

Upper Sioux Agency State Park Management Plan



**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks and Trails**

July 2009



**Department of Natural Resources Approval
of Management Plan for Upper Sioux Agency State Park**

Minnesota Statutes 86A.09, Subdivision 1, requires that a master plan be prepared for units of Minnesota's outdoor recreation system, including state parks and state recreation areas. The Laws of Minnesota for 1963 established Upper Sioux Agency State Park as part of Minnesota's Outdoor Recreation System (MS 85.012, Subd. 58).

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources worked in partnership with Minnesota citizens and an interdisciplinary resource team to develop a management plan for Upper Sioux Agency.

The management plan was approved by the Division of Parks and Trails management team, and was approved through the DNR Regional Interdisciplinary Review Service (RIRS) during January 2009.

Mark Holsten

6/29/09

Mark Holsten, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Date



Upper Sioux Agency State Park Management Plan



State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks & Trails

This management plan has been prepared as required by 2003 Minnesota Laws Chapter 86A.09 Subdivision 1.

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The development of this plan was greatly assisted by the members of the Upper Sioux Agency Citizen Advisory Committee and the Resource Management Advisory Team, who donated many hours of their time to help analyze and discuss the current park issues, and make management recommendations.

For more information on this management plan, please contact the DNR Division of Parks and Trails at (651) 259-5600.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan sets the general direction for the management of Upper Sioux Agency State Park for the next twenty years. These recommendations are the result of a partnership-based planning process involving a local advisory committee consisting of recreational users, members of the public, the Upper Sioux Community (Dakota American Indians), Minnesota Historical Society staff, park staff, and others. The recommendations are not intended to provide specific management or development details but to provide general guidelines and recommendations for the future park staff and visitors.

Park Description

Upper Sioux Agency State Park, located eight miles southeast of Granite Falls in southwestern Minnesota, provides a wide range of recreational opportunities and an excellent diversity of natural communities along the Minnesota River. In 1963, the Minnesota State Legislature established Upper Sioux Agency State Park to preserve and interpret the remains of the agency site. Today the park contains 1,280 acres. The original 19.3 acres containing the historic Upper Sioux Agency site was transferred to the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) in 1969.

Recreational facilities in the park include 18 miles of hiking and 16.5 miles of horseback riding trails, three campgrounds, two rental tipis, two picnic grounds, a visitor center, skiing, snowmobile trails, and a winter sledding hill. Other activities in the park include canoeing, river fishing, and many interpretive opportunities. The park staff also maintains the Joseph R. Brown State Wayside Rest. The wayside is eight miles downstream and consists of 3.2 acres including historic ruins and surrounding landscape.

Community Relations Recommendations

- Cooperate with local agencies and landowners to connect the park to Granite Falls and the Upper Sioux Community by way of the legislatively authorized Minnesota River State Trail. This will be an asset to citizens and businesses of Granite Falls.
- Promote the beauty of the park and the abundant bird watching opportunities therein. Promote the modern campground and the tipis to draw in new users and increase the campground occupancy rate.

Natural Resources Recommendations

- Pursue prairie or savanna reconstruction in areas of the park that were historically prairie or savanna. Areas of the park that are adjacent to remnant prairies are the first priority for restoration. The second priority is the reconstruction of old fields.
- Remove or control invasive exotic species by utilizing best management practices and integrated pest management techniques. Seek a variety of methods to remove problem native vegetation in the park including red cedar, sumac, and box elder.
- Manage white-tailed deer populations to control impacts on native vegetation.
- Restore the floodplain wetlands to provide additional habitat for shorebirds and other wetland species. Actions include completing a soil inventory, developing a restoration plan for the large wetland east of the boat landing, and controlling invasive reed-canary grass populations.
- Use energy-efficient designs and practices for current park facilities and for future development. Conservation efforts may include: fuel-efficient vehicles, clean fuel use, energy efficient office equipment and appliances, energy-conservation in buildings, and landscaping designs that reduce the need for mowing.
- Conduct a comprehensive plant and animal species inventory within the park to establish a baseline inventory that will assist in the development of priorities for managing and restoring flora and fauna. The inventory will also provide valuable information for evaluating potential facility sites and recreational use areas.

Cultural Resources Recommendations

- Conduct a cultural resource survey to inventory known cultural sites within the state park.
- Develop cultural resource materials for the Joseph R. Brown State Wayside Rest related to the role of Joseph Brown and his home in the larger context of the U.S.–Dakota War of 1862.
- Develop cultural resource materials that link Upper Sioux Agency State Park, the Wood Lake Battle site and other local sites Interpretation of the Wood Lake Battlefield Site and incorporate them into the state park interpretive efforts.
- Work with MHS and other appropriate partners to actively manage the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site. The 2012 U.S.-Dakota War sesquicentennial provides an opportunity to bring attention to the site and related historic areas.
- Develop a cooperative agreement which details access to traditional cultural properties within the park (including gathering, harvesting and ceremonial use).

Interpretive Services Recommendations

- Improve the existing visitor center with up-to-date exhibits and improvements to the meeting room. Include child-oriented exhibits and interactive exhibits. Remove the ice and pop vending machines from the main entrance corridor of the visitor center. The artificially constructed earthen mound in front of the visitor center should be removed to improve visibility.
- Consider a new combined visitor center and contact station. A building site plan will be needed to evaluate the best location. At this time, the recommended site is near the present location.
- Work with MHS to produce and install outdoor non-personal interpretive signs for the historic agency site. Determine if the MHS slideshow programs on the historic agency site are still appropriate for use.

Recreational Uses and Visitor Services Recommendations

- Increase visibility and traffic flow at the main park entrance by reconfiguring the entrance road and signs. Improve the landscaping, remove the hill around the visitor center, and reconfigure the parking lot.
- Develop a sanitation building in the horse camp.
- Add camper cabins and/or more tipis to offer additional recreational opportunities.
- Install a fish cleaning facility.
- Construct a new visitor center and contact station in the next 20 years.
- Construct a dump station in the main campground.
- Develop a short hiking trail from the campground area to the Yellow Medicine River.
- Connect state park trails to Skalbekken County Park to provide additional hiking, horseback riding and bicycle trail opportunities.

Park Boundary Recommendations

- The top land acquisition or easement priority is to connect the state park trails to the Skalbekken Renville County Park. The connecting land is already in the park statutory boundary.
- Work with landowners along both sides of the Yellow Medicine River regarding potential inclusion in the park's boundary. Acquisition of this land would protect the park's viewshed, protect native plant communities and water quality in the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota rivers, and provide additional trail opportunities.
- Work with landowners south of Highway 67 regarding potential inclusion in the park's boundary to create additional trail opportunities and expand prairie restoration efforts. Acquisition of this land would also ease boundary identification and help avoid future trespass issues.

Park Operations Recommendations

- Seek funding for additional staff hours, mainly to account for additional maintenance hours for facilities such as the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site and the extension of the Minnesota River State Trail.

INTRODUCTION

Park Description

In 1963, the Minnesota State Legislature created Upper Sioux Agency State Park to preserve and interpret the remains of the Upper Sioux Agency site. The agency site was originally established by the United States federal government in 1854 to be one of two centers for administering the terms of treaties and for instructing the Dakota people in Euro-American way-of-life, including agricultural practices. The Upper Sioux Agency site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Gradually, additional land was added to the park boundary. The state park statutory currently encompasses 1,280.69 acres, of which 1,065.69 acres is managed by the DNR Division of Parks and Trails. The original 19-acre agency site was transferred to MHS in 1969. The agency site employee duplex was reconstructed and archaeological survey work was completed. MHS interpreters staffed the building and programs were offered on a regular basis. However in 1986, MHS closed the agency site because of budget constraints. MHS currently does not staff or maintain the site.

High bluff prairies, oak savannas, and floodplains characterize the vegetation of the state park. The state park contains 130 acres of remnant prairie. Controlling exotic species including Canada thistle, European buckthorn, and hairy vetch in the prairie areas is an important resource management issue for the state park. A prairie reconstruction project just east of the visitor center was begun in 2004. The state park also contains areas of old growth bur oaks. Species inventories have been conducted for some plants, reptiles, amphibians, and birds that inhabit the state park. The inventories show that the state park supports a good diversity of species.

The Minnesota and Yellow Medicine rivers meet in the park. Flooding and eroded banks are concerns along both rivers. In the state park, as in other areas along the Minnesota River, red cedar, sumac and hardwoods are invading native prairies.

Archaeological and historical sites are found within the state park and the surrounding area. The Minnesota and Yellow Medicine river valleys have a long history of habitation by American Indians and later by European-American settlers as well. In addition to the agency site, the state park contains numerous archaeological sites including burial sites and mounds.

Upper Sioux Agency State Park offers many recreational opportunities including hiking and horseback riding trails, picnicking, a variety of camping facilities, canoeing, fishing, and a sledding hill. The state park has three campgrounds: a semi-modern campground with a sanitation building, a rustic campground on the Minnesota River, and a horse campground.

The state park also maintains the Joseph R. Brown State Wayside. The 3.2-acre site contains historic ruins and surrounding landscape located 8 miles southeast of Upper Sioux Agency State Park.

Legislative History

1963 chapter 790, article 5, section 1, subd. 1 (5): Upper Sioux Agency State Park is created and \$30,000 appropriated for land acquisition.

1969 chapter 524, section 2: Boundary expansion.

1969 chapter 956, section 1, subd. 4: Transfers administration of 19.3-acre historic site to the Minnesota Historical Society

1969 chapter 1029, section 1, subd, 3: Boundary expansion.

1971 chapter 859, section 1, subd. 12: Boundary expansion.

Role of Upper Sioux Agency State Park in the State Park System

The park's historic sites play an important role in protecting and preserving Minnesota's cultural history.

- Artifacts found in the area indicate American Indian people lived in the Minnesota River valley for thousands of years.
- The purpose of the Upper Sioux Agency was to administer terms of the treaties and teach the Dakota people the Euro-American way of life.
- In connection with other state parks and historic sites in the Minnesota River valley, the park tells the broader story of the US-Dakota War of 1862 and the Dakota people.
- The park offers many other historical themes including: fur trading posts, early European settlers, farming practices and extensive pre-European archaeological sites.

The park preserves significant riverine and prairie resources along the Minnesota and Yellow Medicine rivers.

- Rapids and pools provide a variety of habitats for aquatic life in the rivers.
- The park offers excellent views of the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota River valleys, and uninterrupted prairie views.
- Because of its topography and location along the Minnesota River flyway, the park is an excellent place to watch spring and fall bird migrations.
- Prairie wildflowers can be seen blooming spring through autumn.
- The park contains important geologic features including ground moraines, terraces, alluvial deposits, shark teeth, and petrified wood fragments.

The park provides an oasis for recreational and educational opportunities in a predominately agricultural area of the state.

- The park offers excellent fishing, canoeing, and seasonal whitewater opportunities. There are few landings on the Minnesota River and the park provides one of the best.
- The park will likely be a trailhead for the legislatively authorized Minnesota River State Trail.
- The park offers diverse camping facilities including semi-modern camping with/without electricity, walk-in sites, tipi rentals, and horse camping.
- The park has outstanding horseback riding trails.
- The park provides a strong educational niche with a good location. The Pezuta Zizi Cultural and Environmental Learning Center is based in the park and offers many educational resources.
- Upper Sioux Agency State Park plays a major role in regional tourism efforts including the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway and the Prairie Passages tour route.

Mission and Vision Statements

DNR Mission Statement

To work with citizens to protect and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.

DNR Division of Parks and Recreation Mission (predecessor to Division of Parks and Trails)

To work with the people of Minnesota to provide a state park system which preserves and manages Minnesota's natural, scenic, and cultural resources for present and future generations while providing appropriate recreational and educational opportunities.

Upper Sioux Agency State Park Mission Statement

To work with local residents and other interested parties to preserve and manage Upper Sioux Agency's natural, scenic, and cultural resources for present and future generations, while providing appropriate recreational and educational opportunities.

Upper Sioux Agency State Park 20-Year Vision Statement

Management decisions for the park will be guided by the following principles:

- Visitors will see the park as a place where people can connect with the past. Interpretation and education will be strengthened and expanded on the natural, cultural, historical, and archaeological significance of Upper Sioux Agency State Park through a variety of interpretive services and facilities.
- The historic Upper Sioux Agency site will be re-opened for interpretation through cooperative efforts with the Minnesota Historical Society.
- The natural communities found in the park (such as the prairie, oak savanna, and floodplain forests) will be preserved, restored, managed, and interpreted.
- The ecological integrity of the river corridors, the river confluence, and its associated plant and animal communities – which are of statewide significance – will be preserved.
- Sweeping views of the prairies and river valleys will be preserved.
- Opportunities to experience quiet, solitude, open spaces, and dark night skies will be preserved.
- Appropriate recreational opportunities will be provided. Upper Sioux Agency State Park and the Renville County Skalbekken Park will develop a trail that connects the two parks.
- Expansion of the park boundaries will be considered to provide additional resource protection and recreational opportunities.

Upper Sioux Agency State Park Goals

- To follow resource management practices that focus on ecosystems and natural communities rather than single species management.
- To maintain scenic aspects of the river corridor by keeping the view from the river surface as wild and natural as possible.
- To increase educational opportunities according to Division and unit interpretive plans.
- To provide recreational opportunities, buildings, and facilities compatible with the park's natural and cultural resources.
- To provide a diversity of trail opportunities – from remote to multi-use recreational trails – that are compatible with the resources; to provide appropriate access to the proposed network of local recreational trails.
- To provide camping facilities which provide services for a variety of camping styles, and that complement existing camping facilities in the area.
- To enhance day use of the park, especially by maximizing opportunities for wildlife watching, and interpreting wildflower/biological diversity and historical tour opportunities.
- To cooperate with the Upper Sioux Community and others on resource management, recreational opportunities, interpretation, cultural projects, and other programs.

- To preserve the cultural resource sites of the park.
- To preserve the cultural landscape of the historic Upper Sioux Agency site.

Unit Planning Process

In August 2004, a public news release announced the beginning of the planning process. A citizen advisory committee was formed to help identify issues and review recommendations brought forward during the planning process. The committee included individuals representing many groups, including:

Local government officials	Area businesses
Adjacent landowners	Environmental and wildlife interests
Upper Sioux Community	Recreation interests
Minnesota Historical society	Local legislators

Meetings were held to discuss major planning issues on the following dates. All meetings were advertised and open to the public:

Aug. 17, 2004	Park issues, mission, vision, goals, and natural resource management issues
Sept. 21, 2004	Cultural resource management issues and interpretive services
Oct. 19, 2004	Recreational use and visitor services
Nov. 16, 2004	Land management, boundaries and acquisition

The Department of Natural Resources formed a Resource Management Advisory Team (RMAT) to assist in developing this park plan. This professional team included representatives from various DNR Divisions including Forestry, Fish and Wildlife, Enforcement, and Waters, as well as the Minnesota Historical Society. The RMAT met formally on June 2, 2004 and December 7, 2004. Members attended the Citizens Advisory Committee meetings and Open Houses that were appropriate to their discipline. The DNR Regional Internal Review System (RIRS) approved the plan in December 2005.

The recommendations in this plan are the result of this partnership-based planning process. This plan provides the basic management direction for the park and is not intended to provide specific management or development details.

This comprehensive management plan replaces the Upper Sioux Agency State Park management plan completed in and approved in 1983. A comprehensive park plan and planning process file documenting the 2004-2005 planning process and pertinent background information will be distributed to the following locations: Upper Sioux Agency State Park, Southern Region Parks and Trails Manager, and Division Planning Section (St. Paul). Copies of the management plan will be available from the DNR Library and DNR Division of Parks and Trails Central Office, both in St. Paul.

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Regional Landscape Description

Minnesota's Ecological Classification System (ECS) is part of a nationwide mapping initiative developed to improve the management of natural resources on a sustainable basis. ECS integrates climatic, geologic, hydrologic and topographic, soil and vegetation data to convey basic information about the biological and physical characteristics of the landscape. ECS divides Minnesota into 24 distinct units called subsections.

Upper Sioux Agency State Park falls into the Minnesota River Prairie subsection (see Map 1: Ecological Subsections). This subsection consists of a gently rolling ground moraine about 60 miles wide. The Minnesota River occupies a broad valley that splits the subsection in half. The valley was created by Glacial River Warren, which drained Glacial Lake Agassiz. Loamy ground moraine (till plain) is the dominant landform, but end moraines and lake plains also occupy a significant area. Well to moderately well drained loamy soils formed in gray calcareous till of the Des Moines Lobe origin are dominant. Some soils are clayey and locally there are sandy and gravelly soils, but these account for only a small percentage of the subsection.

This subsection is drained by the Minnesota River. Most smaller rivers and streams eventually empty into the Minnesota or the Upper Iowa rivers. Wetlands were very common before settlement, though most of them have been drained and used for crop production.

The pre-European vegetation was primarily tallgrass prairie, with many "islands" of wet prairie. Forests of silver maple, elm, cottonwood, and willow grew on floodplains along the Minnesota River and other streams. Portions of the Big Stone Moraine supported dry and dry-mesic prairie. There were also dry gravel prairies on kames. American Indians also influenced the pre-European vegetation, primarily through fire.

Today, agriculture is the dominant land use. Land use around Upper Sioux Agency State Park is primarily agricultural. Corn and soybeans are grown on approximately 82% of cropped land; small grains, hay, and grasslands enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) make up the majority of the balance. There are approximately one million cattle and three million hogs on farms in the Minnesota River basin. Remnant stands of tallgrass prairie are rare.

Regional Population Analysis

Upper Sioux Agency State Park is located in Yellow Medicine County and bordering Renville County across the Minnesota River. The 2000 Census recorded populations of 11,080 for Yellow Medicine County and 17,154 for Renville County. The population of both counties is expected to remain stable over the next several decades. By 2030, Yellow Medicine County's population is projected to be 10,940, or a decrease of 1% since 2000, while Renville County's population is projected to be 17,520, an increase of 2%.

In comparison, Minnesota's population as a whole is projected to increase 27% by 2030 with much of the increase anticipated in the suburban counties surrounding the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area and the St. Cloud to Rochester corridors, and in the retiree-popular lakes area counties.

The state's population in the future will be older on average as well. The median age will rise from 35.4 years in 2000 to 40.2 years in 2030. Rural areas like Yellow Medicine and Renville counties will also see less of an increase – as a percent of the population - of older people than rapidly growing areas.

Regional Recreation and Tourism Opportunities

There are a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities surrounding Upper Sioux Agency State Park (see Map 2: 50-Mile Radius of Recreation Opportunities).

State Parks and State Waysides

There are six state parks and one state wayside within 50 miles of Upper Sioux Agency State Park including Camden State Park, Fort Ridgely State Park, Lac qui Parle State Park, Lake Shetek State Park, Monson Lake State Park, Sibley State Park, and Joseph R. Brown State Wayside. Recreation opportunities available in one or more of these units include hiking, biking, horseback riding, camping, wildlife watching, interpretive programs, and water accesses.

Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA)

There are six SNAs within 50 miles of Upper Sioux Agency State Park including Blue Devil Valley SNA, Gneiss Outcrops SNA, Cottonwood River Prairie SNA, Mound Springs Prairie SNA, Rock Ridge Prairie SNA, and Swede's Forest – Homme-Kolin Unit SNA. SNAs offer nature viewing and wildlife watching opportunities.

Wildlife Management Areas (WMA)

There are nearly 300 WMAs within 50 miles of Upper Sioux Agency State Park. These units offer hunting opportunities, as well as wildlife watching and nature viewing.

State Trails

Portions of four state trails lie within 50 miles of Upper Sioux Agency State Park including the Casey Jones State Trail, Glacial Lakes State Trail, Luce Line State Trail, and the Minnesota River State Trail. The Minnesota River State Trail will pass through Upper Sioux Agency State Park when completed. The trail segment from Montevideo to Wegdahl is currently open for use. These trails support hiking, biking, in-line skating, horseback riding, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing along various trail segments.

County and Local Parks

There are 33 county parks within 50 miles of Upper Sioux Agency State Park, of which three offer camping. The closest one is Renville County's Skalbekken County Park, a 550-acre park just east across the Minnesota River from the state park. The county park offers camping, picnicking, fishing, hiking and horseback riding opportunities. Several cities in the area also have park systems, including Granite Falls and Redwood Falls.

Scenic Byways

The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway, designated in 1996, extends 287 miles from West Browns Valley on the Minnesota/South Dakota border to Belle Plaine.

Canoeing and Boating

There are many lakes near Upper Sioux Agency State Park available for canoeing and boating. There are 181 water access sites with 50 miles of the park. Four rivers within the 50 mile area are designated boating and canoeing routes: the Chippewa River, the Cottonwood River, the Des Moines River, the Pomme de Terre River, and the Minnesota River. Upper Sioux Agency State Park is along a stretch of the Minnesota River that is designated a state wild and scenic river.

Other Day Use Activities

There are several other recreational and educational opportunities available near the state park:

The Yellow Medicine County Historical Museum - The County Historical Museum is located in Granite Falls. The museum displays geology, archaeology and American Indian artifacts. Exhibits illustrate the life of the early settlers and their progress through the pioneer years. There is an authentic log cabin and church on the site.

Wood Lake Battlefield Monument - The monument is located on County Road 18 between Granite Falls and Echo. The site commemorates the Battle of Wood Lake fought on September 23, 1862 between the forces of Colonel Sibley and Little Crow. This was the site of the last battle of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. A granite monument was erected by the state in 1910 in the memory of those who died in this battle. The one-acre site is administered by MHS, however most of the actual battlefield is in private ownership.

Andrew J. Volstead House Museum - Located in Granite Falls, this site is a National Historic Landmark. From 1894 to 1930, this was the home of Andrew J. Volstead (1860-1947). Volstead served in the House of Representatives (1903-23), where he drafted the National Prohibition Enforcement Act (1919), which became known as the Volstead Act. The house is now the office of the Granite Falls Economic Development Authority and has one room dedicated as a museum to Volstead.

Minnesota's Machinery Museum - Located south of the park near Hanley Falls, the museum houses one of the largest collections of farm machinery in Minnesota, including a farm kitchen, parlor, bedroom, a turn-of-the-century blacksmith shop, and general store. There is a collection of vintage automobiles, restored gas engines, and tractors dating back to 1912. The area also offers picnic grounds and six campsites.

Rudi Memorial - Located on Renville Co. 15 South of Sacred Heart, the memorial is an original log cabin built in 1868 by an early settler of the area. Today, the cabin houses photos, household articles, and tools from the 1800s.

