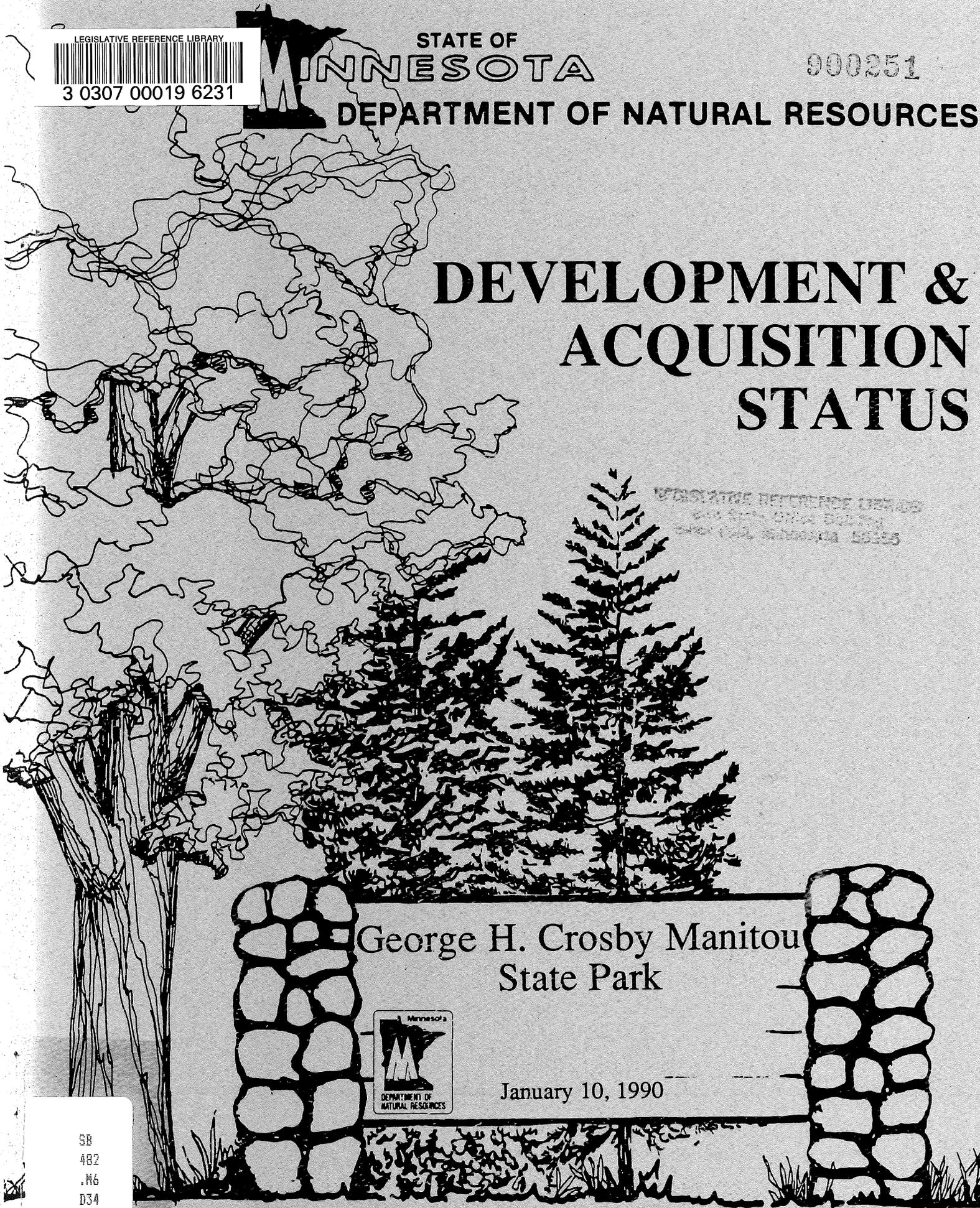


STATE OF  
**MINNESOTA**

900251

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION STATUS



LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY  
400 SOUTH GUYOT BUILDING  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55455

George H. Crosby Manitou  
State Park



January 10, 1990

SB  
482  
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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 GEORGE H. CROSBY MANITOU STATE PARK

George H. Crosby Manitou State Park is located in Lake County on Lake Superior's North Shore. The park entrance is eight miles northeast of Finland on County State-aid Highway 7. The park was established in 1955 on land donated by George H. Crosby and has a statutory boundary which encompasses 3,400 acres. Of these 555 acres are privately owned.

