LAKE BEMIDJI STATE PARK

WINTER FACILITIES AND FEATURES

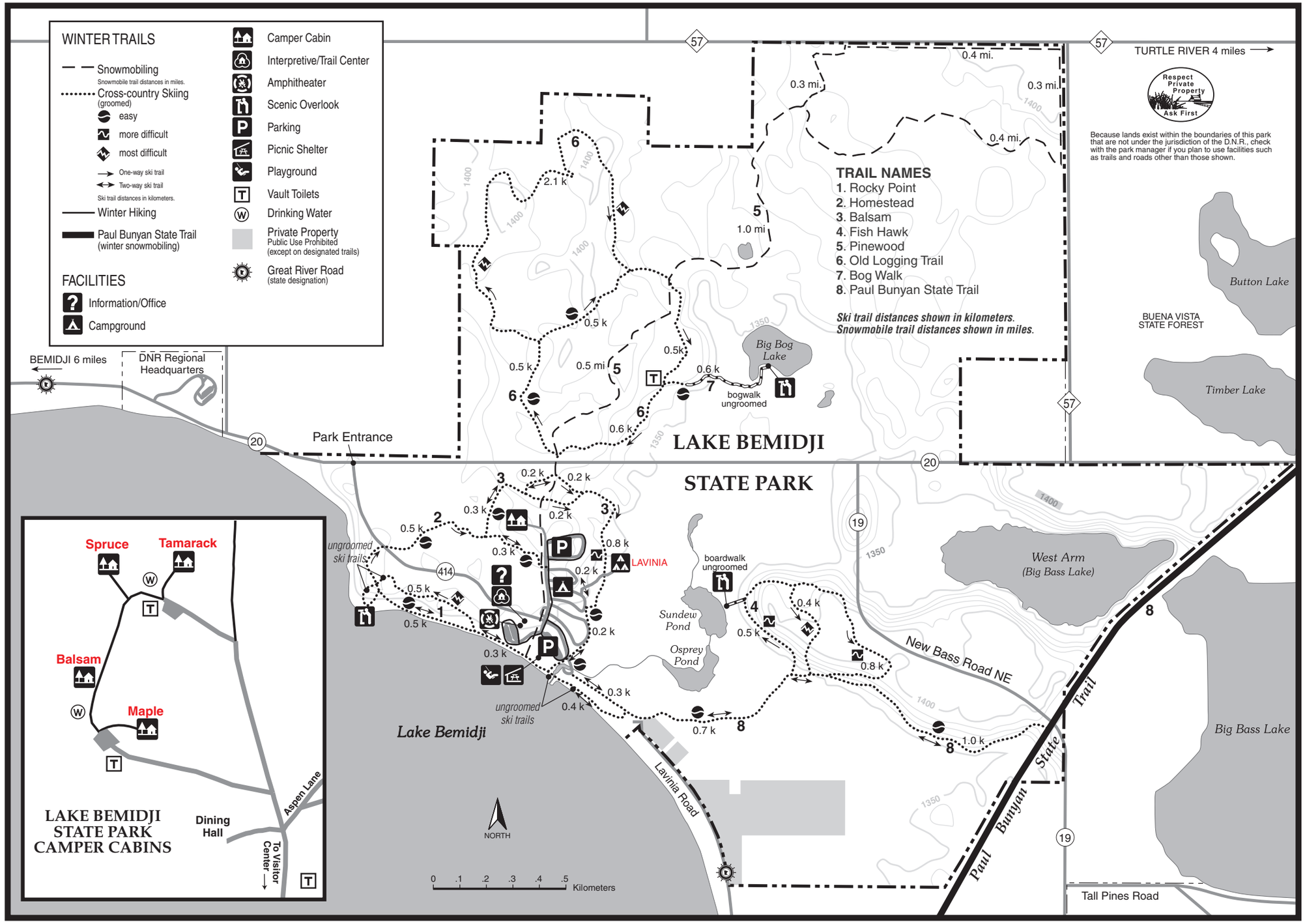
- Rustic winter camping
- Group areas
- Visitor center/trail center
- Naturalist programs
- Nature trails
- Cross-country ski trails
- Snowmobile trail
- Paul Bunyan State Trail
- Snowshoe rental

SPECIAL FEATURE

Access the Lake Bemidji Bog Walk by ski or shoeshoe for winter wildlife viewing. You might catch a glimpse of a snowshoe hare.

SNOWSHOE INFORMATION

The majority of the park is open for exploration by snowshoe. Caution is needed near lakes, streams and wetlands. Please note that you may not snowshoe or hike on groomed ski or snowmobile trails.