Visitor Use Patterns

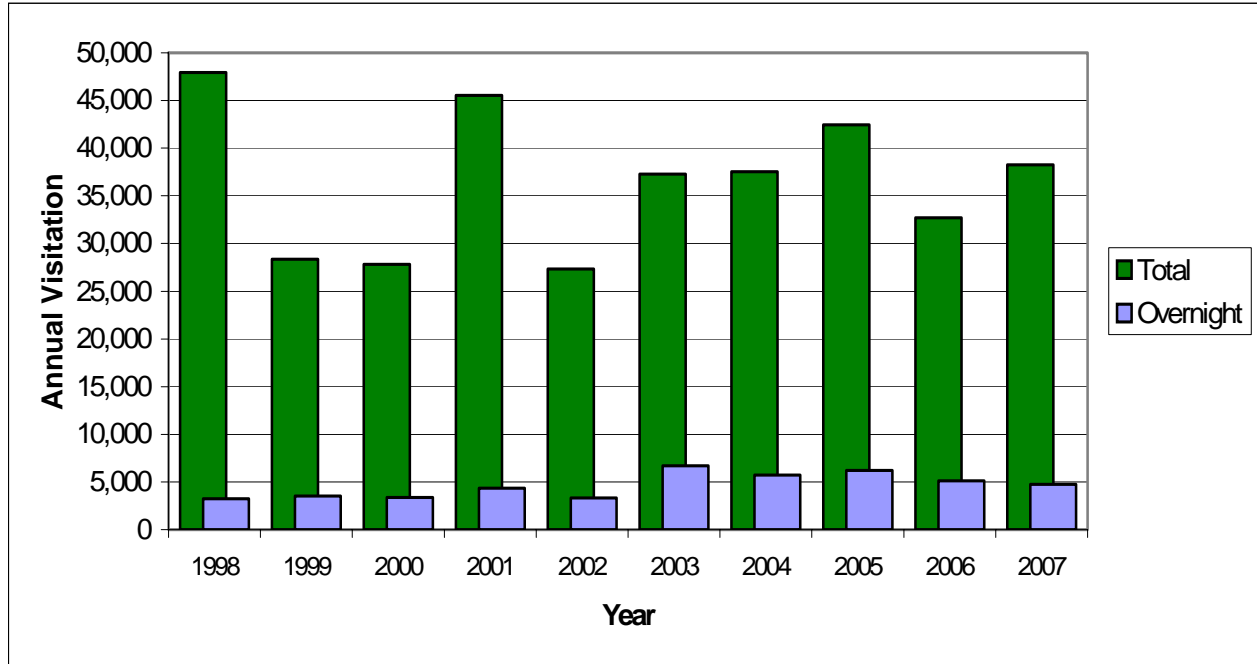
During the last ten years annual attendance has varied from 26,000 to nearly 48,000 (see Table 1: Upper Sioux Agency State Park Annual Attendance, 1998 – 2007). Visitation at Upper Sioux Agency State Park, like many other parks, is very weather dependent. Average visitation over the 10-year period is 36,329 total visits, with 4,508 overnight visits. Overnight visits have increased during the ten-year period, more than doubling since 1998.

Although a formal survey of visitors to Upper Sioux Agency State Park has not been conducted, valuable information about park visitors can be gathered from the interpretive center guest register, camp comment cards, and park staff. Based on these sources, the following visitor profile and patterns can be described. Most of the visitors come from within 40 miles of the park. Activities most visitors report participating in are horseback riding, fishing, camping, and hiking in the summer; winter activities include sledding, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing.



Rustic campsite along the Minnesota River

Table 1: Upper Sioux Agency State Park Annual Attendance 1998 - 2007



Community Relations Recommendations

A. Cooperative Tourism

- Cooperate with local agencies and landowners to connect the park to Granite Falls and the Upper Sioux Community by way of the legislatively authorized Minnesota River State Trail. This will be an asset to citizens and businesses of Granite Falls.
- Investigate sponsoring appropriate cultural and special events, in cooperation with the Upper Sioux Community and other partners.
- Improve highway signage on nearby highways to better direct tourists to the Upper Sioux Agency State Park, Joseph R. Brown State Wayside Rest, and the Wood Lake Monument.
- Expand tourism efforts to include the communities of Echo, Wood Lake, Clarkfield, and Granite Falls.





B. Park Marketing

- Promote the beauty of the park and the abundant bird watching opportunities therein.
- Promote the modern campground and the tipis to draw in new users and increase the campground occupancy rate.
- If/when the connection between Upper Sioux Agency State Park and Renville County Skalbekken Park is completed, promote the longer horse trail system.

Upper Sioux Agency State Park

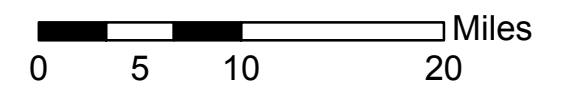
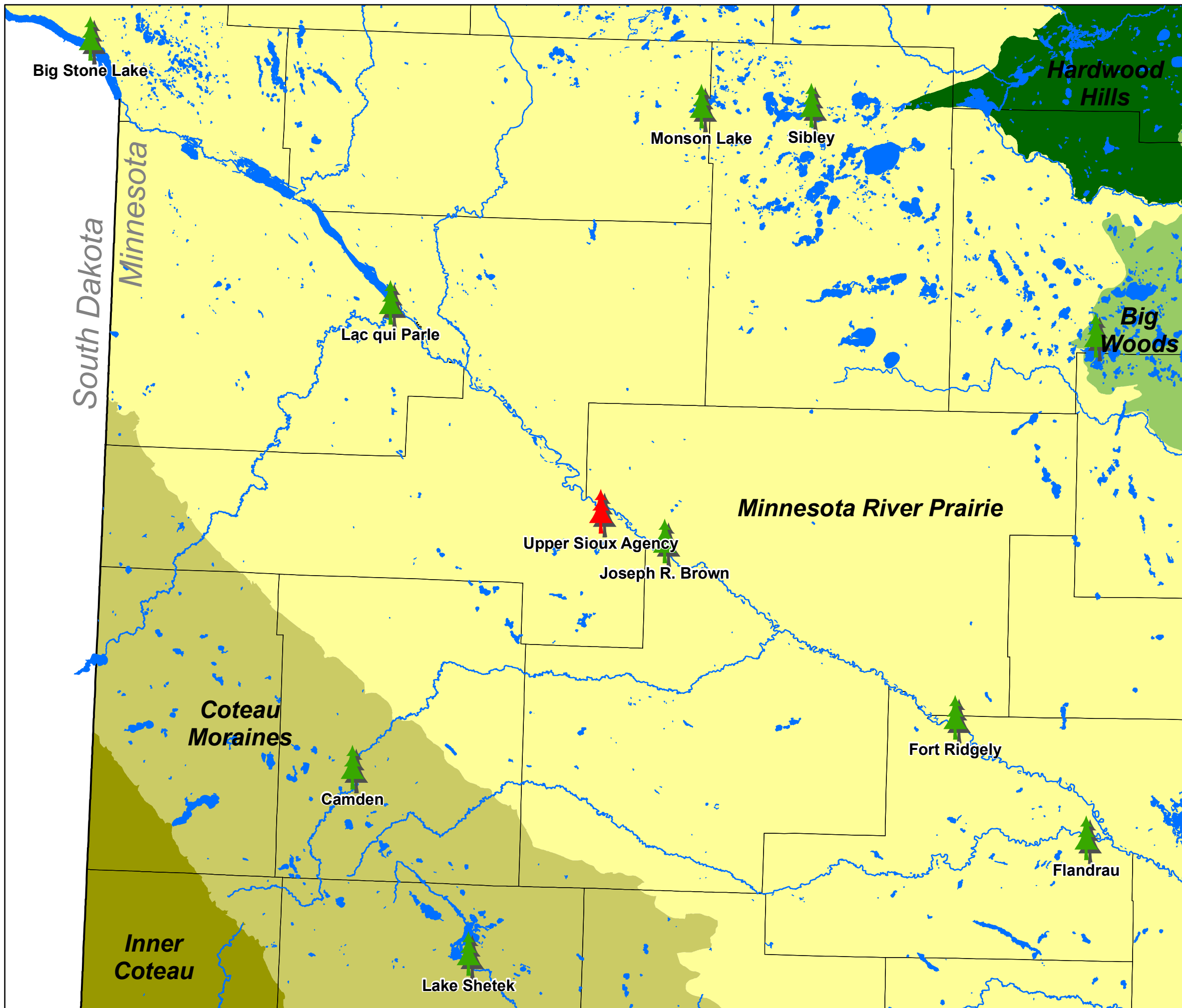
Map 1 - Ecological Subsections

Legend

-  Upper Sioux Agency State Park
-  Other State Parks, SRAs, and State Waysides
-  County Boundaries
-  Lakes and Rivers

Ecological Subsections of Minnesota









-  Hardwood Hills
-  Minnesota River Prairie
-  Big Woods
-  Inner Coteau
-  Coteau Moraines





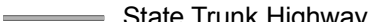
Upper Sioux Agency State Park

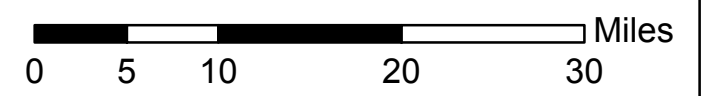
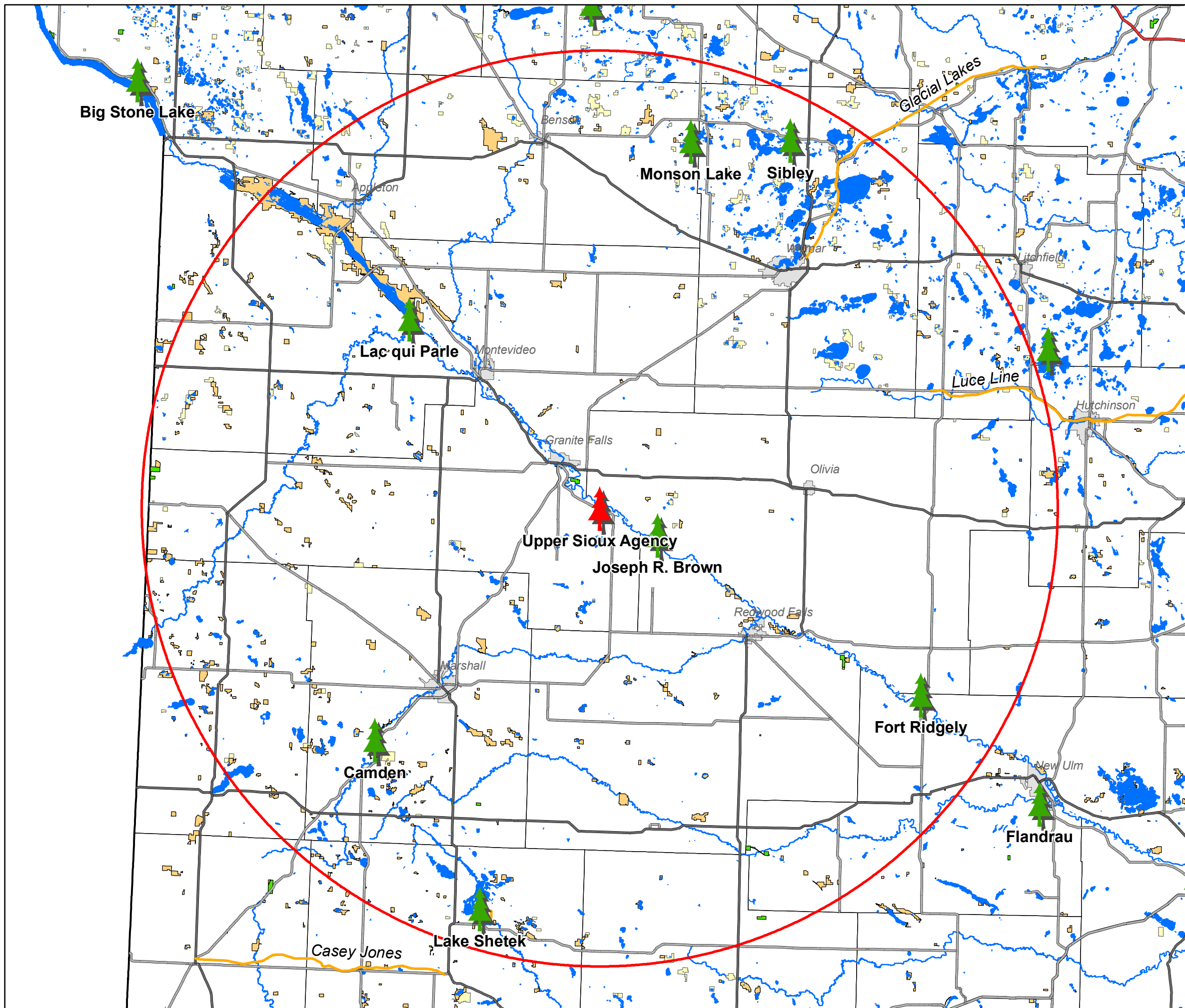
Map 2 - 50 Mile Radius of Recreational Opportunities

Legend

-  Upper Sioux Agency State Park
-  Other State Parks, SRAs, and State Waysides
-  County Boundaries
-  Lakes and Rivers
-  State Trails
-  State Wildlife Management Areas
-  Scientific and Natural Areas
-  USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas

Interstate and Trunk Highways

-  Interstate Highway
-  Federal Trunk Highway
-  State Trunk Highway



NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resources are at the heart of the Minnesota State Park system and as such, they play a key role in the mission of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Recreation (predecessor to Division of Parks and Trails):

We will work with the people of Minnesota to provide a state park system which preserves and manages Minnesota's natural, scenic and cultural resources for present and future generations while providing appropriate recreational and educational opportunities.

Stemming from this wide-reaching mission, a series of goals have been developed to help guide resource management activities throughout the state park system.

Resource Management Goals

The DNR Division of Parks and Trails Resource Management Program has the following resource management goals:

1. Protect and perpetuate natural and cultural resources within the state park system.
2. Minimize damage to the natural and cultural resources of the state park system while providing appropriate recreational and educational activities.
3. Restore natural communities and ecosystems in the state park system.
4. Promote understanding and awareness of the natural and cultural resources within the state park system to enable their management and protection.
5. Participate in landscape-level planning activities relative to the protection of the natural and cultural resources of the state park system.

Guided by State Statute

The Division of Parks and Trails plays an important role in the preservation and interpretation of Minnesota's natural resources, and that role is clearly defined in state statute. According to Minnesota Statutes 86A.05, Subdivision 2c:

State parks shall be administered by the commissioner of natural resources in a manner which is consistent with the purposes of this subdivision to preserve, perpetuate, and interpret natural features that existed in the area of the park prior to settlement and other significant natural, scenic, scientific, or historic features that are present. Management shall seek to maintain a balance among the plant and animal life of the park and to re-establish desirable plants and animals that were formerly indigenous to the park area but are now missing.

Programs to interpret the natural features of the park shall be provided. Outdoor recreation activities to utilize the natural features of the park that can be accommodated without material disturbance of the natural features of the park or the introduction of undue artificiality into the natural scene may be permitted.

Park use shall be primarily for aesthetic, cultural, and educational purposes, and shall not be designed to accommodate all forms or unlimited volumes of recreational use. Physical development shall be limited to those facilities necessary to complement the natural features and the values being preserved.

Introduction

The park landscape has been shaped and influenced by glaciers, rivers, wind, fire, grazing, planting, and harvesting. Some remnant prairies exist in the park and contain a number of rare species. The park offers a variety of environments including oak savanna, wetlands, oak woodlands and floodplain forests. Historically, the natural communities of the park developed under the influence of processes, such as fire. Modern land use has changed forever the scale and role that these processes play today.

Resource management activities at Upper Sioux Agency State Park have consisted of prescribed burns of prairie and savanna remnants, removing trees from the hillside prairies, planting native and non-native grasses and forbs in former croplands in the park, removing farm building sites from the park, restoring drained wetlands, and controlling non-native species (Canada thistle, European buckthorn, hairy vetch, and others).

The most significant natural features identified within the park are:

- Dry prairie hill communities
- Oak forest
- Oak woodland-brushland
- Wetlands
- River corridors and confluence (Yellow Medicine & MN River) and associated geology
- Vistas
- Bluffs (geology)
- Significant wildlife species (western hognose, regal fritillary)

Climate

The climate within the Yellow Medicine River watershed is continental, with cold dry winters and warm wet summers. Temperatures range from –40 to 110°F. Average monthly temperatures range from 9°F in January to 72°F in July. An average of 25 inches of precipitation falls annually in the area. Two-thirds of this precipitation normally falls from May through September. (Minnesota River Basin Information Document 1997, MPCA).

There are several microclimates in the park resulting from the nature of the topography. The most dramatic difference is between north and south facing slopes where vegetation is the most visible variable. Prairie is located on dry, sunny south facing slopes and hardwood forests are along the cool, moist north facing slopes. Additional microclimate influences exist along the rivers where moist soils and higher humidity help to shape which natural communities are successful at those locations (see Map 3: Aerial Photo)

Geology

The Minnesota River runs along the northern boundary of the park. During a 2,000-year time span, from approximately 11,000 to 9,000 years ago, a large river called Glacial River Warren occupied what is now the Minnesota River valley. Fed by Glacial Lake Agassiz, at some stages it occupied the entire width of the valley, with water levels near the top of the valley. The erosion caused by Glacial River Warren was the primary factor in the creation of the Minnesota River valley. The river cut through glacial drift and soft rock formations. In portions of the valley, erosion cut down to the hard and resistant Precambrian crystalline bedrock formations. The current Minnesota River is very small in comparison to the Glacial River Warren.

If the geologic materials were viewed as a stack of layers, then they could be described as follows from top to bottom.

1. The top of the stack has many layers of unconsolidated glacial drift and is composed of various amounts of boulders, cobblestones, gravel, sand, silt, and clay. The glacial drift is up to a few hundred feet thick. Where these materials were washed out by the action of moving water, gravel and sand deposits were formed.
2. The next layer is more localized. In some places beneath the glacial drift, materials are layers of shale or clay-bearing materials 10-50 feet thick, deposited at the bottom of a shallow sea during part of the Cretaceous period. Also during the Cretaceous, but after the sea left the area, a semi-tropical climate caused the weathering of bedrock that created clay-bearing materials.
3. The third layer in the stack is composed of limestone and sandstone formations that occur throughout southeastern Minnesota. Layers up to 100-feet thick or more can be found along the valley from approximately Mankato to the Mississippi River.
4. The fourth layer at the bottom of the stack is composed of the Precambrian bedrock formations including granite and quartzite.

Deposits of kaolin clay are exposed in banks along the Minnesota River. Much of the state park and upstream along the Yellow Medicine River contains potential clay resources. All of these potential areas are currently confined to places where clay is observed in natural outcrops along valleys or slopes and where overburden thickness is less than 100 feet. There are no industrial clay pits in Yellow Medicine County. However, there are at least four industrial clay pits in Redwood County, downstream of the state park. Industrial clay is utilized for brick making, cement, livestock feed filler, specialty ceramics, and for modeling clay (Martin, 2002). Minnesota kaolin is not of a high enough grade to be used as glossy paper coating, which is considered one of the highest value uses for kaolin.

Topography

The topography of Upper Sioux Agency State Park is dominated by the Minnesota and Yellow Medicine river valleys. Elevation in the park ranges from 870 feet at the Minnesota River to 1,050 feet at the height along the ridge above the Minnesota and Yellow Medicine river valleys near the state park entrance (see Map 4: 10 Foot Contours.) The state park sits on a narrow plateau of ground moraine of the Altamont moraine association between the valleys of the Minnesota River and the Yellow Medicine River. Large terraces of the Glacial River Warren from the late Ice Age lie just above the present Minnesota River floodplain but below the top of the ground moraine. Alluvial deposits from the Yellow Medicine River formed the floodplain present today. On the Yellow Medicine River's gravel bars, shark teeth and petrified wood fragments can be found. The extensive erosion by the Glacial River Warren exposed the Precambrian gneiss and granite bedrock several miles northwest and southeast of the park.

Soils

Sixteen different soil types have been identified in the state park. Soil maps and soil interpretation can be accessed from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (<http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov>).

In general, Upper Sioux Agency State Park is in the semiarid to sub-humid plains region. Most soils were formed from calcareous glacial till, modified glacial outwash, or lacustrine or alluvial deposits under prairie vegetation. The area's soils range from productive soils conducive to intensive agriculture, to stony soils and rock outcrops, to poorly drained or frequently flooded soils. The characteristic soil associations in the area are generally delineated by topography. In the Minnesota River bottoms, the alluvial soils are frequently flooded. Rising from the floodplain is the terrace escarpment that has easily eroded and often-droughty soils. Above the escarpment, soils occur on a flat, gently rolling terrace. These soils are variable, but are generally fertile and have been cultivated.

Vegetation

Pre-Euro American Settlement Vegetation

The pre-Euro American settlement vegetation of Upper Sioux Agency was characteristic of the tallgrass prairie biome. Lightning-caused or American Indian-set fires were an important part of the prairie biome. The widespread nature of fire was well documented in the early literature and frontier journals. Spectacular fires annually swept across the grasslands of southwestern Minnesota. Such frequent fires maintained the species composition and nearly treeless character of the tallgrass prairie.

There were four main components to the presettlement vegetation of the park: upland prairie/savanna, oak woodland, floodplain forest, and riverine wetland.

The most striking feature of the upland prairie/savanna was the dominance of grasses with a species rich forb component, and the presence of scattered open-grown bur oak. These oaks are evident at the top of the plateau as well as on south facing slopes above the Yellow Medicine River and on the north-facing slope of the Minnesota River Valley. The prairie/savanna communities exhibit a great deal of variety throughout the park from nearly treeless prairie to savanna transitioning to oak woodlands. Historically, fires that were often set by American Indians maintained the prairies and savannas.

The mesic oak-basswood woodland exists primarily on north-facing slopes above the rivers in the park where increased humidity and ground moisture would have had a dampening effect on fires moving from the prairies through the savannas and then onto the slopes.

The third component of the presettlement vegetation at the park was the floodplain forest. The lowland area occupied by floodplain forest was subject to alternate periods of flood and drought. Spring floodwaters enriched the soil as they deposited silt on the forest floor. Silver maple, American elm, green ash, black willow, and cottonwood are the dominant trees, with poison ivy and stinging nettle the characteristic understory plants. Although floodplain forests are common along the Minnesota River and would have occupied additional areas at Upper Sioux Agency State Park, most of the floodplain forest type found within the park is located along the Yellow Medicine River.

At Upper Sioux Agency State Park, instead of floodplain forest, the river created the riverine wetland located along the Minnesota River during a flood episode. The wetland is located on the outside (cutting edge) of a river bend. Historically this wetland probably received new water periodically when the river flooded, scouring the basin and leaving water behind as the river subsided.

The vegetation surrounding the state park has changed significantly since the advent of European-American settlement. Prior, most of the area contained numerous lakes and wetlands. Poorly drained channels connecting a series of wet prairie meadows typified the Yellow Medicine and its tributaries. The hilly terrain also contained catchments that had no outlet streams. Settlement began in the mid-1800s and the rich prairie soils proved to be very productive for agriculture. As early as the 1880s artificial drainage projects were started. At first, the meandering prairie streams were straightened and deepened. Later, these ditches were extended to drain isolated wetlands and finally, subsurface drainage tile was installed.

