

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Madison, Wisconsin

*Bd. action
Jan. 1976
reduces acreage
goal from 440 to 160.
Date December 17, 1975.*

ITEM RECOMMENDED FOR NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA

TO THE SECRETARY: Anthony S. Earl

FROM: D. J. Mackie

SUBJECT: Master Planning - preliminary review of conceptual master plan for Thunder Mountain State Park, Marinette County.

1. To be presented at January Board meeting by Don Mackie.

2. Appearances requested by the public:

Name

Representing whom?

3. Reference materials to be used:

Attached draft of the Thunder Mountain State Park conceptual plan element of the master plan.

4. Summary: To more effectively guide long-range planning for Department properties, a draft of the conceptual plan is submitted for preliminary consideration with final action at the February meeting.

The draft conceptual plan for Thunder Mountain follows the management and development philosophy which was presented to the Board at the November meeting. It contains the goals and objectives for the property, provides additional information relating to resource capabilities, long-range resource and recreation needs and management policies. Approval of a conceptual plan will finalize property goals and objectives and permit preparation of the detailed action program (or implementation element) of the master plan.

5. Recommendation:

Preliminary review and discussion of the conceptual master plan APPROVED: with approval at the February meeting.

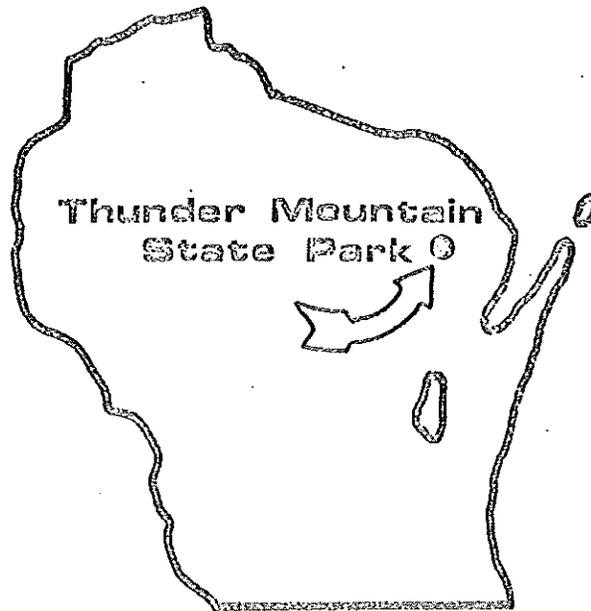
John A. Beale 1/2/76
Mr. Beale Administrator Date

Anthony S. Earl 1/5/76
Secretary Administrator Date

Signed: D. J. Mackie
D. J. Mackie, Director
Bureau of Parks & Recreation

- cc: Miss Kora - 14
- D. W. Koukol - 8
- E. R. Miller - 9
- Cliff Germain - 9
- J. L. Treichel - 8
- D. L. Weizenicker - 8
- S. G. DeBoer - Green Bay

CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN FOR THUNDER MOUNTAIN STATE PARK



Assigned Planner or Property Task Force
Management and Development Philosophy
Approved by Natural Resources Board
Conceptual Plan Approved by Natural
Resources Board

D. L. Aslakson

November 1975

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The 160-acre Thunder Mountain State Park is located in the SE¼ of Section 30, Township 33 North, Range 18 East, Stephenson Township, Marinette County.

The property was established by legislative action in 1965. On August 31, 1967, the Department of Natural Resources was given approval to purchase from Walter and Florence Sutter 160 acres of land for Thunder Mountain State Park. On September 26, 1967, the State exercised its option. Shortly thereafter, it was discovered that the owners had caused timber to be cut on the land, and the State withheld disbursement of the ownership payment. On June 18, 1969, the Sutters gave notice to the State that they elected to terminate the contract and commenced legal action against the State, claiming a breach of the option to purchase. The State counterclaimed on the ground that the Sutters were in unlawful possession of the property and that they had cut timber after the option. Following a court trial, the circuit court awarded the decision in favor of the Sutter family, but on November 20, 1972, the State Supreme Court reversed the decision of the trial court. A motion for a rehearing was denied on January 30, 1973. On October 16, 1973, the Sutter family filed an amended complaint, which was denied on January 3, 1974. An appeal by the Sutters was turned down by the Supreme Court on September 30, 1975. Since that time, a motion for a rehearing by the Sutters has been granted by the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

C. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

Provide the citizens of Wisconsin a quality day-use facility emphasizing picnicking, hiking and scenic overlook.

Objectives

1. Provide facilities for 15,000 man-days of use in a variety of activities
 - a. Picnicking 10,000
 - b. Hiking 2,000
 - c. Scenic overlook from observation tower 2,000
 - d. Nature lore 1,000
2. Preserve and enhance the natural features of the site through minimal vegetative management.
3. Preserve the natural habitat for present wildlife species.

4. Provide the necessary protective measures to serve the park and its visitors.
5. Manage animal species and their habitat for maximum enjoyment by park visitors.

D. OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

1. No action. This alternative would be contrary to legislative action (1965) which established the State Park.
2. Increase development through an increase in the project acreage. This alternative is contrary to the type of development suitable to the site and could not be justified on the basis of priority and need Statewide.
3. Increase development within the project's existing acreage. The site's size dictates limitations on the type of development appropriate.
4. Reduce costs by not building the observation tower. This would greatly reduce the effectiveness of the project. The outstanding feature of the site is its view, and to not utilize it would be illogical.
5. Develop as a county park. The county has a rather extensive park system, but there are no State Parks in northeastern Wisconsin.

