

Minnesota Natural Resources

Department: Environmental
Assessment Files Regarding State
Parks

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SPLIT ROCK CREEK STATE RECREATION AREA

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

A. <u>Purpose of the Action</u> - Split Rock Creek Recreation Area was established by an act of the Minnesota State Legislature in 1937.

The rehabilitation of facilities within the Recreation Area's statutory boundary, by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Division of Parks and Recreation, will provide improved outdoor recreational opportunities for the use and enjoyment of the citizens of the State of Minnesota.

The State of Minnesota - Department of Natural Resources proposes that the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, as administrator of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON), participate in this action.

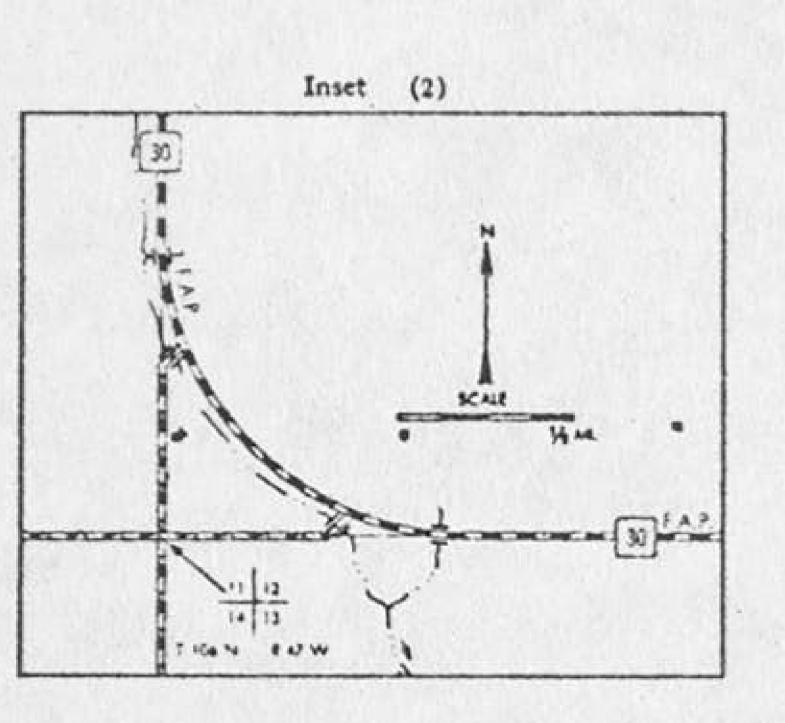
B. Location and Magnitude of the Project - Split Rock Creek State
Recreation Area is geographically located in Pipestone County
approximately 11 kilometers southwest of Pipestone on Minnesota
State Highway 23. It is situated 8 kilometers from the South
Dakota/Minnesota border and is located in the Coteau des Prairies.
The recreation area comprises about 92 hectares. (MAP I, II, III)

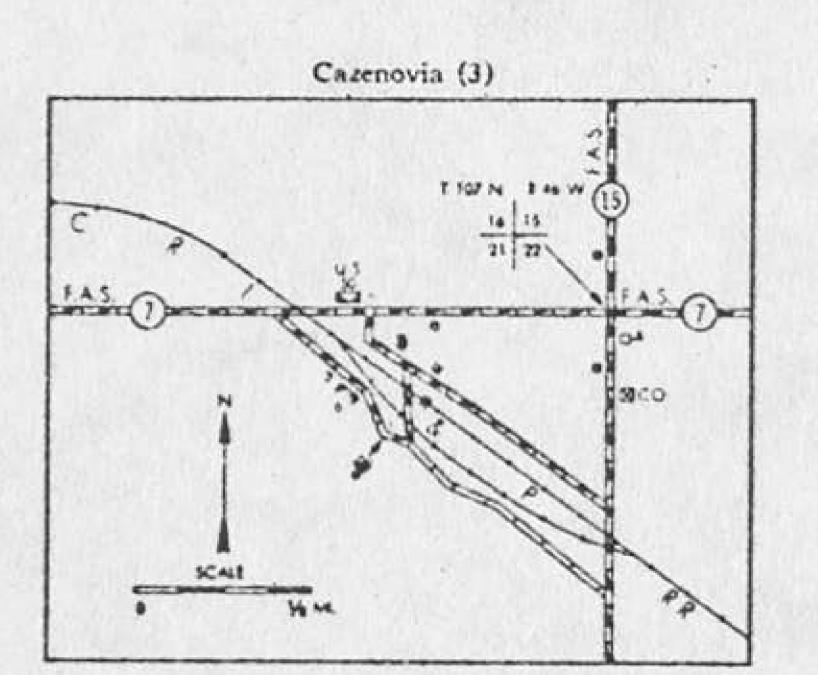
The following improvement projects are proposed.

