

Park Operations

Current staffing at Sibley State Park includes:

Year-round staff:

- Park Manager
- Assistant Park Manager
- Park Naturalist
- Administrative Assistant
- General Repair Worker

Seasonal staff:

- Interpretive Naturalist
- 2 Naturalist Corps Aides
- 4 Parks Workers
- 3 Buildings and Grounds Workers (5 positions allocated)
- 2 Natural Resource Workers (3 positions allocated)
- General Laborer

Temporary or other:

- 3 Interns
- 5 Greenview (part-time) positions. The Greenview program is a partnership between DNR and Greenview, Inc., a nonprofit organization that hires retirees, who work on limited labor tasks appropriate for their skills and physical abilities.

Monson Lake State Park Satellite Operation

Sibley State Park is responsible for the maintenance and operation of Monson Lake State Park (approximately 15 miles west of Sibley). In recent history a staff person was assigned to work at Monson Lake under the direction of Sibley State Park during the summer months and at Sibley during the remainder of their season. The classification of this position has varied from that of a Park Specialist, Park Technician, or Building and Grounds Worker. Currently there are no staff assigned directly to Monson Lake and all maintenance and operations tasks are performed by various Sibley staff. Sibley State Park maintenance and night security staffs make regular visits to Monson Lake and all fiscal management is handled by Sibley staff. Service to Monson Lake guests has been enhanced with the presence of a Campground Host during the summer.

Enforcement

The park manager and assistant manager are the designated Park Rangers who are authorized by the DNR to enforce rules and regulations within the state park

boundary. Typical enforcement issues include campground disturbances, alcohol use and permit violations. Park staff takes a proactive approach to preventing enforcement problems through routine and periodic patrols of use areas and campgrounds by trained security staff. Park staff can also call on other law enforcement agencies, particularly the Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Department, to assist with law enforcement and emergency services. DNR Conservation Officers primarily help enforce fishing, hunting, and trail use rules and regulations and assist with persistent or ongoing enforcement issues.

Regional Office Consolidation

DNR's Management Resources Bureau continues to investigate options to consolidate DNR operations in Willmar – New London area. Sibley State Park currently houses Wildlife Division staff in the former Caretaker's Residence in the shop and service area. Sites within the park will be considered among the various options for locating a combined office. However, no funding is currently available to pursue this option. A separate planning process would be conducted as part of the site selection process, if and when it occurs.

Staffing and Funding Levels

If all the recommendations in this park plan were implemented, annual operational costs would need to be increased. The level or amount of this increase is difficult to estimate, since many of the recommendations are too general to base estimates on. However, new development projects such as a new group camp would increase park visits, which would increase operational costs.

Sibley State Park's level of visitation and its central geographic location mean that it will continue to play an important role within the state park system. As such, it will be important to ensure that staffing is adequate to meet visitor expectations and protect the park's natural and cultural resources.

Staffing and Funding Recommendations

- Ensure that resource management staff time is available to fully implement the resource management recommendations.
- Focus future enforcement and visitor service efforts on heavy-use weekends.
- Seek funding for additional staff hours to manage increased visitation as the development projects outlined in this plan are implemented.

State Park Boundary

The Minnesota State Legislature establishes state park boundaries. The state park statutory boundary defined in Minnesota Statutes provides staff, citizens and policy makers with a common understanding of which lands are appropriate for inclusion in the park. It is the current policy of the Division of Parks and Trails to include within a statutory boundary only those lands where the landowner has agreed to inclusion. The DNR is then authorized to negotiate with willing sellers for acquisition of lands contained within that statutory boundary. Being within a statutory park boundary does not have any impact on the landowner. He or she retains full ownership and rights to the land until he or she decides to sell to the park.

Boundary modifications are considered during all state park management planning processes. Although a state park management plan can recommend boundary changes, only the Minnesota State Legislature can change state park boundaries.

Current State Park Statutory Boundary and Adjacent Lands

Sibley State Park includes 3,014 acres within its statutory boundary. Of that acreage, 2,512 acres is owned by the State of Minnesota, while 502 acres within the boundary remain in private ownership.

Sibley State Park is surrounded primarily by privately owned lands. Agriculture is a dominant land use in the area and is common in the lands surrounding the park. Many farm lands surrounding the park are enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a voluntary, federal private-lands cost-sharing program designed to encourage farmers to improve environmental quality. Shoreline residential development is also common on Lake Andrew, Norway and Games Lakes.

Kandiyohi County Park 7 is located just across County Highway 5 on the western end of Sibley State Park. The county park is a popular swimming and camping area.

A new combination Aquatic Management Area (AMA) and Public Water Access (PWA) of 8.8 acres has been established on the southern shore of Middle Lake. AMAs are created to ensure that critical fish and wildlife habitats are conserved, to provide non-boat public access to water resources, and to restore habitat in previously disturbed areas. The AMA/PWA will be minimally developed to provide a small parking area, a water access site geared primarily to duckboats, and walking trails for shoreline fishing access.