E. RESOURCE CAPABILITY

1. Soils and Geology

a. Soils

The soils of the site are basically Coloma Fine Sand and Coloma Fine Sandy Loam. Because of the glacial origin, the depth of the soil layers varies considerably in some places giving way to plentiful stones and boulders.

The soils are generally yellowish-brown in color, low in organic content, and well-drained to excessively well-drained. The soils are also easily erodible, low in fertility, and rolling to hilly.

The best use for the Coloma fine sand is in extensive recreation or woodland with white pine being predominant and some Norway pine being the original vegetation. The Coloma fine sandy loam also has woodland or extensive recreation as its best use with a combination of white and Norway pine and hardwoods of white birch and red oak being the original vegetation.

b. Geology

The Thunder Mountain site is located atop a quartzite monadnock, which rises approximately 500 feet above the surrounding peneplain of the Northern Highland. The monadnock is one of the more conspicuous remainders of an old mountain mass that makes up the Northern Highland and was covered by the Green Bay Lake of the Wisconsinan Glacier. The site is part of a pitted outwash plain and is located less than 5 miles southeast of the western terminal moraines of the Green Bay Lake.

2. Wildlife

Mammals that may occur on the site are white-tailed deer, black bear, red and gray fox, opossum, skunk, cottontail rabbit, fox and gray squirrel, raccoon, woodchuck, and striped ground squirrel. There are no endangered species.

A significant number of birds, primarily migratory types, are likely to frequent the site. There are two species on the endangered list that may be seen in the vicinity, the eagle and the osprey, and it is more likely they will be seen in the area of Caldron and High Falls Reservoirs, approximately five miles to the east and north, than on Thunder Mountain.

3. Vegetative Cover

Because prior use of the site was for farming, a significant percentage of the property is abandoned field. Sixty percent of the site is wooded and most of this is located on the northern and eastern one-third of the ownership. It is in this location that the land begins sloping away from the relatively flat 40% former farm fields.

Approximately 60% of the wooded acreage consists of a mixture of oak and northern hardwood. Another 25% consists of a mixture of northern hardwood and aspen. Approximately 10% of the cover is oak woods and the remaining 5% consists of some hemlock-hardwood and grass. Logging has occurred on the site several years ago.

4. Water Resources

There are no water features on the property.

5. Historical and Archaeological Features

There are no known historical or archaeological features of significance on the site. If, during construction any discoveries are made, action will be stopped, the Historical

Society notified, the site properly excavated and decision made on whether to continue construction or relocate.

In areas not subject to construction activity, the Department will cooperate with the State Historical Society in its investigation of nearby sites.

6. Ownership

The entire 160-acre property is owned by the Department. There are no plans to expand the property goal beyond 160 acres. The site is now closed pending completion of the master plan.

7. Current Use

The site is closed pending completion of the master plan.

8. Land Use Potential

See accompanying development plan.

F. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREAS

The site is located away from convenient administrative control access which will require patrol and maintenance of the property by an LTE park manager.

The property is expected to be closed during the winter with only occasional patrol by permanent personnel.

G. LONG-RANGE RESOURCES, RECREATION NEEDS AND JUSTIFICATIONS

The Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Plan, 1972 for Region 9 states that though picnicking and hiking opportunities are adequate, a need exists for quality picnic areas with complementary support facilities and the construction of properly laid out, well signed and interesting trails of adequate length. The plan also states that one of the primary objectives is to promote the preservation of scenic resources by the selection of high quality sites. In addition, there appears to be substantial support on the State, county and local levels for establishing a State Park facility in Region 9.

H. ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

1. No action. This would be contrary to legislative action (1965) authorizing establishment of the park. To allow the land to remain idle might be a valid approach if the property was considered a fragile and undisturbed natural area.

2. Increase development through an increase in the project acreage. This alternative is contrary to the type of development suitable to the site. There are better project potentials elsewhere in the area for large scale development. Any feasible additional acquisition would have to occur to the north and west of the site. Purchase and approval of these lands may prove difficult.
3. Increased development within the project's existing acreage. The site is not large enough to provide for camping and is incapable of supporting more than one trail system. Because of the site's attributes and limitations, it is felt that a hiking trail in support of the picnicking and observation tower would be the highest and best use.
4. Reduce costs by not building the observation tower. This action would greatly reduce the effectiveness of the project goal. The outstanding feature of the proposed park is its elevation and view of the surrounding countryside, particularly to the north and east, and to not enhance it by a tower would be illogical.
5. Develop as a county park. Marinette County has an extensive park system and there are no State Parks in northeastern Wisconsin. This action would be contrary to the 1965 legislative decision establishing the site as a State Park.

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The recommended action for Thunder Mountain State Park is to develop a quality, day-use, seasonal facility for approximately 15,000 man-days of recreation.

The facility will be managed under the supervision of the Wausaukee Ranger Station by a Forest Ranger I. Yearly maintenance and operations costs will be approximately \$12,000.

Total cost of development including 15% engineering and contingency will be approximately \$110,000.