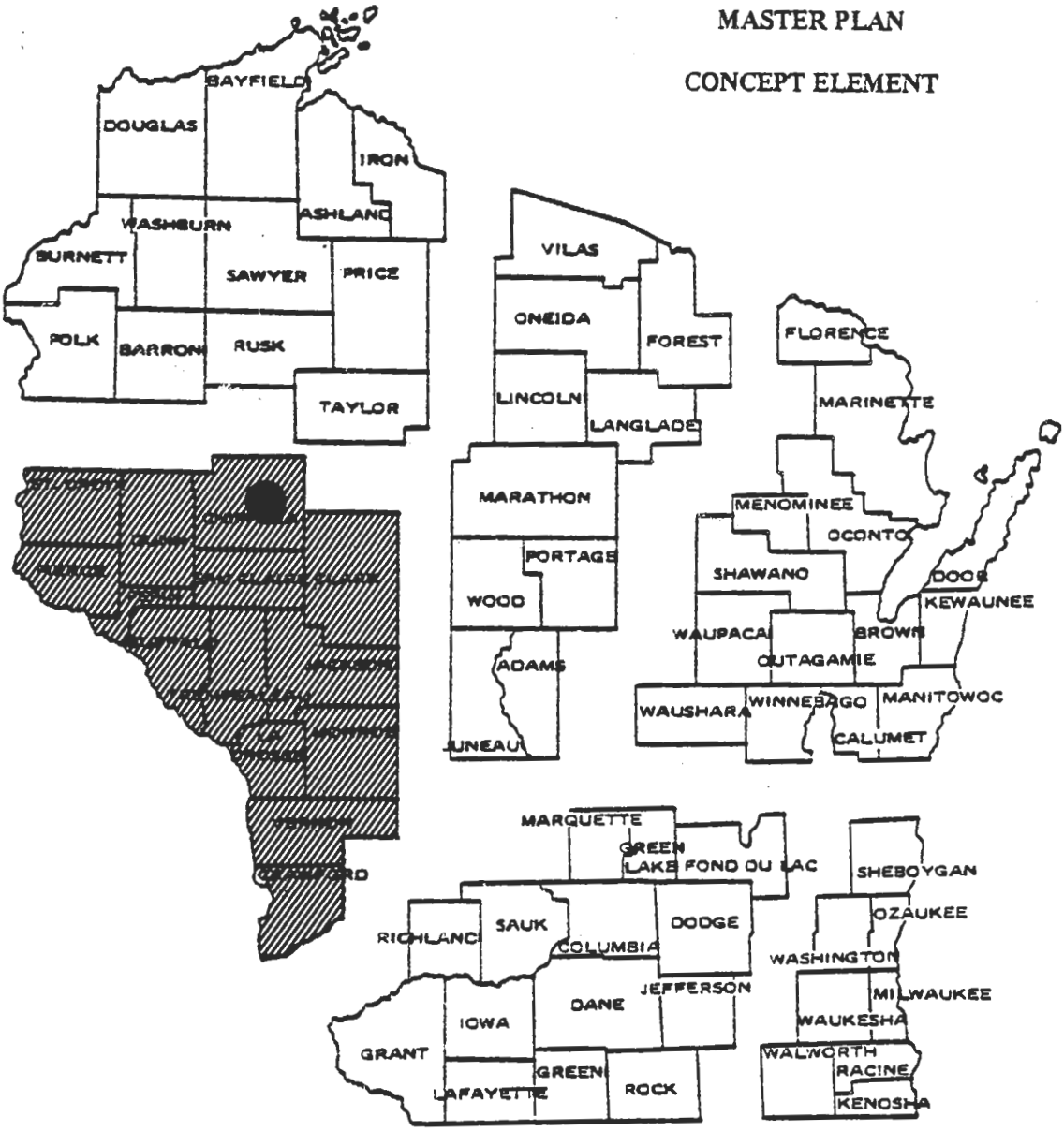
BRUNET ISLAND STATE PARK

MASTER PLAN

CONCEPT ELEMENT



Property Task Force

Leader: Mike Ries, Park Planner
Ed Ferber, Park Manager
Larry Moussette, Park Ranger
Brian Marinello, Forest Manager
Rolland Nesbit, Wildlife Manager
Doug Erickson, Fish Manager
Gary Olson, Real Estate
Tom Harris, Warden

Approved By: NRB

Date: 3/27/86

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
MADISON, WISCONSIN

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SECTION I - ACTION

A. GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Goal

To provide a scenic state park which will serve the recreational, educational, and nature experience needs of the property visitor, while preserving and protecting the resource for present and future generations.

Annual Objectives

1. Provide and maintain recreational facilities to accommodate 180,000 picnickers, swimmers, and other day users.

2. Provide a quality recreational experience for 23,000 campers by maintaining family camping facilities.

3. Provide and maintain trails to accommodate 10,000 hikers and cross-country skiers.

4. Provide and maintain self-guided nature trails, interpretive displays, and programs for 10,000 users.

5. Provide boat and canoe access to the Chippewa and Fisher Rivers for 2,500 watercraft.

6. Manage and maintain the property's scenic and natural qualities by restoring and maintaining a diversity of vegetative cover types for the life of the property.

7. Accommodate individuals who are handicapped through the proper design, construction, and management of the property and its facilities.

Additional Benefits

1. Provide for other recreational and educational uses including bird watching, wildlife observation, gathering of nuts, berries, and mushrooms, and photography.

2. Protect a bald eagle nest site.

B. RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Moderate additional development on existing state-owned land calls for providing facilities such as: a shower building, upgrading the north and south campgrounds, constructing a group camp, and replacement of facilities and furnishings as needed. In addition, hiking and ski trails will be upgraded, and the roads and parking areas will be resurfaced. Shelters will be constructed in the various day use areas, and a permanent contact station will be constructed at the park entrance.

This alternative is desirable in that it will ensure the maintenance of a high-quality recreational facility and maximize user enjoyment. This also allows for moderate increase in use.

It is proposed to transfer fire control and law enforcement personnel and equipment from the Cornell Ranger Station to Brunet Island State Park to increase operational efficiency for the Department and to provide better public service. This consolidation effort involves moving four fire control workers and one conservation warden to the park. To accomplish this, it will be necessary to construct a storage shed for heavy equipment and to provide additional office space. Added utilities will be needed as well as the construction and revamping of the present parking lot and road system near the office. The existing shop roof should also be rebuilt to eliminate ice buildup during the winter months. Funding for this $167,000 project will come from fire control and other affected programs.

All areas proposed for development will be examined for the presence of endangered or threatened animals and plants. If such species are found, development will be suspended until the District Endangered and Nongame Species Coordinator is consulted, the site evaluated, and appropriate protective measures taken. In addition, prior to any major ground disturbing activities within the park, the Department will consult the State Historical Society to determine whether archaeological or historical testing is necessary.

1. Development

Over the next 10 years, minimal new development and a number of major building maintenance items are proposed for Brunet Island State Park.

Phase 1 development will provide for the construction of a toilet-shower building located near the south campground. This facility will serve campers from both the north and south campgrounds. A four-unit, combination vault toilet will be constructed to more adequately serve day visitors in adjacent use areas and campers when water is shut off in the flush building during periods of freezing temperatures. The garage at the park residence is in poor condition and therefore will be replaced with a new two-stall garage.

Campsites will be rehabilitated in the north and south campgrounds. Spurs will be regraveled and camp pads will be leveled and reseeded as needed. A variety of tree and shrub species will be planted to provide both shade and screening. Finally, the south campground road will be asphalted and the north campground road sealcoated.

A rustic group camp (maximum capacity 100) is proposed for an area located east of the Fisher River and approximately 600 feet north of the existing park office. There is increasing demand from church, civic, and scouting groups for this type of facility at Brunet Island. Youth groups canoeing the Chippewa River have to use the family campground for overnight accommodations. The proposed group camp will serve these types of users.

Development of the group camp will include an 8-unit pit toilet, a well and hand pump, a shelter, site preparation and campsite furnishings. A 10-stall parking lot will be located near the trailer dumping station for group camp user vehicles. Additional parking, if needed, will be provided for in the office parking lot. Walk-in and limited vehicle access to the site for dropping off campers and supplies will be via an existing combination hiking-cross country ski trail/service drive. The overhead electric line paralleling the hiking-cross country ski trail will be buried in conjunction with the group camp and trail development work. In addition, the Club Moss Nature Trail will be surfaced with limestone screenings or similar material.

Miscellaneous actions will include resurfacing the park roads and parking lots, asphalting the boat launch parking lot, revision of the beach area parking lot, and painting and striping the roads. Grills, tables, fire rings, and three water fountains in the day use area will be replaced as needed. A park entrance sign will be constructed near the contact station to replace the existing deteriorated sign. A combination of riprap, retaining wall structures, and stairways will be constructed to repair erosion caused by park users cutting paths down the steep banks to get to the water' edge. General landscape planting, vista clearing, grouping and screening of garbage cans will take place to maximize park aesthetics. Boundary signing and a survey of the southwest portion of the property will be done to better define the park boundary. Finally, a sand blanket will be placed on the beach to cover the sharp gravel, stones, and small rocks that are working their way to the surface.

Phase 2 will include the construction of a permanent contact station to replace the present temporary structure. The hiking and cross country ski trails will be improved as needed, a shelter will be constructed in the day use area near the ball field, and an amphitheater will be built in the use area across from the south campground. Picnic tables, grills, fire rings, and other furnishings will also be replaced as warranted. Landscape planting in the intensive and extensive use areas will continue as needed.

During Phase 3, three four-unit pit toilets will be constructed in the north campground to replace the present facilities which are nearing the end of their useful life. A shelter will be built in the boat mooring picnic area and playground equipment (new and replacement) will be provided in the various day use areas. Any addition to the existing storage building would also occur during Phase 3 development. Finally, this phase will see the continuation of intensive area landscaping and the renovation and/or replacement picnic tables, grills, and other furnishings and facilities.

Total estimated development costs based on 1985 figures is $500,000. All proposed development will be dependent upon available funds and statewide priorities. Additional and/or up-to-date justification will also be required.

2. Management

a. Facility

The park is presently operated on a seven-month basis with a seasonal park ranger and a manager who is also in charge of the Cornell ranger station. In addition, approximately 11 limited-term employees (LTE's) are hired during the summer months with responsibility for sticker sales, maintenance, lifeguarding, and law enforcement.

A limited term naturalist is also hired from Memorial Day to Labor Day at 20 hours per week. The log pavilion is used for evening programs and a 3/4-mile self-guided nature trail is available for interpretive purposes.

If the park again becomes a year-round park, the parks program budget will not be expected to carry the additional financial burden.

Options for keeping the park in operation through the winter can be investigated such as using existing personnel out of the Cornell Ranger Station, a local unit of government, or a service group by agreement.

As a unit of the Wisconsin State Park system, Brunet Island has been developed and managed under Chapter 27, Laws of Wisconsin; specifically, Section 27.01, which governs state parks. The property is also managed under the provisions of Wisconsin Administrative Code 45, which contains the rules of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources pertaining to the conduct of visitors at state parks, state forests, and other properties under the jurisdiction of the Department.

Presently, fire protection for the park is provided by the Cornell Fire Department for the buildings and by the Cornell Ranger Station for the natural areas of the property.

b. Vegetative Management (Fig. 4)

The vegetative management goal will be to maintain the health, vigor and diversity of the park's vegetation. To achieve this goal the following steps will be taken in accordance with Manual Code 2532.

Of the 208 acres of hemlock-hardwoods, two areas of five acres each are proposed for regeneration and maintenance of the hemlock type. The two areas will be carefully scarified and seeded with hemlock seed. Follow-up planting with hemlock transplants will provide supplemental stocking of the two areas. A fence will be constructed around each area to exclude deer. Progress of the project will be monitored at least once a year to observe results and determine the need for more seeding or planting. The procedure will be educational.

The park contains 163 acres of nearly pure stands of aspen. Of this acreage, approximately 23 acres of very high quality bigtooth aspen will be managed by cutting to maintain the vigor of this type for diversity and wildlife habitat. Aspen not managed will be left to decline in vigor and be replaced by red maple and eventually sugar maple.

Of the 66 acres of white birch at Brunet Island, 10 acres will be managed to maintain this aesthetically pleasing type. Management practices will include thinning to a prescribed density and scarification to expose bare mineral soil for a seed bed. Thinning will continue every ten years to promote big trees and growth of the birch seedlings and saplings.