Rugged hills, jagged rock outcrops and steep walled gorges typify this North Shore park. About 1.1 billion years ago the North American continent began to tear apart along a rift that extended from what is now Lake Superior all the way to Kansas. Enormous volumes of basaltic lava poured from this rift and formed essentially all the bedrock of the North Shore.

Beginning about two million years ago glaciers advanced south across northern Minnesota crushing and scouring the landscape in the process. Cliffs were sheared off and entire rock layers removed by erosive forces. When the last glacier receded from the area some 10,000 years ago it left behind a thin layer of sand, gravel, rock and mineral debris. Since then weathering and stream erosion have contributed to the ruggedness of the landscape through the removal of glacial deposits and less resistant bedrock layers and through the downcutting of steep ravine gorges. The Manitou River is a spectacular example of this. Towards the center of the park the river enters a steep gorge and drops nearly 300 feet over a series of cascades on its way to Lake Superior.

Since the retreat of the last glacier, the vegetation of northeastern Minnesota has been slowly changing. Tundra occurred at the beginning of the past glacial period followed by a period dominated by spruce forests. A general warming trend resulted in the decline of spruce while promoting an increase in red pine, jack pine and birch. During the peak of the warming trend white pine became established in Minnesota and has since remained a part of the regional vegetation.

Prior to European settlement, the area that is now the park was dominated by aspen and birch in the drier upland areas and tamarack and black spruce in the lowlands. Isolated white pine groves were scattered throughout the park and concentrated along the steep river gorge with areas of sugar maple occurring on the moist upland sites.

Although significant disturbance factors such as fires and logging have occurred in the Crosby Manitou area, field surveys indicate existing vegetation patterns very similar to those of presettlement times with the exception of the pines. Much of the individual white pine that were scattered through out the park were logged off. However, those on the steep river gorge slopes proved too inaccessible to be economically harvested and today serve as a living reminder of what much of northeastern Minnesota once looked like.

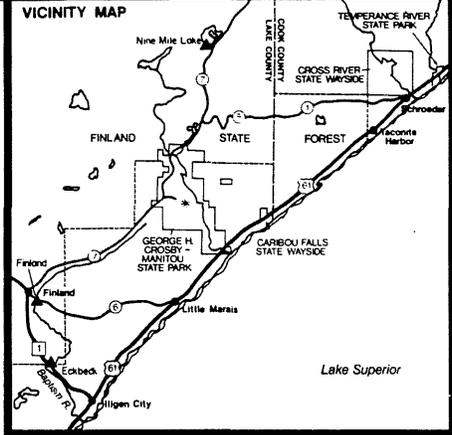
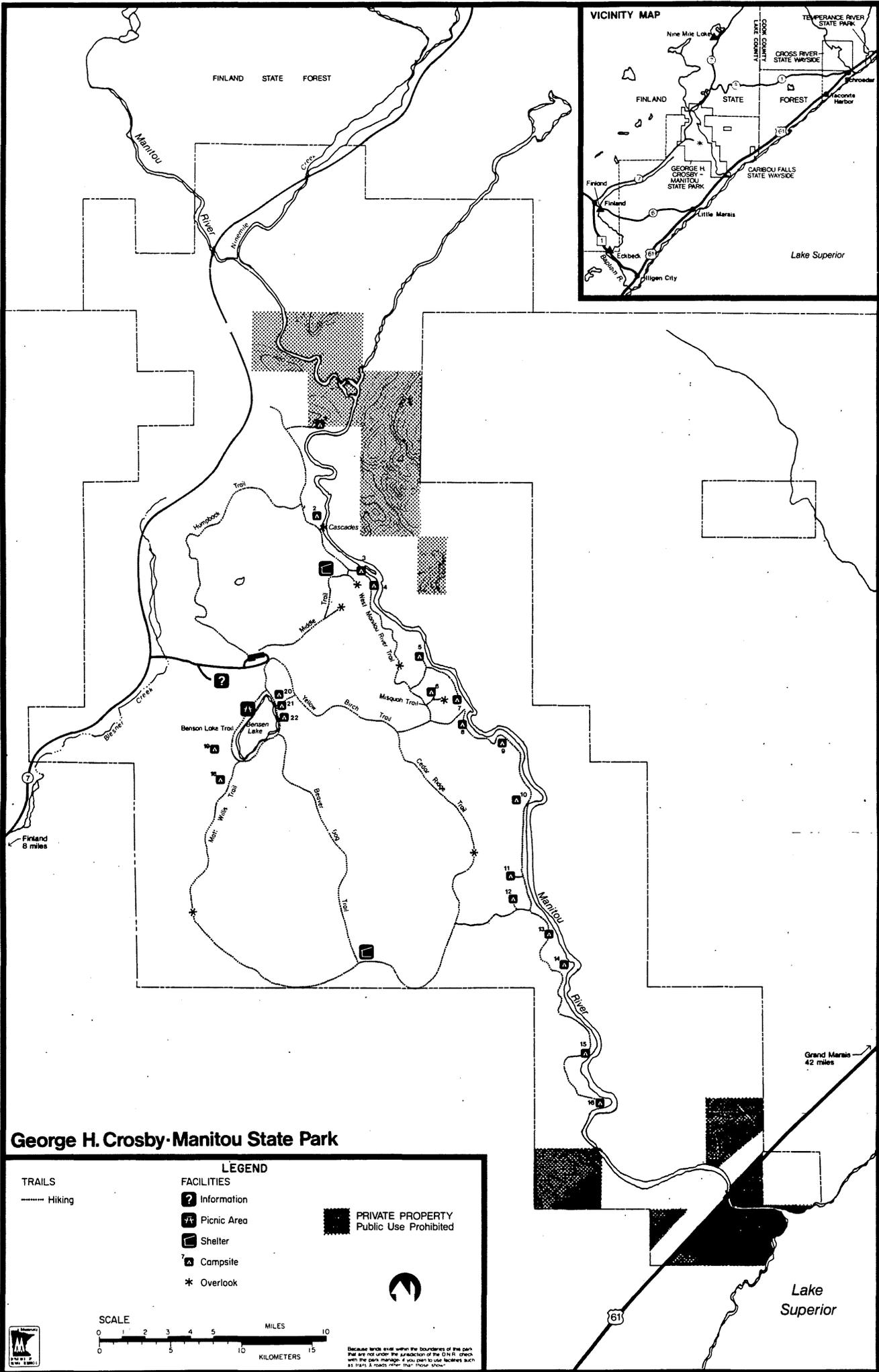
Crosby Manitou contains one of the finest examples of undisturbed northern hardwoods in the state. Much of the management will involve techniques of old growth maintenance. The greatest challenge is to allow the portions of the park that have been logged to regenerate naturally, hopefully favoring such species as yellow birch and white cedar. These species flourish where there are fewer deer, so management for aspen will not be a useful technique.