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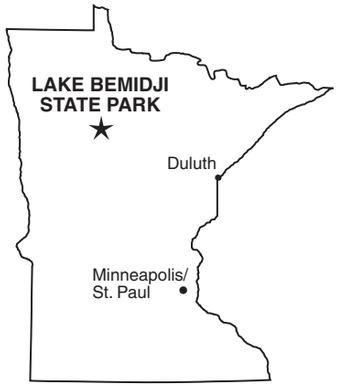

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
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3401 State Park Road N.E.
Bemidji, MN 56601
(218) 308-2300

Department of Natural Resources
Information Center
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040

(651) 296-6157 (Metro Area)
1-888-646-6367 (MN Toll Free)

TDD (Telecommunications
Device for Deaf)
(651) 296-5484 (Metro Area)
1-800-657-3929 (MN Toll Free)

mndnr.gov/parksandtrails

LAKE BEMIDJI STATE PARK is located 1.7 miles off County Road 21, five miles north of Bemidji, Minnesota. Entrance to the park is from Beltrami County State Aid Highway 20. Highway map index: F-7.

In the pine-moraine setting on the north shore of 6,765-acre Lake Bemidji, this state park affords visitors an enjoyable combination of Minnesota lake country recreation and the natural experiences of the northern forest. The short hike to the bluff at Rocky Point high above the blue waters, under a canopy of pine, birch, and maple, is both memorable and inspirational.

LANDSCAPE: Lake Bemidji State Park contains a variety of plant and animal communities. Located in the north-central portion of the pine-moraine region of Minnesota, the park is a mixture of many plant communities from maturing pines to young aspen. Settlers found communities of aspen-birch, tamarack-spruce, river-bottom oaks, basswood, and hard maple represented in the landscape.

Today, natural changes are still occurring within the park. The park is managed to provide visitors with vacation activities like camping, fishing, and boating within the natural setting of the pre-settlement landscape. Still continuing are the processes and plant/animal interactions which have been a part of the area for thousands of years.

RECREATION: Lake Bemidji State Park is far from being just a summertime vacation land. Winter in the north country has become an enjoyable season for young and old. The miles of groomed trails within the park provide both advanced and beginning skiers with exciting, yet peaceful, cross-country skiing experiences. Snowshoers, hikers, birders, and winter anglers also find park resources the ingredients for a pleasurable day. The park is the trailhead for the Paul Bunyan State Trail.

GEOLOGY: The present landscape in the park is the result of the last stage of glaciation in Minnesota. Soil, gravel, and rock material carried by the glacier as it moved south was eventually deposited as the ice receded 10,000 years ago.

The park's rolling topography was created by the uneven deposition of this glacial till. Meltwater, running off the surface of the glacier, also played a role in constructing the present shape of the land. Glacial meltwaters deposited outwash in some areas of the park similar to the way a river deposits soil at its mouth in the form of a delta. The campground area is overlying a flat outwash plain.

Many of the swamps and bogs in the park were formed when chunks of ice separated from the receding glacier and left depressions which later filled with water. Lake Bemidji itself is the result of two huge blocks of ice being left behind by the retreating glacier.

Is our present landscape now fixed? Definitely not! Since the last major alteration in the glacial period, the land continues to change slowly. The changes result from the erosive forces of wind and water, shoreline wave action, and other earth-moving processes.

WILDLIFE: The diversity of vegetation in the park supports many wildlife species. Birding is excellent. Campers may awake to cheery sounds of red-eyed and warbling vireos, rose-breasted grosbeaks, and many other forest songsters. Loons, black terns, gulls, even osprey can be seen while spending a quiet morning or evening on the lakeshore. A quiet hike on one of the park trails can yield a glimpse of a doe with her fawn, a porcupine having lunch halfway up a jack pine, or even an occasional black bear. Eastern chipmunks and red squirrels, always seeking attention from campers and picnickers, adapt all too well to the park's recreational areas.

The park is fortunate in having fine examples of an interesting northern Minnesota plant community—the conifer bog. Living exclusively in these areas are some of Minnesota's most unusual plant and animal species. The Bog Trail boardwalk leads a quarter mile into one of these areas so that visitors can observe pitcher plants, insect-eating sundews, orchids, and other plants without disturbing the bog.

Adjacent to the Fish Hawk Trail a short boardwalk leads visitors to a floating overlook of Sundew Pond.

In the wetland areas of the park, nesting waterfowl can be found as well as beaver, muskrat, and mink. In the evening, the park is alive with the sounds of gray treefrogs, spring peepers, and chorus and wood frogs. The woodland sound of a barred owl, the flute-like song of the veery, and the hammering of a sapsucker all add to the twilight wilderness experience.

