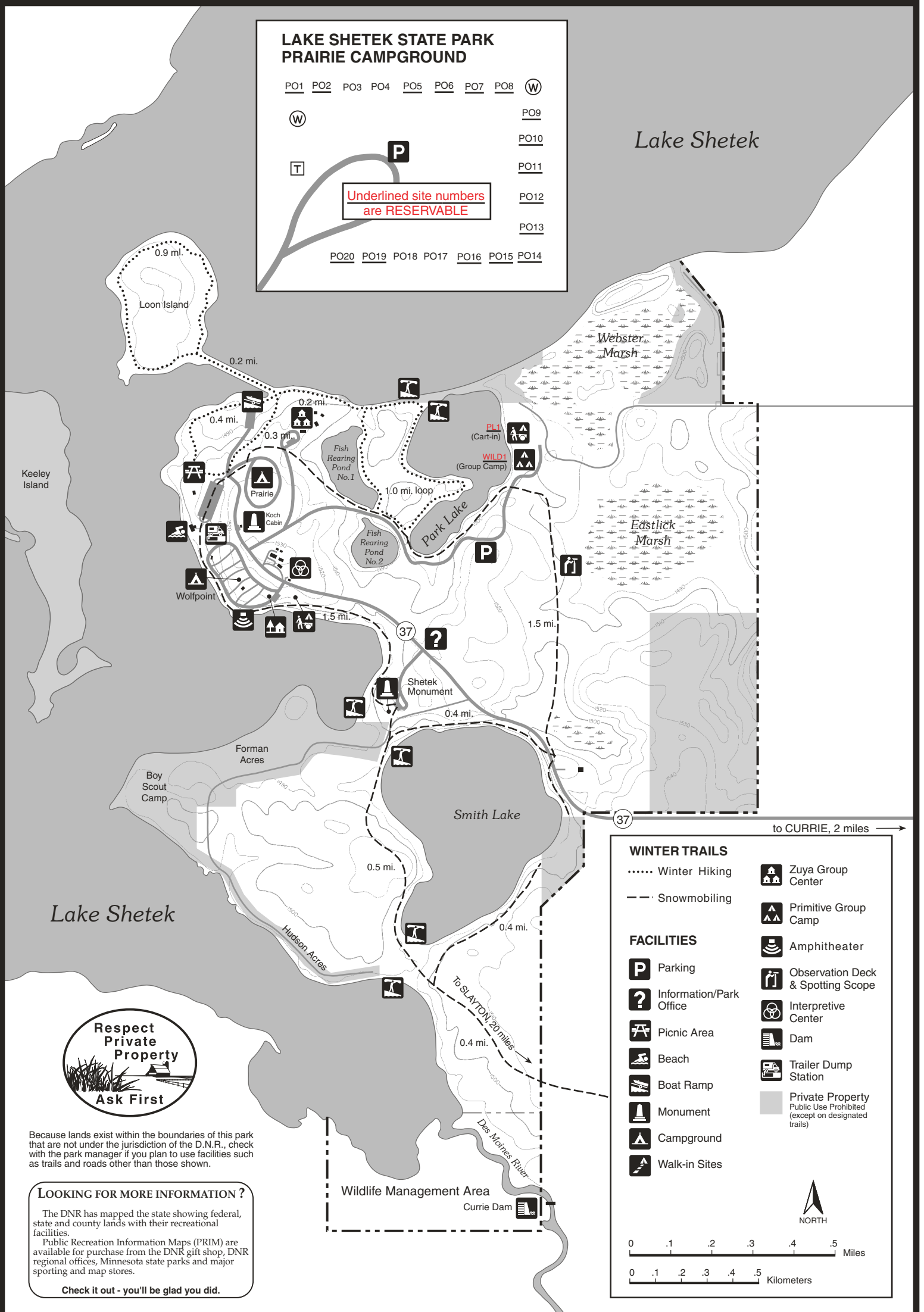


# LAKE SHETEK STATE PARK

## FACILITIES AND FEATURES:

- 77 semi-modern campsites; 67 electrical (Wolf Point Campground)
  - 10 rustic car-in sites
  - 20 rustic campsites (Prairie Campground)
  - 1 primitive group camp (Wilderness camp)
  - Zuya Group Center; 80-person capacity
  - Camper Cabin
  - Picnic area with 2 shelters (1 winter warming shelter)
  - Boat and canoe launch
  - Rowboat/canoe and kayak rental
  - 8 miles of Summer hiking trails
  - 6 miles of paved bike trail
  - 5 miles of snowmobile trails
  - 3 miles of Winter hiking trails
- ## VISITOR FAVORITES:
- Swimming beach
  - Koch Cabin
  - Loon Island
  - Fishing ponds
  - Interpretive center
  - Nature Store
  - Shetek Monument
  - Eastlick Marsh observation deck and spotting scope
  - Woodland, marsh, and prairie hiking trails





# LAKE SHETEK STATE PARK

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lake Shetek State Park  
163 State Park Road  
Currie, MN 56123-1018  
(507) 763-3256

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)

DNR Web Site: [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us)  
State Parks Page: [www.mnstateparks.info](http://www.mnstateparks.info)

**LAKE SHETEK STATE PARK** is located 14 miles north-east of Slayton, 13 miles south of Tracy, and 33 miles southeast of Marshall, MN in Murray County. Access to the park is by County Road 38, north of Currie. Highway map index: D-19.

Shetek is an Ojibwe word. The most widely accepted translation is "pelican". Lake Shetek, the largest lake in southwestern Minnesota, forms the headwaters of the Des Moines River.

For many years, the Department of Natural Resources has stocked game fish in Lake Shetek. In 1975, an aeration system was installed in the 3,600-acre lake, raising the winter oxygen level and reducing winterkill.

Visitors enjoy fishing for walleye, northern, perch, bullhead, crappie, channel catfish and other species.

The 1,109-acre park consists of numerous old fields which are remnants of pioneer farms and woodlots, of oak, hackberry, basswood, elm, and ash. These woodlots became buffers against the winds of the great plains.