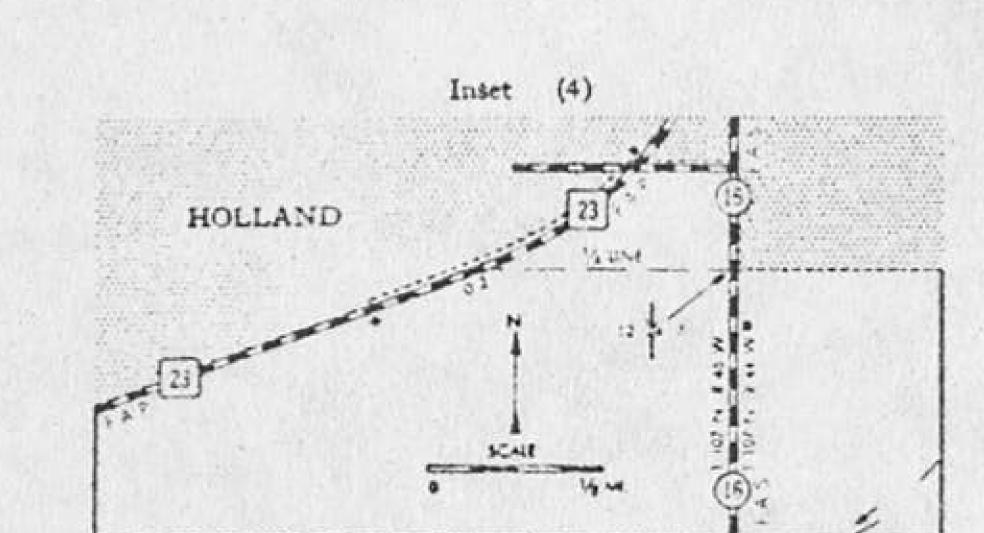
- 1. Split Rock Creek dam improvements
 - a. dam controls rebuilt



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GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

IN COOPERATION WITH THE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

DATA OBTAINED AND HAP PREPARED BY THE

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING DIVISION

OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

SCALE OF STATUTE MILES BASIC DATA 1963*

Polyconic Projection North American Datum of 1927 Projection Reference 46th Parallel - 94th Meridian

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COUNTY MAT. ICHERNIZED MISCELLANEOUS MAP FEATURES WARSH OR SWAMP LAND DEANAGE DITCH

POPE ARMY CAMP, BATTACKS OF METARY MOST TRANSCRATION STATION ... LOOKOUT TO WEE AND TRANSCULATION STATION @ LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE INTERSECTION

Outline Map of this County, Shaded Outline Map of Minnesota ebowing location of this County within the State. portion being area delineated on this sheet. Area of this County 464 Sq Miles Land Area 464 Sq Miles

11/8/1/11/11/11

R 46 W R 44 W

MAR SEPOT, CREAMERY OR CHEESE FACTORY ..