Today, only small remnants of tallgrass prairie remain in relatively natural condition. The vast tallgrass prairie that once covered one-third of the state has been reduced from millions to thousands of acres. Fire suppression over the years has changed the extent and character of the vegetation, creating fewer open areas and more dense forests. Despite all the losses, remnants of the pre-settlement vegetation still exist at Upper Sioux Agency State Park and the state park still supports many of the plants and animals found at the time of European settlement. A number of these species in the park are experiencing significant population declines statewide and have been classified as state endangered, threatened, or special concern species. Prescribed fire is a necessary management tool to emulate the natural and historical process of wildfire in prairie and oak communities.

Current Vegetation

The park represents a mix of both disturbed and relatively undisturbed natural landscapes. Although most areas of the park have been disturbed by human activities in some way, shape or form, much of the park supports natural communities that are similar to the vegetation present prior to Euro-American settlement (see Map 5: Land Cover). Those communities will be discussed in more detail below.

The park's old-field meadows represent one type of landscape that is somewhat disturbed. These areas are located on the main plateau of the park and around the present horse camp. The large area just east of the MHS site was probably farmed and has been planted to a variety of non-native grasses and clovers. The areas around the present horse camp were farmstead sites and contain a variety of non-native grass species as well. In an effort to restore the landscape to pre-settlement conditions, a major prairie reconstruction project is underway in the field surrounding the historic district.

Park and resource staff are also actively restoring natural plant communities to the landscape in other portions of the park. These areas are located on the terraces and floodplain of the Minnesota and Yellow Medicine rivers and the large field between the visitor center and the scenic overlook. These large areas were farmed at one time.

The seed for the reconstruction projects was obtained from Glacial Lakes State Park, about 70 miles north of Upper Sioux Agency, but also within the Minnesota River Prairie subsection. Therefore a substantial portion of the reconstructed acreage at Upper Sioux Agency maintains local genetic diversity.

A complete inventory of Upper Sioux Agency State Park's flora has not been conducted, but the major plant communities have been identified. Each system can be further divided into distinct classes.

Natural Plant Community Classification¹ of Upper Sioux Agency State Park

Fire Dependent Forest/Woodland System

Southern Dry-Mesic Oak (Maple) Woodland (FDs37)

Dry-mesic hardwood forests on undulating sand flats, moraines, and river bluffs. Canopy has abundant northern pin oak and bur oak. Shrub layer is patchy to continuous with black cherry, red maple, chokecherry, American hazelnut, gray dogwood, prickly ash, etc. Historically, fires were common here.

Floodplain Forest System

Southern Terrace Forest (FFs59)

Wet-mesic deciduous forests on silty or sandy alluvium on level, occasionally flooded sites along small streams to large rivers in the southern half of Minnesota. Canopy often made up of American elm, green ash, hackberry, basswood, boxelder, silver maple, black ash, etc.

Southern Floodplain Forest (FFs68)

Deciduous riparian forests on sandy or silty alluvium on low, level, annually flooded sites along medium and large rivers in the southern half of Minnesota. The community is characterized by evidence of recent flooding such as rows and piles of debris, ice scars on trees, high-water channels, and freshly deposited silt and sand.

¹ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (2005). Field Guide to the Native Plant Communities of Minnesota: The Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province. Ecological Land Classification Program, Minnesota County Biological Survey, and Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program. MNDNR St. Paul, MN.

Mesic Hardwood Forest System

Southern Mesic Oak-Basswood Forest (MHs38)

Mesic hardwood or occasionally hardwood-conifer forests. Found on wind-deposited silt on bedrock bluffs and on calcareous till on rolling till plains. Canopy typically dominated by basswood, northern red oak, and sugar maple. Sugar maple, ironwood, and prickly gooseberry are common in shrub layer.

River Shore System

Clay/Mud River Shore (RVx54)

River shore communities on silt or clay substrates. The vegetation cover is ephemeral and zonal, with an upper zone present above normal water level, and one or more lower zones developing on exposed sediments as water levels recede during the growing season, periods of drought, or occasionally, after failure of beaver dams.

Upland Prairie System

Southern Dry Prairie (UPs13)

Grass-dominated herbaceous communities on level to steeply sloping slopes with droughty soils. Little bluestem is generally the dominant grass, though other major mid-height grasses are side-oats grama, prairie dropseed, porcupine grass, and plains muhly.

These areas are located on the slopes of the Yellow Medicine River valley. These hillside prairies are the only prairie remnants in the park. Large portions of these remnants extend into areas under private ownership. These prairies have a high diversity of native grasses and wildflowers.

East and south facing hillsides along the Yellow Medicine River also contain some quality bur oak savanna. Other bur oak savanna areas in the park have been allowed to progress through various stages of succession or have been cleared and farmed. These savannas are located on the south-facing slope of the Yellow Medicine River valley bluff in the park.

Southern Mesic Prairie (Ups23)

Grass-dominated but forb-rich herbaceous communities on somewhat poorly drained to well-drained loam soils. Communities in this class occur primarily on level to gently rolling sites. Tallgrasses like big bluestem and Indian grass dominate, but several mid-height grasses are also important. Forb cover is sparse to patchy, and composition responds to moisture.

Wet Meadow/Carr System

Southern Seepage Meadow/Carr (WMs83)

Open wetlands dominated by a dense cover of hummock-forming broad-leaved sedges or tall shrubs. Present in areas of groundwater seepage. Typically dominated by tussock sedge.

There are also several small intermittent springs located on the north-facing bluff of the Minnesota River. One of these springs served as a source of water for the Agency in the 1800s. There is also a spring on the south-facing slope of the Yellow Medicine River valley.

Non-Native Plants And Invasive Species:

A large number of non-native plant species can be found in many areas of the park. Non-native plants have a wide range of impacts upon native plant communities, native wildlife species, and their management, as well as on park visitors, neighbors, and the operation of the park. Controlled burns, selected mowing, cutting, and spot herbicide treatments are used to help mitigate the impacts of some of these problematic species.

Boxelder is a native tree utilized by a variety of wildlife and the sap was used by the Dakota Indians to make syrup. However, the lack of fire and other checks and balances has allowed it to spread. Today it is considered a problem native species because it is invading prairie and savanna sites. Photos from the 1930s and today show this dramatic change.

Wildlife

The County Biological Survey has been completed in Yellow Medicine County. Park visitors, park and regional staff, and other Department of Natural Resources staff have noted additional observations. The animals observed in the state park and its immediate vicinity include mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects, and fish.

Mammals

Mammal species that have been identified at the state park include red fox, beaver, white-tailed deer, mink, ground squirrels, pocket gophers, tree squirrels, mice, voles, shrews, muskrats and bats. No rare or endangered mammal species have been observed in or near the state park.

Birds

Because Upper Sioux Agency State Park is located at the confluence of the Minnesota and Yellow Medicine rivers it provides excellent habitat for migrating and breeding birds. The bluffs overlooking the rivers contain prairie habitats that add to the diversity of the bird life in the park. To date, 221 species have been recorded at the state park, of which 123 are potential breeding species. A bird species list has been compiled for the state park and can be found in Appendix B.

In addition, the Minnesota River Valley is a natural migration corridor for birds. Migrating groups of warblers (18 species); vireos (5 species); flycatchers (10 species); thrushes (7 species) and sparrows (17 species) use the park for feeding, resting, and nesting. Bald eagles use the park year round, especially in the winter when open water is present on the Minnesota River (Janssen, 2004). Bird watching is an underutilized activity for this park.

Upper Sioux Agency State Park provides habitat for the following Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN):

Table 2: Bird Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in Upper Sioux Agency State Park

Common Name	Scientific Name	Season of Occurrence ²			
		Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	O		O	
American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	O		O	
American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	C	C	C	
American Woodcock	<i>Scolopax minor</i>	U	O	U	
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	U	U	U	U
Bay-breasted Warbler	<i>Dendroica castanea</i>	U		U	
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	U		U	
Black-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus erythrophthalmus</i>	U	U	U	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	U	U	U	
Blue-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora pinus</i>	O		O	

² Abundance codes are defined as follows: C = Common (present, relatively easy to find); U = Uncommon (observed, may be difficult to find); O = Occasional (may or may not be present in any year); R = Rare (has occurred at least once, may or may not be expected to recur).

Common Name	Scientific Name	Season of Occurrence			
		Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Bobolink	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	C	C	C	
Brown Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>	C	C	C	
Canada Warbler	<i>Wilsonia canadensis</i>	U		U	
Cerulean Warbler	<i>Dendroica cerulea</i>	R			
Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>	O		O	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>			O	
Common Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles minor</i>	U	U	U	
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	O		O	
Dickcissel	<i>Spiza americana</i>	O	O		
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	O		O	
Eared Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	O		O	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus virens</i>	C	C	C	
Field Sparrow	<i>Spizella pusilla</i>	U	U	U	
Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>	U		U	
Franklin's Gull	<i>Larus pipixcan</i>	C	O	C	
Golden-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>	O		O	
Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	U	U	U	
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	U		U	
Horned Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	O		O	
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	O		O	
Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	C	C	C	
Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	U		C	
Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>	O	O	O	
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	O		O	O
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	U	U	U	O
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	U		U	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	C	C	C	
Olive-sided Flycatcher	<i>Contopus cooperi</i>	U		U	
Ovenbird	<i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>	C	U	C	
Red-headed Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>	U	U	U	
Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	O		O	
Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	O	O	O	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>	C	C	C	
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	U		U	
Rusty Blackbird	<i>Euphagus carolinus</i>	C		C	
Sedge Wren	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>	U	U	U	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>	U		U	
Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>	O		U	
Swainson's Hawk	<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>	O	O	O	
Swamp Sparrow	<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>	C	C	C	
Upland Sandpiper	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>	O	O		

Common Name	Scientific Name	Season of Occurrence			
		Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Veery	<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>	U	O	O	
Virginia Rail	<i>Rallus limicola</i>	U	U	U	
Whip-poor-will	<i>Caprimulgus vociferus</i>	O	O		
White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	C	O	C	
Willow Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii</i>	U	U	U	
Wilson's Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>	U		U	
Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	U		O	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	U	U	U	

Reptiles

The state park has long been known to be home to large bull snakes, garter snakes, western hognose, smooth green, and red-bellied snakes, and prairie skinks. The following species have been seen in or near the state park:

Table 3: Reptile Species found in Upper Sioux Agency State Park

Common Name	Scientific Name
Bullsnake	<i>Pituophis catenifer sayi</i>
Eastern gartersnake	<i>Thamnophis s. sirtalis</i>
Eastern milksnake	<i>Lampropeltis t. triangulum</i>
Eastern spiny softshell turtle	<i>Apalone s. spinifera</i>
False map turtle	<i>Graptemys p. pseudogeographica</i>
Northern prairie skink	<i>Eumeces s. septentrionalis</i>
Plains gartersnake	<i>Thamnophis radix</i>
Plains hognose snake	<i>Heterodon n. nasicus</i>
Red-sided gartersnake	<i>Thamnophis sirtalis parietalis</i>
Western foxsnake	<i>Elaphe vulpina</i>

Amphibians

The following species have been seen in the state park:

Table 4: Amphibian Species found in Upper Sioux Agency State Park

Common Name	Scientific Name
Cope's gray treefrog	<i>Hyla chrysoscelis</i>
Eastern tiger salamander	<i>Ambystoma t. tigrinum</i>
Northern leopard frog	<i>Rana pipiens</i>
Western chorus frog	<i>Pseudacris triseriata</i>

Insects

An insect species list for the state park has not been compiled, but the regal fritillary, a species of special concern in Minnesota, has been found in the park.

Fish

69 species have been reported in or near the state park, 10 of which are classified as SGCN. The complete list of fish species may be found in Appendix C; those classified as SGCN are below:

Table 5: Fish Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in Upper Sioux Agency State Park

Common Name	Scientific Name
American eel	<i>Anguilla rostrata</i>
Black buffalo	<i>Ictiobus niger</i>
Blue sucker	<i>Cycleptus elongatus</i>
Greater redhorse	<i>Moxostoma valenciennesi</i>
Lake sturgeon	<i>Acipenser fulvescens</i>
Least darter	<i>Etheostoma microperca</i>
Paddlefish	<i>Polyodon spathula</i>
Shoal chub	<i>Macrhybopsis hyostoma</i>
Shovelnose sturgeon	<i>Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus</i>
Skipjack herring	<i>Alosa chrysochloris</i>

Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species

There are fifteen species on the Minnesota List of Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species that are found in Upper Sioux Agency State Park. One important aspect is the freshwater mussel species in the Yellow Medicine River. Freshwater mussels are one of the most endangered groups of animals in North America. Twenty species of freshwater mussels have been documented in the Yellow Medicine River drainage basin (Sietman, 2004).

Summary of rare species documented in the Nongame Research Program information system:

State Rarity Status

E = Endangered

T = Threatened

SC = Special concern

NS = No legal status but tracked in the DNR Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program information system

State Rarity Status

Rare Plants

Missouri milk-vetch (*Astragalus missouriensis*)

SC

Low milk-vetch (*Astragalus lotiflorus*)

SC

Rare Animals

Birds

Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

SC

Red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*)

SC

American white pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)

SC

Reptiles and amphibians

Western hognose snake (*Heterodon nasicus*)

SC

Gopher snake (*Pituophis catenifer*)

SC

Fox snake (*Elaphe vulpine*)

NS

Fish

Least darter (*Etheostoma microperca*) SC

Butterflies

Regal fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*) SC

Mussels

(Note: All in Yellow Medicine River adjacent to or upstream of the park, except where noted*)

Black sandshell mussel (*Ligumia recta*) SC

Creek heelsplitter (*Lasmigona compressa*) SC

Elktoe mussel (*Alasmidonta marginata*) T

Fluted-shell mussel (*Lasmigona costata*) SC

Spike mussel (*Elliptio dilatata*) *

Mucket mussel (*Actinonaias ligamentina*) T

* Observed in Minnesota River.

Skalbekken County Park, across the river in Renville County, also has a large number of rare features and mussels documented by the DNR Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program.

Surface Water and Fisheries

The Minnesota River forms a portion of the northern border of the park. The stretch of river flowing past the state park is typically calm and flat. The Minnesota River originates at the Minnesota-Dakota border, flows for 335 miles through some of the richest agricultural land in Minnesota and joins the Mississippi River at Minneapolis/St. Paul. The river drains a basin of 16,770 square miles, most of that in Minnesota. The average gradient of the Minnesota River is only 0.8 feet a mile, typical of meandering prairie streams.

The river is muddy and polluted to the extent that swimming is not recommended, and anglers are warned to limit consumption of fish taken from the river. The Minnesota River carries a heavy load of two primary pollutants, sediment and phosphorus. The fine silt and clay particles that erode from the Minnesota River landscape tend to remain in suspension for a long time. (Minnesota River Basin Information Document 1997, MPCA).

The water quality in the Minnesota River is a reflection of the land uses within its watershed. At present, soil erosion, chemical use, municipal sewage treatment plant discharge, stream channelization, wetland and lake drainage occur within the Minnesota River watershed.

Today, pollution of surface waters in the Minnesota River's major watersheds is a moderate to severe problem. Items of concern include suspended sediments, excess nutrients (primarily nitrogen and phosphorus), pesticides, pathogens, and biochemical oxygen demand. Many of these problems can be linked to artificial drainage patterns (ditches, tile, etc.) and wetland reduction. These landscape changes have increased the magnitude of storm and snowmelt runoff events. Approximately 80% of the wetlands in the Minnesota River basin have been drained and converted to other uses.

The Dakota people named the Yellow Medicine River "Pejuta Zizi" for the medicinal plant that grows in the area. The Yellow Medicine River begins southwest of the park in the Coteau des Prairies, or Highland of the Prairies, a large plateau of smoothly rolling hills and two terminal moraine zones. The river flows northeast off the Coteau and onto a broadly smooth and nearly flat prairie through shallow channels. Near the Minnesota River, the Yellow Medicine River cuts a deep gorge through the glacial drift, eventually meeting the Minnesota River in an alluvial delta on the valley floor. The Yellow Medicine River falls eighty-five feet in its final ten-mile drop into the Minnesota River Valley. The river and its branches drain 1,047 square miles from Lake Shaokatan to the Minnesota River. (Minnesota River Basin Information Document 1997, MPCA).

Increased water flow and higher flood peaks destroy shoreline vegetation. According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)'s Minnesota River Assessment Project, the "rivers and tributaries in the Hawk Creek-Yellow Medicine River Watershed undergo more rapid fluctuations in flow rate and water quality than the other major watersheds of this section of the Minnesota River Basin." Stage records for the Yellow Medicine show rises in stage within one to four hours after the onset of rainfall. Although the purpose of channelizing was to alleviate local floods by allowing water to run off faster, it produced greater flows and raised flood crests, thereby intensifying downstream floods. Channelization also resulted in the loss of wetlands and wildlife habitat.

The MPCA preformed a survey of the Minnesota River from the boat landing at the Upper Sioux Agency State Park downriver to the confluence of the Yellow Medicine River. Part of the survey was a collection of fish species and their numbers. The inventory of fish species is available in Appendix C.

The large wetland at the base of the hill and south of the Minnesota River is changing since it is no longer flushed by periodic floodwater. The dike that separates the wetland from the river was put in many years ago to prevent flooding of farmland. It also has the effect of preventing floodwater from scouring out the wetland basin periodically. The wetland has transitioned from a dynamic, productive wetland habitat to a basin choked by cattails and cut off from the rejuvenating processes supplied by the river. A water control structure at the west end allows some water flow to enter the wetland, but without the seasonal flooding or a larger outlet flow the wetland is silting in and becoming more shallow. The inlet and outlet of the basin should be evaluated to determine if reintroducing natural processes to this system is possible. The changing conditions have led to a drop in waterfowl using the wetland and possibly contributing to the bald eagles abandoning a nearby nesting site. There are small wetlands on the uplands within the park as well. Reed canary grass has been found near the Minnesota River and could threaten wetland areas of the state park in the future.

Groundwater

Groundwater is available in sand and gravel aquifers within the glacial deposits. Where Cretaceous (sedimentary) aquifers are available, they are generally preferred because they yield softer water. Water from surficial and buried aquifers is generally very hard, calcium sulphate type water, often high in iron. Shallow wells (less than 100 feet) in the Yellow Medicine watershed have been found to contain waters with nitrate concentrations well above the federal maximum contamination standard of 10 mg/l. Many residents within the headwaters area of the Yellow Medicine River rely on the Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water System as their source of potable water. (Minnesota River Basin Information Document 1997, MPCA).

Natural Resource Issues

The following concerns were identified as current or anticipated significant resource issues that need to be addressed at Upper Sioux Agency State Park:

- Problem native species including red cedar, sumac, and box elder.
- Terrestrial invasive species including Canada thistle, European buckthorn, and hairy vetch.
- Riparian issues such as upstream loading and water quality.
- Stream bank management including a concern for the historic ferry crossing.
- Preservation of rare or significant native species, and natural community goals (such as connecting prairie remnants with reconstructions).
- Reconstruction priorities including prairie associated with Agency site or the "bowl" south of office that is surrounded by prairie, oak-woodland and the river.
- Trail quantity, location, and maintenance as related to their impact on soils and native plant communities.
- Relationship with Upper Sioux Community related to landscape, current use, and the historic site.

- Cultural resources; identifying which portions of the park should be managed for cultural, not natural, resource aspects.
- National Historic District; increase awareness of cultural resources and significance of the site.
- Planning for visitor experiences; identifying trails or other sites that are important to visitors

Recommendations for Desired Future Conditions

A. Native Plant Communities and Rare Plants

- Manage the vegetation in the park that is characteristic of the Minnesota River Prairie Subsection. The protection of existing native vegetation remnants including the Upland Prairie, Wet Meadow/Carr, River Shore, Floodplain Forest, and Mesic Hardwood Forest systems should be a priority (see Map 6: Desired Future Conditions).
- Pursue prairie or savanna reconstruction in areas of the park that were historically prairie or savanna. Areas of the park that are adjacent to remnant prairies are the first priority for restoration. The second priority is the reconstruction of old fields.
- Coordinate vegetation management of the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site with MHS.
- Identify areas in the park that should be managed toward oak savanna.
- Enhance the prescribed fire program so that a regular cycle of fire can be incorporated into the management of the prairie and savanna areas.
- Remove or control invasive exotic species by utilizing best management practices and integrated pest management techniques. Seek a variety of methods to remove problem native vegetation in the park including red cedar, sumac, and box elder.
- Limit activities that cause erosion or trample native vegetation.

B. Native Wildlife

Significant changes in the area's plant communities and the landscape has lead to corresponding changes in wildlife assemblages. As the region was settled and agriculture began to dominate the landscape, wildlife populations were affected in many ways.

Extirpated or extinct species including bison, elk, passenger pigeons, and prairie chickens occurred in the park prior to settlement. There are many species found in the park today that did not occur there historically (e.g. house sparrow, ring-necked pheasant, turkey, and others). It is not practical at this time to remove any of these species from the park.

With the exception of grassland birds and lepidopteron species, which would benefit from prairie reconstruction and enhancement, it is not currently feasible to reintroduce extirpated species. The Department typically focuses on reconstructing habitat rather than reintroducing wildlife species.

The goals for management of wildlife at Upper Sioux Agency State Park are to:

- Preserve and perpetuate native wildlife species in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 86A.05, Subdivision 2c, particularly those species that are state or federally listed, or are classified as SGCN.
- Annually assess need for deer herd reduction within the park. Plan and conduct deer hunts as required to protect native vegetation.

C. Water Resources Management

- Preserve the riverbanks in the park by utilizing proven techniques, especially in areas where there may be historic artifacts or visitor safety concerns. Evaluate riverbank stabilization options in light of protecting water quality, aesthetics, and erosion control.
- Restore the floodplain wetlands to provide additional habitat for shorebirds and other wetland species. Actions include completing a soil inventory, developing a restoration plan for the large wetland east of the boat landing, and controlling invasive reed-canary grass populations.

- Minimize park development on floodplain areas to limit future erosion issues and damage to facilities.

D. Cooperative Projects and General Conservation

- Continue to work with other environmental, resource management and education agencies and programs in the area to improve the water quality of the Minnesota River and adjacent habitat. Encourage cooperative projects such as native seed harvesting and planting, and conservation easements.
- Identify, manage, and protect rare, endangered, or threatened plant and animal species and native plant communities within the park.
- Protect native mussels in the rivers and prevent the spread of zebra mussels.
- Use energy-efficient designs and practices for current park facilities and for future development. Conservation efforts may include: fuel-efficient vehicles, clean fuel use, energy efficient office equipment and appliances, energy-conservation in buildings, and landscaping designs that reduce the need for mowing.
- Use outdoor lighting systems that preserve the dark night skies.

E. Research Needs

- Research vegetation around the historic Upper Sioux Agency site to determine if there are plantings that represent the landscape from the mid-1800s.
- Conduct a comprehensive plant and animal species inventory within the park to establish a baseline inventory that will assist in the development of priorities for managing and restoring flora and fauna. The inventory will also provide valuable information for evaluating potential facility sites and recreational use areas. The Minnesota County Biological Survey has been conducted in Yellow Medicine County, but additional park work is needed.