Proposed Boundary Modifications

As the land use surrounding Sibley State Park is anticipated to remain largely agricultural, the land preserved within the park will become more important for natural and cultural resource protection and for visitors seeking quality recreational experiences.

Some possible additions to the statutory boundary, shown on Figure 11, include:

- The DeLong Farm and other areas near the southeast corner of park. This area may be important for possible trail expansion that would connect to the Glacial Lakes State Trail.
- South and east side of Middle Lake near the AMA. This would provide additional shoreline protection and help preserve water quality, and protect wildlife and fisheries habitat.
- An access parcel between Norway and Middle Lakes to complete a six-lake canoe circuit.
- On the north side of Trunk Highway 9, the hilly, wooded landscape is similar in character to that of the park, and is likely to include similar high-quality natural resources. Expansion in this area could provide opportunities to extend trails and protect significant resources.

Extension of a park's statutory boundary simply means that DNR staff may negotiate with interested property owners in that area. No lands are recommended to be removed from the state park statutory boundary.

Park Boundary Recommendations

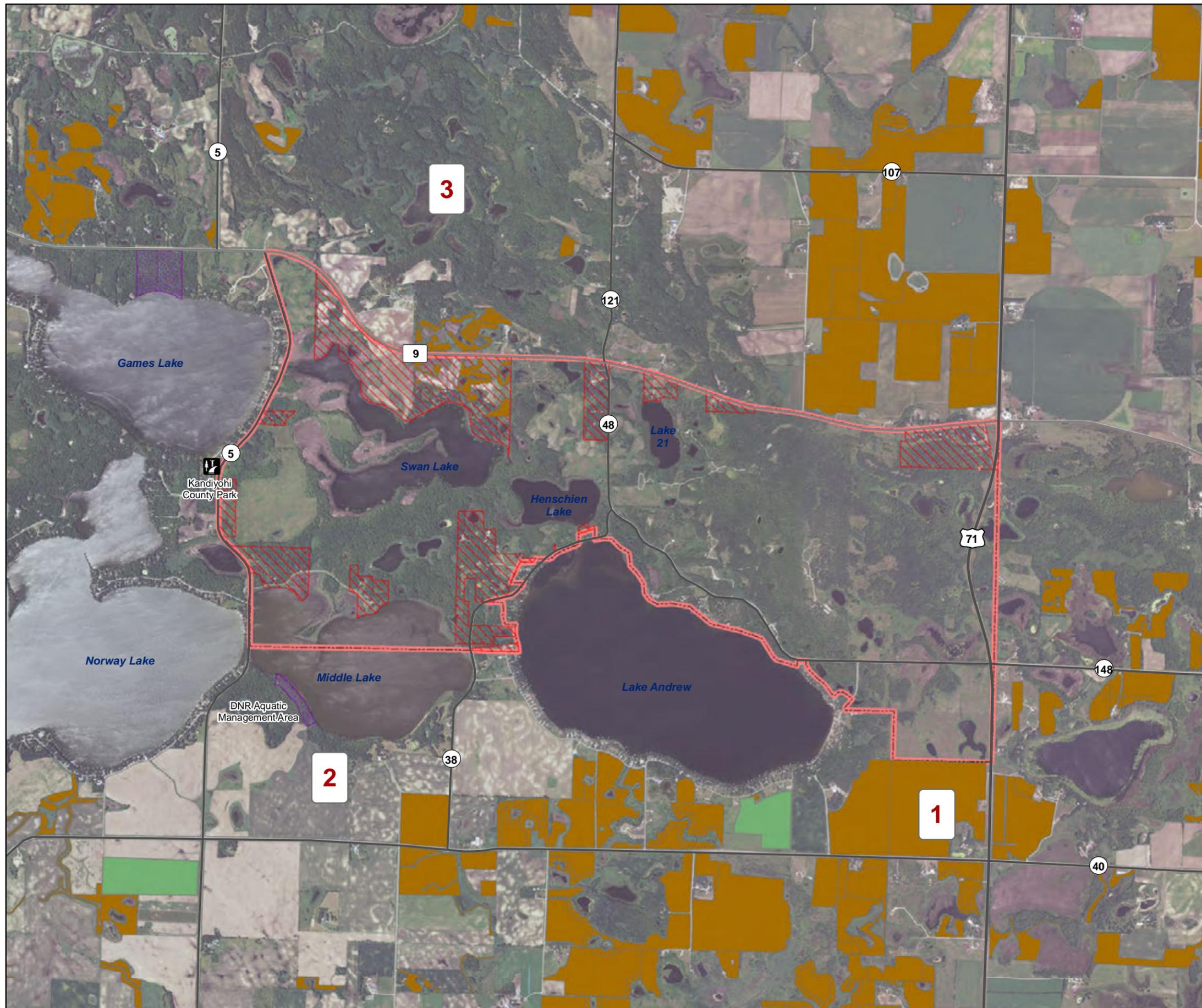
- Pursue addition of lands to the park statutory boundary as described above, with the support of property owners.
- Provide local units of government with the opportunity to review statutory boundary proposals.
- Continue to pursue acquisition of private lands within the current park statutory boundary that support the Division of Parks and Trails' mission to protect and perpetuate the diverse natural, scenic and cultural resources for low impact use, education and enjoyment of park visitors.
- Consider acquisition of parcels outside of the park statutory boundary that meet boundary change criteria and are supported by the property owner.
- Support the use of conservation tools like conservation easements and cooperative resource management projects in working with neighboring

communities, special interest groups, county and regional units of government, and private property owners.

