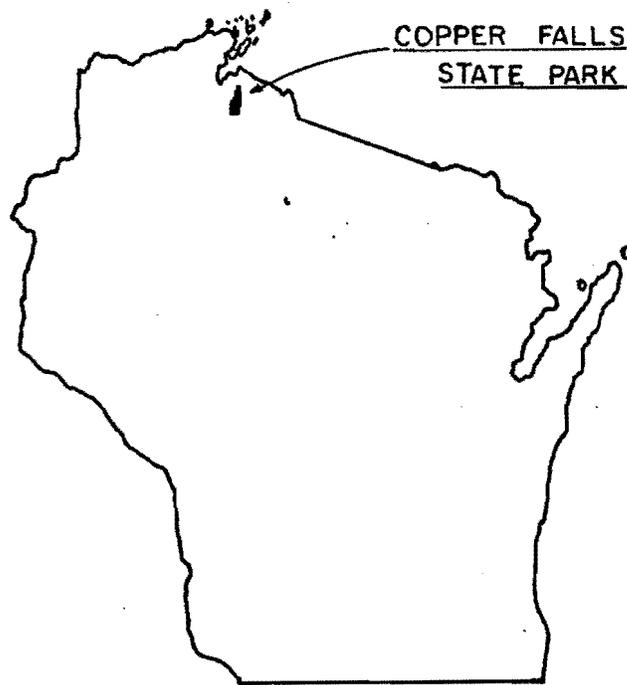


CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN FOR COPPER FALLS STATE PARK



Assigned Planner or Property Task Force
Goals & Objectives Approved by Natural
Resources Board
Conceptual Plan Approved by Natural
Resources Board

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COPPER FALLS PARK
MASTER PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

The Bad River, named by the Indians because it floods so easily, flows northward to Lake Superior through 2,251 acres of state park land. The river tumbles 29 feet over Copper Falls into a scenic and narrow gorge. The coppery hue of the water gives the falls its name.

About one-quarter mile downstream from Copper Falls, Tyler Forks River drops 30 feet over Brownstone Falls into the Bad River. Another scenic attraction is the Tyler Forks Cascades, a series of five small waterfalls formed as Tyler Forks River flows over a series of rock ledges. In an effort to protect this scenic grandeur, the state established Copper Falls State Park in 1929.

Most of the park facilities, such as the log shelter, picnic area, and much of the trail system, were developed under the CCC and WPA programs in the late 1930's. In 1946 a severe flood on the Bad River caused extensive damage to the park. The swimming beach, bathhouse and two suspension bridges were washed away.

The information presented in this plan will serve as guidelines for park development for the next ten years.

Property Goal: The protection of the resource and the scenic attractions of the Bad River, namely its waterfalls and rapids and to provide for outdoor recreation consisting of camping, day use and nature study.

Property Objectives:

1. To ultimately provide for a total of 208,000 visits annually.
 - a. Provide camping facilities for 33,000 annual visits consisting of:
 - 1) Family camping (30,000) (ultimately 84 sites, 25 early phase and 34 existing)
 - 2) Outdoor group camping (2,000)
 - 3) Back-pack camping (1,000)
 - b. Provide day-use facilities for 147,000 annual visits consisting of:
 - 1) Picnicking (72,000)
 - 2) Interpretation and nature study (No vegetative or forest management practices) (8,000)
 - 3) Swimming (75,000)
 - c. Maintain hiking trails and overlooks to accommodate 208,000 annual visits. This includes wildlife observation and interpretation. (Not all visitors will traverse entire trail or trails but all are expected to use those portions leading to the major scenic points of interest.)
 - d. Provide for trail development for winter sports such as snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and future uses which are consistent with the property goal for a total of 20,000 visits.
 - e. Maintain approximately 97 percent of the park lands in a natural or undeveloped condition, as a natural area.
 - f. Maintain a fishery of bass and panfish in Loon Lake and trout and other fish species in the Bad and Tyler Forks Rivers. No restocking will be required as species find their way into the lake and upper and lower reaches of the river from stocking practices elsewhere. The number of fishing experiences total 600 man days/year.