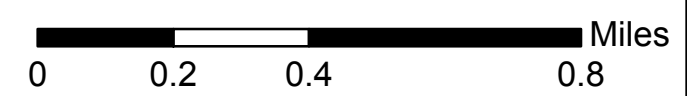
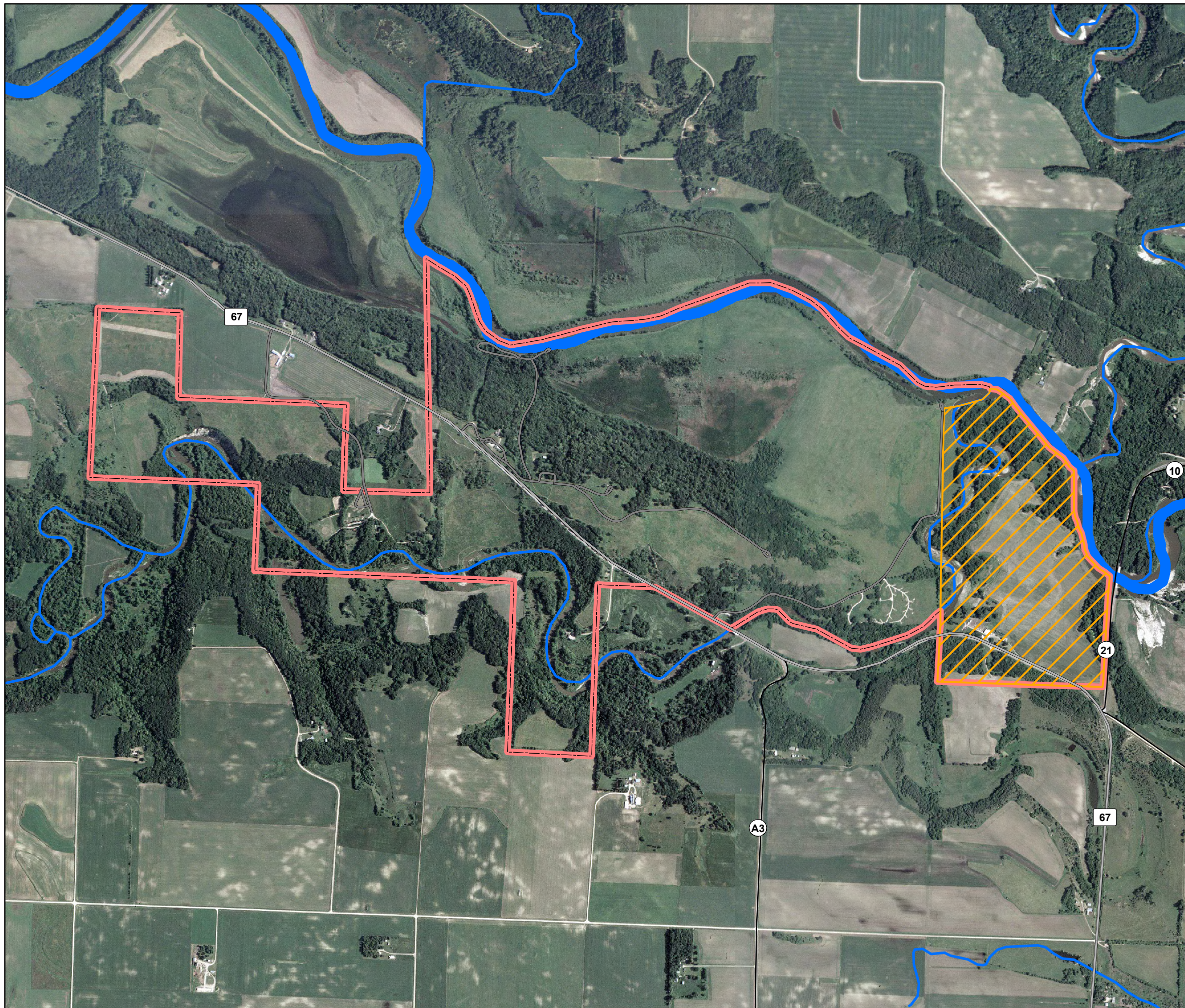
Park vegetation is a mix of prairie, grasslands, floodplain forest and oak savanna.

Upper Sioux Agency State Park

Map 3 - Aerial Photo

Legend

-  State Park Statutory Boundary
-  Private Property within Park Boundary
-  State Trunk Highways
-  County State-Aid Highways
-  State Park Roads
-  Rivers and Streams




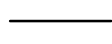





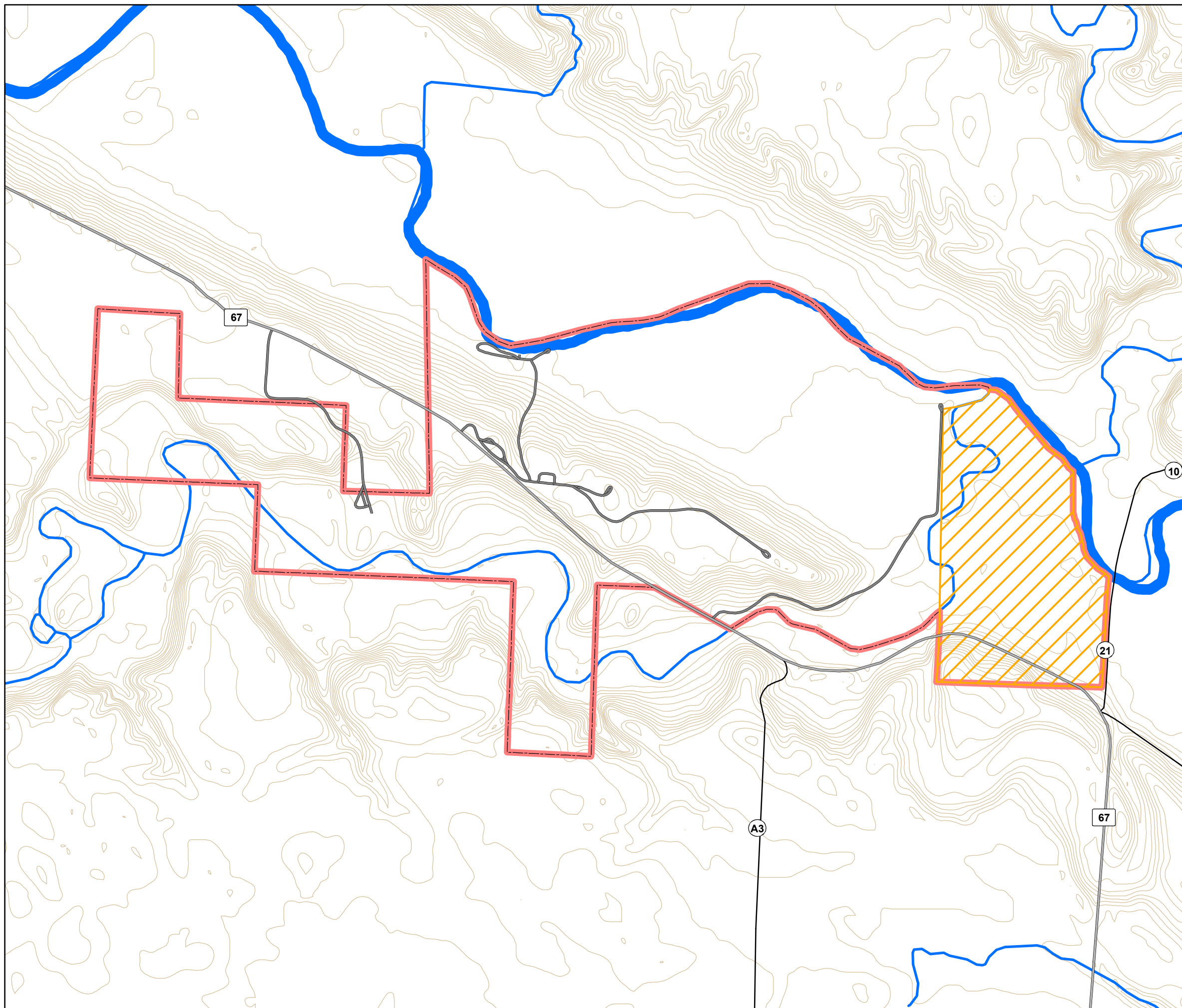
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Upper Sioux Agency State Park


Map 4 - 10 Foot Contours


Legend

-  State Park Statutory Boundary
-  Private Property within Park Boundary
-  State Trunk Highways
-  County State-Aid Highways
-  State Park Roads
-  Rivers and Streams
-  10 Foot Contours



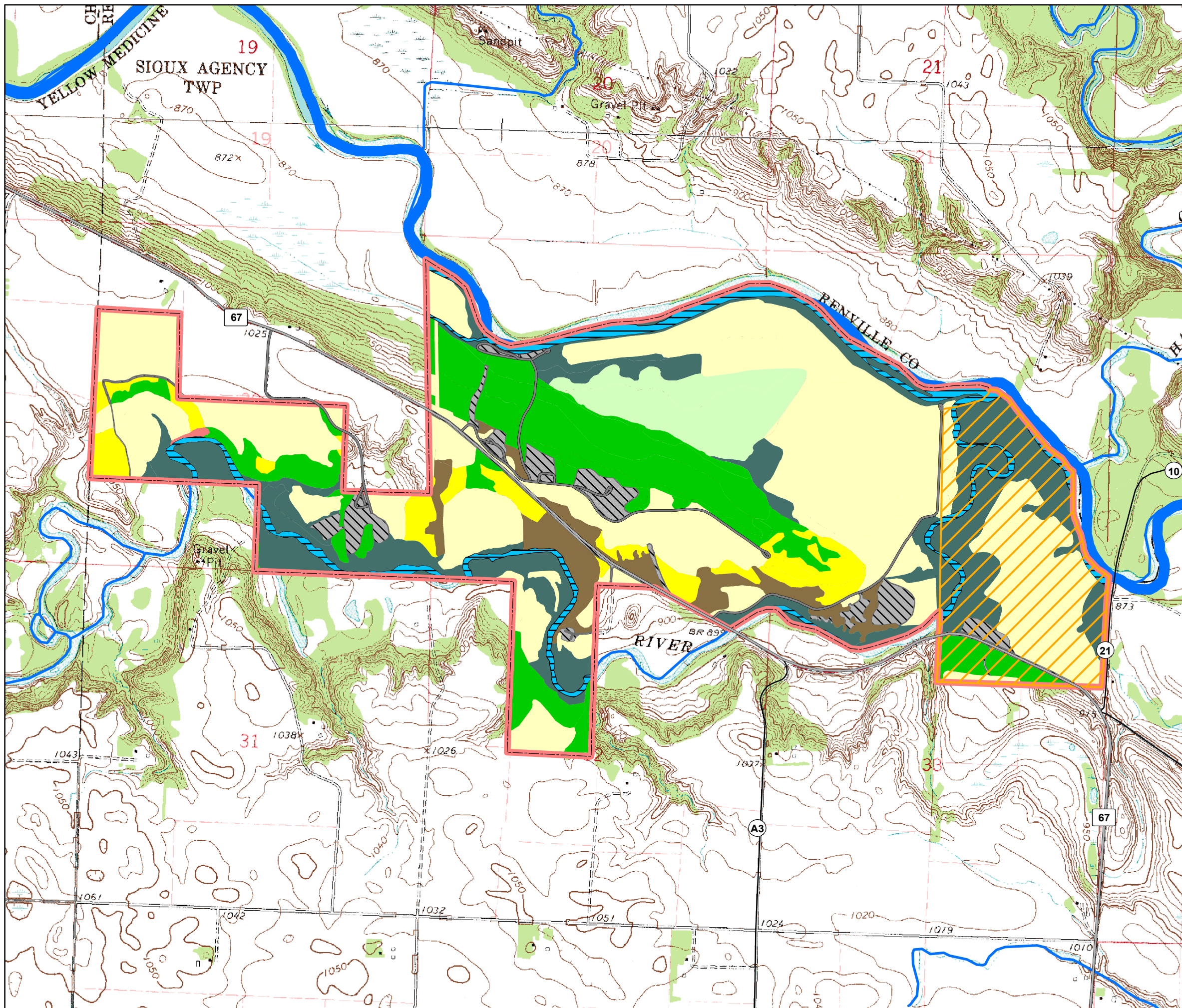






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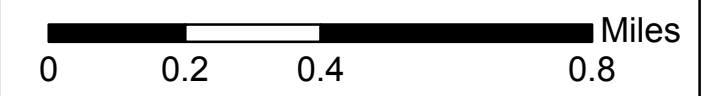
Map 5 - Land Cover

Legend

- State Park Statutory Boundary
- Private Property within Park Boundary
- State Trunk Highways
- County State-Aid Highways
- State Park Roads
- Rivers and Streams

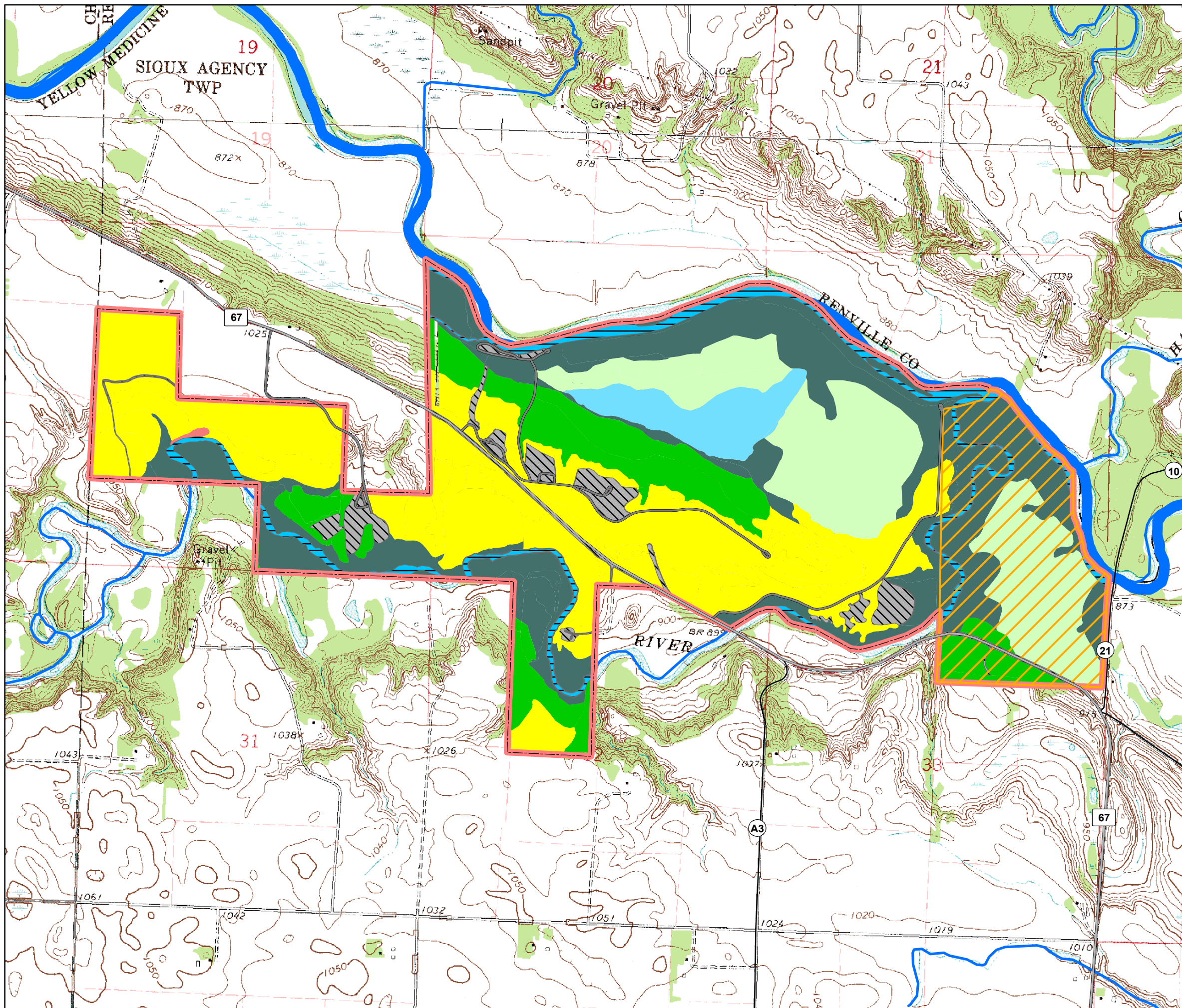
State Parks System Level Land Cover

- Fire-Dependent Forest/Woodland System
- Floodplain Forest System
- Mesic Hardwood Forest System
- River Shore System
- Upland Prairie System
- Wet Meadow/Carr System
- Other Natural System (water)
- Non-Natural System (old fields, etc.)
- Facilities System (campground, etc.)

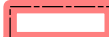



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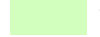


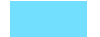



Upper Sioux Agency State Park Map 6 - Desired Future Conditions



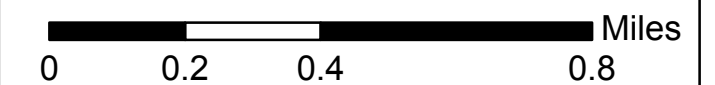
Legend

-  State Park Statutory Boundary
-  Private Property within Park Boundary

State Parks System Level Land Cover DFC System

-  Upland Prairie System
-  Wet Meadow/Carr System
-  Floodplain Forest System
-  Mesic Hardwood Forest System
-  Marsh System
-  Other Natural System
-  River Shore System
-  Facilities System

-  State Trunk Highways
-  County State-Aid Highways
-  State Park Roads
-  Rivers and Streams



MN Department of Natural Resources
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CULTURAL RESOURCES

Archaeological and Historical Setting

People have had a close association with the Minnesota River valley from the end of the ice age to the present. Several known and many suspected prehistoric sites lie within the park's boundaries. Stone tools mark the locations of several of these sites. The Minnesota River was also a major transportation route. The park offers an excellent location to provide interpretation about the people who once inhabited this space, their customs, traditions, adaptations, influences and impact on the environment. The park contains important cultural resources dating from the Paleoindian period (8,000-12,000 years ago), up to the agency period of the 1850s, and post-Euro-American settlement. All of the American Indian traditions present in Minnesota have been documented in the archaeological record at Upper Sioux Agency State Park. See Appendix D for a summary of the American Indian traditions and post-contact history of the area.

When the state park was first established, resource management activities were focused on cultural resources. These activities consisted of an archaeological study of the agency site and its immediate surroundings. The report of the study's findings has not been formally completed.

There are fourteen archaeological resource sites recorded in and near Upper Sioux Agency State Park (see Map 7: Historic District and Archaeological Sites). These sites include eleven pre-contact American Indian sites and three post-contact sites (see Table 6: Archaeological and Historic Sites). The pre-contact period sites include seven cemetery and four habitation sites that represent American Indian occupations ranging from the Late Paleoindian Tradition (ca. 6500 B.C.) to the Plains Village Tradition (A.D. 1000-1500). Most of the burial sites are no longer visible due to the impact of 130 years of agriculture. The DNR Division of Parks and Trails archeologists are in frequent contact with the Indian Affairs Council concerning archaeological resources and projects at the state park.

Table 6: Archaeological and Historic Sites

Site Number	Site Type	Description	Tradition
21YM5	Cemetery	Lone earthwork	Pre-contact Woodland
21YM6	Cemetery	Lone earthwork	Pre-contact Woodland
21YM7	Cemetery	Lone earthwork	Pre-contact Woodland
21YM8	Cemetery	Lone earthwork	Pre-contact Woodland
21YM9	Cemetery	Lone earthwork	Pre-contact Woodland
21YM29	Cemetery	Lone earthwork	Pre-contact Woodland
21YM83	Cemetery	Natural feature with reported precontact burials	Pre-contact undetermined
21YM50	Habitation	Mazomnai/Kvister homesite	Pre-contact Paleoindian, Archaic, Woodland, Plains village, Post-contact Dakota and Euroamerican
21YM87	Habitation	Bluff top site overlooking Minnesota and Yellow Medicine Rivers	Pre-contact Woodland, Plains village, Oneota
21YM88	Habitation	Yellow Medicine River floodplain site	Pre-contact Oneota
21YM89	Habitation	High terrace site overlooking the Yellow Medicine River	Pre-contact Paleoindian, Archaic, Woodland
21YM25	Historic	Upper Sioux Agency site	Post-contact Dakota and Euroamerican
21YMs	Historic	Yellow Medicine City townsite	Post-contact Euroamerican
21YM102	Historic	Upper Sioux Agency brickyard site	Post-contact Euroamerican

Upper Sioux Agency Site

The area encompassing the historic Upper Sioux Agency is administered by MHS, but is located entirely within the state park. Nineteen acres in size, the site was a United States Indian Agency for the Sisseton and Wahpeton Dakota from 1854-1862, and was largely destroyed during the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. The walls of several brick and stone buildings remained partially intact, and were reused by settlers who eventually repaired and incorporated them into their homes and outbuildings for farmsteads.

Archaeologists from the MHS extensively excavated the site in the late 1960s and building foundations were exposed for site visitors to view. The Upper Sioux Agency was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970 (MHS, 1996) because of its significance related to United States Indian policy with the Dakota and the events that occurred at the location during the period of operation. The National Register nomination included all of the land that was in the statutory boundary of Upper Sioux Agency State Park in 1970, approximately 920 acres. Therefore not all of the lands within the historic district are directly linked to the agency, however they may contain other archaeological sites or resources.

In 1969, the historic site was transferred to MHS for research, preservation and development purposes. The MHS-administered Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site is 19 acres and includes a reconstructed agency building and remnants of other structures dating to the agency's operation. In the early 1970s, one of the employee duplexes was restored to what is believed to be its original appearance. Due to budget cuts, MHS closed a number of sites around the state in the 1980s and 90s, and the Upper Sioux Agency was no exception. The Upper Sioux Agency site was closed in 1986 and has not been actively managed by MHS since.

Upper Sioux Community

Since 1993, the Upper Sioux Community has used the state park for their annual Tribal Community Wacipi (Pow Wow), a traditional community celebration. The attendance for the event is typically around 2,500 visitors. Members of the Upper Sioux Community also use the state park for ceremonial purposes throughout the year.

Recommendations for Cultural Resources

A. Cultural Resource Management

- Conduct a cultural resource survey to inventory known cultural sites within the state park.
- Develop cultural resource materials for the Joseph R. Brown State Wayside Rest related to the role of Joseph Brown and his home in the larger context of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.
- Research the events from both the Dakota and settlers perspectives on the U.S – Dakota War of 1862, especially in relation to the Wood Lake Battlefield.
- Develop cultural resource materials that link Upper Sioux Agency State Park, the Wood Lake Battle site and other local sites Interpretation of the Wood Lake Battlefield Site and incorporate them into the state park interpretive efforts.