Initially, the 22-acre fir-spruce plantation will be thinned to remove some hardwoods, tall trees and small, suppressed white spruce. Thinning will continue at ten-year intervals to promote vigorous large diameter trees. Better hardwoods in the stand like yellow birch will be left for diversity.

There are 17 acres of red pine plantation. Stands will be selectively marked and commercially thinned to promote rapid growth of large, healthy, natural looking pine trees.

Eight acres of the ten-acre 1977 tornado blow-down site will be planted to large seedlings or small saplings of red oak, white ash, sugar maple plus white pine transplants. Two acres will remain as is without any type of planting or management to serve as a comparison for educational and interpretive purposes.

In total, about 13 percent of the park's forested acreage will receive some type of vegetative management.

Since a complete biological inventory of the property does not exist, it is recommended that an inventory be conducted as funds permit or be undertaken though the voluntary efforts of the local university system.

c. Wildlife Management

There is no specific management proposed for the fauna or amphibian species on the property other than maintaining the status quo. However, in an effort to add to the learning experience, a variety of songbird and wood duck houses may be constructed and placed in strategic locations with appropriate explanatory signs. The active bald eagle nest and any others that may be constructed on park property will be protected per guidelines established by the Department. Vegetative management will provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species which, in turn, will add to the experience of park users.

The deer herd is in balance with the range and no thinning of the herd is necessary.

d. Fish Management

The Cornell Flowage is currently managed for the major game fish species: walleye, musky, small south bass, catfish, and sturgeon, as well as bluegill, black crappie, perch, and rock bass. Muskellunge is the only species that has been stocked annually in recent years, however, this practice will be reduced to biennial stocking. Artificial habitats should be installed for panfish and forage fish to promote the increase in numbers of these species. This will provide anglers increased fishing opportunities and expand the forage base for predators, particularly walleyes. Stocking of bluegills and/or perch should be encouraged when they are available. No regulation changes are recommended at this time.

A variety of length, season, and bag limits have regulated fishing in the flowage over the years. There is currently no length limit on any game fish species except muskellunge (32 inches) and sturgeon (45 inches). The open season for walleye, northern pike, large and small mouth bass currently runs year-round. For muskellunge, the open-season runs from the fourth Saturday in May through November, and for sturgeon, there is a special season in September. The daily bag limit for walleye, large and small mouth bass, and northern pike is 5 per day; for muskellunge - 1 per day; sturgeon - 1 per year; for panfish and suckers - 50 aggregate; for catfish - 10 per day. For further detailed information, please reference the fishery studies undertaken on the Cornell Flowage in 1983.

e. Revenue Potential

The 1985-86 operations budget for Brunet Island was $58,392. With 1985 revenue at $34,528, the percent of revenue to operations cost is about 59 percent.

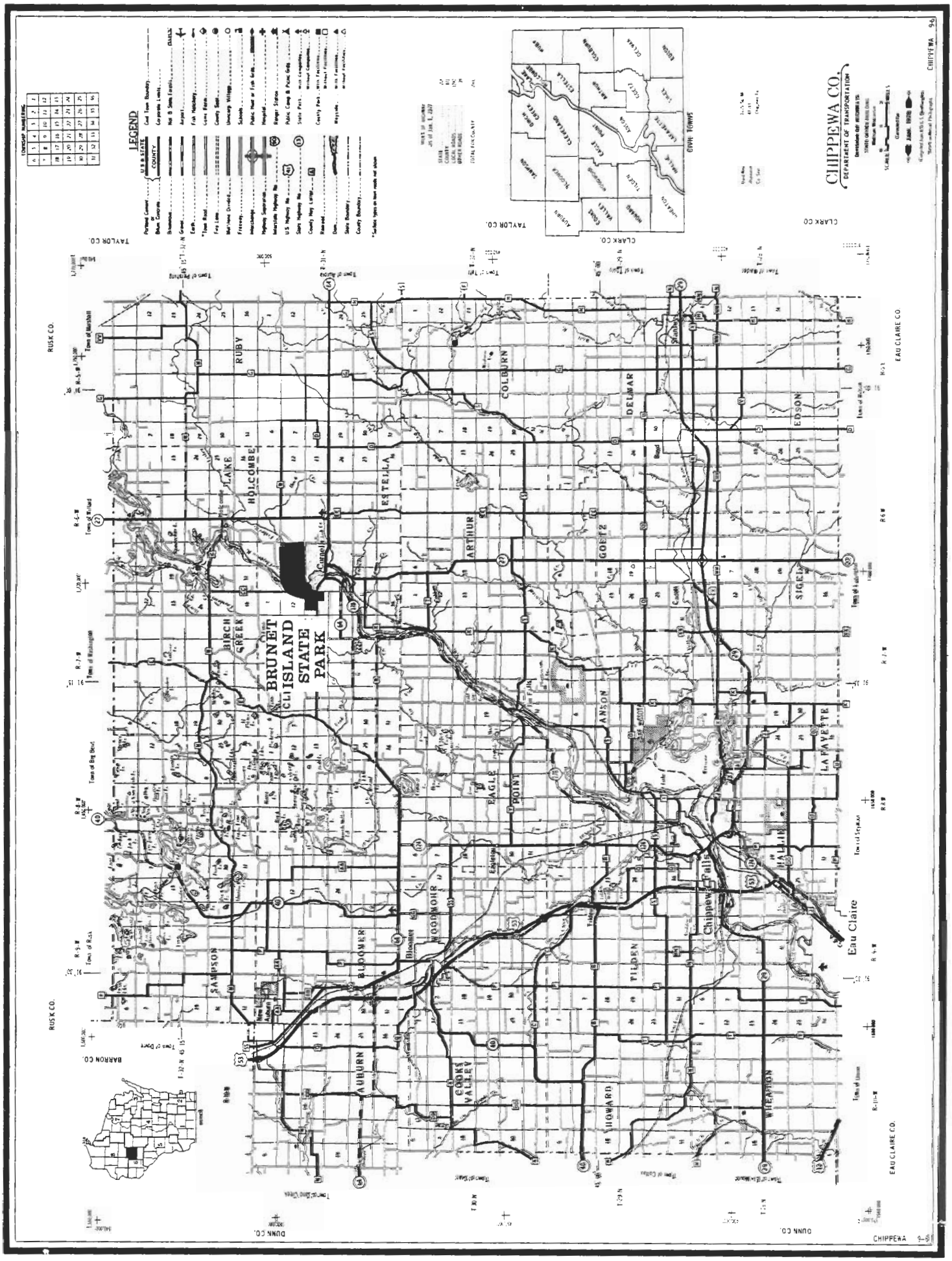
f. Roads, Entrances, and Private Inholdings

Brunet Island is a one-entrance park. A temporary park entrance/visitor station was placed on the entrance road in 1983. Park personnel provide services to the visiting public, collect vehicle admission sticker fees, and dispense park information to the visitor. Since placing the temporary contact station at the entrance, the number of annual resident stickers sold increased 4% while daily resident stickers sold increased 23% over 1982 figures. Camper registration is taken care of at the campsite or at the park office which is located in a building that also houses the shop/maintenance facility. For more efficient management, a permanent contact station should be erected so that sticker sales, camper registration, and general office work can be done in one location during the peak use seasons.

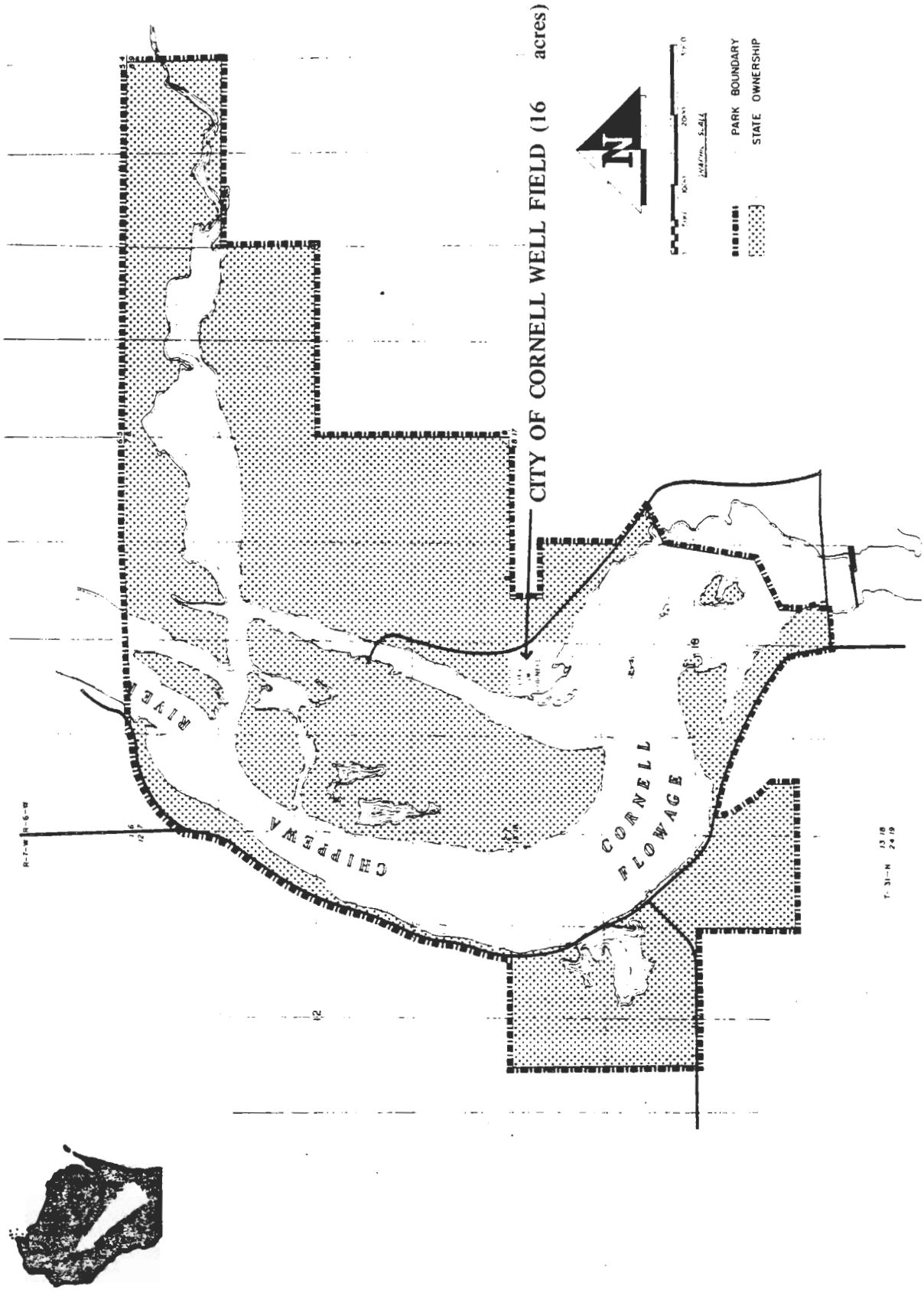
There is one private inholding on the property (city well field) but this does not affect the Department's ability to operate the property.