**WILDLIFE:** Before modern agriculture was introduced, most of the Lake Shetek area was a treeless prairie that contained hundreds of species of wildflowers and grasses. The prairie was habitat for such animals as bison, elk, antelope, wolves, and prairie chickens. Over the past century, 99 percent of Minnesota's native prairie has been removed and transformed into cropland.

The habitats now in the park still support many wildlife species. A quiet hike on one of the park trails can yield a glimpse of a doe and her fawn, the bubbly sounds of bobolinks in the prairie, or the graceful flight of a white pelican overhead. Thirteen-lined ground squirrels and raccoon have adapted all too well to the park's recreational areas, and are frequent visitors of campers and picnickers.

The wooded shorelines of Lake Shetek provide cover for a variety of woodland species. Notable animals include white-tail deer, fox, mink, beaver, fox squirrels, muskrat, woodchuck, and coyote. The woods also provide cover for many birds including cuckoos, bunting, warblers, and hawks.

Several wetland areas in the park offer visitors an opportunity to view waterfowl, reptiles and amphibians. At Eastlick Marsh, interpretive signs and an observation deck with a spotting scope allow for close-up viewing and easy identification of coot, grebes, ducks, herons, and pelicans. Many species of waterfowl can be seen nesting in and around the park in spring and early summer.

A large portion of the park consists of abandoned farm fields. In an effort to restore the natural prairie community, carefully managed prescribed burns, weed control, and other techniques are used in these areas. Although it will take decades to even partially restore the prairie, many species of prairie grasses and wildflowers can now be found in the park. Blazing star, black-eyed susans, coneflowers, vervain, sunflowers, and bottle gentian are a few of the showy wildflowers again growing in the park.