B. Cooperative Projects

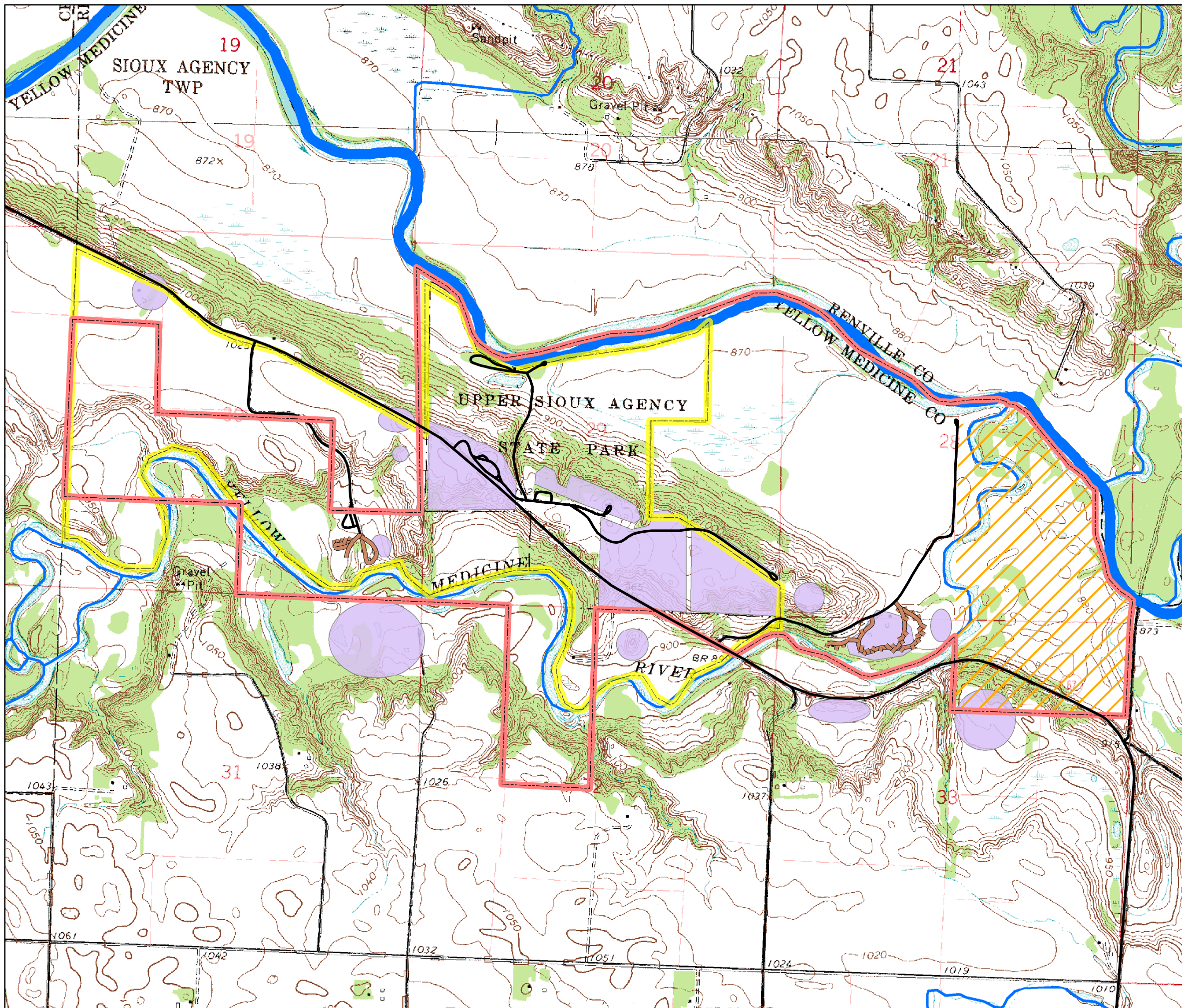
- Work with MHS to complete the archaeological report on the historic Upper Sioux Agency site.
- Work with MHS and other appropriate partners to actively manage the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site. The 2012 U.S.-Dakota War sesquicentennial provides an opportunity to bring attention to the site and related historic areas.
- Work with the Upper Sioux Community to identify and protect burial sites, sacred sites, habitation sites, traditional use, and other natural or cultural areas within the state park.
- Develop a cooperative agreement which details access to traditional cultural properties within the park (including gathering, harvesting and ceremonial use).

Upper Sioux Agency State Park

Map 7 - Historic District and Archaeological Sites

Legend

-  State Park
-  State Park Roads
-  Campground Loops
-  Private Property
-  Historic District
-  Archaeological Sites
-  Rivers and Streams
-  MN DOT County Roads
-  State Trunk Highways
-  MN DOT Township Roads



MN Department of Natural Resources
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INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

The purpose of interpretive services is to foster connections between the park visitor and the resources within the park. Interpretation can enhance the visitor's experience by teaching them about the natural and cultural environment in which they are visiting. The objective of interpretation is to provide first-hand, resource-based, accessible programs and activities that create a sense of stewardship for Minnesota's natural and cultural heritage. This may be accomplished by illuminating the changing relationship between people and landscapes over time.

Minnesota State Parks Interpretive Services Goals

The Division of Parks and Trails views interpretation as a site specific, DNR sponsored communication process that uses recreational and environmental experiences to achieve its goals. Ultimately, those goals involve revealing the meanings and relationships of our natural and cultural heritage. To fulfill the DNR's legislated obligation to provide environmental education and interpretation in state parks, the Division of Parks and Trails' interpretive program aims to:

- Promote increased understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the natural and cultural resources of Minnesota;
- Assist in protecting each state park's resources;
- Promote public understanding of, and support for, the Minnesota DNR and its Division of Parks and Trails; and to
- Increase public awareness of critical environmental problems on a local, state, national and worldwide scale.

Minnesota State Parks Statewide Interpretive Plan

The Statewide Interpretive Plan devised a process to evaluate every state park for its interpretive opportunities. The ranking process was based on natural resources, cultural resources, attendance, and population within a 25-mile radius of the park. For Upper Sioux Agency State Park, the plan recommends interpretive efforts focused primarily on providing self-guided trails, wayside exhibits, and a seasonal interpretive center (Minnesota DNR, 1994). Since the interpretive plan was written, a new campground was built in the park and visitation has increased significantly.

Interpretive Themes

A unit interpretive plan has been written for Upper Sioux Agency State Park. The plan was last revised in 1994. Interpretive themes for Upper Sioux Agency State Park from the interpretive plan and others identified during the management plan process include:

Connecting Themes

- Glacial activity shaped the landscape we see today.
- Upper Sioux Agency State Park exists today because of past efforts to protect this area.
- How have people shaped the natural environment here?

Cultural Themes

- Who were the earliest people to live in the Minnesota River valley?
- How did the earliest people use this area?
- How did the Dakota people use the Minnesota River valley?
- How did European settlers change the land?

- What role did the Upper Sioux or Yellow Medicine Agency play in the lives of the Dakota people?
- Why was Upper Sioux Agency State Park created?
- How do the Dakota People use the state park for traditional uses?

Geologic Themes

- How was the Minnesota River valley formed?
- How did glaciers shape the area?
- What evidence of glacial activity can be found in the park and area today?
- We all live in a watershed.

Biologic themes

- What natural communities are found in Upper Sioux Agency State Park?
- What is a prairie?
- What is an oak savanna?
- Fire - natural necessity or natural disaster?
- Clean water is essential for all life in the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota Rivers.
- Land use affects water quality and quantity.
- Alien plants degrade the park's native plant and animal communities.
- Can we restore native plant communities?
- All life is connected to everything else.
- What (reptiles, birds, mammals, insects, mussels, and fish) live in Upper Sioux Agency State Park?

Recreation Themes

- The ten best methods and places for observing wildlife in Upper Sioux Agency State Park.
- Tips for cross-country skiing at Upper Sioux Agency State Park.
- You can take great photos of Upper Sioux Agency State Park.
- Tips for canoeing on the Minnesota River and kayaking on the Yellow Medicine River and Hawk Creek.
- Tips for fishing on the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota River.
- Tips for bicycling in Minnesota River country.

Resource Management Themes

- The ten goals of resource management activities in Upper Sioux Agency State Park.
- What management activities are used to manage the park's grassland areas?

Existing Interpretive Services

Personal Interpretive Activities and Presentations

There are no regularly scheduled naturalist-led activities or presentations at the park. Park staff and volunteers have organized occasional one-day educational events. Local schools or other government agencies have helped coordinate these events.

Non-personal Interpretive Services

Two main areas provide interpretation of the state park's resources: the state park interpretive center and the Upper Sioux Agency historic site managed by MHS. The state park interpretive center (located at the park office) contains exhibits on the formation of the Minnesota River valley, an orientation of the park trails and recreation opportunities, information on other state parks and historic sites along the river, life in the Yellow Medicine River, plant and wildlife communities of the park, how Dakota people used the products of the prairie, and a large mural depicting changes in the river valley. New displays are under development for the interpretive center. Some of the topics and concepts include: the historic site, how people survived in the past, the Upper Sioux Agency Historic

Site, the health of the rivers in the region, and Glacial River Warren. MHS has a series of informational signs located on the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site.

Information and Publicity

People may obtain information about the park by visiting the DNR's website, calling the park, writing or visiting. A map of the park and a brochure with a brief history of the Agency site is available online and at the park. Publicity is usually done through state park publications, the DNR's website, tourism publications and occasional coverage in local media. Bulletin boards in the horse camp and interpretive center are often used to post notices, posters, and schedules.

Staff

At present, there is no naturalist at the park, but park staff provides information and interpretation about the park as time allows. The manager's interpretive role is very limited due to commitments to other park operation responsibilities.

Interpretive Center

The park interpretive center has a small indoor meeting space that can be used for activities and presentations (see description above). However, the building is of poor construction, drafty, poorly insulated, and difficult to heat.

Pezuta Zizi Cultural and Environmental Learning Center

The Pezuta Zizi Environmental Learning Center is managed by a private, non-profit organization that provides specific programming and equipment loans for the purposes of environmental education. While the learning center is not an actual structure, the organization uses volunteers to provide specific environmental education programming to area students, especially relating to river water quality, prairie, and area history. The main focus of the group is to educate children K-6 about the prairie and health of the rivers. The group also sponsors the traditional garden at the park, and the learning center has information on Dakota uses of plants. Dakota artisans come into the schools for programs and provide displays. The group is considering developing a wetland-learning trunk.

Recommendations for Interpretive Services

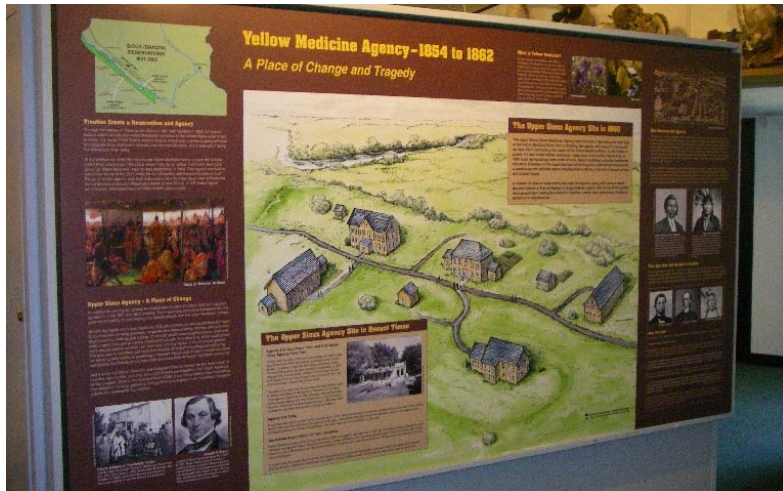
A. Facilities and Services

- Improve the existing visitor center with up-to-date exhibits and improvements to the meeting room. Include child-oriented exhibits and interactive exhibits. Remove the ice and pop vending machines from the main entrance corridor of the visitor center. The artificially constructed earthen mound in front of the visitor center should be removed to improve visibility.
- Consider a new combined visitor center and contact station. A building site plan will be needed to evaluate the best location. Criteria to consider include: elevation, flooding, safety of road alignment, archaeological artifacts, soil type, natural resources, natural communities, and adequate space for facilities, scenic views. The recommended site is near the present location.
- Periodically evaluate the themes, visitor use, and effectiveness of the park's non-personal interpretive services.
- Produce printed interpretive materials on the following topics: Upper Sioux Agency State Park wildflower checklist, U.S.-Dakota War sites, snakes of the park, Yellow Medicine City history, prairie and native community reconstruction in the park, Minnesota River valley birds of prey, problem plant species control and management.
- Describe and define Upper Sioux Agency State Park's niche in telling the story of the U.S. – Dakota War, and include information on the Wood Lake Battlefield site and the Joseph R. Brown State Wayside.
- Develop short-term exhibits on timely and seasonal topics for the interpretive exhibit panels in the visitor center. Posters and notices should also be placed on these panels.
- Acquire and maintain up-to-date video presentation equipment in the visitor center meeting/presentation space.

- Improve wildlife watching opportunities at the visitor center.
- Survey existing and potential users to determine target audiences and their interests and needs.

B. Cooperative Projects

- Work with MHS to produce and install outdoor non-personal interpretive signs for the historic agency site. Determine if the MHS slideshow programs on the historic agency site are still appropriate for use.
- Work with local school districts to produce an educational activity guide for Upper Sioux Agency State Park.
- Utilize guest presenters whenever possible for interpretive presentations and activities.
- Develop a formal operating contract with the Pezuta Zizi Cultural and Environmental Learning and Resource Center to clarify responsibilities for the educational trunks and other materials.



Though the visitor center has many high-quality exhibits, the space could be improved by incorporating updated content, and interactive and child-oriented exhibits.

RECREATIONAL USE AND VISITOR SERVICES

Existing Facilities

Camping

- Yellow Medicine River campground: 31 semi-modern sites (14 electrical sites; 12 non-electrical; two tipis available for rent; three walk-in sites along the Yellow Medicine River), accessible showers and flush toilets
- Horse campground: 38 sites (five electric and 33 non-electric)
- Riverside campground: Six rustic sites with fire rings and picnic tables

Trails

- Sixteen miles of shared hiking/horseback trails
- Two miles of hiking only trails
- Two miles of cross country skiing trails
- Fourteen miles of snowmobile trails

Day Use

- Interpretive center/contact station/nature store.
- Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site (administered by Minnesota Historical Society)
- Picnic shelter and two picnic areas
- Swing set, two volleyball courts, and horseshoe pits in main picnic ground
- Canoe rental
- Canoe access on the Minnesota River
- Winter sledding hill

Other development in the state park that supports visitor use includes: four water wells, three septic systems, three miles of gravel roads, two parking areas (interpretive center - 25 vehicle capacity; picnic shelter - 12 vehicle capacity), and the Wacipi facility including six electric boxes (see Map 8: Existing Visitor Facilities and Trails). The state park service area includes a heated shop building, cold storage building, and a garage.



Canoe access at the Riverside Campground on the Minnesota River.

Access

State and local governments may not discriminate on the basis of disability (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and 28 CFR Part 36). Access must be provided to park services, programs, and activities. All services, when viewed in their entirety, must be useable by individuals with disabilities. This includes facilities such as parking, pedestrian access routes, restrooms, drinking water and recreation facilities. Pedestrian access routes are a continuous unobstructed path that connects accessible elements within a picnic area, camping area, or designated trailhead, such as the paths connecting parking spaces to a picnic or camp unit, a picnic unit to a toilet building, or connecting accessible picnic tables to other accessible camping elements.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides guidance for accommodating the natural environment's variable character when providing accessibility. ADA delineates modifications and exceptions that can be applied when necessary to maintain the integrity of an outdoor recreation setting, accommodating such elements as hydrology, terrain, surface characteristics and vegetation. Information regarding accessibility will be available in brochures and on the DNR website to guide visitor expectations.

Trail Issues

Upper Sioux Agency State Park has a high density of trails, relative to other state parks its size. During the spring, summer and fall, most of the trails are shared between hikers and horseback riders. Conflict between trail users on shared trails has not been a concern for park visitors to date. However, trail erosion is a problem on some of the steep hillsides. Participants in the management planning process strongly supported the idea of connecting the park's trails to Skalbekken County Park's (Renville County) trail system and the proposed Minnesota River State Trail. These connections will provide additional mileage and opportunities for new trail experiences, as well as and reduce the potential for conflicts between trail users in the future.

Special Events

The annual Upper Sioux Community Wacipi event is held in the state park. Upper Sioux Agency State Park has been the site of several endurance horse rides, typically held in mid-September. An annual wagon train ride on Labor Day weekend has also been located in the state park. In past years, 20 wagons and 50 riders have participated in the event.

Recommendations for Recreational Use and Visitor Services

A. Roads

- Maintain the three current public park entrances. Although one entrance road is preferable, at Upper Sioux Agency State Park it is not feasible or desirable due to visual impacts, slope, and possible displacement of trail users (see Map 9: Proposed Development).
- Work with the MN Department of Transportation to improve safety at all state park entrances onto the highway. Possible projects include improving directional and information signs on Highway 67 and adding turn lanes.
- Increase visibility and traffic flow at the main park entrance by reconfiguring the entrance road and signs. Improve the landscaping, remove the hill around the visitor center, and reconfigure the parking lot.
- If park visitation increases significantly, consider converting the road from the MHS site to the overlook into a hiking trail. Include accommodations for people with disabilities.

B. Camping and Day Use

- Evaluate ADA compliance in the campgrounds, interpretive center, parking lots, and picnic grounds to improve accessibility.
- Develop a sanitation building in the horse camp.
- Limit the number of horse campsites to maintain the atmosphere of solitude.
- Add camper cabins and/or more tipis to offer additional recreational opportunities.
- Install a fish cleaning facility. A low profile, fish-cleaning table with appropriate waste disposal containers would be sufficient.
- Annually assess need for deer herd reduction within the park. Plan and conduct deer hunts as required to protect native vegetation.
- Promote safe kayaking and canoeing on the Yellow Medicine River by developing a kayak/canoe landing area, and provide information on river conditions and access information at the contact station.
- Improve air conditioning and ventilation in the contact station/interpretive center.
- Construct a new visitor center and contact station in the next 20 years.
- Install a vandalism resistant vault toilet at the Joseph R. Brown State Wayside Rest.
- Construct a dump station in the main campground.

C. Hiking, Horseback Riding, Skiing & Snowmobile Trails

- Identify scenic vistas of the rivers at visitor use areas. The construction of observation decks may be appropriate for visitor safety and to prevent erosion. Many of these areas have sensitive natural and cultural resources.
- Future development should be limited to protect natural areas and high quality resources.
- Develop a short hiking trail from the campground area to the Yellow Medicine River.
- Connect state park trails to Skalbekken County Park to provide additional hiking, horseback riding and bicycle trail opportunities.
- Encourage trail riders to be respectful of private land and stay in the park boundary. Trespass problems will require enforcement action and will be referred to the DNR Division of Enforcement.

D. Minnesota River State Trail Project

Discussion: The legislatively authorized Minnesota River Trail will serve hikers, cross-country skiers, bicyclists, horseback riders, and snowmobile riders. Separate treadways are needed for horseback riders and bicyclists. The DNR Division of Parks and Trails is responsible for maintenance and management of designated State Trails. To assure appropriate protection of state park resources, viewsheds, and facilities immediately adjacent to the trail, division staff will establish standards and parameters for maintenance activities on state trails within state parks. Local trail managers will plan, schedule, and coordinate maintenance activities with the park manager.

- Develop bike/hiking trails in the park that connect to the Minnesota River State Trail and to the campground using existing trails as much as possible (see Map 9: Proposed Development).
- The horse trail treadway of the Minnesota River State Trail should stay along the riverbank on existing horse trails. A bridge over the Yellow Medicine River will provide access to the rest of the state trail.
- Add trailhead facilities and amenities including bike racks, water, and restrooms to serve state trail use.
- Cooperate with local agencies and landowners to connect to the Minnesota River State Trail and other recreation and tourism opportunities, including the city of Granite Falls and Prairie's Edge Casino.

E. Hunting

- Annually assess need for deer herd reduction within the park. Plan and conduct deer hunts as required to protect native vegetation.



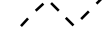


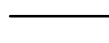
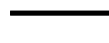












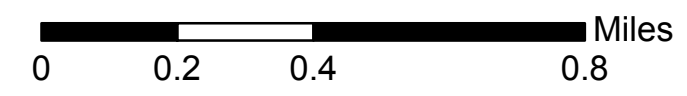
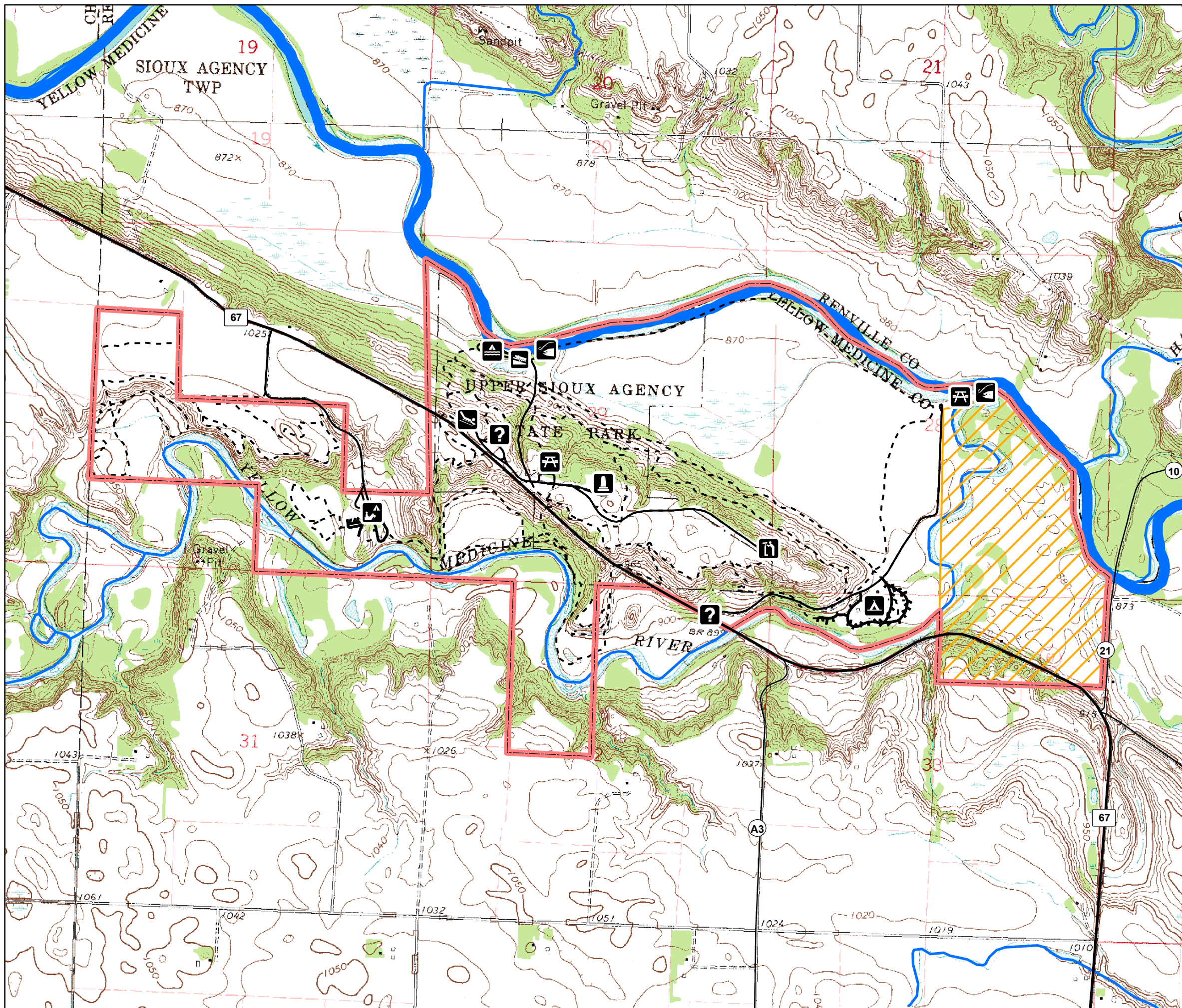
In addition to semi-modern campsites and walk-in campsites, the park's campground features two tipi rentals. The installation of camper cabins or additional tipi rentals could boost park visitation.