3. Land Acquisition

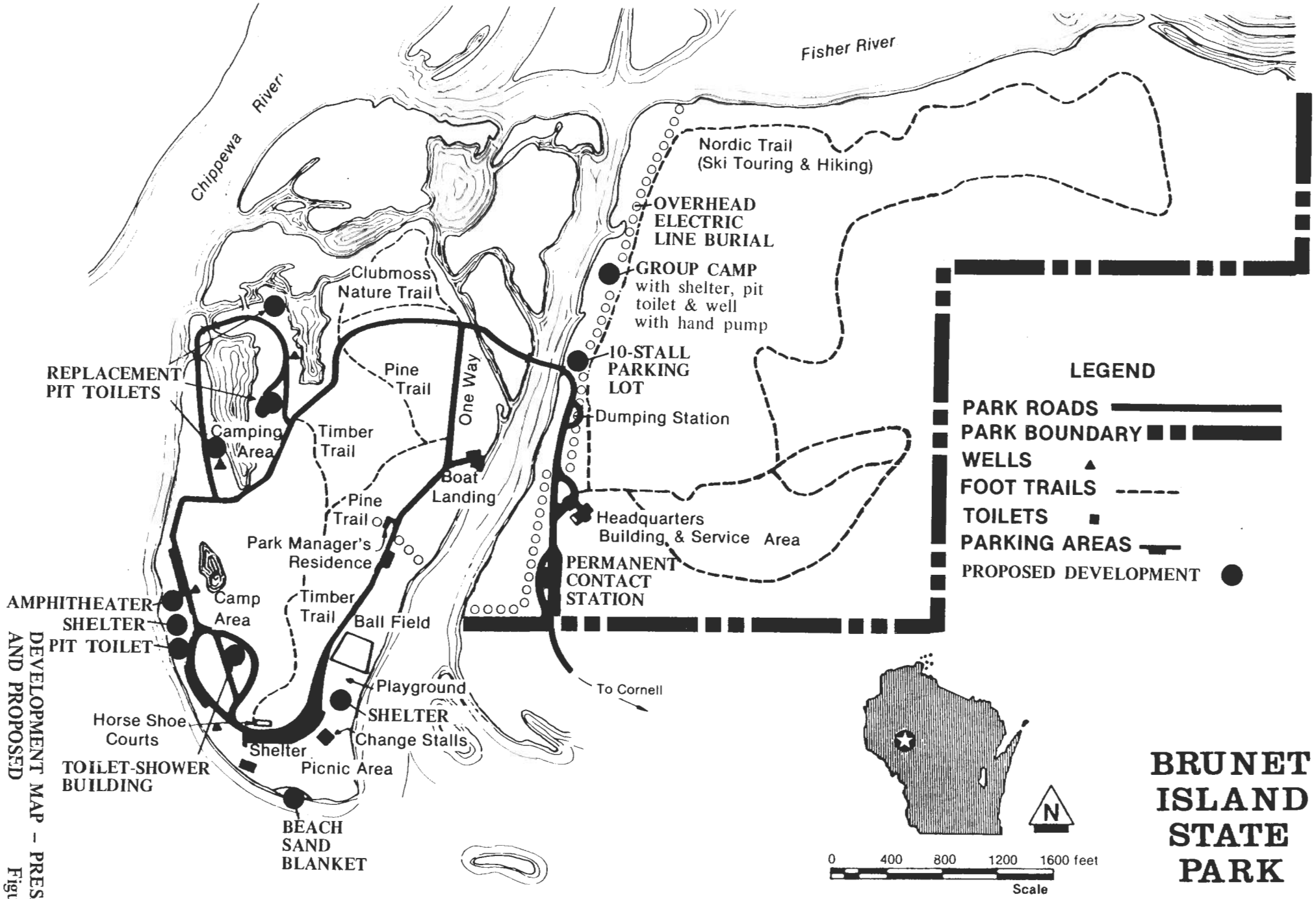
The original acreage goal of 1,032 acres at Brunet Island has been met. The new acreage goal will be increased to 1,048 acres to include a 16-acre parcel of city land (well field) within the park boundary should the parcel be available in the future.



COUNTY LOCATOR MAP Figure 1

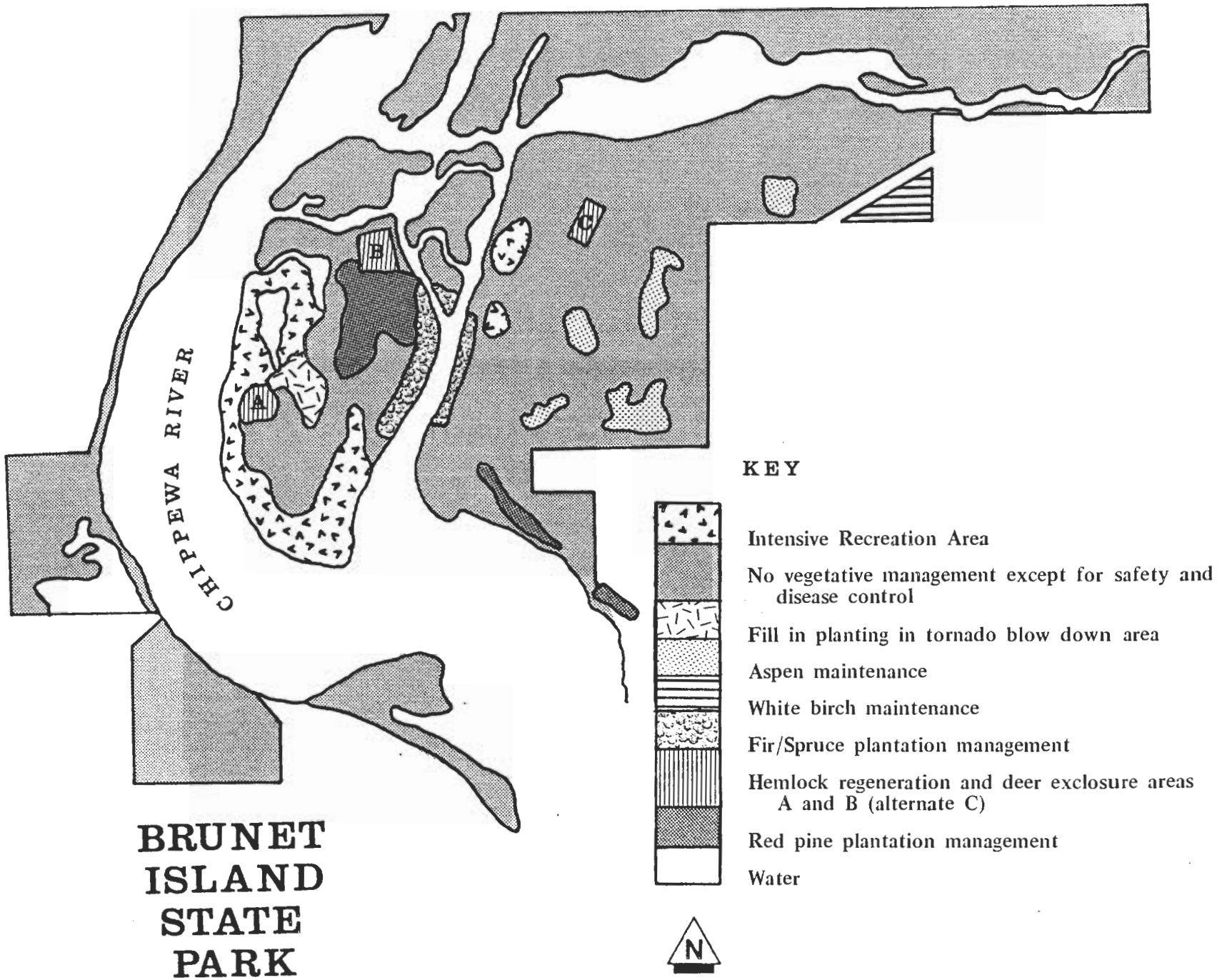


ACQUISITION MAP Figure 2

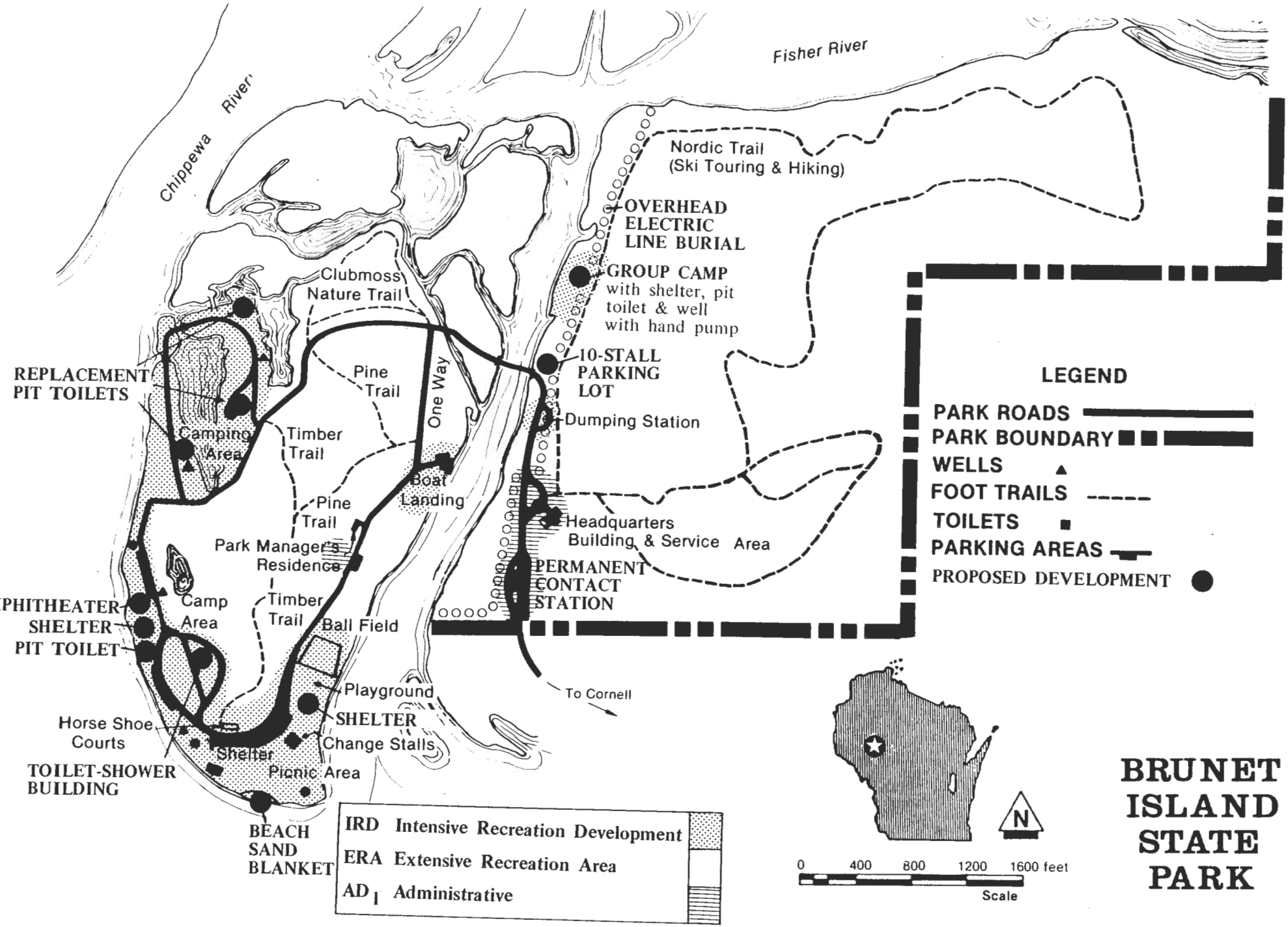


DEVELOPMENT MAP – PRESENT AND PROPOSED

Figure 3



VEGETATIVE MANAGEMENT MAP Figure 4



LAND USE CLASSIFICATION MAP
Figure 5

SECTION II - SUPPORT DATA

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Location

The park is located within Estella and Cleveland Townships, Chippewa County. It is approximately 40 miles from the Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls area and about a two-hour drive from the heavily populated Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. Primary access to the park is provided by State Trunk Highways 64 and 27.

The City of Cornell is nestled on the banks of the Chippewa River adjacent to Brunet Island State Park.

2. History of the Area

One hundred years or more before the American Revolution, French fur traders had explored the upper reaches of the Chippewa River and laid the foundation for an extensive fur industry. Their diaries and reports recorded this as a land rich in furs, timber, and potential water power.

Brunet Island State Park bears the name of one of the early settlers in this area of Wisconsin. Jean Brunet was an explorer, teacher, missionary, guide, politician and engineer. He lived in the area from 1828 to 1877.

Another notable individual was Ezra Cornell who often visited the Brunet's home while looking for land for the newly founded Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. In 1867, the New York manufacturing company was organized to further his plan for a mill in town at Brunet Falls (Cornell). Mr. Cornell died before his plans could be realized and left his landholdings as an endowment to Cornell University.

The latter history of this area and the Chippewa River largely revolves around the mammoth lumbering operations which began around 1850 and lasted until the area was finally denuded. Large-scale lumbering operations came to a close in the early 1900's. After 1860, the keen competition for timber resulted in many feuds and legislative and legal clashes which kept the state in an uproar until 1875.

3. Chronology of Property's Establishment and Development

Brunet Island State Park is 1,032 acres in size. The main use area is a 179-acre island between the Chippewa River on the west and the Fisher River on the east. The park was established in 1939 as a WPA project, and it was dedicated in 1940. As noted earlier, this park was named for Jean Brunet, a Frenchman who was the first settler of Chippewa Falls and Brunet Falls, now called Cornell.