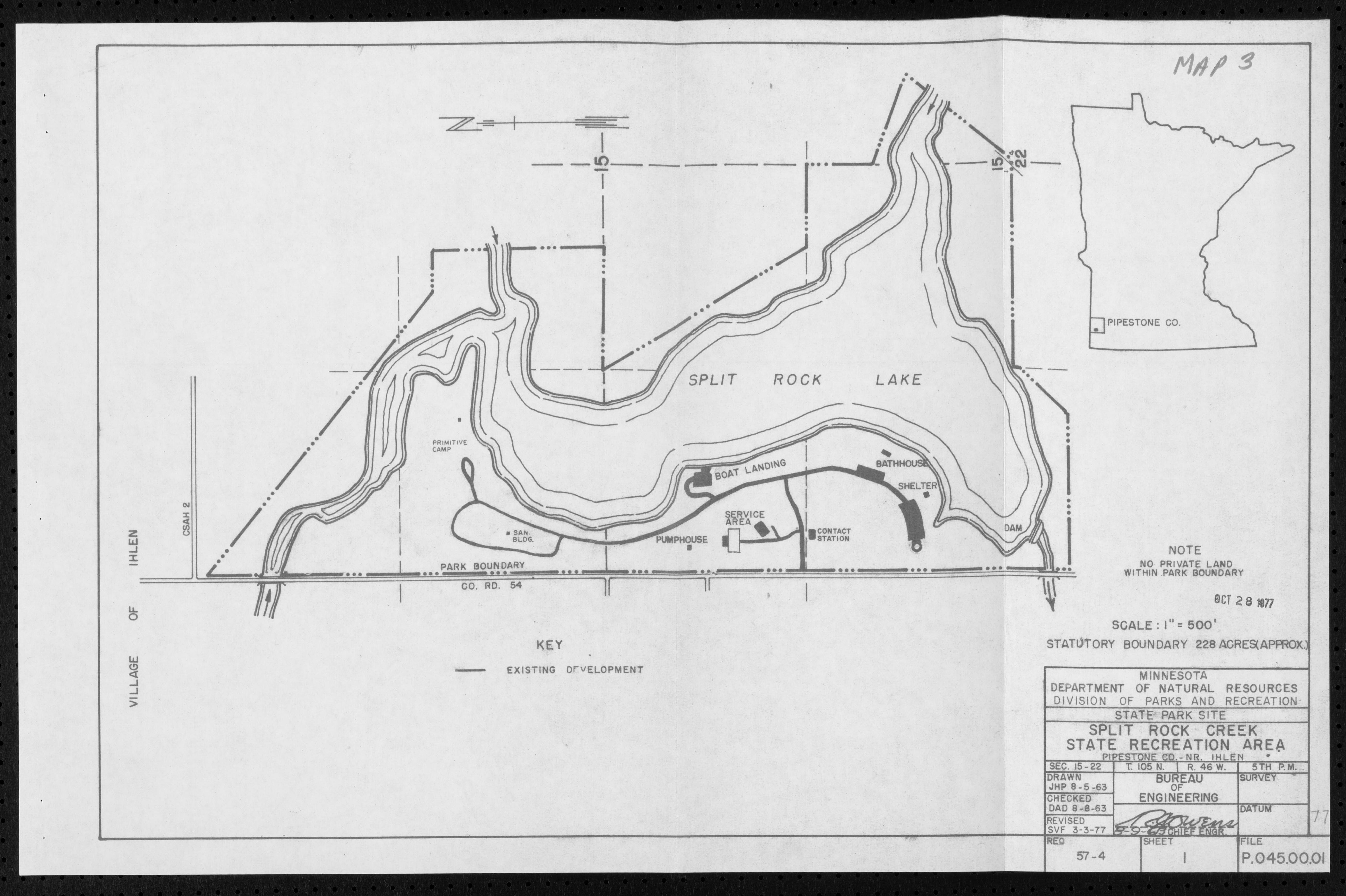
POND OF LAKE.

BESERVOIR, NOWAGE LIMITS

"NOTE ALL FEATURES, EXCEPT TOWNSHIP ROADS AND CULTURE ARE CURRENT AL OF JANUARY 1, 196" NOTE FOR DETAIL OF COUNTY STATE AND HIGHWAYS AND COUNTY ROADS IN INCORPORATED PLACES, SEE MAPS OF MUNICIPALITIES



MOTE HED US CENSUS FIGURES SHOWN FOR ALL NUNICIPALITIES UPLESS OTHERWISE STATES. 1*A SHEET 1 OF 1



- b. catwalk installed across top of dam
- c. erosion control improvements on face of dam
- Install new steel mesh on boat ramp and construct new dock
- Paint exterior, replace window casings, screens and louvres and improve insulation on the water tower
- 4. Install solar heated showers and replace skylights and doors in the beach house
- Jack up and level picnic shelter roof and pour footings under supports to prevent recurrence
- 6. Remove old entrance road grade and landscape and plant to prevent erosion

It is proposed that these improvements be made with the assistance of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The current estimated cost of these improvements is \$24,000.