Upper Sioux Agency State Park

Map 8 - Existing Visitor Facilities and Trails

Legend

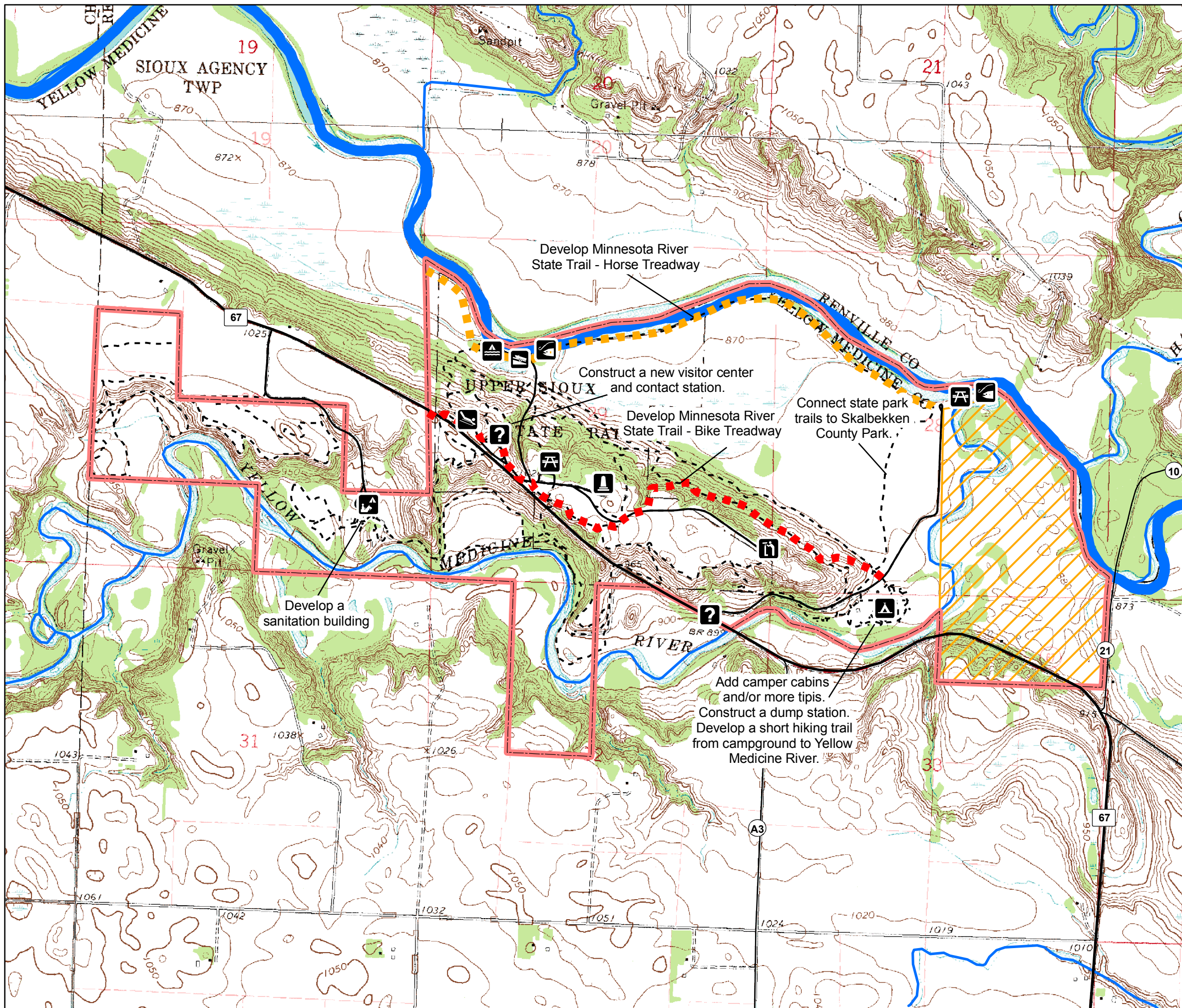
-  State Park Statutory Boundary
-  Private Property within Park Boundary
-  Existing State Park Trails
-  Rivers and Streams
-  State Trunk Highways
-  County State-Aid Highways
-  State Park Roads
-  Information/Office
-  Campground
-  Watercraft Camping
-  Equestrian Camping
-  Picnic Area
-  Boat Ramp
-  Historic Site
Upper Sioux Agency
-  Overlook
-  Fishing Access
-  Sledding Hill





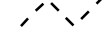


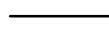
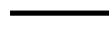










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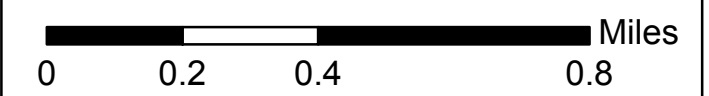
Upper Sioux Agency State Park

Map 9 - Proposed Development



Legend

-  State Park Statutory Boundary
-  Private Property within Park Boundary
-  Existing State Park Trails
-  Rivers and Streams
-  State Trunk Highways
-  County State-Aid Highways
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-  Sledding Hill



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PARK BOUNDARY

Boundary modifications are considered during all state park management planning processes. Although a state park management plan can recommend boundary changes, only the Minnesota State Legislature can change state park boundaries.

A park statutory boundary is defined by the Minnesota State Legislature and provides staff, citizens and policy makers with a common understanding of which lands are appropriate for inclusion in a state park. Changes to park statutory boundaries are typically requested from the Legislature when appropriate land outside of the boundary becomes available or as a result of a new planning process which has evaluated the long-term recreation and conservation needs of the area. After a planning process is completed, the Division of Parks and Trails requests changes to park boundaries only with the landowner's approval to be included in the state park statutory boundary. It is important to note that landowners who include their land within a park statutory boundary do not give up any rights over the use of their property including the right to sell to whomever they choose.

The DNR can only negotiate to acquire lands for a state park that are within a state park statutory boundary. Further, the DNR can only purchase land for state parks from willing sellers. No landowner, even one within a park statutory boundary, is required to sell their land to the state.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) grants have been used to acquire land and develop facilities at Upper Sioux Agency State Park. The LAWCON grant program stipulates that these lands must be retained solely for outdoor recreation purposes and not converted to other use, unless the lands are replaced with other lands that have at least the same market value and provide equivalent recreational opportunities.

Existing Land Ownership

Upper Sioux Agency State Park includes 1,280.69 acres within its park statutory boundary, 1,084.69 acres of which are owned by the State of Minnesota. Of the state-owned acreage, the Division of Parks and Trails administer 1,065.69 acres, and MHS administer 19 acres encompassing the historic Upper Sioux Agency site. The remaining 196 acres within the park statutory boundary are privately owned (see Map 11: Proposed Boundary Adjustments and Land Ownership).

Proposed Boundary Modification

As Yellow Medicine County's land use is anticipated to remain largely agricultural, the land preserved within Upper Sioux Agency State Park will become more important, for natural and cultural resource protection and for visitors seeking quality recreational experiences. The state park, as part of the Minnesota Valley and its tributaries, is considered a very important conservation corridor for the region. Participants in the planning process were generally supportive of extending the park's statutory boundaries to protect high quality natural communities, future recreational trail connections, unique cultural resources, and viewsheds.

Reasons For Expanding The Park Boundary:

- Preserve and protect the shoreline and watershed of the Minnesota River and Yellow Medicine River. Acquisition or permanent easement of shoreline land will help preserve water quality, and protect wildlife and fisheries habitat. Preserving shorelines will also ensure that nearby residents,

tourists, and future generations have opportunities to fish, boat, observe wildlife and learn about the environment. Acquisition of additional lands would also allow the development of a public access on the Yellow Medicine River.

- Expand prairie restoration efforts. Natural areas with high quality remnant prairies or oak savannas are a priority.
- Create additional trail opportunities. New land would offer recreation opportunities for future generations, including more hiking and horseback riding trails.

Park Boundary Recommendations

A. Landowner Relations

- Park staff will ensure that common boundaries with property owners are clearly identified to prevent access to private land by park users and prevent trespass issues onto parkland.
- Park staff will educate neighbors about the parks' resource management goals and techniques. Staff will also provide information to interested landowners on sustainable land management practices, water quality, the creation and protection of wildlife habitat, and natural areas restoration.
- Park staff will work with neighbors to increase understanding of resource management goals and techniques. They will also provide information to interested landowners on what they can do to protect water quality, wildlife, and natural areas.

B. Acquisition

- The top land acquisition or easement priority is to connect the state park trails to the Skalbekken Renville County Park. The connecting land is already in the park statutory boundary (see Map 11: Proposed Boundary Adjustments and Land Ownership).

C. Boundary Changes

- Work with landowners along both sides of the Yellow Medicine River regarding potential inclusion in the park's boundary. Acquisition of this land would protect the park's viewshed, protect native plant communities and water quality in the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota rivers, and provide additional trail opportunities.
- Work with landowners south of Highway 67 regarding potential inclusion in the park's boundary to create additional trail opportunities and expand prairie restoration efforts. Acquisition of this land would also ease boundary identification and help avoid future trespass issues.









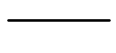




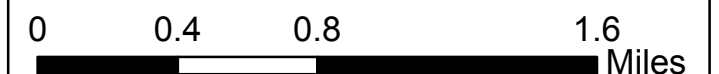
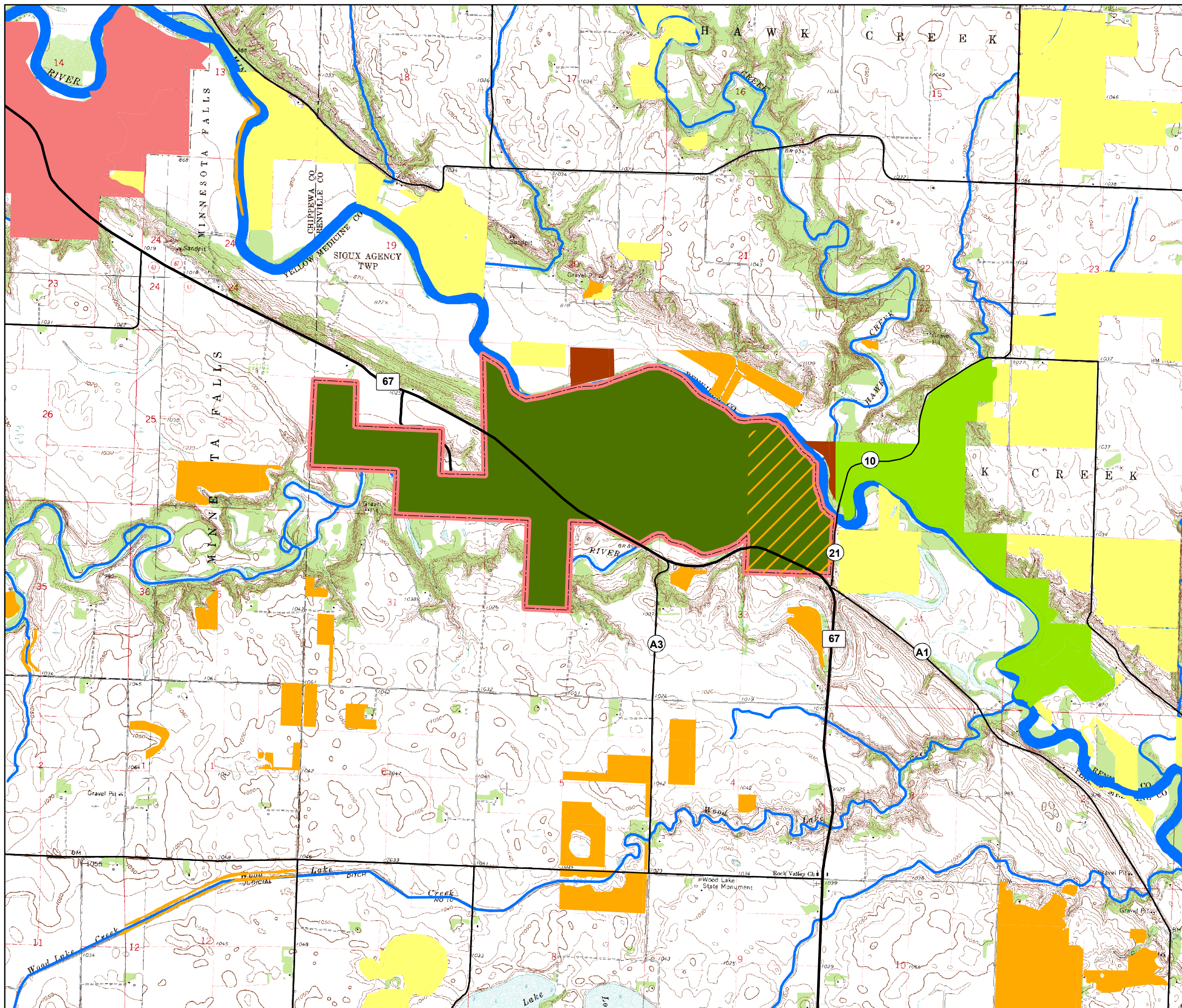
Protecting the Yellow Medicine River was identified as a high priority during the park management plan process.

Upper Sioux Agency State Park

Map 10 - Park Boundary and Adjacent Lands

Legend

-  State Park Statutory Boundary
-  Private Property within Park Boundary
-  Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
-  Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
-  Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM)
-  Skalbekken County Park (Renville Co)
-  Upper Sioux Reservation
-  Rivers and Streams
-  State Trunk Highways
-  County State-Aid Highways
-  State Park Roads



MN Department of Natural Resources
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SIGNIFICANT AREAS MAPPING

Significant Areas Mapping (SAM) is an integrated approach by which the natural and cultural resources in a park are identified in terms of their significance and assessed in terms of their capability to provide opportunities for visitor experiences.

The SAM process involves assessing both present and future conditions. Future conditions are those anticipated at the end of the twenty-year lifetime of the management plan. Visitor use and experience is defined on a park-specific scale of low, medium, and high use based on the number and density of visitors using the area.

The purpose of the SAM process is to identify areas where there may be opportunities to interpret important natural or cultural resources, or where future park development should be avoided. The SAM process can lead to a discussion of how to resolve conflicts between resource protection and visitor use - possibly by relocating (or modifying) visitor use, or by monitoring resource impact and defining impact management strategies. Appropriate strategies for managing impacts can be determined using the SAM analysis along with the park's mission as guides. Specific management strategies may include:

- *site management* (facility design, site hardening, site closure, vegetation barriers)
- *rationing and allocation* (reservations, queuing, pricing)
- *regulation* (the number of people, the location or timing of visitors, visitor behavior)
- *deterrence and enforcement* (signs, sanctions)
- *visitor education* (interpretation that promotes appropriate behavior or provides information regarding use conditions)

Assessing Current Conditions

Significant Natural and Cultural Resources

Although most areas of the state park have been disturbed to some extent by human activities, much of the park supports natural communities that are similar to those present prior to Euro-American settlement. As a result, there are several significant communities and species located in Upper Sioux Agency State Park. Looking at the park as a whole, however, the Yellow Medicine River area stands out as a significant natural resource that merits special attention and protection (see Map 12: Significant Areas and Rare Features).

Upper Sioux Agency State Park also contains numerous cultural sites including pre-contact and historic sites. A very visible example is the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site.

Visitor Use Levels and Experience

High Visitor Use Areas

Areas identified as high visitor use include the visitor center, horse camp, semi-modern campground, the boat landing and fishing access areas. These areas support the majority of park visits. Visitors can expect to encounter other people in these areas.

Medium Visitor Use Areas

Areas identified as medium visitor use include the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site, the picnic grounds, the scenic overlook, the sledding hill, and the park trails. Several of these areas are used only seasonally; the picnic grounds in summer and the sledding hill in winter, for example.

Low Visitor Use Areas

Areas identified as low visitor use are those portions of the park with no formal access or facilities, and currently support little to no visitor use. These include the peninsula south of the Yellow Medicine and the large wetlands area. As of 2005, visitor use levels in the Yellow Medicine River area are

relatively low due to minimal access by trails, roads, or boat. A significant amount of the lower portion of the river is in private ownership. The horse trail in the southern part of the park has the greatest potential impact on the river from within the park's boundaries

With the exception of the Historic Site, cultural sites within Upper Sioux Agency State Park are generally not pointed out to the park's visitors in order to protect them. Many people visit the park's namesake historic site to learn more about its role in our state and nation's history.

Identifying Existing Opportunities and Conflicts

Several areas of the park present opportunities or illustrate existing user conflicts within the park's boundaries, including the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site, native plant community restoration, and road and trail use. Recommendations for addressing these opportunities and conflicts are included in the related sections of the management plan.

Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site

This area contains the largest concentration of known cultural resources and a medium to occasionally high level of visitor use. Although there are potential resource impacts, bringing people to this area is one of the primary purposes of the park. Management strategies include working with MHS to improve interpretive signage to educate visitors and designating walkways to direct visitor movements. In addition, Upper Sioux Agency State Park will work cooperatively with MHS to improve maintenance to the buildings and ruins, as well as evaluate transfer the site back to the DNR.

Prairie/oak savanna restoration and roads/trails

The park road crosses through a prairie restoration area between the historic site to the scenic overlook. In the future, this road could be downgraded to a trail to reduce the effects of landscape fragmentation, to provide for additional interpretive opportunities, and minimize the development footprint on the land.

User Conflict

There is some user conflict between horses and hikers in the area southwest of the overlook. This congestion could increase with the development of the Minnesota River State Trail within the park's boundaries.

Assessing Future Conditions

Significant Natural and Cultural Resources

The current natural and cultural resource sites will remain significant. If the park boundary is expanded in the next twenty years, there will be additional natural and cultural resource sites that will need protection and management. Shoreline protection zones will likely be important if the state park expands along the Yellow Medicine River.

Visitor Use Levels

It is likely that visitor use levels will increase, though not dramatically. The completion of the Minnesota River State Trail – connecting the state park trails with Skalbekken County Park – would likely bring more trail users to the area. Additional tipis or camper cabins, and the development of a water access on the Yellow Medicine River would likely bring in more users to the state park as well.

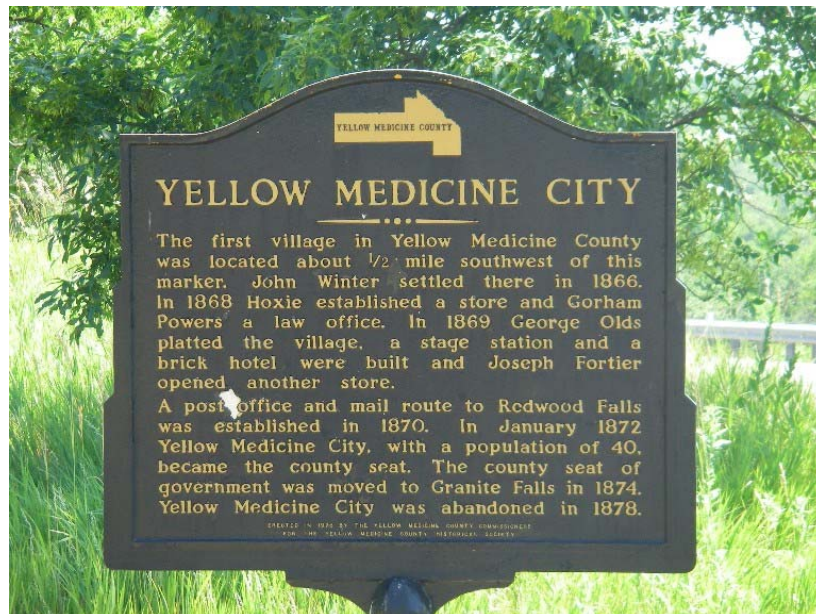
Identifying Future Opportunities and Conflicts

The opportunities and conflicts identified under Assessing Current Conditions will still be relevant in the future. In addition, several new areas or issues will likely present themselves as opportunities or conflicts in the future. Trail use should be monitored in the future to ensure that hikers, bicyclists and horse riders are staying on trails, and that erosion is not impacting the natural and cultural resources. The extension of the state trail into the park provides a great opportunity for additional interpretive and natural resource restoration opportunities. Native plant community restoration should be done in conjunction with trail construction, and interpretive signs and displays should be used at strategic

stopping points to educate trail users about the park's restoration programs and other natural resource projects.

A new visitor center/contact station is an important future opportunity for the interaction of park visitors and resources. It will offer increased space for interpretive signs and programming, as well as serving as a trailhead for the Minnesota River State Trail and other park trails.

Working cooperatively with MHS to improve interpretive efforts and to reopen the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site will also improve the distribution of cultural resource information to park visitors.

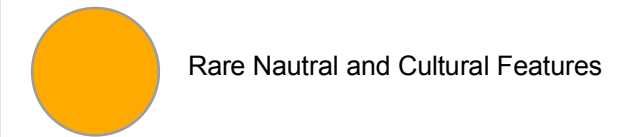


The Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site contains the largest concentration of known cultural resources and a medium-high level of visitor use. Although there are potential resource impacts, bringing people to this area is one of the primary purposes of the park.