II. CONCEPTS

The concepts will reiterate the present achievements and serve as guidelines for future development of the park.

i. Park Entrance

The existing entrance for Copper Falls Park does not allow contact with all park visitors at one location. Separate attendants must be on duty at the beach and the park office to sell park stickers.

2. Camping

Use at the existing 34-unit campground has averaged 89 percent of capacity during July-August (main use season) for the past seven years. This percentage of use plus a large number of turn-aways indicates a potential need for additional camping. Sufficient area for an additional 50 campsites exists to the south and east of the present campground. An inventory of campsites within a 15-mile radius of Copper Falls State Park shows a total of 245 sites. This figure consists of federal, county and private facilities. The private facilities usually provide a "campground community" type camping experience. This consists of electric, water and sometimes sewer hook up at the campsites. Length of stay varies from several days to the entire season. Quite often campers are set up on one site all season. This is a service exclusive to the private campgrounds. Federal facilities are usually of the primitive type with less than 20 sites per campground. These campgrounds are utilized mainly by hunters and fishermen. The 50 additional sites will not have provisions for hookups such as electricity, water or sewer, at the individual campsites. Several sites in the existing campground do not meet the present requirements for camp spur length or pad size. These sites should be removed or redeveloped at the park manager's discretion.

A travel trailer sanitary station will be developed near the proposed park entrance.

Opportunities exist in the northern part of the park for walk-in primitive camping. Campsites could be planned in conjunction with existing and proposed trails. Due to rugged topography and red clay soil in this section of the park, the walk-in sites should be located near the ridge tops along the Bad River. If the demand for this type of camping increases, expansion along the section of the Bad River south from the existing campground should be explored.

The location of the existing group camp which can accommodate 20 campers, is too close to the campground to provide adequate separation for users. Planned events by groups can be disturbing to others, both during the day and evening hours. The group camp should be relocated south of the snowmobile trail in the Murphy Lake area. Facilities such as pit toilets, well and shelter could be utilized by snowmobilers during the winter.

3. Trails

At the present time snowmobile trails exist within the park. These trails utilize existing trails and gas line right-of-way. The trails are used for a connecting link in the Ashland County trail system. Only trails meeting state requirements for width, stream crossings, etc. will be allowed in the park and preferably along the edge of the property. A hiking trail should be constructed to provide access to Red Granite Falls on the Bad River in the southwest corner of the park.

With a growing demand for cross-country ski trails, areas should be set aside within the parks where possible for this sport. Most of the existing hiking trails in the northern half of the park could be used for cross-country ski trails with some modifications.

The addition of walk-in camping will require an extension of the present hiking trail system.

4. Fishing Access

Fishing access to the northern portion of the Bad River within the park is available via the hiking trails in this area. Access to the lower portion of the river is available primarily by a road starting near the swimming beach parking lot. This road should be terminated in a 5-car parking lot not less than 1/4 mile from the river.

A walk-in landing to Loon Lake for small nonpower boats and canoes should be constructed on Lot 10 (Loon Lake plat). A 10-car parking lot would be provided. Acquisition of Lot 10 is required.

5. Murphy Lake

Murphy Lake is a shallow (5' deep) lake with a mucky bottom. There is no visible inlet; however, there are outlets on the east and west ends of the lake. A beaver lodge has recently been constructed on the north side of the lake. Fish consist mainly of minnows.

No intensive development such as camping, etc., should take place on Murphy Lake or within a minimum of 400 feet of the shoreline.

6. Timber Management

There will be no intensive timber management within the park. Trees may be removed if they are dead, diseased, or in planned development areas. Plantation cutting would be allowed only to modify the linear arrangement of the plantation so the area appears more natural.

7. Overlooks

Good potential exists for overlooks on the north and south sides of Brownstone Falls. A board walk and railings constructed over the rock have been suggested for the site. The Bureau of Engineering will do a feasibility study of the site.

8. Three additional bridges on the Bad River are required in the park, one below Devil's Gate on the existing hiking trail and the other two for snowmobiling on the proposed county trail (SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 19-T45N-R2W and SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 17-T45N-R2W).

III. DEVELOPMENT

1. Park Entrance

A new entrance would incorporate the park visitor entrance station, park office and ranger station in one building. The existing park office building in the day-use area could be utilized for a naturalist office or display area. The existing manager's office and ranger station would become part of the heated shop area. Also located at the new entrance would be a travel trailer sanitary station.