- C. <u>Timing of the Project</u> State Funds are available for completion of the project. Bids from private contractors will be taken for the dam rehabilitation.
- D. Future Development No comprehensive management plan has been developed for Split Rock Creek State Recreation Area as yet.

 As the park management planning process continues, a management plan for this recreation area will be developed in the future. There is no scheduled date, at this time, for the development of this plan. The comprehensive management planning process of the Minnesota parks planning section assesses the area's potential to service the recreation user's needs.

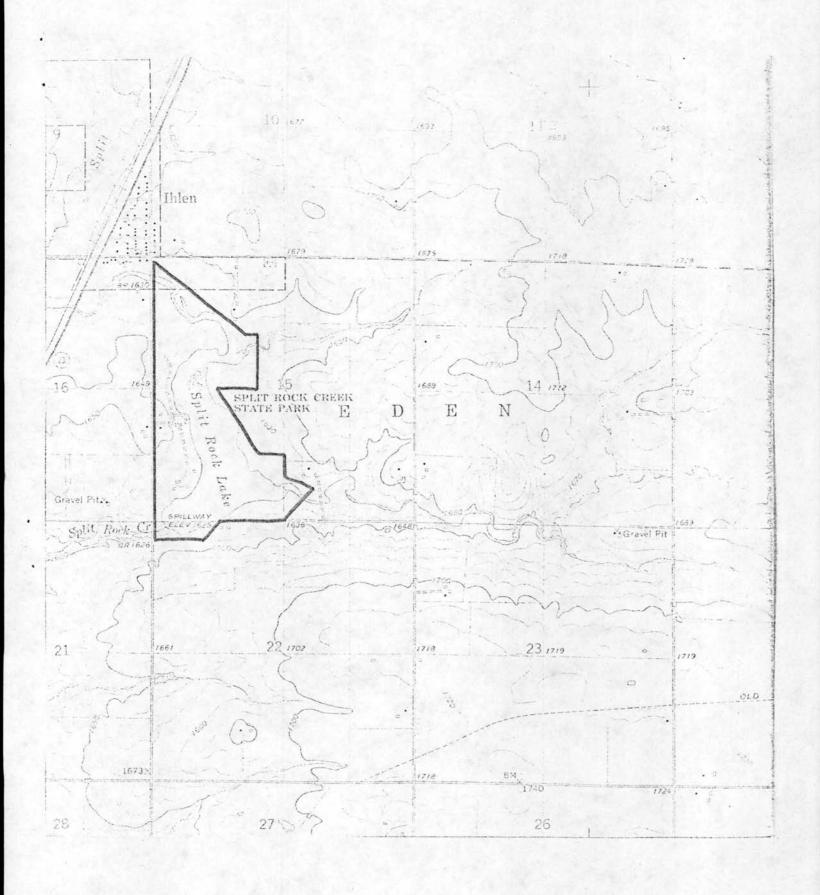
E. Recreation Needs to be Served by the Proposed Improvements This recreation area provides facilities for picnicking,
camping, swimming, fishing, skiing, and hiking. The
recreation area's attendance records show steady growth:
1974 - 45,227; 1975 - 51,264; 1976 - 66,971. Because of
the increasing attendance in the recreation area, completion
of this project is necessary to meet demands.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

A. <u>Topography</u> - The recreation area lies on the outer extremity of the Wisconsin glaciation and Wisconsin loess was deposited throughout the area. The recreation area also lies near the west edge of the Sioux Quartzite formation of southwestern Minnesota. A few outcrops and fragments can be found within the park. (MAP IV)

Split Rock Lake, formed by the damming of Split Rock Creek, makes up approximately 50% of the area of the park. The reservoir offers excellent recreational opportunities. Fishing is the major winter activity in the recreation area and the major interest of the local population.

The area is dominated by ash and elm hardwood forest. There are some areas of native prairie and several small areas dominated by aquatic plantlife. The park has an excellent native prairie remnant along the left side of the campground road. This small area has been managed as a native prairie during the past several years and includes many species of native forbs sparsely found in other areas of southwest Minnesota.