**GEOLOGY:** Lake Shetek lies in the Coteau des Prairie "highlands of the prairie" region of Minnesota, a geological area which separates the Minnesota River from the Missouri River watershed. This Coteau region was often inundated by glaciers that moved across Minnesota two million to 11,000 years ago. During the last period of glaciation (Wisconsin), the Des Moines lobe covered this area with deep deposits of glacial till (rock debris).

Each advance of the glacier moved immense amounts of glacial till, which accumulated at the margins of the glacier, forming irregular hills and depressions called moraines. The Coteau is essentially formed by two moraines, the Bemis and Altemont.

About 12,000 years ago the climate warmed and the glaciers receded, producing swift rivers of meltwater which sculpted channels and formed outwash plains.

Small landslides dammed nearby meltwater channels and depressions, which backed up water and eventually created Lake Shetek.

**HISTORY:** The natural beauties of the Lake Shetek area which attract present day visitors are not confined only to the 20th century. Long before white settlement appeared in the area, American Indians were settled in the Lake Shetek area. Undoubtedly the first visitors were wandering hunters in pursuit of bison. Because of its supply of water, bison and those who preyed upon them were attracted to the Shetek area.

Strictly speaking, the first to settle the area were the peoples of the Great Oasis culture on the northeastern slope of the Coteau. In the mid 1840s, European and American explorers such as Catlin, Nicollet, Prescott and Fremont explored the area associated with Lake Shetek and what would later be called Murray County.

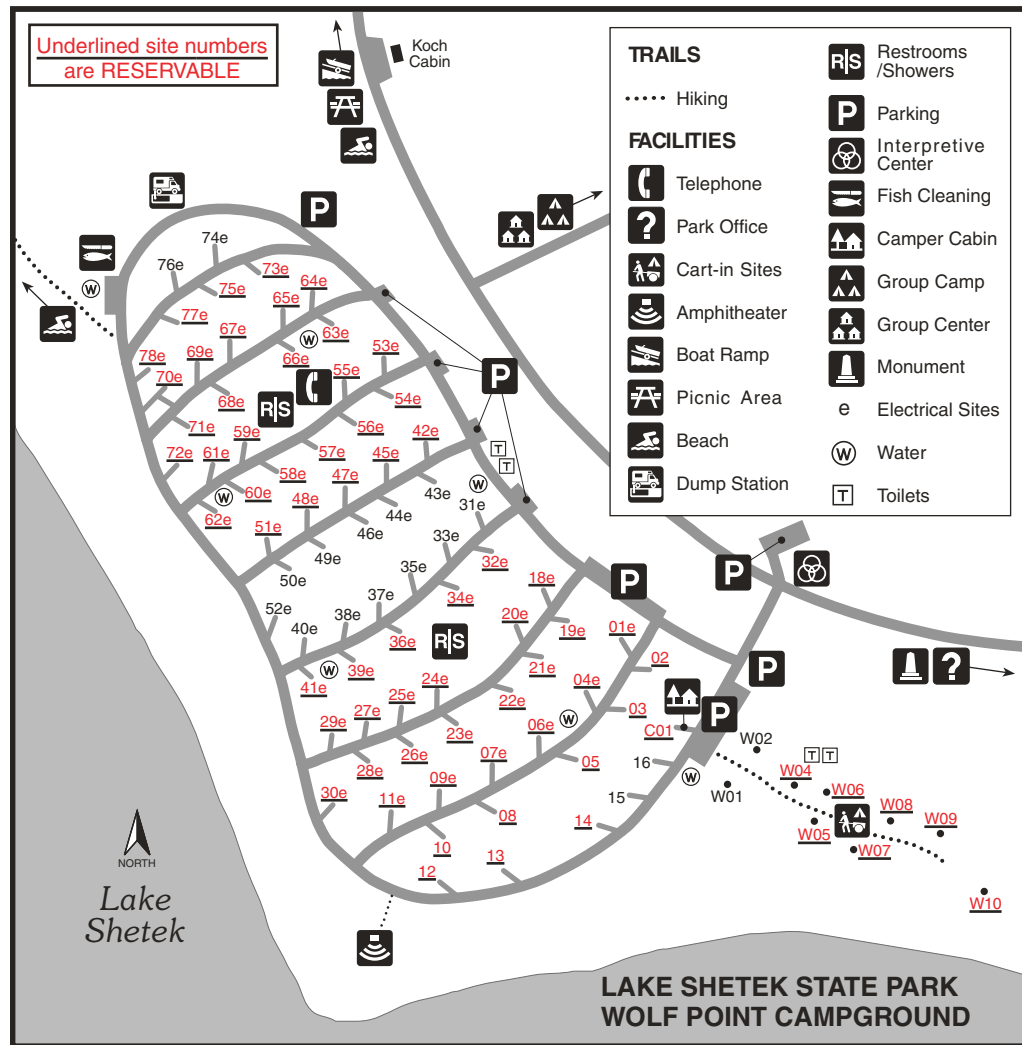
The first settlement by whites occurred in 1856. From the period 1856-1862 a settlement was established. Although its population varied, it probably numbered no more than 40 persons at any given time. This settlement was established from Lake Fremont to Beauty Lake along the eastern belt of land adjacent to Lake Shetek. The availability of large trees and wood made it attractive for settlers and pioneers. The western shores of Shetek were largely prairie and thus offered no appeal to the first settlers.

