



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Minnesota State Archives

NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT Parks and Recreation Division

An Inventory of Its State Parks Files

OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

- Agency:** Minnesota. Division of Parks and Recreation.
- Series Title:** State parks files.
- Dates:** 1925-2001.
- Abstract:** Correspondence, memoranda, contact and planning reports, opinion surveys, press releases and clippings, annual reports, photographs, and maps regarding development projects and usage provisions and regulations in state parks.
- Quantity:** 6.4 cu. ft. (7 boxes).
- Location:** See Detailed Description section for box locations.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE RECORDS

The Itasca State Park files include reports on the historicity and physical condition of the park (1959, 1979), creation of the state parks system (1925-1951), the Civilian Conservation Corps and Emergency Conservation Work (1933-1941, 1984, 1993), the park's natural history (ca. 1970s), and the wilderness area (1985-1986), and materials documenting improvements (1941-1942, 1949-1960, 1967), historical pageants (1932-1933), the Lake Itasca Forestry and Biological Station (1964-1967), the Squaw Lake Youth Camp (1959-1961), relocation of Trunk Highway 92 (1949-1951), the park's Red, White, and Jack Pine forests (1995), utilities contracts (1941-1963), a 1961-1962 launch purchase, Wilderness Drive (1987), a 1993 oral history project, and several 2001 visitor guides.

Also of special interest are materials, including photographs and maps, relating to development of the Grand Portage National Monument (ca. 1926, 1938-1971), Lake Minnetonka and Minnehaha Creek (1930, 1934-1942), Lake of the Woods (Northwest Angle, 1937-1969), and the state park naturalist program (June 1991); an archaeological survey of Savanna Portage State Park (1969); 1935 progress reports for Scenic and Sibley state parks; St. Croix State Park title abstracts (1925-1943); a 1988 underground state park feasibility study; and several files documenting scenic waysides and natural areas.

Forms part of the records of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

RELATED MATERIALS

A published version of John Dobie's *The Itasca Story*, is cataloged separately in the Society's library collections.

INDEX TERMS

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons or places should search the catalog using these headings.

Topics:

Archaeological surveying--Minnesota.
National monuments--Minnesota.
Natural areas--Minnesota.
Nature trails--Minnesota--Itasca State Park.
Pageants--Minnesota--Itasca State Park.
Park naturalists--Minnesota.
Park use--Minnesota.
Parks--Law and legislation--Minnesota.
Parks--Minnesota--Management.
Parks--Minnesota--Planning.
Parks--Public relations--Minnesota.
Roadside rest areas--Minnesota.
Work camps--Minnesota.

Places:

Camden State Park (Minn.)--Photographs.
Grand Portage National Monument (Minn.)--Photographs.
Itasca State Park (Minn.)--Guidebooks.
Itasca State Park (Minn.)--History.
Itasca State Park (Minn.)--Photographs.
Lake of the Woods--Photographs.
Minnehaha Creek Watershed (Minn.)--Photographs.
Minnetonka, Lake (Minn.)--Photographs.
Northwest Angle (Minn.)--Photographs.
Saint Croix State Park (Minn.).
Savanna Portage State Park (Minn.)--Antiquities.
Scenic State Park (Minn.).
Sibley State Park (Minn.).
United States Highway 92.

Persons:

Dobie, John, 1912-.

Organizations:

Civilian Conservation Corps (U.S.) Minnesota District--History.
Lake Itasca Forestry and Biological Station (Minn.).
Minnesota. Division of Parks and Recreation--History.
Minnesota. Dept. of Natural Resources.

Types of Documents:

Maps--Minnesota.
Photographs.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation:

[Indicate the cited volume and page or item and folder title here]. Minnesota. Division of Parks and Recreation. State Parks Files. Minnesota Historical Society. State Archives.
See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.

Accession Information:

Accession number(s): 989-230; 977-23; 998-77; 2001-67; 2002-14; 2003-40; 2004-29; 2006-13; 2006-26

Processing Information:

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the location and box numbers shown below.

Location	Box	
103.E.20.6F	1	General information, 1975-1985. 2 folders. Afton, 1989. Baptism River, 1945-1948. Bear Head Lake, 1959-1962, 1968. 2 folders. Includes George T. Gaylord plaque dedication materials. Beaver Creek Valley, 1950, 1989. 2 folders. Big Stone Lake, 1956-1972. Birch Coulee, 1951, 1961. Blue Mounds, 1935-1937, [1970s]-1980. 3 folders. Includes interpretive center photographs. Buffalo River, 1978-1980.