The quantity and diversity of faunal inhabitants found within the recreation area are not outstanding; however, because Split Rock Lake is the largest body of water in Pipestone County, the recreation area is an important resting area for waterfowl and other migrating marsh birds. Some importance should also be attached to the cattail marsh habitat found in portions of the lake. This type of habitat, being extremely rare in Pipestone County, is vitally important for habitat-restrictive bird species such as the yellow-headed blackbird and both species of marsh wrens.

- B. <u>Historical and Archaeological Resources</u> No historical or archaeological sites have been recorded in the recreation area; however, when the comprehensive management plan is developed in accordance with the Outdoor Recreation Act of 1975, an intensive site survey will be conducted.
- C. <u>Socio-Economic Factors</u> The Minnesota State Planning Agency (SPA) population statistics for Pipestone County show a decrease in population between 1960 and 1970 (approximately 7%).
- D. Land Use The present land use is recreational.
- E. <u>Existing Recreational Facilities</u> Split Rock Creek State Recreation Area provides facilities to visitors for camping, swimming, boating, picnicking and related activities.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

A. <u>Impact on the physical and biological environment</u> - Some localized disruption of flora and fauna will occur during landscape work on

the old entrance road. Any disruption that occurs will be temporary as the purpose of the project is to return the landscape to a natural setting. Within one construction season flora will return to the old road grade and any area disrupted during the landscape process.

During dam rehabilitation and boat landing repair, there will be very localized, temporary disturbance of the aquatic environment. Because of the localized nature, no significant impacts upon aquatic flora or fauna will occur.

There will be no significant impacts upon flora or fauna resources from the other proposed improvement projects.

- B. Impact on the Historical and Archaeological Resources There are no known historical or archaeological resources in Split Rock Creek State Recreation Area.
- C. Impact on Transportation and Utilities The landscape work proposed for the old entrance road will have a beneficial impact on park visitor traffic by eliminating confusion as to the location of the park entrance. The other proposed improvements will have no impact on transportation or utilities.
- D. Impact on Socio-Economic Factors Since all proposed improvements are within the recreation area boundaries, no loss of agricultural production or local tax revenues will occur. Beneficial impacts on the local economy will result by the contracting of the proposed dam improvement project.

IV. MITIGATING MEASURES INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED ACTION

After completion of landscape work on the old entrance road, reseeding of grasses will be employed to return the area to native flora.

No mitigating measures are necessary for the other proposed improvement projects.

V. ANY ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED SHOULD THE PROPOSAL BE IMPLEMENTED.

The proposed improvements will unavoidably affect a minimal amount of flora and fauna resources. The disruption that occurs will be confined to the highly localized area of the improvements. In carrying out the proposed old road landscape work, no adverse effects will occur since mitigating measures will create more floral resources than was present before landscaping.

VI. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT-TERM USES OF MAN'S ENVIRONMENT AND
THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY.

Because of the increasing recreational use of the Split Rock Creek
Recreation Area, any short-term losses are outweighed by the enhancement of long-term productivity.

GATNS

- Rehabilitation of existing facilities (beach house, picnic shelter, water tower, boat landing).
- Returning old road bed to a natural landscape.
- Improved dam safety and water level control for recreation.
- 4. Improvement in the local economy from necessary employment.

LOSSES

- Minimal disruption of a highly localized area of flora and fauna.
- 2. Expenditure of \$24,000 of public funds.

VII. ANY IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVEABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES WHICH WOULD

BE INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED ACTION SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED.

There will be an irreversible conversion from present recreational

land use to facilities used to enhance the recreational land. The

manpower, materials, and funds necessary to implement the proposed

improvements will also be irretrievably committed.

VIII. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

Only one alternative for the proposed improvements was considered, that being, no action. A no action development course would result in the flora and fauna resources remaining undisturbed. A no action decision on dam improvements would only prolong and compound the necessary rehabilitation to retain Split Rock Lake at its present recreational value. A no action decision on the other proposed improvements would leave present facilities inadequate in meeting future recreational demands.