Upper Sioux Agency State Park

Map 11 - Significant Areas and Rare Features

Legend



State Park Statutory Boundary

Historic District

State Park Roads

MN DOT County Roads

State Trunk Highways

Private Property

State Parks System Level Land Cover

Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest

Clay / Mud River Shore

Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)

Permanent Rivers/Streams

Pin Oak - Bur Oak Woodland

Prairie or Savanna Reconstruction

Southern Dry - Mesic Oak (Maple) Woodland

Southern Dry Prairie

Southern Floodplain Forest

Southern Mesic Oak - Basswood Forest

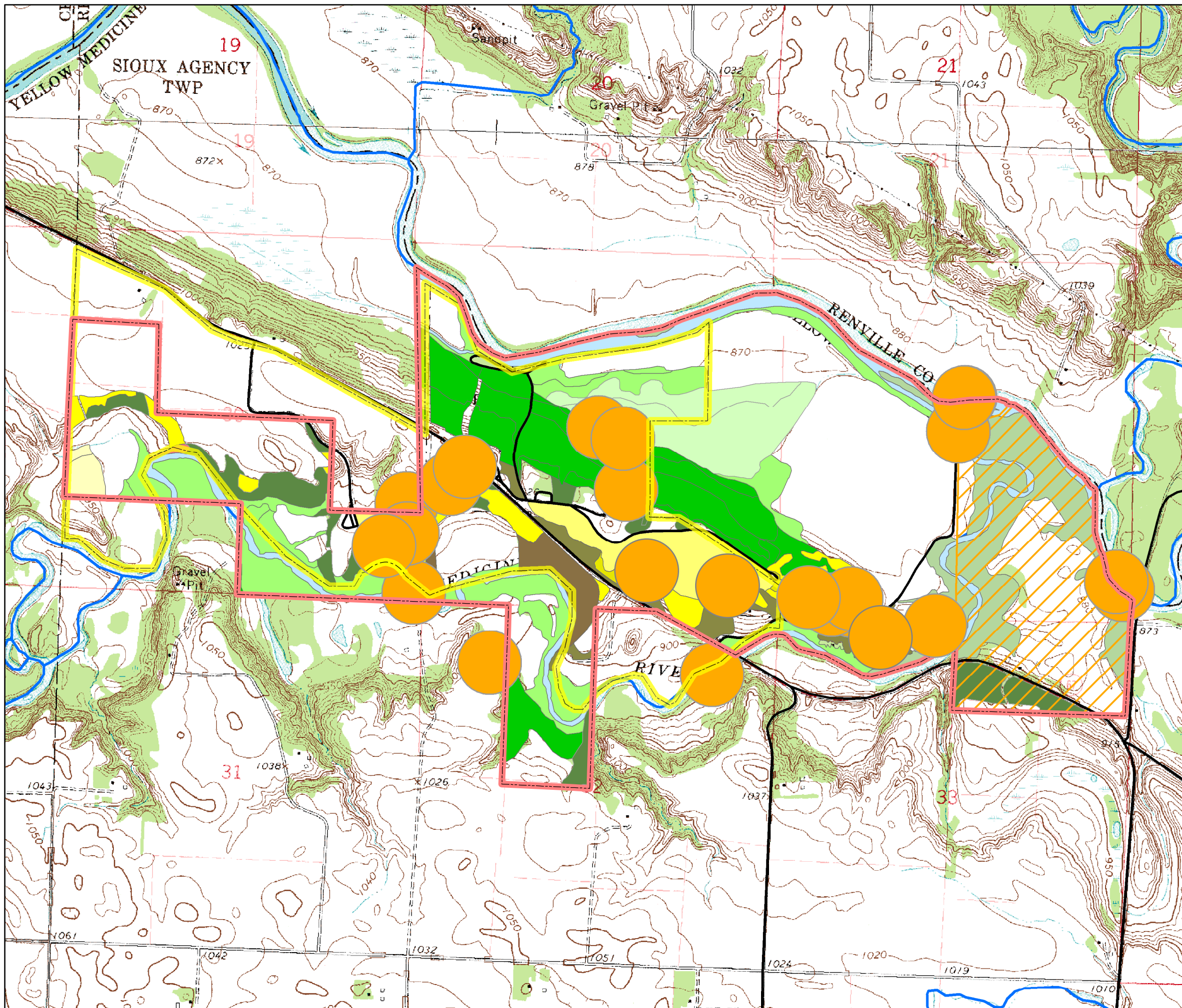
Southern Mesic Prairie

Southern Seepage Meadow / Carr

Southern Terrace Forest



MN Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks and Recreation



PARK OPERATIONS

Current Staffing

Upper Sioux Agency State Park has one full-time year-round position, the park manager. There are also several seasonal positions at the park:

- Two Buildings and Grounds workers (part-time April-October)
- One Parks Worker (60%, May-September)
- Two Natural Resource workers (60%, May-September)

Operations Costs and Staffing Issues

As new facilities are developed, additional staff hours will be needed. New facilities in the park, like the legislatively authorized Minnesota River State Trail, will likely increase the need for additional visitor services and enforcement. Additional interpretive staff time will be needed to design the new visitor center exhibits. Resource management efforts should be increased to match any opportunities for new restoration projects, especially if/when additional lands are acquired.

If all the recommendations in this park plan were implemented, the parks annual operational budget would need to be increased. The level or amount of this increase is difficult to estimate – many of the recommendations are too general to base estimates on at this time.

Several recommendations have development cost implications. The total cost to implement these actions is estimated at \$1.5 million, though this cost estimate does not include Minnesota River State Trail construction or acquisition costs, or the bridge over the Yellow Medicine River which is estimated to cost approximately \$200,000. These estimates have a significant margin of error because a variety of assumptions was made in relation to unknown variables like soil conditions, site design, septic system site selection, disturbance to electrical service, etc.

The DNR Division of Parks and Trails will experience increased staffing needs and workloads as a result of plan implementation. Other DNR divisions may also experience some increased workload in the implementation of certain recommendations. For example, the Division of Enforcement, the Division of Lands and Minerals, and the Bureau of Field Services may experience increased workloads as the result of additional recreational opportunities and land acquisition. Local representatives of these and other divisions participated in the planning process and are familiar with what their future role may be.

Joseph R. Brown State Wayside

The Joseph R. Brown State Wayside is managed and maintained by the staff of Upper Sioux Agency State Park. The wayside is eight miles from the park entrance. Managing the state wayside places an additional workload on the state park's limited staff and budget.

Enforcement

Currently, enforcement problems in the park are minimal. Typical enforcement issues at Upper Sioux Agency include vehicle permit citations, alcohol use, littering (especially along the Minnesota River), and horseback riders riding off trails and occasionally onto private property. The park manager is the designated Park Officer for the state park - authorized by the Department of Natural Resources to enforce rules and regulations within the state park boundary. Park staff often calls on other law enforcement

agencies, particularly DNR Conservation Officers and the Yellow Medicine County Sheriff's Department, to assist with law enforcement. DNR Conservation Officers primarily help enforce fishing, hunting, and trail use rules and regulations.

Recommendations for Park Operations

- Seek funding for additional staff hours, mainly to account for additional maintenance needs related to facility upkeep, especially related to the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site as well as the extension of the legislatively authorized Minnesota River State Trail.
- Expand resource management staff time at both a regional and a park level to fully implement the resource management recommendations.
- Future enforcement and visitor service efforts should be focused on heavy-use weekends and interpretive efforts should emphasize ways to protect the park natural and cultural resources and reduce impacts on the resources.

PLAN MODIFICATION PROCESS

State park management plans document a partnership-based planning process, and the recommended actions resulting from that process. These comprehensive plans recognize that all aspects of park management are interrelated and that management recommendations should also be interrelated.

Over time, however, conditions change that can effect some of the plan recommendations or occasionally an entire plan. Plans need to acknowledge changing conditions and be flexible enough to allow for modifications as needed.

There are two scales or types of plan modifications: plan revisions and plan amendments. Minor plan revisions concern less controversial issues and can generally be made within the DNR Division of Parks and Trails as plan modifications. Larger issues that represent changes in management direction, or involve other portions of the Department or other state agencies are addressed as plan amendments. The division's Planning Manager will make the decision of whether a plan amendment or plan revision is appropriate.

To maintain consistency between plans and processes, all revisions and amendments will be coordinated through the division's planning section. Requests for planning assistance should be directed to the division's Planning Manager.

Plan Amendments

Plan Amendment Criteria

The criteria outlined below will be used to determine whether the proposed change warrants a plan amendment:

The proposed change:

- Alters the park mission, vision, goals, specific management objectives, or proposed development plans outlined in the plan;
- Is controversial between elected officials and boards, park user groups, the public, adjacent landowners, other DNR divisions or state agencies; or
- Directly affects other state agencies (e.g., MHS, MPCA, etc.).

Plan Amendment Process

The plan amendment process has a series of steps.

1. Review the proposed change at the park and regional level. Determine which stakeholders potentially have a major concern and how those concerns should be addressed. If the major concerns are within the DNR Division of Parks and Trails, the issue should be resolved within the Division, with input from the public. The proposed change is then reviewed with the Division Central Office Management Team.
2. If the proposed change involves other DNR divisions, the issue should be resolved by staff and approved by the affected division directors. This may require one or two area/regional integrated resource management team meetings. The proposed change will be reviewed through the Department's review process (Regional Interdisciplinary Review Service or RIRS).
3. If the proposed change issue involves other state agencies, the issue should be resolved by staff and approved by the Division Central Office Management Team - with input from the public - and reviewed by RIRS.

4. If the proposed change is potentially controversial among elected boards, park user groups, adjacent landowners or the public, an open house will be held that is advertised in the local and regional area.
5. All plan amendments should be coordinated, documented, and distributed by the DNR Division of Parks and Trails planning staff.

Plan Revisions

If a plan change is recommended that does not meet the amendment criteria above, and generally follows the intent of the park management plan (through mission, vision, goals, and objectives), the Division of Parks and Trails has the discretion to modify the plan without a major planning process.

Revisions related to Physical Development Constraints and Resource Protection

Detailed engineering and design work may not allow the development to be completed exactly as it is outlined in the plan. A relatively minor modification, such as moving a proposed building site to accommodate various physical concerns, is common. Plans should outline a general direction and document the general “areas” for development rather than specific locations. For the most part, plans are conceptual, not detail-oriented. Prior to development, proposed development sites are examined for the presence of protected Minnesota Natural Heritage Program elements and historical/archeological artifacts. If any are found, the planned project may have to be revised to accommodate the protection of these resources.

Program Revisions

The resource management and interpretive services plan sections should be updated periodically as needed. The DNR Division of Parks and Trail’s Resource Management and Interpretive staff will determine when an update is needed, and coordinate the revision with the park planning section. Program sections should be rewritten in a format consistent with the plan as originally approved by the DNR. To retain consistency, DNR Division of Parks and Trails planning staff will be involved in the revision review, editing and distribution.



State park management plans document a partnership-based planning process and the recommended actions resulting from that process

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Appendix A – Recommendations

Community Relations Recommendations

A. *Cooperative Tourism*

- Cooperate with local agencies and landowners to connect the park to Granite Falls and the Upper Sioux Community by way of the legislatively authorized Minnesota River State Trail. This will be an asset to citizens and businesses of Granite Falls.
- Investigate sponsoring appropriate cultural and special events, in cooperation with the Upper Sioux Community and other partners.
- Improve highway signage on nearby highways to better direct tourists to the Upper Sioux Agency State Park, Joseph R. Brown State Wayside Rest, and the Wood Lake Monument.
- Expand tourism efforts to include the communities of Echo, Wood Lake, Clarkfield, and Granite Falls.

B. *Park Marketing*

- Promote the beauty of the park and the abundant bird watching opportunities therein.
- Promote the modern campground and the tips to draw in new users and increase the campground occupancy rate.
- If/when the connection between Upper Sioux Agency State Park and Renville County Skalbekken Park is completed, promote the longer horse trail system.

Natural Resources Recommendations

A. *Native Plant Communities and Rare Plants*

- Manage the vegetation in the park that is characteristic of the Minnesota River Prairie Subsection. The protection of existing native vegetation remnants including the Upland Prairie, Wet Meadow/Carr, River Shore, Floodplain Forest, and Mesic Hardwood Forest systems should be a priority (see Map 6: Desired Future Conditions).
- Pursue prairie or savanna reconstruction in areas of the park that were historically prairie or savanna. Areas of the park that are adjacent to remnant prairies are the first priority for restoration. The second priority is the reconstruction of old fields.
- Coordinate vegetation management of the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site with MHS.
- Identify areas in the park that should be managed toward oak savanna.
- Enhance the prescribed fire program so that a regular cycle of fire can be incorporated into the management of the prairie and savanna areas.
- Remove or control invasive exotic species by utilizing best management practices and integrated pest management techniques. Seek a variety of methods to remove problem native vegetation in the park including red cedar, sumac, and box elder.
- Limit activities that cause erosion or trample native vegetation.

B. *Native Wildlife*

- Preserve and perpetuate native wildlife species in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 86A.05, Subdivision 2c, particularly those species that are state or federally listed, or are classified as SGCN.
- Manage white-tailed deer populations to control impacts on native vegetation.

C. *Water Resources Management*

- Preserve the riverbanks in the park by utilizing proven techniques, especially in areas where there may be historic artifacts or visitor safety concerns. Evaluate riverbank stabilization options in light of protecting water quality, aesthetics, and erosion control.

- Restore the floodplain wetlands to provide additional habitat for shorebirds and other wetland species. Actions include completing a soil inventory, developing a restoration plan for the large wetland east of the boat landing, and controlling invasive reed-canary grass populations.
- Minimize park development on floodplain areas to limit future erosion issues and damage to facilities.

D. Cooperative Projects and General Conservation

- Continue to work with other environmental, resource management and education agencies and programs in the area to improve the water quality of the Minnesota River and adjacent habitat. Encourage cooperative projects such as native seed harvesting and planting, and conservation easements.
- Identify, manage, and protect rare, endangered, or threatened plant and animal species and native plant communities within the park.
- Protect native mussels in the rivers and to prevent the spread of zebra mussels.
- Use energy-efficient designs and practices for current park facilities and for future development. Conservation efforts may include: fuel-efficient vehicles, clean fuel use, energy efficient office equipment and appliances, energy-conservation in buildings, and landscaping designs that reduce the need for mowing.
- Use outdoor lighting systems that preserve the dark night skies.

E. Research Needs

- Research vegetation around the historic Upper Sioux Agency site to determine if there are plantings that represent the landscape from the mid-1800s.
- Conduct a comprehensive plant and animal species inventory within the park to establish a baseline inventory that will assist in the development of priorities for managing and restoring flora and fauna. The inventory will also provide valuable information for evaluating potential facility sites and recreational use areas. The Minnesota County Biological Survey has been conducted in Yellow Medicine County; but additional park work is needed.

Cultural Resources Recommendations

A. Cultural Resource Management

- Conduct a cultural resource survey to inventory known cultural sites within the state park.
- Develop cultural resource materials for the Joseph R. Brown State Wayside Rest related to the role of Joseph Brown and his home in the larger context of the U.S.–Dakota War of 1862.
- Research the events from both the Dakota and settlers perspectives on the U.S – Dakota War of 1862, especially in relation to the Wood Lake Battlefield.
- Develop cultural resource materials that link Upper Sioux Agency State Park, the Wood Lake Battle site and other local sites Interpretation of the Wood Lake Battlefield Site and incorporate them into the state park interpretive efforts.

B. Cooperative Projects

- Work with MHS to complete the archaeological report on the historic Upper Sioux Agency site.
- Work with MHS and other appropriate partners to actively manage the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site. The 2012 U.S.-Dakota War sesquicentennial provides an opportunity to bring attention to the site and related historic areas.
- Work with the Upper Sioux Community to identify and protect burial sites, sacred sites, habitation sites, traditional use, and other natural or cultural areas within the state park.
- Develop a cooperative agreement which details access to traditional cultural properties within the park (including gathering, harvesting and ceremonial use).

Interpretive Services Recommendations

A. Facilities and Services

- Improve the existing visitor center with up-to-date exhibits and improvements to the meeting room. Include child-oriented exhibits and interactive exhibits. Remove the ice and pop vending machines from the main entrance corridor of the visitor center. The artificially constructed earthen mound in front of the visitor center should be removed to improve visibility.
- Consider a new combined visitor center and contact station. A building site plan will be needed to evaluate the best location. Criteria to consider include: elevation, flooding, safety of road alignment, archaeological artifacts, soil type, natural resources, natural communities, and adequate space for facilities, scenic views. At this time, the recommended site is near the present location.
- Periodically evaluate the themes, visitor use, and effectiveness of the park's non-personal interpretive services.
- Produce printed interpretive materials on the following topics: Upper Sioux Agency State Park wildflower checklist, U.S.-Dakota War sites, snakes of the park, Yellow Medicine City history, prairie and native community reconstruction in the park, Minnesota River valley birds of prey, problem plant species control and management.
- Describe and define Upper Sioux Agency State Park's niche in telling the story of the U.S. – Dakota War.
- Develop short-term exhibits on timely and seasonal topics for the interpretive exhibit panels in the visitor center. Posters and notices should also be placed on these panels.
- Acquire and maintain up-to-date video presentation equipment in the visitor center meeting/presentation space.
- Improve wildlife watching opportunities at the visitor center.
- Survey existing and potential users to determine target audiences and their interests and needs.

B. Cooperative Projects

- Work with MHS to produce and install outdoor non-personal interpretive signs for the historic agency site. Determine if the MHS slideshow programs on the historic agency site are still appropriate for use.
- Work with local school districts to produce an educational activity guide for Upper Sioux Agency State Park.
- Utilize guest presenters whenever possible for interpretive presentations and activities.
- Develop a formal operating contract with the Pezuta Zizi Cultural and Environmental Learning and Resource Center to clarify responsibilities for the educational trunks and other materials.

Recreational Uses and Visitor Services Recommendations

A. Roads

- Maintain the three current public park entrances. Although one entrance road is preferable, at Upper Sioux Agency State Park it is not feasible or desirable due to visual impacts, slope, and possible displacement of trail users (see Map 9: Proposed Development).
- Work with the MN Department of Transportation to improve safety at all state park entrances onto the highway. Possible projects include improving directional and information signs on Highway 67 and adding turn lanes.
- Increase visibility and traffic flow at the main park entrance by reconfiguring the entrance road and signs. Improve the landscaping, remove the hill around the visitor center, and reconfigure the parking lot.
- If park visitation increases significantly, consider converting the road from the MHS site to the overlook into a hiking trail. Include accommodations for people with disabilities.

B. Camping and Day Use

- Evaluate ADA compliance in the campgrounds, interpretive center, parking lots, and picnic grounds to improve accessibility.
- Develop a sanitation building in the horse camp.
- Limit the number of horse campsites to maintain the atmosphere of solitude.
- Add camper cabins and/or more tipis to offer additional recreational opportunities.
- Install a fish cleaning facility. A low profile, fish-cleaning table with appropriate waste disposal containers would be sufficient.
- Promote safe kayaking and canoeing on the Yellow Medicine River by developing a kayak/canoe landing area, and provide information on river conditions and access information at the contact station.
- Improve air conditioning and ventilation in the contact station/interpretive center.
- Construct a new visitor center and contact station in the next 20 years.
- Install a vandalism resistant vault toilet at the Joseph R. Brown State Wayside Rest.
- Construct a dump station in the main campground.

C. Hiking, Horseback Riding, Skiing & Snowmobile Trails

- Identify scenic vistas of the rivers at visitor use areas. The construction of observation decks may be appropriate for visitor safety and to prevent erosion. Many of these areas have sensitive natural and cultural resources.
- Future development should be limited to protect natural areas and high quality resources.
- Develop a short hiking trail from the campground area to the Yellow Medicine River.
- Connect state park trails to Skalbekken County Park to provide additional hiking, horseback riding and bicycle trail opportunities.
- Encourage trail riders to be respectful of private land and stay in the park boundary. Trespass problems will require enforcement action and will be referred to the DNR Division of Enforcement.

D. Minnesota River State Trail Project

- Develop bike/hiking trails in the park that connect to the Minnesota River State Trail and to the campground using existing trails as much as possible (see Map 10: Proposed Minnesota River State Trail Alignment).
- The horse trail treadway of the Minnesota River State Trail should stay along the riverbank on existing horse trails. A bridge over the Yellow Medicine River will provide access to the rest of the state trail.
- Add trailhead facilities and amenities including bike racks, water, and restrooms to serve state trail use.
- Cooperate with local agencies and landowners to connect to the Minnesota River State Trail and other recreation and tourism opportunities, including the city of Granite Falls and Prairie's Edge Casino.

E. Hunting

- Annually assess need for deer herd reduction within the park. Plan and conduct deer hunts as required to protect native vegetation.

Park Boundary Recommendations

A. Landowner Relations

- Park staff will ensure that common boundaries with property owners are clearly identified to prevent access to private land by park users and prevent trespass issues onto parkland.
- Park staff will continue to caution horseback riders about safety concerns during deer hunting season: riders may want to avoid certain horse trails, horses and riders should wear blaze orange, and riders should not disturb hunters on private land.

- Park staff will work with neighbors to increase understanding of resource management goals and techniques. They will also provide information to interested landowners on what they can do to protect water quality, wildlife, and natural areas.

B. Acquisition

- The top land acquisition or easement priority is to connect the state park trails to the Skalbekken Renville County Park. The connecting land is already in the park statutory boundary (see Map 11: Proposed Boundary Adjustments and Land Ownership).

C. Boundary Changes

- Work with landowners along both sides of the Yellow Medicine River regarding potential inclusion in the park's boundary. Acquisition of this land would protect the park's viewshed, protect native plant communities and water quality in the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota rivers, and provide additional trail opportunities.
- Work with landowners south of Highway 67 regarding potential inclusion in the park's boundary to create additional trail opportunities and expand prairie restoration efforts. Acquisition of this land would also ease boundary identification and help avoid future trespass issues.

Park Operations Recommendations

- Seek funding for additional staff hours, mainly to account for additional maintenance hours for facilities such as the Upper Sioux Agency Historic Site and the extension of the Minnesota River State Trail.
- Resource management staff time, both regional and park level, will need to be expanded to fully implement the resource management recommendations.
- Future enforcement and visitor service efforts should be focused on heavy-use weekends and interpretive efforts should emphasize ways to protect the park natural and cultural resources and reduce impacts on the resources.

Appendix B – Bird Inventory

Common Name	Scientific Name	Season of Occurrence ³			
		Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Alder Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax alnorum</i>	U		U	
American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	O		O	
American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	O		O	
American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	C	C	C	
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	C	C	C	C
American Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis tristis</i>	C	C	C	U
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	C	C	C	U
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	C	C	C	
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	C	C	C	U
American Tree Sparrow	<i>Spizella arborea</i>	C		C	C
American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	C	C	C	
American Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>	U		U	
American Woodcock	<i>Scolopax minor</i>	U	O	U	
Baird's Sandpiper	<i>Calidris bairdii</i>	U		U	
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	U	U	U	U
Baltimore Oriole	<i>Icterus galbula</i>	C	C	C	
Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	C	C	C	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	C	C	C	
Barred Owl	<i>Strix varia</i>	U	U	U	U
Bay-breasted Warbler	<i>Dendroica castanea</i>	U		U	
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>	C	C	C	O
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	U		U	
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	C		C	
Black-bellied Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	U		U	
Black-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus erythrophthalmus</i>	U	U	U	
Blackburnian Warbler	<i>Dendroica fusca</i>	U		U	
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapilla</i>	C	C	C	C
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	U	U	U	
Blackpoll Warbler	<i>Dendroica striata</i>	U		U	
Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Dendroica virens</i>	U		U	
Blue Grosbeak	<i>Guiraca caerulea</i>		R		
Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	C	C	C	C
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	U	U	U	
Blue-headed Vireo	<i>Vireo solitarius</i>	U		U	
Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>	C	C	C	
Blue-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora pinus</i>	O		O	
		Season of Occurrence			

³ Abundance codes are defined as follows: C = Common (present, relatively easy to find); U = Uncommon (observed, may be difficult to find); O = Occasional (may or may not be present in any year); R = Rare (has occurred at least once, may or may not be expected to recur).