Some logging took place over much of the park but in most places it was a selective cut rather than a clearcut. This has served to increase sugar maple and has changed the composition of most stands except in the scientific natural area which is almost untouched. Except the trails and campsites and a few overgrown logging roads, the park is pristine.

The variety of ecological communities found in the park provide habitat for a multitude of wildlife. White-tailed deer, timber wolf, black bear and moose are some of the over 40 mammals that inhabit the park. Other include red fox, mink, raccoon, beaver, porcupine and river otter.

The northeast region of Minnesota is a prime area for bird life. Over 140 species of birds use the park during the year. Ruffed grouse, ruby-crowned kinglets, alder flycatchers, hermit thrush and northern warblers are just a few of the many birds species that can be observed during the summer. During the fall hawks numbering in the tens of thousands migrate through to wintering areas in the south. Winter is an excellent time to observe northern owls, woodpeckers, finches and an array of unusual water birds.

George H. Crosby Manitou State Park offers visitors a variety of recreational experiences in the rugged beauty of the North Shore. Thirty-four miles of trails provide opportunities for hiking, cross county skiing and nature study. Lake Superior and Manitou River offer excellent salmon and trout fishing. Twenty-one back pack campsites, sixteen of which are located along the Manitou River, provide a secluded base from which to explore the beauty of the park.



**George H. Crosby-Manitou State Park**

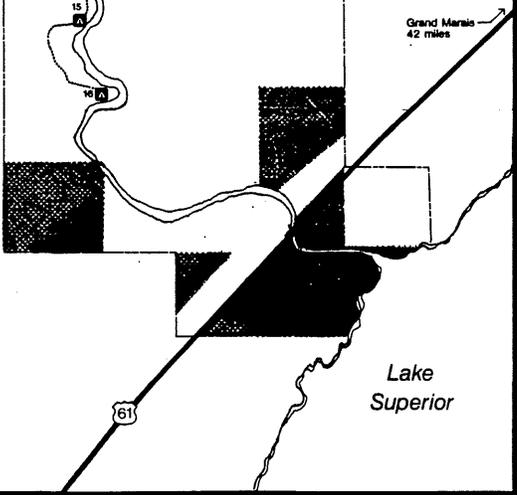
**TRAILS**  
 - - - - Hiking

**FACILITIES**  
 ? Information  
 PA Picnic Area  
 Shelter  
 A Campsite  
 \* Overlook

**PRIVATE PROPERTY**  
 Public Use Prohibited

**SCALE**  
 0 1 2 3 4 5 10 MILES  
 0 5 10 15 KILOMETERS

Because lands exist within the boundaries of the park that are not under the jurisdiction of the DNR, check with the game manager of any park to see facilities such as trails, roads, etc. that those lands show.