- Park staff will ensure that common boundaries with property owners are clearly identified to prevent access to private land by park users and prevent trespass issues onto parkland.

Sibley State Park

Figure 11:
Proposed Boundary Adjustments



Legend

- Potential Statutory Boundary Expansion Zone
- State Park Statutory Boundary
- Private Property within State Park Boundary
- Aquatic Management Area
- Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM)
- Conservation Reserve Program (2007)



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



MN Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks and Trails

August 2012

Plan Modification Process

State park management plans document a partnership-based planning process, and the recommended actions resulting from that process. These comprehensive plans recognize that all aspects of park management are interrelated and that management recommendations should also be interrelated.

Over time, however, conditions change that can affect some of the plan recommendations or occasionally an entire plan. Plans need to acknowledge changing conditions and be flexible enough to allow for modifications as needed. The DNR Division of Parks and Trails has adopted processes for plan amendments (major changes) and plan revisions (minor changes), which are coordinated through the division's planning section.

Plan Amendment

A change must be approved through the plan amendment process if it meets any of the following criteria:

1. Alters the park vision, goals or specific management objectives outlined in the plan; or
2. Is controversial among elected officials and boards, park user groups, the public, adjacent landowners, other DNR divisions or state agencies; or
3. Directly affects other agencies (e.g., Minnesota Historical Society).

Plan Amendment Process

The Plan Amendment Process consists of five steps:

1. The existing plan is reviewed at the park and regional levels to determine which stakeholders are potentially impacted by a resource condition or proposed change.
2. If the proposed change involves other DNR divisions, the issue should be resolved by staff of involved divisions and approved by the division directors.
3. If the proposed change involves other state agencies, the issue should be resolved by staff and approved by the appropriate division directors from all involved agencies.
4. If the proposed change is potentially controversial among elected boards, user groups or the public, a citizen advisory committee should be established to address the proposed change. A locally advertised open house will be held to encourage public input on the matter, after which point the DNR Division of Parks and Trails division director will

determine whether the proposed change should be reviewed by the department.

5. All plan amendments will be coordinated, documented and distributed by the DNR Division of Parks and Trails planning section.

Plan Revision

If a plan change is recommended that does not meet the amendment criteria above, and generally follows the intent of the plan, the DNR Division of Parks and Trails has the discretion to modify the plan without a major planning process.

Plan Revisions Related to Physical Constraints and Resource Protection

Detailed engineering and design work may not allow the development to be completed exactly as it is outlined in the plan. A relatively minor modification, such as moving a proposed building site to accommodate various physical concerns, is not uncommon. Plans should outline a general direction and document the general “area” for development rather than specific locations. For the most part, plans are conceptual, not detail-oriented. Prior to development, proposed development sites are examined for the presence of protected Natural Heritage Program elements and historical/archaeological artifacts. If any are found, the planned project may have to be revised to accommodate the protection of these resources.

Program Revisions

The resource management section and interpretive services sections of the plan should be updated periodically as needed. The DNR Division of Parks and Trails’ resource management and interpretive staff will determine when an update is needed and coordinate the revision with the DNR Division of Parks and Trails planning section.

References

Benson, David R. 2002. *Stories in Log and Stone: The Legacy of the New Deal in Minnesota State Parks*. MNDNR, St. Paul, MN.

Harris, J. Merle. 1957. "Geology of Sibley State Park." *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer*, July-August 1957, pp 54-57.

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/index.html>

Meyer, Roy. 1991. *Everyone's Country Estate: A History of Minnesota's State Parks*. Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. 1995. *Minnesota State Park System Interpretive Services Plan*. Division of Parks and Recreation, MNDNR, St. Paul, MN.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. 2005a. *Field Guide to the Native Plant Communities of Minnesota: the Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province*. Ecological Land Classification Program, Minnesota County Biological Survey, and Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, MNDNR, St. Paul, MN.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. 2005b. *Field Guide to the Native Plant Communities of Minnesota: the Prairie Parkland and Tallgrass Aspen Parklands Province*. Ecological Land Classification Program, Minnesota County Biological Survey, and Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, MNDNR, St. Paul, MN.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. 2006. *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare: An Action Plan for Minnesota Wildlife*, Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. Division of Ecological Services, MNDNR, St. Paul, MN.

Mossberg, Barbara. 1976. "A History of Sibley State Park: The Monongalia Game Preserve, a Forerunner of the Park." unpublished report.