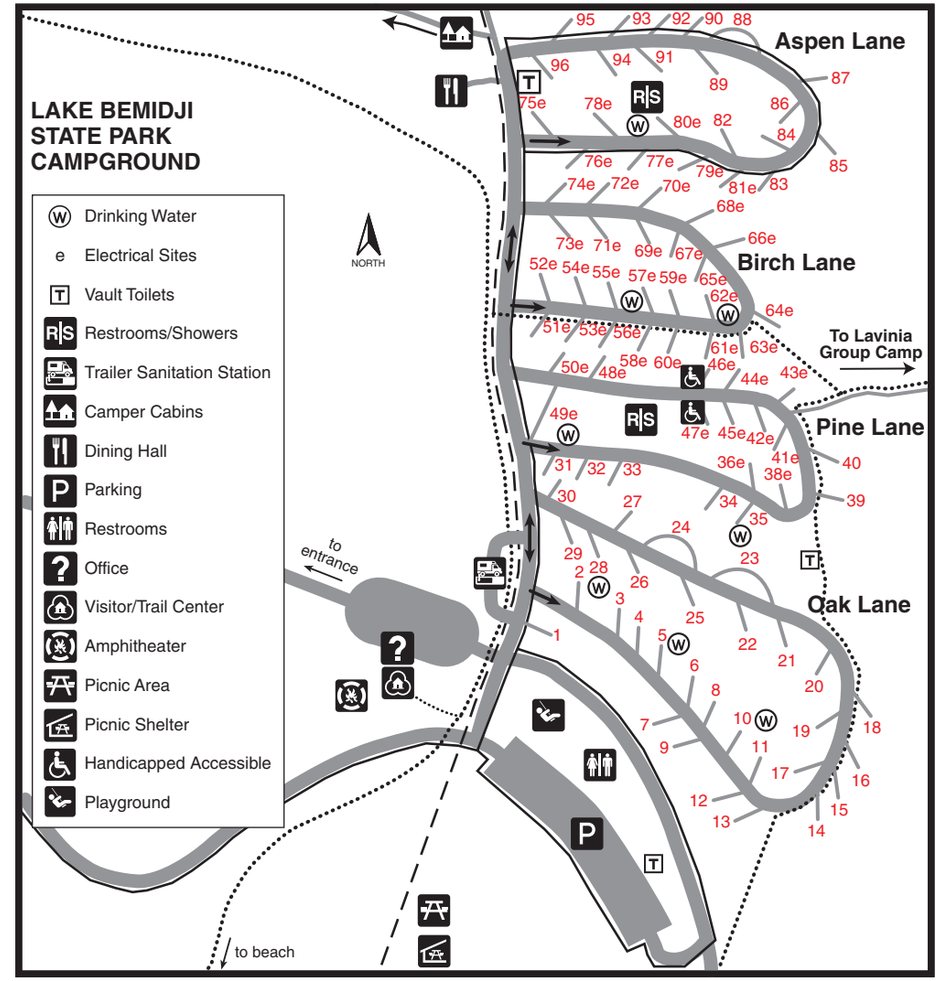
In all, nearly 50 species of mammals and almost 200 different kinds of birds can be seen throughout the year in Lake Bemidji State Park. Contact the park naturalist for current information on where and when to observe the variety of wildlife.

HISTORY: For generations, Dakota Indians fished and hunted around Lake Bemidji until the westward-moving Anishinabe reached the area, about 1750. The Anishinabe were able to drive the Dakota into the Great Plains away from their ancestral lakes and hunting grounds.

The Anishinabe called the lake Bemidjigumaug, meaning "cross water." Early voyageurs translated it to French as Lac Travers. Later Europeans unable to pronounce the Anishinabe name simply referred to it as "Bemidji."

A priority of settlers in the area was the harvesting of prime white and red pine. Several mills on the south shore of Lake Bemidji were the center of the last big logging surge in Minnesota. The foundation of one mill is still visible near Nymore Beach. Logging artifacts have been found in the lake by divers.

The land within the present park boundaries was involved in the logging era. Vast areas were extensively logged. Fortunately, a few areas within the park boundaries were still in a virgin state when the land was purchased by the government, thus preserving a remnant of towering forests so common in years past.
In 1923, the Minnesota state legislature set aside



421 acres, establishing Lake Bemidji State Park. Today, the park has grown to over 1,600 acres to serve 150,000 plus visitors a year.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS: Throughout the year park visitors have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities. From Memorial Day to Labor Day activities such as morning hikes, boat tours of Lake Bemidji, or evening films and campfire talks are conducted just about every day. Winter months offer visitors a chance to try snowshoeing, candlelight skiing, or to learn about winter wildlife, animal tracking or life under the ice. A variety of programs are offered from Labor Day to Memorial Day.

During the winter a modern trail center is open daily and sometimes serves as a gathering place for interpretive programs where visitors share experiences by the warmth of the woodstove. Throughout the year the Visitor Center is a place where information about the park's trails, animals, geology or other interesting features can be found through exhibits, videos or naturalist programs. A complete listing of programs and special programs for organized groups is available on request.

This information is available in alternative format upon request.

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