4. Past and Present Management Activities

Since its inception, the property has been managed for camping, picnicking, hiking, swimming, fishing, and general nature education, as well as a variety of other related activities. Presently, it has 87 acres of land developed for intensive recreation use. It has 20 acres of picnic area, 75 picnic tables, 24 grills, 1 shelter, a 210-foot beach, 227 parking stalls, a 3/4 mile long nature trail, 5 miles of hiking trails, 4 miles of cross-country ski trails, 69 campsites, 1 boat launch, and 2.6 miles of road. Average annual visitation for the last 2 years for day-use is approximately 150,000 and camper days is approximately 20,000.

The Cornell Archery Club has an agreement for using a portion of the park between the park road and the Fisher River as part of an archery range. The remaining portion is located on city property. The archery range is open to the public and affiliation with the club is not required.

B. RESOURCE CAPABILITIES AND INVENTORY

1. Geology

The Wisconsin Glacier was the most recent glacier to reach Chippewa County. It did not completely cover the county as did earlier ice sheets. Upon receding, it deposited debris, or till, in large quantities in the form of terminal moraines across the northeast part of the county, from the northwest corner southeast to Jim Falls and then east to the county line. The young drift area of the terminal moraine is distinct in having a typical hilly appearance, a large number of kettle holes, bogs, and irregularly shaped lakes, as well as numerous swamps.

The geological formations which underlie Chippewa County are the Pre-Cambrian (igneous) crystalline rocks in the northeastern part, from near Long Lake and south to Chippewa Falls and eastward to the county line. The bed of the Chippewa River upstream from Chippewa Falls exposes portions of this bedrock.

2. Soils

Major soils found within the property include Roshholt sandy loam, Chetek sandy loam, Menahga loamy sand, and Friendship loamy sand on the island. On the mainland, Menahga loamy sand, Alban fine sandy loam, Santiago silt loam, Amery, and Chetek sandy loam are found. Most of the soil series are well drained to excessively well-drained and have slight to moderate restrictions for dwellings with or without basement, local roads, campgrounds, picnic areas, playgrounds, and trails.

3. Climate

The climate of Chippewa County is classified as humid continental. It is characterized by moderately long, cold winters and short summers that are warm and humid. Mean temperatures drop below freezing in mid-November and freeze-up of lakes follows soon afterward. Ice cover remains until April. The average annual precipitation is 30.5 inches. Maximum precipitation occurs in June with 4.9 inches followed by August, May, and July. Summer rainfall averages 3.48 inches per month during April through October, while winter precipitation is about 8.5 inches. Near the end of November, most of the precipitation falls as snow and accumulates throughout the winter.

4. Water Resources

Brunet Island State Park lies adjacent to the Chippewa and Fisher Rivers which make up the Cornell Flowage. The flowage is approximately 864 acres in size and was created as a reservoir for hydroelectric production. Water levels continue to be maintained for this purpose and fluctuate during the year, depending on anticipated runoff and precipitation. The principal inlet is maintained by a 42-foot high dam at Holcombe; the other inlet is the Fisher River. The dam maintaining the Cornell Flowage has a head of 39 feet. Both dams are operated by Northern States Power Company. The deepest part of the flowage, 54 feet, is located near the dam at Cornell. The flowage has a relatively small percentage of developed shoreline. There are two boat landings with parking, one of which is in Brunet Island State Park. Since impoundment, there have been several surveys to determine the status of the sport fishery in the Cornell Flowage. The fish population of the flowage is dominated by walleye. Other predator species include muskellunge, northern pike, large and small mouth bass. Panfish include bluegills, perch, black crappie, rock bass, and pumpkinseed. Other species found are bullheads, white suckers, lake sturgeon, burbot, channel catfish, and quillback.

5. Vegetative Cover

The original forest cover, based on 1847-1853 survey records, was hemlock, northern hardwoods, white birch, and aspen. Currently on-the-ground evidence shows that most of the timber on the island has remained much as it was when the first land surveys of the area were made.

The following is a brief description of the present forest cover types and includes all areas outside of the intensive use areas such as beach, picnic areas, and campground.

There are 208 acres of hemlock-hardwoods. Species here include hemlock, basswood, sugar maple, white oak, and yellow birch. Most of this type is over 15 inches in diameter at 4-1/2 feet above the ground (DBH). Ages vary widely; with most falling into the 80-120 year-old range. Some of the larger hemlock are declining in vigor, but generally, the stands are still growing.

The northern hardwoods cover 186 acres and contain basswood, red oak, sugar maple, red maple, white ash, white birch, aspen, bitternut hickory, and butternut. Most of the stands (107) are 11-15 inches DBH. The remainder are pole timber and sapling stands 1-11 inch DBH. Ages vary from small seedlings to over 100 years. Most stands are still in good condition with good to excellent quality trees.

Nearly pure stands of aspen cover 163 acres. The majority of the stands are 5-11 inch DBH with an average age of 48 years. The normal age span of aspen is quite short (up to 50 years). As this was one of the original forest types within the park and because it is a vital forest type for game, these stands should be managed so that they will regenerate themselves via root sprouting.

White birch is found on 66 acres of the property. There is one stand composed mainly of white birch with some aspen, red maple, sugar maple, and red oak intermixed. Average stand diameter is 5-11 inches and averages 61 years of age. This is an interesting and aesthetically pleasing type which should be maintained for overall vegetation diversity.

There are 22 acres of the fir-spruce cover type. This stand is 47 years old and was planted by the CCC. The size of trees vary but 5-inch DBH is a good average. Most of the trees are white spruce which were planted under existing hardwoods.

Red pine plantations cover 17 acres of the park. Most of this is roadside plantings done by the CCC and averages 40-50 years of age. The stands have been thinned commercially in the past and are now entering the small sawlog size class (9-15 DBH).

White pine covers 8 acres and the trees are 5-10 inches in diameter and average 40-50 years of age. They are being suppressed by competing hardwoods and are in need of release.

Bottomland hardwoods cover 17 acres. These are isolated stands located in very wet areas and are also found on some of the small islands in the Chippewa River. Main species here are river birch, silver maple, and red maple. It is an aesthetically attractive type which is currently small in size (5-11 inches DBH) and less than 60 years of age.

There are no known rare, unique, or endangered plant communities or species present within the property boundary. However, as time and funds permit, a total vegetative inventory should be undertaken.

6. Wildlife

Common wildlife species include white-tailed deer, gray squirrel, raccoon, red fox, muskrat, mink, and beaver. Waterfowl include mallards and wood ducks. A list of amphibians, birds, mammals, and reptiles can be found in Appendix A.

There is an inactive bald eagle nest within the park. It is on the north side of the Fisher River approximately 1/4 mile east of the confluence of the Fisher and Chippewa Rivers.

7. Site Inventory

The cover type map indicates the following: Forest cover - 687 acres, picnic areas - 20 acres; campgrounds - 18 acres; trails, beach, boat launch etc. - 40 acres; parking area - 7 acres; minor streams, lakes and surface water - 145 acres; grasslands - 47 acres; lowland grass - 41 acres; lowland brush - 17 acres; and powerline right-of-way - 10 acres.

8. Land Use Inventory

Lands within the park are classified as intensive recreation development (IRD) and extensive recreation areas (ERA). The IRD land presently encompasses 84 acres. The remaining acreage is classified as extensive recreation area.

9. Historical and Archaeological Features

The State Historical Society has indicated that there are no known historical or archaeological sites in the park, but this may simply reflect the lack of a systematic survey to locate such resources in this part of Chippewa County. Surveys conducted elsewhere along the Chippewa River indicate that the river islands and terraces have a very high probability of containing archaeological sites. For this reason, they recommend that prior to undertaking any major ground disturbing activity in Brunet Island State Park, the DNR consult with their office to determine whether an archaeological survey is needed.

C. MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

1. Sticker Sales and Revenue Collection

Prior to the 1983 use season, sticker sales were handled out of the office (located in the shop building), by park employees contacting park visitors in their vehicles at the various parking lots or by placing a sticker violation notice on the unattended vehicle. This system resulted in inefficient fee collection, loss of revenue, and wasted employee work time. The situation was corrected this past use season by placing a temporary booth on the park entrance road and staffing it with LTE and local high school work-study personnel.

This system resulted in a 4% increase in resident annual sticker sales and a 23% increase in daily resident stickers. It is apparent that the park should be sufficiently staffed to keep the contact station open during the major use season. In addition, a permanent park entrance visitor station should be constructed so that sticker sales, camper registration, and general office work can be undertaken in this single structure.

2. Shoreline Erosion

The north campground and various day use area shorelines have a history of erosion created by people walking down the steep banks to fish or moor their boats. This has been corrected in some instances by placing a retaining wall on side hills and riprapping the shoreline. In other instances, work remains to correct the erosion and guard against further bank disturbance. The use of such structures, in combination with providing stairs, stepping stones, tree and shrub plantings, and a program of user education should be utilized to eliminate this recurring problem.

D. RECREATIONAL NEEDS AND JUSTIFICATIONS

The 1981 State Outdoor Recreation Plan for Region 4 which includes Clark, Eau Claire, Dunn, St. Croix, Polk, Barron, and Chippewa Counties notes that there is need for developed campsites, primitive campsites, and pleasure walking trails. The study further indicates that there is no need for additional cross-country ski trails and snowmobile trails. At the present time, the summer campsite occupancy rate of 51% is not high enough to justify campground expansion at Brunet Island. Similarly, picnic areas are sufficient to meet demand based on day use annual visitation figures.

The Chippewa County-Community Outdoor Recreation Plan of 1977 indicates no need for developed campsites through the year 1990. It did indicate a need for an additional 259 picnic tables by 1990. Swimming area supply meets present and future needs. Additional cross-country ski trails are identified as being needed but no specific length figures were provided.

Based on public input at a master planning work shop, an additional 3/4 mile loop should be added to the existing cross-country ski trail.

E. ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

1. No Additional Acquisition and No Additional Development

This alternative would provide for no further acquisition or development. The Department would merely retain and manage the existing resource and its recreational facilities. This alternative is not desirable since the property was acquired for recreational purposes in order to meet the needs of the recreating public. No additional acquisition within the property boundary could lead to future encroachment of undesirable land uses. No additional

development could lead to degradation of the resource, its facilities, and could lead to degradation of the resource, its facilities, and could lead to safety problems.

2. Reduce and Adjust Existing Acquisition Boundary

This alternative would provide for the elimination of the 16-acre parcel of land that is presently occupied by the Cornell well field. The property could be eliminated from the park boundary with little or no impact to the park as it presently exists if we were assured that the land would be retained by the city for a well field. However, because this is not a certainty, the land should be kept within the boundary and acquired when and if it becomes available for sale. This, again, would guard against any potential future land use conflicts.

3. Moderate Additional Development on Existing State-Owned Land

It is recommended that moderate additional development occur on existing state-owned land. Facilities include a shower building , upgrading the north and south campgrounds, constructing a group camp and replacing facilities and furnishing as needed. In addition, hiking and ski trails would be upgraded and the roads and parking areas will be resurfaced. A shelter and amphitheater will be constructed in the day use area and a permanent contact station will be built at the park entrance. This alternative is desirable in that it will ensure the maintenance of a high-quality recreational facility, maximize user enjoyment, and eliminate any potential safety problems.

Development of a fire control storage building and office space in conjunction with the existing park office/shop complex is proposed. This consolidation would entail bringing fire control employees, a conservation warden, and park personnel into one central location and facility. This action will allow for the sharing of manpower and equipment which will be beneficial to the property.

4. Additional Large Scale Development on Lands Within Park Boundary

Large scale development including enlarging the campground and various day use areas is possible. However, based on present and projected use figures, such action is not warranted.