Location	Box	
103.E.20.6F	1	Camden, 1935-1965, 1978-1980. 2 folders. Includes photographs and maps. Cascade, 1959-1960, 1978-1979. 2 folders. Charles A. Lindbergh, 1979-1980. Crow Wing, 1957-1966, 1978-1980. Father Hennepin, 1978-1980. 2 folders. Flandrau, 1943-1966, 1977-1980. 5 folders. Includes photographs. Flood Bay Wayside, 1979. Floyd B. Olson Memorial, 1938. Forestville, 1977-1979. Fort Ridgely, 1933-1940, 1947, 1978-1979. 2 folders. Fort Snelling, 1976-1980. 3 folders. Fort Snelling—Upper Bluff Area Policy, 1975-1976. Frontenac, 1935-1939, 1953-1957, 1978-1979. 2 folders. G. C. Manitou, 1978. Glacial Lakes, 1979.
111.G.5.5B	2	Gooseberry Falls, 1936, 1978-1980. 2 folders. Includes photographs. Grand Mounds Wayside, [undated]. Grand Portage National Monument, [ca. 1926], 1938-1971. 2 folders. Includes photographs (ca. 1926, 1932) and maps. Grand Portage National Monument, [ca. 1926], 1938-1971. 4 folders and 3 volumes. Hayes Lake, 1978-1980. Helmer Myre, 1978. Itasca: Annual activity reports, 1986-1988. Bibliography of Papers Containing Information About or Gathered in the Itasca Wilderness SNA, August 1986. 1 volume. Prepared by Paul A. Benson-Lender. The Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC] and Itasca State Park, prepared in May 1984. 1 volume. By Ben Thoma, Park Naturalist. Correspondence—General, 1955-1969. Includes photograph of the lake (1932).

Location	Box	
111.G.5.5B	2	<p>Discover Itasca Information Series, [undated]. Contains Nos. 1-12, 14, 15, and 24.</p> <p>Documentation History of the Itasca Wilderness Area: The Donald B. Lawrence File, [ca. 1938] - 1978. 1 volume. Compiled by Ben Thoma in 1985; photocopies of a series of letters, manuscript reports, newspaper clippings, and publications collected by Donald B. Lawrence (died 1996) of the University of Minnesota and documenting the Itasca State Park Wilderness Area.</p> <p>ECW [Emergency Conservation Work] - CCC: S.P. No. 1 - Camp Itasca No. 1 Reports and Letters, June 1934 - May 1939. Photocopies of reports and letters from the National Archives regarding Itasca State Park.</p> <p>ECW - CCC Reports regarding staff employment and politics, 1934-1937.</p> <p>Evaluation of the Historicity and Physical Condition..., report by Minnesota Historical Society, 1979.</p> <p>Guide to the Informational Signs of Itasca State Park, 1984.</p> <p>Historical Pageants Report, 1932-1933.</p> <p>Ice Houses and Picnic Shelters, 1993.</p> <p>Improvements, 1941-1942, 1949-1960, 1967.</p> <p>Informational Material Pertaining to the History, Research and Management of the Red, White and Jack Pine Forest of Itasca State Park, Minnesota: Volume 7 - Final Volume, 1995. 1 folder. Management Strategy and Review and Abstracts of the Relevant Literature; prepared by the Natural Resources Department and the University of Minnesota Lake Itasca Forestry and Biological Station.</p> <p>Itasca Imponderables: A Series of Little Known Facts about Itasca State Park, 1989-1994. Includes No. 2: The Mississippi Headwaters, 1989; No. 3: The Mississippi River Commission, 1989; No. 4: Bedrock at 680 Feet, 1990; and No. 6: [Picnic Shelters], 1994.</p>