Acquisition of forty acres (NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 29-T45N-R2W) outside the park boundary is required. The possibilities of purchasing the Anderson property are remote at this time. If it could be purchased now, its cost could be high as the Anderson parcel contains a house and other improvements. The house and improvements would result in additional costs for removal or renovation. The purchase of additional land plus the boundary change must be approved by the Natural Resources Board. Purchase of the entire forty acres will protect the park entrance by providing a buffer zone on both sides of STH 169.

The proposed entrance road will connect into the existing CTH "J" approximately 500 feet north of the Anderson property. Anderson's and Dulaney's would continue to gain entrance from CTH "J".

2. Camping

An additional 50-unit campground will be developed. The campground will be laid out in two loops of 25 units each. Each loop will contain at a minimum a set of 4-unit pit toilets and a well. Additional facilities may be required due to topography. The exact area to be developed is gently rolling to hilly and covered with typical northern hardwoods. The surrounding area is very steep. All construction will be planned for the minimum of excavation and tree removal where practical.

Excellent opportunities for primitive or walk-in camping exist at Copper Falls Park. The primary objective of this type camping is providing campsites exclusively for tents, with liberal separation between campsites. Campsite clusters of 3-4 individual sites would be located off the main hiking trail. Each site within the cluster would be separated by a minimum of 300'. Facilities provided would consist of a set of single unit pit toilets per cluster and fire ring for each campsite. Provisions for drinking water and garbage disposal would not be provided at the campsites. Users would be instructed to burn all materials except plastic and glass and to "pack out" all nonburnables (plastic, glass, tin cans, etc.). A plastic garbage bag for this purpose could be

provided to the user when registering for a campsite. All campers would be required to register at the park office prior to using the sites. Standard fees would be charged for these sites.

The proposed group camp to be constructed $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of Murphy Lake would accommodate 24 tent units. Facilities to be provided would consist of parking area for 20 cars, a 4-unit pit toilet and a well. With the snowmobile trail passing through the area it may be desirable to plan a shelter with removable sides for both summer and winter use.

3. Trails

Additional hiking trails will be necessary to accommodate walk-in camping.

All hiking trails will be constructed to conform with the Department of Natural Resources Trail Specifications Manual. A hiking trail to Red Granite will be constructed so the public can see this reach of the Bad River.

A more desirable trail potential exists just south of Murphy Lake and leads east to the pipeline right-of-way. Two problems must be overcome before this trail can be opened. First, an easement must be obtained from John Stilen to cross two parcels of his land ($SW\frac{1}{4} NE\frac{1}{4}$ and $NW\frac{1}{4} SW\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 19-T45N-R2W). Second, two bridges must be constructed one across the Bad River in $SW\frac{1}{4} NW\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 19-T45N-R2W and one across the Tyler Forks River, $SE\frac{1}{4} SE\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 17-T45N-R2W. Funding for bridge construction, signing, maintenance, etc., should be paid by the County Snowmobile Program, as this trail will become a vital link in the Ashland County snowmobile trail.

A crossing is to be constructed over the Bad River below Devil's Gate. This will connect the existing hiking trails on both sides of the river. Any temporary road constructed to move equipment and material to the construction site will be obliterated after completion of the project.

The steps on the north trail will be rebuilt after the crossing is completed.

4. Fishing Access

The road from Loon Lake to the Bad River should be 10-12' wide with 2' shoulders. The road would terminate in a 5-car parking lot at least $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the river.

5. Pedestrian Walk

Pedestrians moving between the campground and beach and day-use area walk the road because it is the easiest route between these two areas. A designated walk should be constructed to separate pedestrians and vehicles. A set of steps will also be necessary due to topography. Stop signs should be erected and crosswalks delineated at the intersections where pedestrians must cross. The walk will serve the new campground as well as the present campground, day-use area and beach.

6. Boundary Survey

The entire boundary of the park should be surveyed and all section corners and quarter corners on the boundary monumented. After the survey is completed the boundary should be brushed out. A minimum of two park boundary signs per quarter mile should be erected along the boundary.