Most of those who came in the 1856-62 period were taking advantage of then Governor Ramsey's lenient land regulations which permitted them to claim land after seven years' occupation if they cleared sufficient land area for a farm.

The promise of the first white settlement of Shetek came to an end during the Dakota Conflict of 1862. On August 20, 1862 three war bands of Dakota braves descended on the Shetek settlement. Fifteen settlers were killed in the attack and the rest scattered. After the conclusion of the Dakota Conflict on September 26, 1862, Shetek lay abandoned for all practical purposes. It was not until the 1900s that further settlements were envisioned for the area. Families from Ireland were tempted to settle at Avoca and nearby towns through generous grants and loans; however, the difficulty of farming soon doomed many of these efforts at further settlement. Added to these distresses were severe Minnesota winters, blackbird and locust infestations.

Shetek never had any chance of developing a subsistence farming economy and thus, with the lack of economic integrity, it never became a community as thriving as Sioux Falls or Sioux City. However, the beauty of Lake Shetek still remains. As it was beautiful in the eyes of the Native American and the white settler, so it remains beautiful in our eyes too.

**INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM:** The park's interpretive center, open through the summer, has on display many photographs, artifacts, maps and interpretive exhibits relating to the natural and cultural resources in the park. A self-guided interpretive trail around Loon Island begins at the boat landing. Kids can ask for a Prairie Jr. Naturalist book at the park office and complete it to earn a Jr. Naturalist patch.



## SO EVERYONE CAN ENJOY THE PARK . . .

- Park permits are required on every motorized vehicle entering the park.
- Pet waste deposited in mowed or maintained areas must be immediately cleaned up by the owner and deposited in an appropriate waste container.
- Edible berries, fungi and legally taken wild animals are the only things not protected by law in state parks.
- Hunting in the park and possessing any firearm is allowed only during the special muzzle loader season.
- Loud noises and other disturbances are prohibited after 10 P.M.
- It is unlawful for any person in a state park to consume intoxicating liquors, or to display in public any intoxicating liquor containers.
- The park is closed from 10:00 P.M. to 8:00 A.M. except in camping areas.
- Minnesota State Park rules are available at park office.

*This information is available in alternative format upon request.*

"Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is available to all individuals regardless of race, color, creed or religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, age or disability. Discrimination inquires should be sent to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4031; or the Equal Opportunity Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240."