Location	Box	
111.G.5.5B	2	<p>“Itasca Notes,” compiled by Ben Thoma, [ca. 1970s]. 3 folders. Compilation of printed and mimeographed fact sheets covering various aspects of the park’s natural history and designed to assist naturalists and park guides in their interpretive program presentations. Virtually all are undated but appear to date from the 1930s into the 1960s. The arrangement within the volume is random. Topics covered include the following topics: geology, pre-history of the park, biography of Jacob V. Brower, voyageurs, origin of park place names, forest fire history, forest conditions/largest trees, various species of conifers, Minnesota vegetation zones, tree growth, wild rice, mushrooms, walleye, amphibians/reptiles, loons, eagles, beaver, deer, timber wolves, mice, 1965 park usage controversy, Itasca name origin, Mississippi River source discovery, park rules, interpreters’ guide sheets to trails, fisher and porcupine, ecological and silvicultural research, tree diseases, ruffed grouse, and the Lake Itasca Forestry and Biological Station.</p> <p>Itasca State Park Civilian Conservation Corps Projects 1936-1942. 1 volume. Prepared in 1993 by Ben Thoma.</p>
111.G.5.6F	3	<p>Itasca State Park - Wilderness Area. 1 volume. From inscription on front cover, “This is the complete wilderness file of Dr. Donald B. Lawrence. The originals are on file with the DNR Scientific and Natural Area Program.” Prepared in January 1985 by Ben Thoma; contains copies of correspondence and reports dating back to 1930s.</p> <p><i>The Itasca Story</i>, [1959]. Written by John Dobie. Photocopy of what appears to be the typewritten manuscript, with handwritten corrections, for the published book of the same title.</p> <p>Lake Itasca Forestry and Biological Station correspondence, 1964-1967. Launch purchase, 1961-1962. Includes photographs.</p> <p>Oral History Project, 1993. Includes manuscript of U. W. Hella.</p>

Location	Box	
111.G.5.6F	3	<p>Photographs, [undated], 1936-1937, 1952. Headwaters, buildings, and assorted landscapes.</p> <p>Region I: Regional Resources Management Program, Program Review, June 1989.</p> <p>Reports to the National Park Service: Emergency Conservation Work [ECW] - Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC] - Minnesota S.P. No. 1 and/or S.P. No. 19, September 1933 - December 1934. 2 folders. Photocopies of reports and photographs from the National Archives. More descriptive information is found in the folders.</p> <p>Reports to the National Park Service: Emergency Conservation Work [ECW] - Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC] - Minnesota S.P. No. 1 and/or S.P. No. 19, January 1935 - July 1942. 2 folders. Photocopies of reports and photographs from the National Archives. More descriptive information is found in the folders.</p> <p>Reports to the National Park Service: T.P. No. 9 [Squaw Lake] Camp Headquarters, February-March 1936, February-March 1937. Photocopies of reports and photographs from the National Archives. More descriptive information is found in the folders.</p> <p>Reports to the National Park Service: T.P. No. 10 [Elk Lake] Camp Itasca, January 1936 - March 1937. Photocopies of reports and photographs from the National Archives. More descriptive information is found in the folders.</p> <p>Snowshoe Notes, [undated]. 1 volume. Prepared by Neb Amoht [Ben Thoma] and Nad Areb [Dan Bera?]; a compilation and review of interesting articles and illustrations, both old and recent regarding snowshoes and their use.</p> <p>Squaw Lake Youth Camp, 1959-1961.</p>

Location	Box	
111.G.5.6F	3	<p>State Park Naturalist Program, Compilation of Historical Materials, June 1991. 2 folders.</p> <p>By Ben Thoma; photocopies of documents, reminiscences, and reports, covering the 1890s through [ca. 1972], detailing the development of naturalist interpretive programs in Minnesota state parks, especially Itasca and St. Croix, but including other parks as well. Sections include: early naturalists, 1890s-1930s (George B. Aiton and Jacob V. Brower); Report of Minnesota State Park Guide Service, Season 1941, by Mildred J. Ericson, Division of State Parks; Minnesota Museum of Natural History reports of Walter J. Breckenridge and Donald K. Lewis, 1947-1967, promoting park naturalist programs, specifically in Itasca; and James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History reports of Walter J. Breckenridge and Richard E. Barthelemy, 1968-1972, continuing the work of the 1947-1967 project.</p> <p>Summary of Minnesota CCC Work, 1933-1941.</p> <p>Temporary Volume IV, April 1925 - March 1935. 3 folders.</p> <p>Labeled <i>Creation of the Division of State Parks from the Minnesota Forest Service</i>; correspondence, reports and related records (photocopies) of documents that appear to be records of the Minnesota Forest Service and the State Parks Division of the Conservation Department.</p> <p>Temporary Volume V, April 1935 - May 1951. 2 folders.</p> <p>Labeled <i>Creation of the Division of State Parks from the Minnesota Forest Service</i>; correspondence, reports and related records (photocopies) of documents that appear to be records of the Minnesota Forest Service and the State Parks Division of the Conservation Department.</p> <p>Trunk Highway 61: Relocation, 1949-1951.</p> <p>Utilities: Miscellaneous, 1941, 1943, 1946, 1963.</p> <p>Utilities: Telephone, 1942-1962.</p> <p>Visitor Guides, 2001. 1 folder.</p> <p>Contains Steeping Stones Visitor Guide, Itasca State Park, 2001; Bemidji Tourist Guide, 2001; and DNR Review, July 2001 [includes story on new visitor center].</p>