DK:jm
4105L

APPENDIX A

Wildlife Species

No formal surveys to document species and numbers have been conducted. However, because of the park's location and vegetative types, the following have been observed or encounter might be anticipated:

a. Amphibians

Chorus Frog
Common American Toad
Gray Tree Frog
Green Frog
Jefferson Salamander
Leopard Frog
Mudpuppy
Newt
Pickeral Frog
Red-barked Salamander
Spring Peeper
Wood Frog

b. Birds

American Goldfinch
Bald Eagle (Endangered)
Baltimore Oriole
Barn Swallow
Barred Owl
Belted Kingfisher
Black-Capped Chickadee
Blue Jay
Blue-Wing Teal
Brown Thrasher
Bufflehead (Migrant)
Cardinal
Catbird
Common Crow
Common Grackle
Common Loon (Migrant)
Common Nighthawk
Downy Woodpecker
Eastern Phoebe
Flicker
Great Blue Heron
Great Horned Owl
Green Heron
Goldeneye (Migrant)
Hairy Woodpecker
House Sparrow
Least Bittern
Mallard
Mourning Dove
Northern Shrike
Purple Finch

Purple Martin
Raven
Red-Breasted Nuthatch
Red-Headed Woodpecker
Red-Tailed Hawk
Red-Winged Blackbird
Ring-Necked Duck (Migrant)
Robin
Ruffed Grouse
Scaup (Migrant)
Screech Owl
Sharp-Shinned Hawk
Slate-Colored Junco
Snow Bunting
Snowy Owl (Occasional Winter Visitor)
Starling
Whip-poor-will
White-Breasted Nuthatch
Woodduck
Wood Thrush

c. Mammals

Beaver
Coyote
Eastern Chipmunk
Ermine
Flying Squirrel
Gray Squirrel
Masked Shrew
Mink
Muskrat
Porcupine
Pygmy Shrew
Raccoon
Red-Backed Vole
Red Fox
River Otter
Short-tailed Shrew
Snowshoe Hare
Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel
Red Squirrel
Stripped Skunk
White-footed Mouse
White-tailed Deer
Woodchuck
Woodland Deer Mouse

d. Reptiles

Common Garter Snake
Common Water Snake
Eastern Hognose Snake
Eastern Ringneck Snake
Pine Snake
Five-lined Skink

Fox Snake
Painted Turtle
Red-bellied Snake
Snapping Turtle
Softshell Turtle

APPENDIX B

Fish Species

walleye (Stizostedion vitreum vitreum)
muskellunge (Exos masquinongy)
northern pike (Exos lucius)
largemouth bass (Micropterus salmoides)
smallmouth bass (Micropterus dolomieus)
bluegills (Lepomis machrochirus)
yellow perch (Perca flavescens)
black crappies (Poxomoxis nigromaculatus)
rock bass (Amblopolites rupestris)
pumpkin seed (Lepomis gibosus)
bullheads (Ictaluris spp.)
white suckers (Catostomus commersoni)
lake sturgeon (Acipsenser fulvescens)
burbot (Lota lota)
channel catfish (Ictaluris punctatus)
quillback (Carpiodes cyprinus)

MRT112

Parks + Rec.

The State of Wisconsin

SCIENTIFIC AREAS PRESERVATION COUNCIL
Box 7921
Madison, Wisconsin 53707

IN REPLY REFER TO: 1750

January 28, 1986

Mr. David Weizenicker, Director
Bureau of Parks and Recreation
Department of Natural Resources
Box 7921
Madison, Wisconsin 53707

We have no specific natural area proposals for Brunet Island State Park; however we do want to express our concern regarding the timber management proposed in the concept master plan.

As we have stated in other state park master plan comments; tree-cutting in state parks should be limited to that required for safety of park users and as otherwise required in intensive recreation zones.

We have been informed that the tree-cutting policy for state parks has been clarified to emphasize that extensive recreation zones of parks would be left to exhibit a natural environment, that is, generally left alone. The Brunet Island Park plans suggest a new emphasis on timber harvest more typical of forests or wildlife properties. We believe that the policy of severely limiting harvest of trees has served Wisconsin's parks well. Today, the state parks provide areas where the public can readily observe natural biological processes.

We hope that Brunet Island Park Concept Master Plan will be modified following more closely the guidelines of the revised tree-cutting policy.

Cordially,

Forest Stearns
Chairman

FS:CG:ss/41460

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Date: February 24, 1986 *File Ref:* 2100-1

To: Cliff Germain-ER/4

From: D. L. Weizenicker-PR/4 for D. Weizenicker

Subject: SAPC Comments on Brunet Island State Park Master Plan

This is in response to the Council's comments on the vegetative management proposals in the Brunet Island Master Plan.

Since hemlock is disappearing from Wisconsin's forests, Brunet Island presents an excellent opportunity to regenerate at least 10 acres of deteriorating hemlock stands to keep a remnant of hemlock forest viewable by the public. In addition to the hemlock, both aspen and white birch require certain management practices to maintain vigor and promote regeneration.

In the draft master plan reviewed by the Council, 236 acres were recommended for vegetative management or 34 percent of the forested area of the park. The master plan to be presented to the Board for approval has been revised to recommend that 90 acres or 13 percent receive a specific type of vegetative management. This breaks down to hemlock (10 a.), aspen (23 a.), white birch (10 a.), conifer plantation (39 a.), and planting in the blow down area (8 a.). If you exclude the management of the 39 acres of conifer plantation which will be thinned occasionally, and the 8 acres of blowdown area which will be planted, only 7.6% of the naturally vegetated area of the park will be managed.

In summary, the Bureau of Parks concurs with the master plan task force that there is sufficient justification for recommending that the hemlock, aspen, and white birch timber types be perpetuated at Brunet Island only in lesser acreage. Considerations are uniqueness of hemlock stands, species diversity, aesthetics, nature interpretation and wildlife habitat.

We thank the Council for reviewing the Brunet Island Master Plan.

DJK:btM561

cc: J. Treichel-PR/4
D. Kulhanek-PR/4
J. Lissack-Eau Claire

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Date: June 6, 1985

File Ref: 2100-1/1430

To: Dave Weizenicker - PR/4

From: Dick Lindberg - FR/4 RL

Subject: WRAC Review of Brunet Island State Park Plan

The following are the Wild Resources Advisory Council review comments on this master plan.

1. The plan is straightforward and relatively free of problems.

2. A brief overview of the property's outstanding features would have been helpful in the introduction as would a reference in the goal to their preservation and protection.

3. Adding the Cornell Ranger Station functions to this property is a good move as is the provision of the group camp and is the study of endangered and threatened plants and animals.

4. Extra effort should be exerted to complete land acquisition and obtain the desired contiguous ownership.

5. The historical support data, maps, appendices and soils and geological description were very adequate and added greatly to the plan directions and readability.

Thank you for the review opportunity.

DL:dj

CORRESPONDENCE / MEMORANDUM — STATE OF WISCONSIN

DATE: July 1, 1985 IN REPLY REFER TO: 2100-1

TO: Dick Lindberg - FR/4

FROM: Dave Weizenicker - PR/4 JT for D. Weizenicker

SUBJECT: WRAC Comments on Brunet Island State Park Master Plan

This is in response to the Council's comments on the Brunet Island master plan.

Comment #1: The plan is straightforward and relatively free of problems.

Department Response: So noted.

Comment #2: A brief overview of the property's outstanding features would have been helpful in the introduction as would a reference in the goal to their preservation and protection.

Department Response: As in most state park master plans the goal statement is kept quite general with the list of objectives providing more of the detail. From the description of the park's resources in the background information section, the hemlock, aspen, and white birch vegetative types are the only outstanding features requiring special management and protection. This is covered in Objective #6.

Comment #3: Adding the Cornell ranger station functions to this property is a good move as is the provision of the group camp and is the study of endangered and threatened plants and animals.

Department Response: The task force is to be commended, especially for recommending the transfer of Department personnel to the park to increase operational efficiency and provide better public service.

Comment #4: Extra effort should be exerted to complete land acquisition and obtain the desired contiguous ownership.

Department Response: The acreage goal at Brunet Island has been met, however, the plan recommends that the goal be increased by about 16 acres to include a parcel of city land (well field) in the park boundary should the parcel be available in the future.

Comment #5: The historical support data, maps, appendices, and soils and geological description were very adequate and added greatly to the plan directions and readability.

Department Response: So noted.

We thank the Council for reviewing the Brunet Island master plan.

cc: J. Treichel - PR/4
D. Kulhanek - PR/4
J. Lissack - Eau Claire

Form 1600-1

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

District or Bureau: WCD
Docket Number:
Type List Designation(s): NR 150.03(2)(c)4

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Applicant: State of Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources

Title of Proposal: Brunet Island State Park Master Plan/Conceptual Element

Location: Chippewa County
Township 31N, Range 7W
Sections 7, 8, and 18, Estella Township & portions of Sections 12, 13, and 18, Cleveland Township
Political Towns: Estella and Cleveland

PROJECT SUMMARY

1. General Description (brief overview)

This environmental assessment is based on the provisions of the 1985 conceptual master plan prepared for Brunet Island State Park. Basically, the plan identifies Brunet Island as a scenic state park and it shall remain thus. The management and development alternatives selected for the property allow for moderate increased use and development. It is anticipated that use will increase approximately 10-15% during the next 10-year period following approval of the master plan and subsequent development of new facilities. A wide range of traditional activities are offered including: camping, swimming, boating, fishing, picnicking, hiking, nature study, and related day-use activity.

The master plan identifies the proposed development, management, and land acquisition scheduled for the park.

Development:

Moderate additional development calls for providing facilities such as a shower building, upgrading the north and south campgrounds, constructing a group camp, and replacing facilities and furnishings as needed. In addition, hiking and ski trails will be upgraded and the roads will be resurfaced. Shelters will be constructed in the various day use areas and a permanent contact station will be built at the park entrance. It is also proposed to transfer fire control and law enforcement personnel and equipment from the Cornell Ranger Station to Brunet Island State Park to increase operational efficiency and to provide better public service. To accomplish this, it will be necessary to construct a storage shed for heavy equipment, provide additional office space, enlarge utilities, and construct and revamp the present parking lot and road system near the office.

Management:

The park is presently operated on a seven-month basis with a seasonal park ranger and manager who is also in charge of the Cornell Ranger Station. In addition, approximately 12 limited-term employees (LTE) are hired during the summer months. They are responsible for sticker sales, maintenance, lifeguarding, law enforcement, and performing naturalist duties. In the future, it is hoped that the property will be returned to a 12-month operation and be staffed accordingly.

As a unit of the Wisconsin State Park System, Brunet Island has been developed and managed under Chapter 27, Laws of Wisconsin; specifically, Section 27.01, which governs state parks. The property is also managed under the provisions of Wisconsin Administrative Code 45, which contains the rules and regulations of the Department of Natural Resources pertaining to the conduct of visitors at state parks, state forests, and other properties under the jurisdiction of the Department.

Lands within the park are classified as intensive recreation development (IRD) and extensive recreation area (ERA). The IRD land emcompasses 84 acres. The remaining acreage is classified as extensive recreation area.

Land Control:

As of December 31, 1984 state ownership of Brunet Island was 1,032.24 acres. 16.24 acres (city well field) remain to be purchased in order to reach the project acreage goal of 1,048.48 acres (see Item #17).

2. Purpose and Need (include history and background as appropriate).

Brunet Island was established as a scenic state park in 1939. The main use area is a 179-acre island between the Chippewa River on the west and Fisher River on the east. It was originally developed as a WPA project.

The master plan narrative is being prepared in accord with Natural Resources Board and Department policy. The primary purpose of this conceptual master plan is to guide the development, operation, and maintenance of the property for the next 10 years and provide recreational facilities to accommodate approximately 180,000 annual visitations for day use and 23,000 camper days.

The 1981 State Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for Region 4 which includes Clark, Eau Claire, Dunn, St. Croix, Polk, Barron, and Chippewa Counties notes that there is a need for additional family campsites, primitive campsites, and pleasure walking trails. The study further indicates that there is no need for additional cross country ski trails or snowmobile trails. At the present time, campsite occupancy figures at Brunet Island are not high enough to justify campground expansion. Similarly, picnic areas are sufficient to meet demand based on annual day-use visitation figures.

The Chippewa County Community Outdoor Recreation Plan of 1977 indicates no need for developed campsites through the year 1990. It did indicate, however, a need for an additional 259 picnic tables by the year 1990. Swimming areas meet present and future needs. Additional cross-country ski trails are identified as being needed but no specific length figures were provided. Based on public input at the master planning workshop, an additional 3/4 mile loop should be added to the park's existing cross-country ski trail.

3. Authorities and Approvals (list statutory authority and other relevant local, state and federal permits or approvals required)

   Statutory authority to initiate: Section 27.01 of Wis. State Statutes, permits or approvals required: Natural Resources Board and Governor

   All development, as identified in the master plan, will comply with applicable state and local zoning requirements. Construction of rest room facilities will be in accord with H63 and all other township or Chippewa County zoning ordinance.

   Shoreline riprap and the beach sand blanket will comply with Chapters 30-31 (see Item #5).

4. Estimated Cost and Funding Source

   The total estimated development cost, based on 1985 figures, is $500,000. ORAP, LAWCON, and other funds will be used as they become available.