Common Name	Scientific Name	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Bobolink	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	C	C	C	
Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Larus philadelphia</i>	U		U	
Brewer's Blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	U		U	
Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>	U	O	O	
Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>	C		C	O
Brown Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>	C	C	C	
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	C	C	C	
Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	U		U	
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	C	C	C	
Canada Warbler	<i>Wilsonia canadensis</i>	U		U	
Canvasback	<i>Aythya valisineria</i>	U		U	
Carolina Wren	<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>		R		
Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	C	C	C	U
Cerulean Warbler	<i>Dendroica cerulea</i>	R			
Chestnut-sided Warbler	<i>Dendroica pensylvanica</i>	U		U	
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>	C	C	C	
Clay-colored Sparrow	<i>Spizella pallida</i>	U	U	U	
Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	C	C	C	
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	U		U	
Common Grackle	<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>	C	C	C	
Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>	O		O	
Common Merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	U		U	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>			O	
Common Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles minor</i>	U	U	U	
Common Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea</i>	O		O	O
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	O		O	
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	C	C	C	
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	U	U	U	O
Dickcissel	<i>Spiza americana</i>	O	O		
Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	C	C	C	
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>	C	C	C	C
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	O		O	
Eared Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	O		O	
Eastern Bluebird	<i>Sialia sialis</i>	C	C	C	O
Eastern Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>	C	C	C	
Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	C	C	C	
Eastern Screech-Owl	<i>Otus asio</i>	U	U	U	U
Eastern Towhee	<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>	U	U	U	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus virens</i>	C	C	C	
European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	C	C	C	C
Evening Grosbeak	<i>Coccothraustes vespertinus</i>	O		O	O
Field Sparrow	<i>Spizella pusilla</i>	U	U	U	

Common Name	Scientific Name	Season of Occurrence			
		Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>	U		U	
Fox Sparrow	<i>Passerella iliaca</i>	C		C	
Franklin's Gull	<i>Larus pipixcan</i>	C	O	C	
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	U		U	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>	C		C	
Golden-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>	O		O	
Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	U	U	U	
Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	C	C	C	
Gray Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	O	O	O	O
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	C	C	C	O
Great Crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>	U	U	U	
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	C	C	C	
Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	U	U	U	U
Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	O		O	
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	U		U	
Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	U	U	U	
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	U		U	
Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>	C	C	C	C
Harris's Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia querula</i>	U		U	
Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	C		C	
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	U		U	
Hooded Merganser	<i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i>	U	U	U	
Horned Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	O		O	
Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	C	C	C	U
House Finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	C	C	C	C
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	C	C	C	C
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	C	C	C	
Indigo Bunting	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>	C	C	C	
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	C	C	C	
Lapland Longspur	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	C		C	U
Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	O	O	O	
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	O		O	
Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	C	C	C	
Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	U	U	U	
Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	U		C	
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	U	C	C	
Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>	U		U	
Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	O		O	
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	U	O	U	U
Magnolia Warbler	<i>Dendroica magnolia</i>	U		U	
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	C	C	C	

Common Name	Scientific Name	Season of Occurrence			
		Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>	O	O	O	
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	R			
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	C	C	C	O
Mourning Warbler	<i>Oporornis philadelphia</i>	U		U	
Nashville Warbler	<i>Vermivora ruficapilla</i>	C		C	
Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	U	U	U	U
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	C	C	C	U
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	O		O	O
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	U	U	U	O
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	U		U	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	C	C	C	
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	U		U	
Northern Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	O		O	O
Northern Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>	U		U	
Olive-sided Flycatcher	<i>Contopus cooperi</i>	U		U	
Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>	U		U	
Orchard Oriole	<i>Icterus spurius</i>	U	U	U	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	U	U	U	
Ovenbird	<i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>	C	U	C	
Palm Warbler	<i>Dendroica palmarum</i>	U			
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	U	U	U	
Philadelphia Vireo	<i>Vireo philadelphicus</i>	U		U	
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	C	C	C	
Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>	U	U	U	U
Pine Siskin	<i>Carduelis pinus</i>	U		U	U
Purple Finch	<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>	U		U	U
Purple Martin	<i>Progne subis</i>	U	U	U	
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	O		O	O
Red-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>	U	U	U	U
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	U		U	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>	U		U	O
Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	C	U	C	
Redhead	<i>Aythya americana</i>	U		U	
Red-headed Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>	U	U	U	
Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	O		O	
Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	O	O	O	
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	C	C	C	
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	C		C	
Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	U		U	
Ring-necked Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	C	C	C	C
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	C	C	C	C

Common Name	Scientific Name	Season of Occurrence			
		Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>	C	C	C	
Rough-legged Hawk	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>	U		U	U
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	C		C	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>	U	O	U	
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	U		U	
Rusty Blackbird	<i>Euphagus carolinus</i>	C		C	
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	O		O	
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	C	C	C	
Scarlet Tanager	<i>Piranga olivacea</i>	U	U	U	
Sedge Wren	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>	U	U	U	
Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	C	U	C	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>	U		U	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	U		U	O
Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>	O		U	
Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	C		C	C
Snow Goose	<i>Chen caerulescens</i>	C		C	
Snowy Owl	<i>Bubo scandiacus</i>	O		O	
Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>	U	O	U	
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	C	C	C	
Sora	<i>Porzana carolina</i>	U	U	U	
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>	C	C	C	
Swamp Sparrow	<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>	C	C	C	
Tennessee Warbler	<i>Vermivora peregrina</i>	C		C	
Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	C	C	C	
Tundra Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>	O		O	
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	C	U	C	
Upland Sandpiper	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>	O	O		
Veery	<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>	U	O	O	
Vesper Sparrow	<i>Poocetes gramineus</i>	C	C	C	
Virginia Rail	<i>Rallus limicola</i>	U	U	U	
Warbling Vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	C	C	C	
Western Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>	O	O	O	
Western Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>	C	C	C	
Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>			R	
White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	C	C	C	C
White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	C	O	C	
White-winged Crossbill	<i>Loxia leucoptera</i>			O	O
Wild Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	C	C	C	C
Willet	<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>	O		O	
Willow Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii</i>	U	U	U	
Wilson's Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>	U		U	

Common Name	Scientific Name	Season of Occurrence			
		Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Wilson's Snipe	<i>Gallinago delicata</i>	U		U	
Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	U		U	
Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>	C	C	C	
Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	U		O	
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	C	C	C	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax flaviventris</i>	O		O	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	U	U	U	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	U	U	O	
Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>	R			
Yellow-headed Blackbird	<i>Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus</i>	U	U	U	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	C		C	
Yellow-throated Vireo	<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>	U	U	U	

Appendix C – Fish Inventory

Common Name	Scientific Name
American eel	<i>Anguilla rostrata</i>
Banded darter	<i>Etheostoma zonale</i>
Bigmouth buffalo	<i>Ictiobus cyprinellus</i>
Bigmouth shiner	<i>Notropis dorsalis</i>
Black buffalo	<i>Ictiobus niger</i>
Black bullhead	<i>Ameiurus melas</i>
Black crappie	<i>Pomoxis nigromaculatus</i>
Blackchin shiner	<i>Notropis heterodon</i>
Blackside darter	<i>Percina maculata</i>
Blue sucker	<i>Cycleptus elongatus</i>
Bluegill	<i>Lepomis macrochirus</i>
Bluntnose minnow	<i>Pimephales notatus</i>
Brassy minnow	<i>Hybognathus hankinsoni</i>
Brook stickleback	<i>Culaea inconstans</i>
Bullhead minnow	<i>Pimephales vigilax</i>
Carmine shiner	<i>Notropis percobromus</i>
Central stoneroller	<i>Campostoma anomalum</i>
Channel catfish	<i>Ictalurus punctatus</i>
Common carp	<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>
Common shiner	<i>Luxilus cornutus</i>
Creek chub	<i>Semotilus atromaculatus</i>
Emerald shiner	<i>Notropis atherinoides</i>
Fantail darter	<i>Etheostoma flabellare</i>
Fathead minnow	<i>Pimephales promelas</i>
Flathead catfish	<i>Pylodictis olivaris</i>
Freshwater drum	<i>Aplodinotus grunniens</i>
Gizzard shad	<i>Dorosoma cepedianum</i>
Golden redhorse	<i>Moxostoma erythrurum</i>
Golden shiner	<i>Notemigonus crysoleucas</i>
Greater redhorse	<i>Moxostoma valenciennesi</i>
Green sunfish	<i>Lepomis cyanellus</i>
Highfin carpsucker	<i>Carpionodes velifer</i>
Hornyhead chub	<i>Nocomis biguttatus</i>
Iowa darter	<i>Etheostoma exile</i>
Johnny darter	<i>Etheostoma nigrum</i>
Lake sturgeon	<i>Acipenser fulvescens</i>
Largemouth bass	<i>Micropterus salmoides</i>
Largescale stoneroller	<i>Campostoma oligolepis</i>
Least darter	<i>Etheostoma microperca</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Logperch	<i>Percina caprodes</i>
Mimic shiner	<i>Notropis volucellus</i>
Northern hog sucker	<i>Hypentelium nigricans</i>
Northern pike	<i>Esox lucius</i>
Orangespotted sunfish	<i>Lepomis humilis</i>
Paddlefish	<i>Polyodon spathula</i>
Quillback	<i>Carpionodes cyprinus</i>
Rainbow darter	<i>Etheostoma caeruleum</i>
River carpsucker	<i>Carpionodes carpio</i>
River shiner	<i>Notropis blennioides</i>
Rock bass	<i>Ambloplites rupestris</i>
Sand shiner	<i>Notropis stramineus</i>
Sauger	<i>Sander canadensis</i>
Shoal chub	<i>Macrhybopsis hyostoma</i>
Shorthead redhorse	<i>Moxostoma macrolepidotum</i>
Shortnose gar	<i>Lepisosteus platostomus</i>
Shovelnose sturgeon	<i>Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus</i>
Silver redhorse	<i>Moxostoma anisurum</i>
Skipjack herring	<i>Alosa chrysochloris</i>
Slenderhead darter	<i>Percina phoxocephala</i>
Smallmouth bass	<i>Micropterus dolomieu</i>
Smallmouth buffalo	<i>Ictiobus bubalus</i>
Spotfin shiner	<i>Cyprinella spiloptera</i>
Spottail shiner	<i>Notropis hudsonius</i>
Stonecat	<i>Noturus flavus</i>
Walleye	<i>Sander vitreus</i>
Western blacknose dace	<i>Rhinichthys obtusus</i>
White bass	<i>Morone chrysops</i>
White sucker	<i>Catostomus commersonii</i>
Yellow perch	<i>Perca flavescens</i>

Appendix D – American Indian Traditions and Post-Contact History

Paleoindian Tradition 12,000-8,000 years ago

This period of time witnessed significant changes in landscape, climate and vegetation in the Minnesota River valley. Prior to the beginning of this period, portions of Minnesota were still covered by glacial ice and the river valley as we now know it, had not yet been formed. Then, over a period of several thousand years, Glacial Lake Agassiz began to drain to the south, releasing melt waters that eventually created the current Minnesota River valley. As the post-glacial climate warmed, the vegetation during this period changed from tundra and spruce forest to mixed deciduous and coniferous forest, with prairie to the west. The tradition is thought to have included small, nomadic groups of people who hunted large mammals such as woolly mammoth and the giant bison (*Bison occidentals* – now extinct) present in the region. As early as 10,000 years ago bison were hunted without the use of horses or bow and arrow. On the southwest side of Granite Falls, is the Peterson bison kill site. The University of Minnesota conducted research at this private site and estimated that the artifacts are from 5,000 to 9,000 years ago. Little is known about these earliest people in the Minnesota River valley for they left very little evidence. Archaeologists estimate these people followed a nomadic lifestyle from about 12,000 to 8,000 years ago. This cultural period is associated with various forest types and it probably witnessed the warming climate and the changing of forest to grassland in this part of North America and Minnesota. The other evidence of these people is at the head of the Minnesota River valley at Brown's Valley, Minnesota and at the Hildahl bison kill site above Granite Falls, Minnesota.

Archaic Tradition 8,000 – 3,000 years ago

The Archaic tradition in the Minnesota River valley is characterized as having shifting climate and environmental changes. For the first half of the period, the climate gradually became warmer and drier, and the vegetation became more prairie-like. And then for the remainder of the period, the climate became cool and moist, and the deciduous forest became more prominent, invading from the east. The cultures living at the time are thought to have been the more western prairie inhabitants who hunted bison, in addition to the more eastern woodland inhabitants who were general hunters and gatherers.

Woodland Tradition 3,000 – 350 years ago

During the Woodland tradition, changes in the landscape, climate and vegetation of the Minnesota River valley were slowing down and the resulting cultures are thought to have been more stable or at least more sedentary. Ceramics, earthen mounds and horticulture started to appear during this time.

Plains Village/Oneota/Mississippian/Missouri Traditions 1,000 – 350 years ago

This time period was a cultural transition period. Traditional nomadic hunting and gathering was slowly becoming a basic subsistence and settlement pattern. This change was made possible through the development of limited horticulture and ceramics. Crops such as corn, beans and squash were cultivated. There is evidence of long-distance trading between complex regional cultures. People of this cultural time period located habitation sites on islands, peninsulas, and isthmuses of lakes. Later they moved to terraces above river floodplains, which allowed them easy access to floodplain gardens that were easily cultivated and watered.

Evidence for this cultural time period in the Minnesota River valley is limited. The Minnesota Historical Society site file indicates there are 57-recorded archaeological sites along the Minnesota River valley between Redwood Falls and Montevideo. Many are in the area of Granite Falls and east along the river

bluffs. Since the Minnesota River was a major travel route and hunting area for people of this cultural period, it is not uncommon to find Indian artifacts along its bluffs. Some artifacts were found during historical research excavations by MHS, which indicate use of the park bluffs for Indian camps prior to European immigration. An archeological survey of the entire state park has not been completed.

Dakota People and Culture circa 300 years ago to present

The Dakota have lived in the Lower Minnesota River valley since 1700 A.D. Accounts of the Dakota culture can be found alive today in the stories told by current members of the tribes (Mdewakanton, Wahpeton, Sisseton and Wahpekute) and by historical records from European explorers, missionaries, traders and settlers. In essence, their lives centered on the changing seasons and the resources that were seasonally available in the Minnesota River valley for use in food, shelter and clothing. They were the dominant culture in central and southern Minnesota.

The Sisseton and the Wahpeton Dakota occupied a territory that was centered on the Minnesota River, and extended south into the Prairie des Coteau region, northwest towards Big Stone and Traverse Lakes area, and east into the Alexandria Moraine complex of central Minnesota, and into the Big Woods area. The Dakota also had the opportunity to interact with other tribes on the edges of their territories.

European Contact

Wanderers and adventurers probably made contact with the Dakota in the early 1600s. Religious missionaries made contact with the Dakota in the 1680s and recorded their encounters. With the arrival of French and English explorers in the early 1700s, and later, fur traders, the Dakota way of life was to change forever. Trading posts were established and treaties were signed. Entrepreneurs began a growing trade with the Dakota in the late 1700s. One such trading post was located several miles southeast of the park near a place called Patterson's Rapids. By the early 1800s, British, French, and American fur companies had extensive fur trade networks and contacts with the Dakota.

Treaties and the Agencies

The United States government had a strong interest in acquiring the lands occupied by the Dakota people. Several attempts were made to buy portions of Dakota lands during the 1830s and 1840s through treaties. Although the early treaties were agreed upon by Dakota and U.S. government officials, Congress never provided enough money to pay the amounts or deliver the services stipulated in the treaties or failed to ratify the treaties altogether. The pressure on the Dakota to sell more of their land to the U.S. Government increased. There were in four tribes of Santee Dakota (Sioux): the Mdewakantons, Wahpekutes, Sissetons, and Wahpetons.

In 1837, as wild game and opportunities for livelihood decreased, the Dakota agreed to sell about 5 million acres of their land to the federal government for \$1 million. The government did not fulfill its obligations.

On July 23, 1851, one of the most significant Indian treaties in our nation's history was signed at Traverse Des Sioux. The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux by which the upper Dakota bands (Sisseton and Wahpeton) ceded all of their lands in Iowa and Minnesota east of the Red River-Lake Traverse-Big Sioux River in return for a tract of land ten miles wide on both sides of the Minnesota River from Traverse Lake to the Yellow Medicine River. Two weeks later at Mendota, a treaty was signed with the lower bands of the Dakota (Mdewakanton and Wahpekute). The government established two administrative centers, the Upper and Lower Sioux agencies that would administer the terms of these treaties. These treaties were instrumental in opening the American west to European settlement. The result of these treaties was that essentially all Dakota land west of the Mississippi, except for the specified reservations, was ceded to the U.S. government.

Over 24 million acres in Minnesota were ceded by the Dakota in exchange for reservation lands and for \$3 million to be paid over a 50-year period in annual annuities of goods and money -- about 12 cents an acre for some of the finest agricultural land in the country. Before ratifying the Treaty the US Senate added amendments that weakened the Dakota position. Even with the changes, the terms of the treaty were not entirely honored by the U.S.

In return, the Wahpeton and Sisseton would receive annual payments and provisions, and have schools established for them. The terms of the treaty would be administered at an agency site in their traditional homeland. That agency was eventually located at a site where the Minnesota and Yellow Medicine Rivers meet and would be known as the Yellow Medicine or Upper Sioux Agency. The treaties left about 7,000 Dakota with two reservations, each 20 miles wide and 70 miles long, with a 10-mile strip on each side of the Minnesota River.

Construction of the Yellow Medicine Agency (Upper Sioux) began in 1854 on the west bank of the Yellow Medicine River. Because of flooding and poor building sites on the west bank, construction was concentrated on a bluff overlooking the Minnesota River. All buildings were built of locally manufactured brick. In 1862, the buildings at the agency included a warehouse with an attached doctor's office, offices and quarters for the agent, a stable, a two-story manual labor school, numerous employee residences, a jail, a bake house and oven. Five cisterns stored the agency's water supply. Besides the necessary government buildings there were several stores and the village had at one time, sixty-two inhabitants. Doctor Wakefield, the government doctor at the agency, was the first to live in the house that now stands reconstructed.

In 1858 the strip of land along the north side of the river, nearly a million acres, was also ceded to the U.S. Also in 1858 battles were occurring in Iowa between the Dakota and U.S. Troubles mounted between the whites and the Dakotas, as well as between the Dakotas who maintained traditional ways and those who were living, dressing, and worshiping like the Europeans.

U.S. – Dakota War of 1862

In the summer of 1862, the Dakota in Minnesota were facing starvation and had not received their annuity payments. The potato blight and a very hard winter in 1861-1862 left them with no food and little game. Lower Sioux Agency residents were worse off than Upper Sioux Agency. Frustration and tension were building at the Agency sites. The agency warehouses were full of food, but the government agent at Lower Sioux Agency refused to distribute it. The government money was late. Indian agent Thomas Galbraith was a stickler for policy. The food and the money were always distributed together. He held to that in 1862 - with disastrous results. A trader at the agency, Andrew Myrick, said, "So far as I am concerned, if they are hungry, let them eat grass."

The conflict began on August 18 when Little Crow, the hereditary chief of one of the Mdewakanton villages, led an attack on the Lower Agency. The body of the trader was later found, his mouth stuffed with grass. With most of the able-bodied men away fighting the Civil War, the Indians seized their opportunity. Many of the Upper Sioux Agency band did not support the uprising.

Those fleeing the Dakotas sought refuge at Fort Ridgely, thirteen miles east of the Lower Sioux Agency. On September 19, Henry Hastings Sibley, a former governor of Minnesota who had been recently named a colonel of the state militia, set out from Fort Ridgely with about 1,600 men, including 270 Civil War veterans. The U.S. soldiers defeated the Dakota near Wood Lake on September 23.

The war spread quickly. The main fighting was in the Minnesota River valley, but extended south to Iowa and west to the Dakotas. Battle sites in Minnesota included New Ulm, Fort Ridgely, Birch Coulee and Wood Lake. The war lasted five weeks.

Within a few weeks, Sibley held about 2,000 Dakota who had been captured or had surrendered. A military commission determined that 307 of the captives should be hanged. President Lincoln intervened,

ordered an investigation, and cut the number to thirty-eight, at least three of whom were determined later to have been innocent. It was the largest mass execution in American history.

When the fighting ended, the worst was still ahead for the Dakota. Congress canceled all of the treaties with the Dakotas, including all payments, and ordered them out of the state. Poverty, starvation, and general suffering led to the unrest in 1862. This conflict launched a series of Indian wars on the northern plains that did not end until the battle of Wounded Knee in South Dakota in 1890.

The Upper Sioux agency's buildings were partially destroyed in the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. This put an end to all the agency's activities and programs. In 1863 the Minnesota State Legislature opened the remaining Dakota lands to settlement.

The Dakota People Return to Minnesota

By the 1870s, a few families were establishing small "colonies" back in Minnesota and at Flandreau, South Dakota. Some had managed to stay in Minnesota, after the removal of most of the Dakota, in areas like Red Wing, Wabasha and Hastings. Some families eventually moved back to reservation areas. The Dakota struggled through decades of changing U.S. Indian policies that went from allotment of Indian lands and termination of tribal governments to the Indian Reorganization Act of 1938 at Upper Sioux Agency and the re-establishment of tribal sovereignty. In Minnesota, the Dakota families that returned or managed to stay in Minnesota grew to become the self-sufficient communities that exist today.

Early Settlers

Among the first settlers in the area were, John Winter and Mrs. Desire Sanders, who came in 1865. The latter with her son Benjamin and two daughters, located on the site of the old agency, and Mr. Winter located on the bottomlands and became the founder of Yellow Medicine City. The first store in the county, owned by Joseph Fortier, was briefly located at the old agency; he then moved his store to Yellow Medicine City. Yellow Medicine City, at one time had two stores, a steam gristmill, a hotel, a blacksmith shop and a few dwellings. When the county was organized, Yellow Medicine City was the first county seat. Later the county seat was moved and Yellow Medicine City soon lost its standing and the buildings were removed to other places, leaving little to mark it today.

At the close of the Civil War, in the 1865, George E. Olds purchased the agency site and five acres. When George Olds and his wife Betsy came, the roof and upper story of the house had to be rebuilt. It was the largest dwelling then in the county and the Olds house became a gathering place on the frontier. Olds added to his holdings until he owned over 600 acres. Olds served in the state legislature in 1895 and 1897 and held a variety of county, township, and other civic positions. For twenty years he was the county surveyor. They raised five children and lived in the house until 1913. At that time they moved to Granite Falls, leaving the farm in the hands of their son, Benjamin. The Olds family farmed the land until the state purchased it in 1965.