7. Entrance Sign

A park entrance sign should be erected near the junction of the proposed entrance and Highway 169. All rock for the base should be native material.

8. Intrusions

A massive concrete generator house and an abutment exist on the Bad River in the NWSE of Section 30. This should be removed.

Electrical transmission lines crossing through the park should be rerouted around the park wherever possible or put underground. Service lines within the park should be buried.

IV. ACQUISITION

The total acreage presently owned at Copper Falls is 2,251.81 acres with an acquisition goal of 2,520 acres. Total acquisition costs as of December 31, 1974 are \$183,916.

1. Park Entrance

The forty acre parcel (NWNE, Sec. 29) now owned by Norbert Seipel is necessary to accommodate the planned new entrance. This tract is outside the present boundary. There are presently no improvements on the property and the current estimate for acquisition is about \$6,000.

2. Lands for Disposal

One forty acre tract (NWNE, Sec. 19) lies outside the boundary and is not needed to accomplish the goals or objectives of the project. It was acquired in a large land transaction in which the owner would sell only his entire holding. This forty acre tract can be used for trade for lands within the boundary.

3. Loon Lake Frontage

The following tracts having frontage on Loon should have acquisition priority:

		Est. Cost
Ashland County	Lot I	\$1,000
Robert Anderson	1 acre	\$35,000
Dulaney	Lot II	\$25,000
Brown	Lot 14	\$10,500
Peterson	Lot 2	\$11,000
Eauch	Lots 9 and 10	\$12,500
Wasgreen	Lot 7	\$6,000
Jelich	Non-platted track	\$1,500
John Stilen	40 acres	\$6,500
Murray	Lot 7 and Island	\$18,000

4. Other lands within the boundary to be acquired are:

		Est. Cost
Bidgood	40 acres	\$10,500
Doyle	40 acres	\$5,500
Primax Corp.	10 acres	\$3,000
Jelich	1 acre	\$2,100
DeGiovanni	80 acres	\$6,500
Border Land Co.	30 acres	\$8,000
John Stilen	80 acres	\$9,500

5. Boundary and Goal Changes

There is one forty (NENE, Sec. 8) acquired as part of a large acquisition that should now be included within the boundary and acreage goal since it has frontage on the Bad River. This tract, together with the tract needed for the new entrance (see item 1) will require a total increase in the acreage goal of 80 acres - from 2,520 to 2,600 acres. The accompanying changes in the project boundary should also be made.

V. ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

1. Operate the park in its present developed state.
2. Increase camping over and above what is included in goals and objectives.
3. Eliminate development and create a wild or wilderness situation.

VI. DEVELOPMENT COSTS

1. Existing

Total development cost since 1951	\$165,640
Present value of all park buildings	184,313

2. Proposed

Phase 1 (near future)

25 unit campground	\$ 52,630
bridge below Devil's Gate	25,000 (limit)
overlooks (2)	10,500
park entrance (road and PEVS) (Force acct. est.)	38,940
pedestrian walk and steps	5,000 (Bur. Est.)
managers projects	6,000
boundary survey	5,000
TOTAL	<u>\$143,070</u>

Phase 2 (future)

25 unit campground	\$ 52,630
back pack camping	3,000
outdoor group camp	37,500
fishermen parking lot and access road	10,000 (Bur. Est.)
managers projects	6,000
TOTAL	<u>\$109,130</u>

GRAND TOTAL \$252,200

VII. MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The person responsible for implementation of the master plan will be the forester-ranger-superintendent stationed at Copper Falls State Park.

CAMPGROUND ATTENDANCE

<u>Month</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Units Occupied</u>	<u>Percent of Sites Used*</u>	<u>Turnaways</u>
August	1974	935	89	220
July	1974	1,011	96	209
August	1973	911	86	186
July	1973	1,030	98	107
August	1972	865	82	N.A.
July	1972	932	88	116
August	1971	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
July	1971	986	94	226
August	1970	930	88	229
July	1970	975	93	134
August	1969	891	85	82
July	1969	900	85	N.A.
August	1968	879	83	49
July	1968	918	87	39
TOTALS		12,163		1,597
	Average Use		89%	

*34 campsites at Copper Falls Park