Location	Box	
111.G.5.7B	4	<p>Wilderness Drive: Itasca State Park, State Park Naturalist Meeting, June 2-4, 1987, May 1987. 1 volume. Compiled by Ben Thoma; compilation of specific topics relating to the Wilderness Drive, including brochures, maps, and published articles regarding the Landmark Interpretation Trail, forestry demonstration area (forestry v. park management), Minnesota's record white pine, the Itasca State Park Wilderness Area, the Itasca bison kill site, Minnesota's record red pine, Chambers Creek, Elk Lake, and the Aiton Heights Observation Tower. Includes, among other publications: Issue Nos. 6 (bald eagle) and 7 (common loon) of the Discover Itasca series; Wilderness Drive Auto Tour Guide, Landmark Interpretive Trail (1985), and Forestry Demonstration Area (1986).</p> <p>Willard, E. V., Acting Commissioner of Conservation, 1933-1935. <i>[0.1 cu. ft., letter, empty]</i></p> <p>Jay Cooke, 1987-1989. Jay Cooke Trail correspondence, 1976-1978. Lake Bemidji, 1978-1979. Lake Bronson, 1978-1980. Lake Bronson Watershed—Water resources, 1980. Lake Carlos, 1978. Lake Louise, 1978-1979. Lake Maria, 1978-1980. Lake Minnetonka and Minnehaha Creek, 1930, 1934-1942. 1 folder and 1 volume. Lake Minnetonka and Minnehaha Creek, 1930, 1934-1942. 2 volumes. Lake of the Woods (Northwest Angle), 1937-1969. 5 folders and 1 volume. Includes photographs and maps.</p> <p>Lake Shetek, 1978-1980. Maplewood, 1978-1980. McCarthy Beach, 1957-1958, 1961, 1978-1979. 2 folders. Includes photographs.</p> <p>Mille Lacs Kathio, 1977-1980. Includes photographs.</p> <p>Minneopa, 1978-1979. Minnesota Point, 1935-1937. Minnesota River Valley, 1934-1938. Includes photographs.</p>

Location	Box	
111.G.5.7B	4	Minnesota Valley Project, [ca. 1934]. 2 volumes. Includes photographs. Minnesota Valley Trail, 1979-1980.
111.G.5.8F	5	Moose Lake, 1978-1980, 1989. 2 folders. Nerstrand Woods, 1978-1979. O. L. Kipp, 1977-1980, 1989. 2 folders. Old Mill, 1978-1980. Oronoco, 1964. Pine Tree, 1968. Pomme de Terre State Recreational Reserve, [undated]. Rice Lake, 1978-1979. Sakatah Lake, 1977-1979. Savanna Portage, 1978-1979, 1986-1988. 2 folders. Savanna Portage State Park: An Archaeological Survey of Savanna Portage State Park, 1969. Includes photographs and maps. Scenic, 1935, 1978-1980. 1 folder and 1 volume. Monthly Progress Report, February and March 1935, includes photographs. Schoolcraft, 1977-1979. Sibley, 1935, 1978-1979. 1 folder and 1 volume. Fifth Period Progress Report, April-September 1935, includes photographs and maps. Sibley Environmental Learning Center, 1979-1980. Split Rock Creek, 1977-1980. Split Rock Creek Dam, 1978-1981. Split Rock Lighthouse, 1978-1979. St. Croix, 1978-1980. St. Croix Abstracts of Title, 1925-1943 [bulk 1936-1943]. Records of the St. Croix River Recreational Demonstration Project, that apparently evolved to the St. Croix State Park. The records include abstracts of title, maps, assorted certificates, receipts, correspondence, affidavits, depositions, wills, and related documents. Arranged in numerical order by parcel number. Parcel Nos. 1-41. 11 folders.
133.B.20.8F	6	Parcel Nos. 42-93. 15 folders. St. Croix Wild River, 1978-1980. 4 folders. Tettegouche, 1979-1980. 2 folders. Tower-Soudan, 1963-1984. 2 folders.

Location	Box	
133.B.20.9B	7	Traverse des Sioux, 1978-1980. An Underground State Park: Feasibility Study, December 31, 1988. Upper Sioux, 1978-1979. Whitewater, 1978-1980, 1986, 1989. 7 folders. Includes a September 1986 flood warning system investigation. William O'Brien, 1979-1980, 1989. 2 folders. Zippel Bay, 1978-1980. 2 folders. <i>[0.6 cu. ft., legal, empty]</i>