PROPOSED PHYSICAL CHANGES

5. Manipulation of Terrestrial Resources (include relevant quantities - sq. ft., cu. yds., etc.)

   The proposed toilet/shower building, approximately 30' X 40' in size, will be located in the south campground. Soil excavated for footings, septic tanks, and drainfield will be disposed of on-site and the area around the building will be seeded and landscaped. It is anticipated that under 100 cubic yards of soil will be excavated. The four-unit pit toilet located in the day-use area adjacent to the south campground will be placed in a grassy open area. Soil excavated for the vault will be disposed of on-site and the area landscaped. The new two-stall garage near the residence will be located on the site of the present garage which is in bad state of repair. Campsite rehabilitation in the north and south campgrounds will include regraveling the spurs and leveling and reseeding the camp pads. Up to 200 cubic yards of gravel and up to 200 cubic yards of soil may be needed to upgrade the campsites. It is unknown how many cubic yards of asphalt will be needed to resurface and seal-coat the interior park road and parking lots. The Department's Bureau of Engineering will be initiating the study and proposal for resurfacing the road in the next few years.

The rustic group camp (maximum capacity - 100 people) is proposed for an area of northern hardwoods located east of the Fisher River and approximately 600 feet north of the existing park office. Development will include an 8-unit pit toilet, a well and hand pump, a shelter, and scattered clearing and grubbing on approximately 3 acres of land. Soils excavated for the toilet vault shelter footings and other facilities will be distributed on-site and the area graded for proper drainage and use as a group camp. The 10-stall gravel surfaced parking lot proposed for this facility will be located in an open area near the trailer dumping station. The present overhead electric line that runs parallel to the adjacent cross-country ski trail will be buried by the electric company as part of the overall development scheme.

The north campground and various day-use area shorelines have a history of erosion created by people walking down the steep banks to fish or moor their boats. This has been corrected in some instances by placing a retaining wall on side hills and riprapping the shoreline. Work still remains to correct additional erosion and guard against further bank disturbance. It is estimated that up to 100 cubic yards of rock may be needed to riprap the shoreline. In addition, up to 1,000 cubic yards of soil may be needed to reclaim areas where large gullies have formed. This material may be held in place by retaining walls, vegetative planting, and laying down and staking sod on the reclaimed areas. In some instances, stairways will be provided in these areas where park users gain access to the water's edge.

A sand blanket is proposed for the beach area to cover the sharp gravel stones and small rocks that have worked their way to the surface. A Chapter 30.12(2)b permit will be obtained for the replacement of the sand blanket.

A permanent contact station (12' X 24') will be built where the present temporary structure is located. It is anticipated that less than 20 cubic yards of soil will be disturbed for the building's footings. The material will be distributed on-site, regraded, and landscaped. Similarly, soils disturbed for the placement of the shelter in the day-use area near the ballfield will be disposed of on-site, graded, and landscaped. No earth moving is anticipated for the construction of the amphitheater.

Three four-unit vault pit toilets will be constructed in the north campground during Phase III. These will be placed in the general location of existing facilities. Approximately 120 cubic yards of soil will be excavated for the vaults and this material will be spread on-site, graded, and landscaped.

Although the concept of combining fire control, a warden and park personnel has been proposed, the specifics of additional office space needs, etc. are not known. However, it is anticipated that three-four offices will be added to the existing structure and a building approximately 40' X 60' will be needed for storing fire equipment. This construction will call for the excavation of soil for building footings, utilities, and revision of parking lots and roads.

Some tree removal and planting will take place as needed for the health, safety, and welfare of park visitors and to provide shade and screening at various campground and day-use areas. In addition, some vegetative clearing and cutting will occur to create vistas along trails and at overlooks. Extensive area vegetative management will be minimal. Approximately 80 acres of hemlock hardwoods will be managed using selective cutting to increase growth rate and to start regeneration of the species. There is a 61-acre stand of aspen and a 66-acre stand of white birch which will be cut to regenerate and perpetuate those types. The fir-spruce and red pine plantations covering 39 acres of the property will be managed to promote growth and vigor. In the remaining extensive areas, natural succession will continue to meet the objective of providing a diversity of tree species and age classes.

6. Manipulation of Aquatic Resources (include relevant quantities - cfs., acre feet, MGD, etc.)

It is proposed to place a sand blanket on the existing beach. The sand blanket would encompass an area approximately 6 inches thick by 300 feet by 100 feet. The riprap noted earlier will be placed on the shoreline and thus have some of the material in the water especially during periods of high water in the flowage. It is not anticipated that this will affect more than a few hundred lineal feet of shoreline.

7. Buildings, Treatment Units, Roads and Other Structures

The proposed toilet/shower building is approximately 30′ X 40′ in size and will be block and wood frame construction. The four 4-unit combination vault toilets consist of concrete block, poured concrete, and wood construction. Their size is approximately 11′ X 19′. The garage will be approximately 20′ X 24′ and be wood frame construction. The shelter buildings for the day-use area, boat mooring area, and rustic group camp will be approximately 24′ X 40′. They will have a cement floor and laminated wood beam construction. The permanent contact station will be about 12′ X 24′, and will have a cement floor and wood frame construction. If remodeled for fire control, a warden, and park personnel the enlarged office will be brick and masonry construction. The fire control storage building will be wood and steel construction, approximately 40′ X 60′ in size.

The 2.6 miles of park road is about 22 feet wide and will be resurfaced and/or seal-coated. In addition, there are approximately 227 parking stalls of which will be seal-coated and/or resurfaced. Finally, the new boat launch facility (approximately 100′ X 120′) will receive an asphalt surface. Upgrading the existing trails may entail minor surfacing with gravel or other material and the placement of water diversion structures to correct any erosion problems. The ampitheater will consist of wood benches, a small 12′ X 20′ stage with screen, and electric serice.

8. Emissions and Discharges

Proposed additional development and subsequent use of the property is not expected to significantly affect Wisconsin's air quality. However, some local noise and pollution might be expected during construction due to the use of heavy equipment and disruption of surface conditions. Site specific actions will be taken to guard against any erosion potential. Vehicular traffic is expected to increase about 5% into and through the area within the next 10 years and this will add to the noise and potential air pollution. These emissions, however, are not expected to significantly affect the ambient air quality. Fossil fuels and lubricants consumed by construction equipment and those used for labor activities and fabrication of materials will be consumed and will result in some discharge of emissions. Secondary emissions and discharges will be created by the fuel and electricity used to operated the facility.

9. Other Changes

Lands within the park will be classified as intensive recreation development (IRD) and extensive recreation area (ERA). Intensive recreation development will encompass an estimated 90 acres upon completion of the proposed group camp, additional trails, and other day-use facilities. The remaining 942 acres will be classified as extensive area and be managed according to guidelines found under that classification.

10. Attach Maps, Plans and Other Descriptive Material as Appropriate (list)

1. Locator Map
2. Development Map
3. Ownership Map

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Information Based On (check all that apply):

__X___ Literature/correspondence
__X___ Personal Contacts (list in item 31)
Field Analysis By: __X__ Author, __X__ Other (list in item 31)
Past Experience With Site By: __X__ Author,
__X__ Other (list in item 31)

11. Physical (topography - soils - water - air - wetland amounts and types)

The topography of the park ranges from nearly level to gently rolling. The topography is the result of the Wisconsin glacier which was the most recent one to reach Chippewa County. It did not completely cover the county as did earlier ice sheets. Upon receding, it deposited debris or till in large quantities in the form of terminal moraines across the northeast part of the county from the northwest corner, southeast to Jim Falls, and then east to the county line. The young drift area of the

terminal moraine was distinct in having a typical hilly appearance, a large number of kettle holes, bogs, and irregularly shaped lakes as well as numerous swamps. The geological formations which underly Chippewa County are the Cambrian crystaline rocks in the northeast part, near Long Lake and south to Chippewa Falls and eastward to the Chippewa County line. The bed of the Chippewa River upstream from Chippewa Falls exposes portions of this bedrock.

Major soils found on the property include Roshholt sandy loam, Chetek sandy loam, Menahga loamy sand, and Friendship loamy sand is found on the island. On the mainland, Menahga loamy sand, Alban fine sandy loam, Santigo silt loam, Amery, and Chetek sandy loam are found. Most of the soil series are well drained to excessively well drained and have slight to moderate restrictions for dwellings with or without basements, local roads, campgrounds, picnic areas, playgrounds and trails.

The climate of Chippewa County is classified as humid continental. It is characterized by moderately long, cold winters and short summers that are warm and humid. Mean temperatures drop below freezing in mid-November and freezeup of lakes follow soon after. Summer rainfall averages 3.48 inches per month, April through October, while the total winter precipitation is about 8.5 inches.

Brunet Island State Park lies adjacent to the Chippewa and Fisher Rivers which make up the Cornell Flowage. The flowage is approximately 864 acres in size and was created as a reservoir for hydroelectric production. Water levels continue to be maintained for this purpose and fluctuate during the year depending on anticipated runoff and precipitation. The principal inlet is being maintained by a 42-foot high dam at Holcombe. The other inlet is the Fisher River. The dam maintained at the Cornell Flowage has a head of 39 feet. The deepest part of the flowage is 54 feet and is located near the dam at Cornell. The flowage has a relatively small percentage of developed shoreline. There are two boat landings with parking, one of which is in Brunet Island State Park. There is very little wetland in or adjacent to the park. The largest amount (5 acres) lies west of County Trunk CC. Minimal wetland lies along the shoreline of the many small islands and associated backwater bays which make up the main island complex. No development will take place in these wetland areas. Air around the park meets the primary and secondary ambient air quality standards.

12. Biological

a) Flora

The original forest cover, based on 1840-1853 survey records, was hemlock, northern hardwoods, white birch, and aspen. Current on-the-ground evidence shows that most of the timber on the island has remained much as it was when the first land surveys in the area were

made. The following is a brief summation of the forest cover types and includes all areas outside of the intensive use areas such as beach, picnic area, and campground. There are 208 acres of hemlock hardwoods, northern hardwoods cover 168 acres, aspen covers 163 acres, and white birch is found on 66 acres of the property. There are 22 acres of the fir-spruce cover types, red pine plantations cover 17 acres of the park, and white pine covers 8 acres. Bottomland hardwoods cover approximately 17 acres.

b) Fauna

Common wildlife species include whitetail deer, gray squirrel, raccoon, red fox, muskrat, mink, and beaver. Waterfowl include mallards and wood ducks. A list of amphibians, birds, mammals, and reptiles can be found in the master plan appendix. There is an inactive bald eagle nest within the park. It is on the north side of the Fisher River approximately 1/4 mile east of the confluence of the Fisher and Chippewa Rivers.

13. Social/Economic (include ethnic and cultural groups, and zoning if applicable)

The property is located adjacent both to urban and rural settings. The City of Cornell is located directly to the southeast of the park. The rest of the park is predominantly bounded by agricultural lands, woodlot, and farmsteads. The park is approximately 40 miles from the Eau Claire - Chippewa Falls area and about a two-hour drive from the Minneapolis - St. Paul metropolitan area. Primary access to the park is provided by State Trunk Highways 64 and 27.

All revenues collected from the sale of admission stickers and campground registration fees are remitted to a segregated fund from which operation and maintenance are partially subsidized. According to a 1980 camper survey conducted by the University of Wisconsin Recreation Resource Center Extension, "Camper spending has a very substantial economic impact on the local economy." Furthermore, the study indicates that state-owned lands are not an economic burden to local government units because the state makes payments in lieu of taxes.

14. Other Special Resources (e.g., archaeological, historical, endangered/threatened species, scientific areas, natural areas)

The State Historical Society has indicated there are no known historical and/or archaeological sites in the park, but this may simply reflect the lack of a systematic survey to locate such resources in this part of Chippewa County. Surveys conducted elsewhere along the Chippewa River indicate that the river island terraces have a very high probability of containing archaeological sites. For this reason, they recommend that prior to any major ground disturbing activity in Brunet Island State Park, the Department consult with their office to determine whether an archeaological survey is needed.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES (probable adverse and beneficial impacts including indirect and secondary impacts)

15. Physical (include visual if applicable)

Proposed new development and major building maintenance will have limited impact on the property. Use is expected to increase approximately 10-15% over the next 10-year period; however, this increase should not overtax the man-made and natural resources. Maintenance of the area, its man-made features and vegetative cover should maximize user enjoyment and perceptions, as well as provide some diversity of habitat.

Development of a group campground, trails, and other support facilities will cause some minor short-term disruption to the soil due to exposure and compaction during the construction phase. Soils may also be affected by such things as compaction caused by maintenance equipment and foot traffic. Maintenance practices will be utilized to guard against destruction of ground cover which may result in erosion or other detrimental effect to the resource.

Development plans call for additional planting of trees and shrubs for shade, screening, and space definition in areas such as campground, group camp, and day-use areas.