Finland 8 miles

FINLAND STATE FOREST

Manitou River

Cross

Wynkoop Trail

Cascades

Mobile Trail

West Manitou Trail

Hillier

Birch Trail

Masquon Trail

Colorado Trail

Baron

Loop Trail

Benson Lake Trail

Benson Lake

Maple Hills Trail

Maple Hills

## EXISTING FACILITIES

The following is an inventory of the existing physical plant of George H. Crosby Manitou State Park.

Acres in Statutory Boundary - 3,400

Acres of state land - 2,845

Acres of private land - 555

### Campsites

Back Pack - 21

### Miles of Trails

Hiking - 23

Cross Country Ski - 11

### Miles of Road

Gravel - 2

Number of Picnic Tables - 5

### Number of Buildings

Over 100 sq.ft. - 2

Under 100 sq.ft. - 5

Miles of Posted Boundary - 3

### Park Utilities

Number of Septic Tanks - 1

Number of Wells - 1

Number of Individual

Water Distribution Systems - 1

## PROBLEMS FACING

### GEORGE H. CROSBY MANITOU STATE PARK

There are many public recreational facilities in George H. Crosby Manitou 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 George H. Crosby Manitou's resources. In the past, facilities were developed in prehistoric and historic use areas. These areas must be protected and interpreted.

Of major concern to users is the condition of the existing campsites. Extensive use and lack of maintenance dollars have caused them to deteriorate.

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

### RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN GEORGE H. CROSBY MANITOU STATE PARK

Major development projects over the past few years have included:

1. Construction of new day use parking lot to serve hikers and cross county skiers.

**GEORGE H. CROSBY MANITOU  
STATE PARK  
CAPITAL NEEDS**

**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**Resource Assessment - \$4,500**

Studies must be completed to extend the knowledge of plant and animal communities unique to the park. Particular attention should be paid to species in portions of the park along the river and on the ridg-tops that have been virtually undisturbed. Sensitive areas should be mapped that reflect rare plant and animal distributions.

**Yellow Birch Plantings - \$9,000**

Several stands should be carefully chosen as yellow birch nurse areas. Seeds should be collected nearby and germinated as container stock. A total of 30,000 trees would be planted.

**White Pine Regeneration - \$5,000**

Planting of white pine seedlings in remote areas of the park. This project could plant nearly 28,000 trees.

**Subtotal \$18,500**

**MAJOR REHABILITATION**

**Backpack Campsites Rehabilitation - \$30,000**

Campsite rehabilitation will include landscaping, improved drainage, and replacement of fire grates and picnic tables.

**Trail Rehabilitation - \$30,000**

Trail rehabilitation will include trail surface improvements, erosion control and addition of steps and stairs where necessary.

**Subtotal \$60,000**

**NEW DEVELOPMENT**

**Interpretive Information Stations - \$12,000**

Will provide backpackers with information and interpretation of the park's natural resources.

**Subtotal \$12,000**

**TOTAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS - \$90,500**

## LAND ACQUISITION

There are approximately 20,000 acres of private land within the boundaries of Minnesota State Parks. Acquisition of these lands is an ongoing process that occurs as parcels become available for purchase and funds are available. Present acquisition costs are averaging about a \$1,000 per acre across the state. It would 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 limit public use of existing park facilities and lands because of their location.

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

### PRIVATE LANDS TO BE ACQUIRED WITHIN GEORGE H. CROSBY MANITOU STATE PARK

Parcel #	Acres
1	40.00
3	160.00
4	80.00
5	20.00
6	15.00
7	40.00
8	40.00
9	160.00

**Total 555.00 acres.**

## PARK POTENTIAL

What efforts will the completion of resource management, rehabilitation and new development projects have on George H. Crosby Manitou 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 diverse nature of Minnesota's 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 detract from the natural beauty of George H. Crosby Manitou 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 George H. Crosby Manitou 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.

George H. Crosby Manitou State Park acquisition costs will be determined by appraisals.

George H. Crosby Manitou State Park development needs - **\$90,500**

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