In the extensive areas of the property, all tree harvesting activities will be done with aesthetics in mind.

Development and use of the property is not expected to significantly affect Wisconsin's air quality. However, some local noise and air pollution might be expected during construction due to the use of heavy equipment and disruption of surface conditions. Some increase of vehicular traffic into and through the area will add to the noise and potential air pollution. These emissions, however, are not expected to significantly affect the ambient air quality. Highways 64 and 27 provide immediate access to the property. These highways, as well as the village street leading to the property, should easily accommodate the expected 3-5% increase in traffic volume over the next 10-year period.

16. Biological

The number and type of plant species at Brunet Island will change somewhat due to natural succession, interruption of succession, and the cutting and planting of various plant materials. Removal of dead and dying trees will occur to ensure a healthy timber stand adjacent to the intensive use area and ensure visitor safety. Some vegetative clearing and brushing will occur to create vistas in use areas, along trails, and at overlook sites. This will entail some tree removal, limb cutting, and

occasional mowing to keep down woody growth. Timber harvest will occur on the small pine plantations and various hardwood stands as outlined earlier. As the dominant vegetation cover is removed from the cut areas, accelerated growth of the remaining vegetation is expected. In addition, disrupted land near construction sites will be reseeded and planted with native tree, shrub, and ground cover species to guard against erosion and provide the user with shade and other amenities associated with vegetative cover.

The expanded hiking - cross country ski trail and group camp east of the Fisher River will increase disturbance of those species that are timid and not well-adapted to humans. Species that would be affected include coyotes and fox. However, most species present in the Brunet Island State Park area already are adapted to human disturbance and therefore should not be noticably affected.

The Cornell Flowage is currently managed for major game species such as walleye, musky, smallmouth bass, catfish, and sturgeon. Muskellunge is the only species that has been stocked in recent years and this practice will be reduced to biennial stocking. Artificial habitat will be installed for panfish and forage species to promote increased populations. This will provide anglers increased fishing opportunity and expand the forage base for predators, particularly walleyes. Stocking of bluegills and/or perch will be encouraged when they are available. The local fish manager will take the lead in all such projects and be assisted by the park personnel when appropriate.

17. Social/Economic (include ethnic and cultural groups and zoning if applicable)

Expansion and improvement of park facilities will result in better service to the public. Providing a group camp and upgrading existing campground and day-use facilites will serve to meet some of the needs as identified in local, regional, and state outdoor recreation plans. The new shower building should increase campsite utilization and length of stay and therefore increase camping revenue. This should also mean more dollars for the local economy, based on information presented within the 1980 Wisconsin Camper Survey. Providing an amphitheater, additional nature trails, and nature programs will increase the educational mission of the property and provide the user with more information about the natural environment and Department programs being undertaken to safeguard our natural resources.

Remodeling and replacing obsolete facilities should also increase park user satisfaction and lead to increased use and duration of stay. This in turn will provide economic benefits through increased park admission sticker and campsite rental fees. It is expected that the park will continue to generate local commercial sales for such things as gasoline, picnic and camping supplies. If the proposed development projects are implemented, at least $500,000 will be put into the regional economy.

There is only one 16.24-acre parcel of land remaining to be purchased to reach the project acreage goal of 1,048.48 acres. This land is presently utilized as the city well field. The Department would be interested in the land only if it was no longer used as a city well field and would come up for sale. At the present time, the Department pays in lieu of taxes for the lands which it owns.

There are two management problems worthy of discussion:

1. Sticker sales and revenue collection.

   Prior to the 1983 use season, sticker sales were handled out of the office (located in the shop building) by park employees contacting park visitors in their vehicles at the various parking lots or by placing a sticker violation notice on the unattended vehicle. This system resulted in very inefficient fee collection, loss of revenue, and waste of employee work time. The situation was corrected the past 2 use seasons by placing a temporary booth on the park entrance road and staffing it with LTE and local high school work study personnel. This system resulted in a 4% increase in resident, annual sticker sales and a 22% increase in daily resident sticker sales in 1983. It is apparent that the park should be sufficiently staffed to keep the contact station open during the major use season. In addition, a permanent park entrance visitor station should be constructed so that sales, camper registration, and general office work can be undertaken in the same structure.

2. Shoreline erosion

   The north campground and various day-use area shorelines have a history of erosion created by people walking down the steep bank to fish or moor their boats. This has been corrected in some instances by placing a retaining wall on sidehills and riprapping the shoreline.

   Work remains to correct other eroded areas and guard against future bank disturbance. The use of riprap, retaining walls, stairs, stepping stones, and plantings will be utilized in combination with user education to eliminate this recurring problem.

18. Other Special Resources (e.g., archaeological, historical, endangered/threatened species, scientific areas, natural areas)

The State Historical Society will be informed of all major development proposals and the sites will be surveyed and evaluated prior to initiating construction in those areas.

Protection will be provided for endangered and threatened species that may be found to inhabit or migrate through the park. Guidelines of Manual Code 2028.1 will be followed.

19. Probable Adverse Impacts That Cannot be Avoided

Increased presence of man within the park may mean some interference with wildlife habitat and plant damage. The construction stage will expose some soil to water and wind erosion. Some dirt and noise will also be created during construction. Air pollution emissions to the atmosphere will increase slightly due to increased auto traffic to and through the area. Some minor grading will take place around construction; however, this will only minimally alter existing topography and drainage patterns. Some soil erosion could occur in construction sites; however, this will be minimized through the use of appropriate control techniques. Increased use will possibly increase the need for public services such as police and fire protection and medical attention. Gasoline and other fuels will be consumed by people coming to the park and by maintenance vehicles used in the park. Traffic will increase on the state trunk highways and village streets leading to the property; however, this increase is minimal and therefore is not expected to have a great effect on traffic volume.

ALTERNATIVES (no action - enlarge - reduce - modify - other locations and/or methods)

20. Identify, describe and discuss feasible alternatives to the proposed action and their impacts. Give particular attention to alternatives which might avoid some or all adverse environmental effects.

No Additional Acquisition and no Additional Development.

This alternative would provide for no further acquisition or development. The Department would merely retain and manage the existing resource and its recreational facilities. This alternative is not desirable since the property was acquired for recreational purposes in order to meet the needs of the recreating public. No additional acquisition within the property boundary could lead to future encroachment of undesirable land uses. No additional development could lead to the degradation of the resource, its facilities, and could lead to safety problems.

Reduce and Adjust Existing Acquisition Boundary

This alternative would provide for the elimination of the 16-acre parcel of land that is presently occupied by the Cornell well field. The property could be eliminated from the park with little or no impact as it presently exists if we were assured that the land would be retained by the city for a well field. However, because this is not a certainty, the land should be kept within the boundary and acquired when and if it becomes available for sale. This would guard against any potential land use conflicts.

Moderate Additional Development on Existing Stateowned Land

It is recommended that moderate additional development occur on existing state-owned land. The facilities include a shower building, upgrading the north and south campgrounds, constructing a group camp, and replacing facilities and furnishings as needed. In addition, hiking and ski trails would be upgraded and roads and parking areas will be resurfaced. A shelter building and amphitheater will be constructed in the day-use area, and a permanent contact station will be built at the park entrance. This alternative is desirable in that it will ensure the maintenance of a high quality recreational facility, maximize user enjoyment, and eliminate potential safety problems.

Development of a fire control storage building and office space in conjunction with existing park office shop complex is proposed. This consolidation will entail bringing fire control employees, a conservation warden, and park personnel into one central location and facility. This action will allow for the sharing of manpower and equipment which will be beneficial to the property.

Additional Largescale Development on Lands Within Park Boundary

Largescale development including enlarging the campground and various day-use areas is possible. However, based on present and projected use figures, such action is not warranted.

EVALUATION (discuss each category. Attach additional sheets and other pertinent information if necessary.)

21. Secondary Effects: As a result of this action, is it likely that other events or actions will happen that may significantly affect the environment? If so, list here and reference their discussion in items 15-18 as appropriate.

    Providing a group camp area will increase the use of the park to the point where park revenues will be increased and secondary economic gains will be realized by the local economy. Upgrading and enlarging the day-use facilities will also increase use and secondary economic benefits. This additional use will generate traffic into the area and increase use of local roads.

22. New Environmental Effect: Does the action alter the environment so a new physical, biological or socio-economic environment would exist? If so, list here and reference their discussion in items 5-10 or 15-18 as appropriate.

    The proposed development action will not result in a significant change to the social, physical, or biological environment of the property because similar facilities and recreational activities have been provided on the property since 1939.

23. Geographically Scarce: Are the existing environmental features that would be affected by the proposed action scarce, either locally or statewide? If so, list here and reference their discussion in items 15-18 as appropriate.

    Brunet Island State Park is one of two state parks located along the Chippewa River in Western Wisconsin and therefore would not be considered scarce on a regional or statewide basis. However, the park is heavily used by local Cornell residents, as well as state and out-of-state citizens and therefore removal from the Wisconsin State Park System would have a detrimental impact on users.

24. Precedent: Does the action and its effect(s) require a decision which would result in influencing future decisions? Describe.

    The action is not precedent setting as similar management practices and programs discussed throughout the master plan are being carried out on a statewide basis. There are over 50 other state parks which are being managed similarly to Brunet Island State Park.

25. Controversy: Discuss and describe concerns which indicate a serious controversy or unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

    This action has generated no controversy as it is not precedent setting and it has been reviewed by local citizenry and generally met with their approval.

26. Consistency With Plans: Does the action conflict with local or agency zoning or with official agency plans or policy of local, state or federal government (e.g., NR 1.95)? If so, how? Refer to applicable comments in item 31.

    No conflicts are known or became evident during the initial planning and review process. This project is in accord with local, county, and state outdoor recreation plans.

27. Cumulative Impacts: While the action by itself may be limited in scope, would repeated actions of this type result in major or significant impacts to the environment?

    Additional actions of this type would generally upgrade existing state park properties. Due to location of the proposed development and modification of existing buildings, there would be little significant impact on the natural environment.

28. Foreclose Future Options: Is the action irreversible? Will it commit a resource (e.g., energy, habitat, historical features) for the foreseeable future?

Some fuel, wear and tear on machinery, and depletion of resource materials is non-recoverable as is the manpower utilized in the planning, construction, and operation of the park. Fuel and other energy sources used to power vehicles to and from the park would be irretrievable. Similarly, energy used to maintain the property would be permanently committed. Funds used to develop the area would be irretrievably committed as well. For all practical purposes, roads, parking lots, and buildings will be permanently committed and the material will be basically unsalvagable. However, land covered by these facilities could be retrievable as roads are often obliterated, and revegetated. Abandoned building foundations are often also removed and, as a result, the site is often regraded and revegetated.

29. Socio-cultural Impacts: Will action result in direct or indirect impacts on ethnic or cultural groups or alter social patterns?

__X___ No, the park is open to all ethnic and cultural groups.
____ Yes, refer to item 17.

30) Other:

None.

LIST OF AGENCIES, GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED REGARDING THE PROJECT (Include DNR personnel and title)

31. Date	Contact	Comments
2/1983-7/1/84	Ed Ferber, Park Mgr. Doug Erickson, Fish Spec. Rollie Nesbit, Wildlife Spec. Brian Marinello, Forest Spec. Larry Moussette, Park Rngr. Tom Harris, Warden	Master planning task force comments as it pertains to the various resource topics, work assignments, drafting goal and objective statements, and formulation of conceptual master plan document.
2/10/83	Cliff Germain Chief, Natural and Scientific Areas Section	Scientific Area input for Brunet Island State Park master plan. Findings: No suitable area for scientific natural or wild area designation due to limited land base and resources.

3/31/83	J. R. Huntoon Nat. Res. Admn.	Preliminary goal and objective statements approved.
10/12/83	Public Meeting - 24 residents attended	Reviewed, discussed, and accepted comments regarding acquisition development, and management of Brunet Island State Park.
5/9/84	John DeLaMater Forestry Staff Spec.	Discussed and drew up preliminary schematic plan for fire control building and office needs in combination with the park.
8/9/84	Daniel Koich, Area WMS	Development of boat launch and processing of appropriate permits.

Dennis Kulhanek PR/4

Project Name: Brunet Island State Park County: Chippewa

RECOMMENDATION

EIS Not Required X

Analysis of the expected impacts of this proposal is of sufficient scope and detail to conclude that this is not a major action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. In my opinion therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required prior to final action by the Department on this project.

Refer to Office of the Secretary . . . . . :

Major and Significant Action: Prepare EIS . . . . . .

Request EIR . . . . . .

Additional factors, if any, affecting the evaluator's recommendation:

Michael L. Reis 1/8/85

Signature of Evaluator Date

x Jeffrey D. Weinzwicker 1/17/85

Noted: Area Director or Bureau Director Date

Number of responses to public notice 1

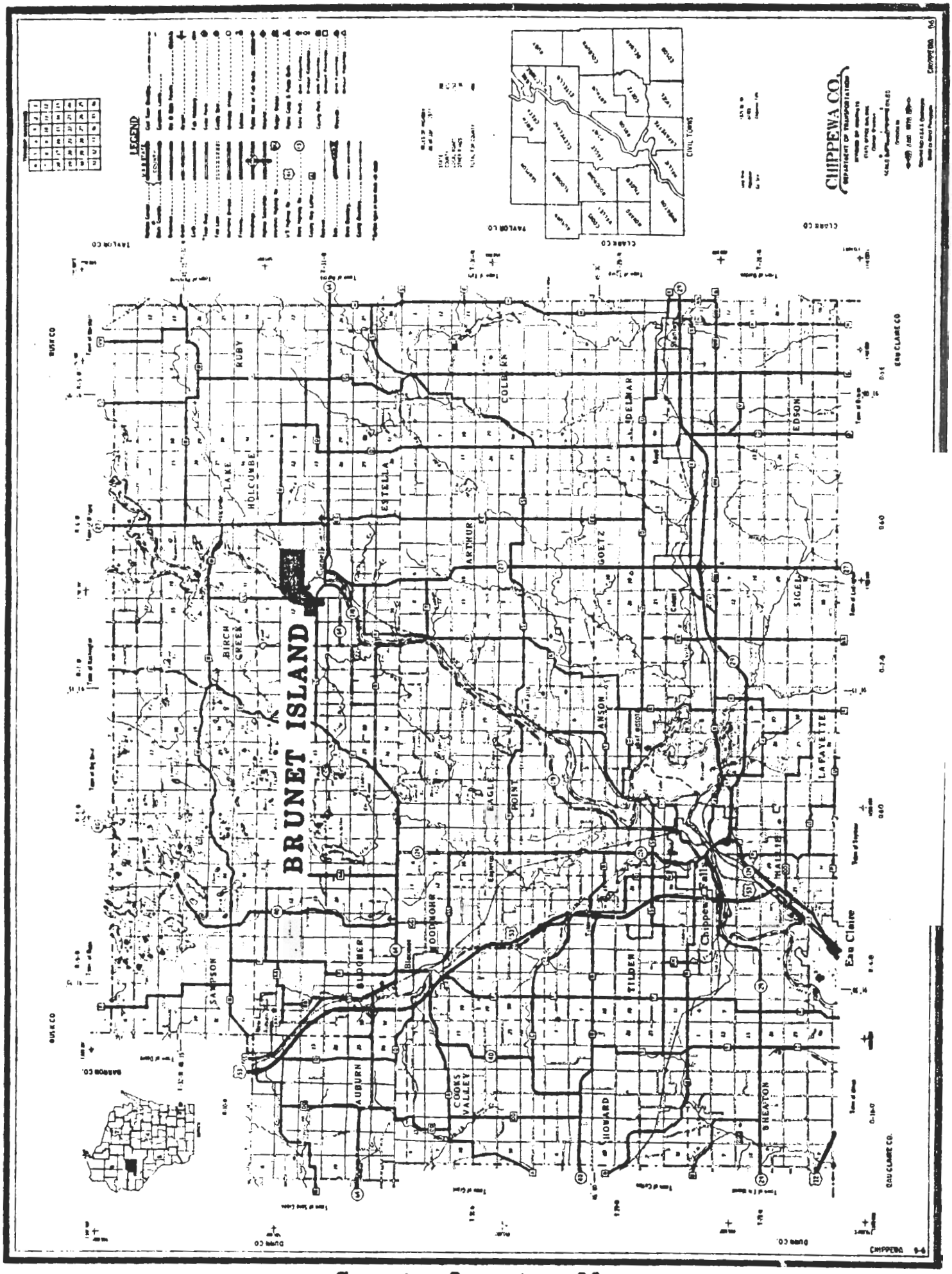
Public response log attached?..... no

CERTIFIED TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH WEPA

District Director or Director of BEI (or Designee) Date

Roger A. Fritz 4/30/85

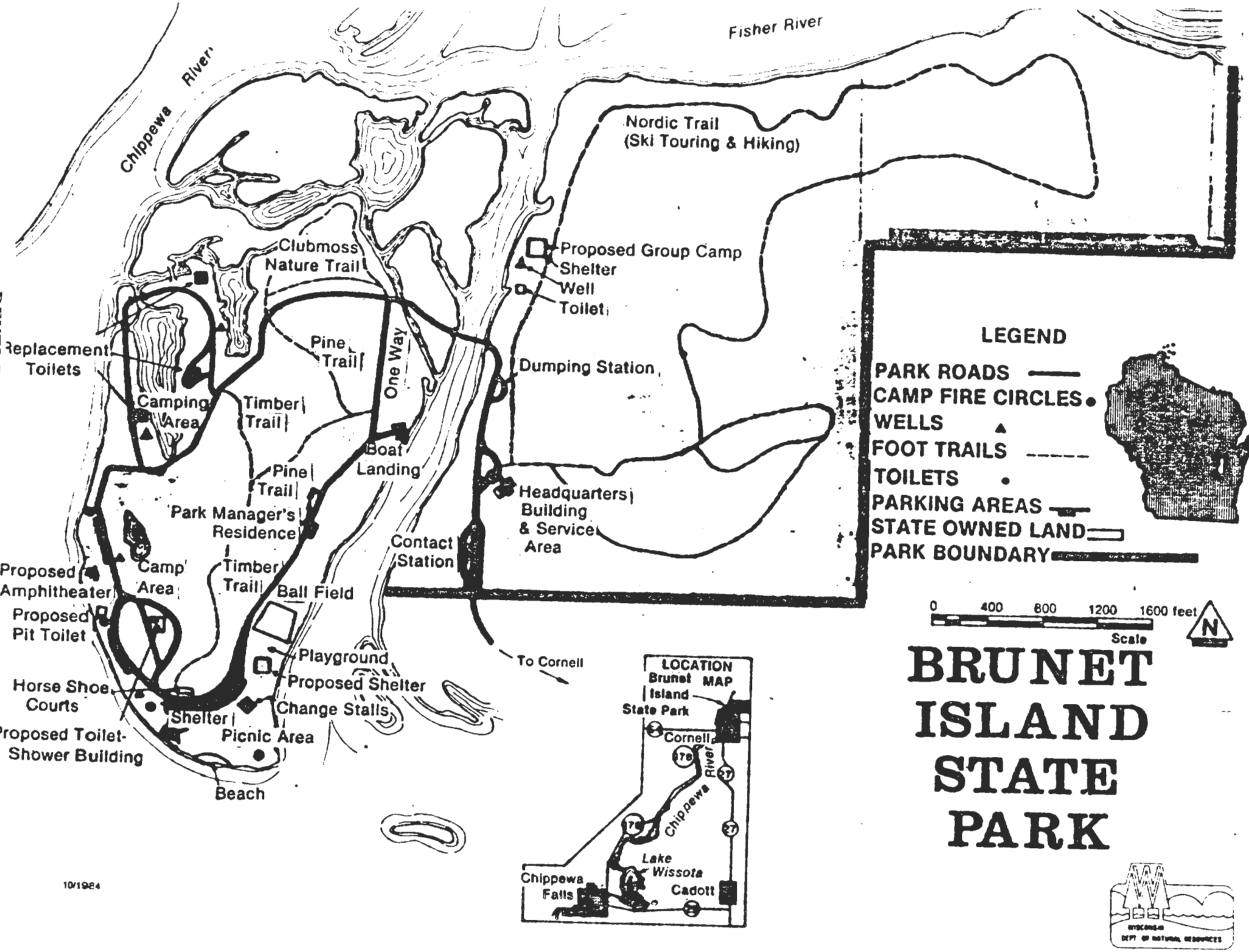
This decision is not final until certified by the appropriate District Director or the Director of BEI. If you believe you have a right to challenge this decision, you should know that Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Codes establish time periods within which requests to review Department decisions must be filed. For judicial review of a decision pursuant to ss. 227.15 and 227.16, Stats., you have 30 days after service of the decision to file your petition for review. The respondent in an action for judicial review is the Department of Natural Resources. You may wish to seek legal counsel to determine your specific legal rights to challenge a decision. This notice is provided pursuant to s. 227.11(2), Stats.

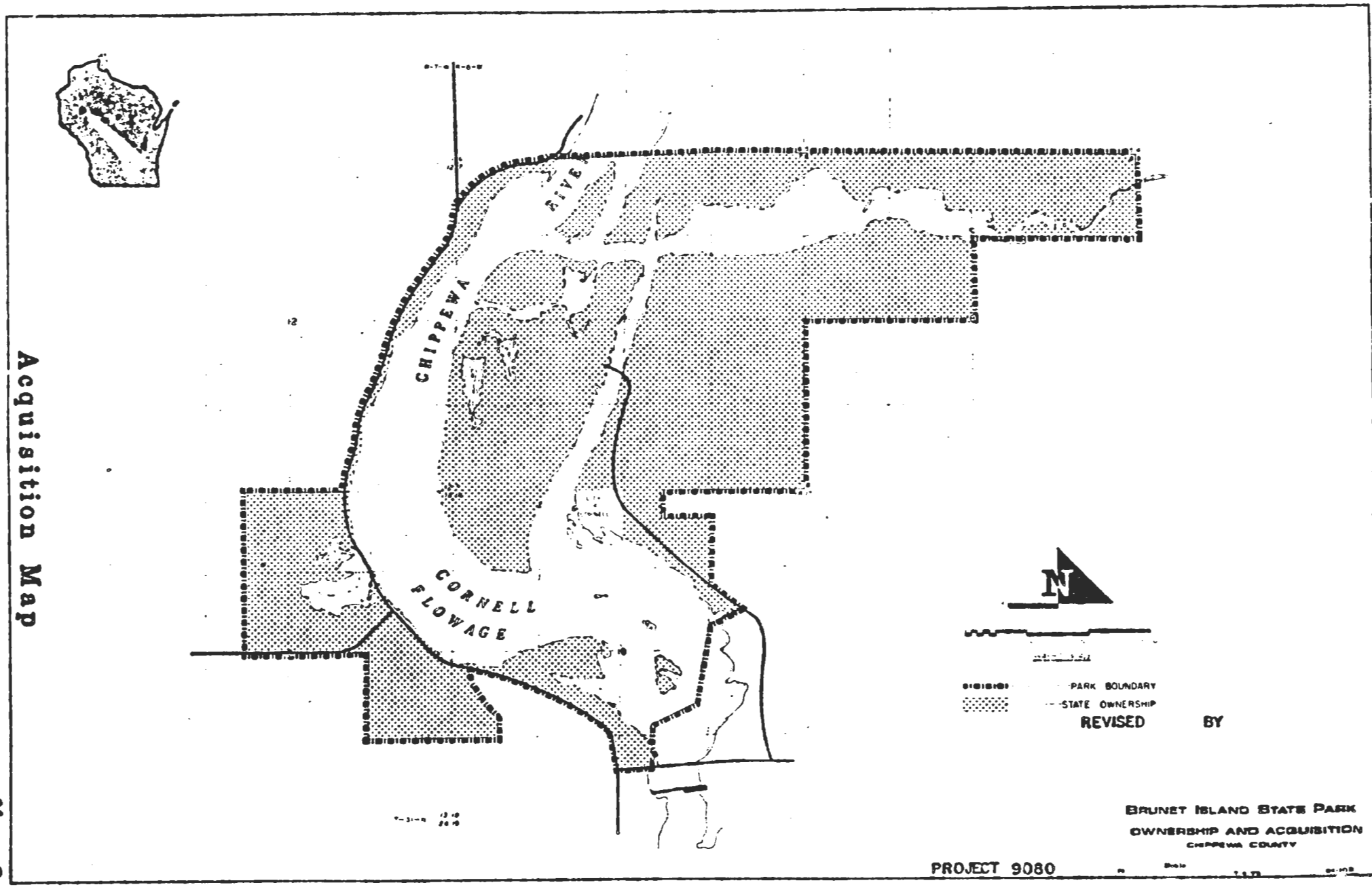


County Locator Map

fig. 1.

DEVELOPMENT MAP—PRESENT & PROPOSED FIGURE





Acquisition Map

fig. 2