

NERSTRAND BIG WOODS STATE PARK

FACILITIES AND FEATURES

- 51 semi-modern campsites
- 27 electrical campsites
- Showers and flush toilets
- Picnic tables and fire rings
- 4 rustic walk-in campsites
- Group camp (capacity 72)
- Picnic ground with shelter building
- Dump station
- 13 miles of hiking trails
- 8 miles of cross-country ski trails
- 4 miles of snowmobile trails
- 1 mile of snowshoe trail

VISITOR FAVORITES

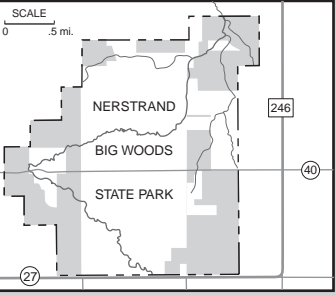
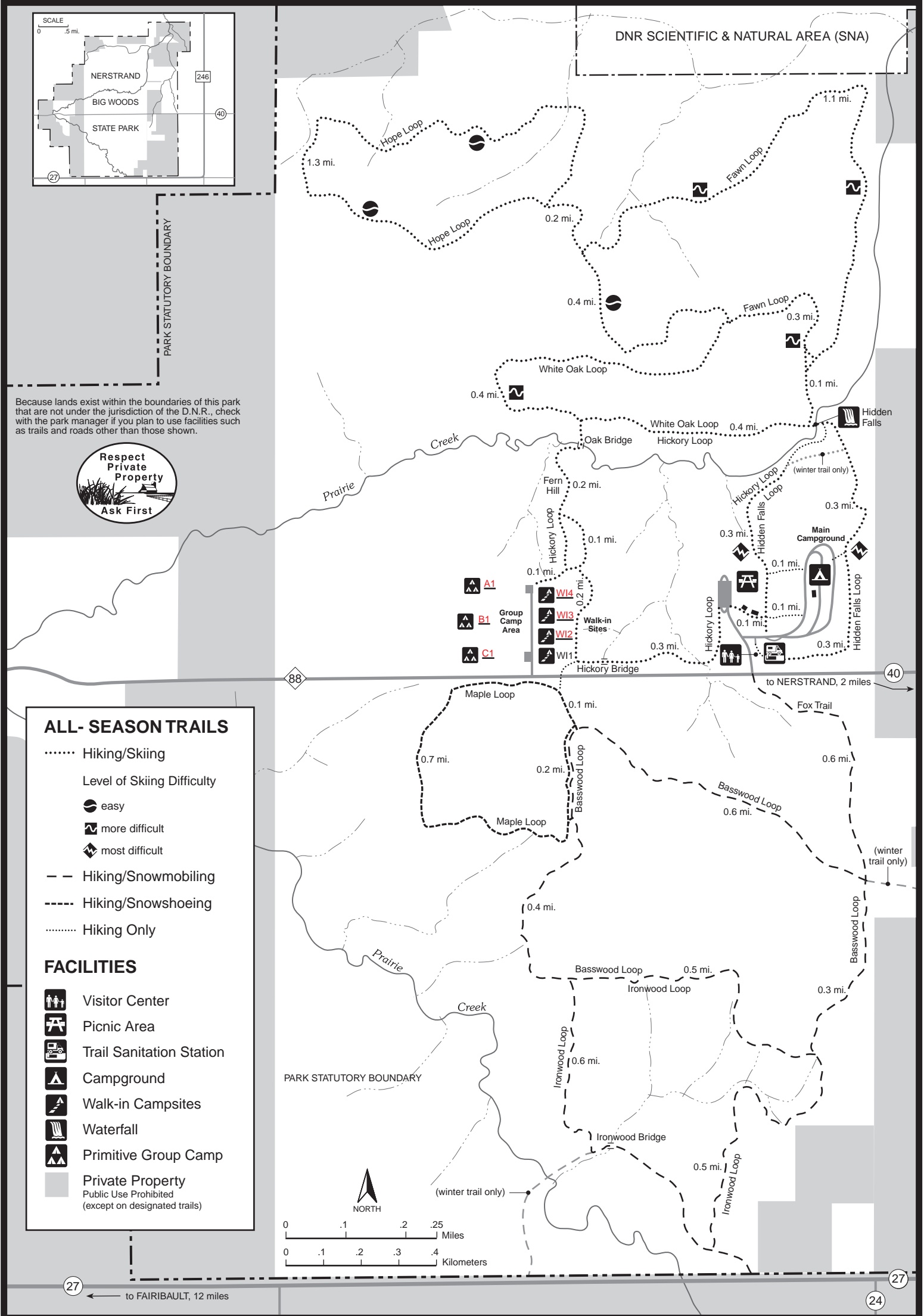
- Spring wildflowers
- Hidden Falls
- Fall colors
- Cross-country skiing

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION ?

The DNR has mapped the state showing federal, state and county lands with their recreational facilities. Public Recreation Information Maps (PRIM) are available for purchase from the DNR gift shop. DNR regional offices, Minnesota state parks and major sporting and map stores.

Check it out - you'll be glad you did.

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Department of Natural Resources



Because lands exist within the boundaries of this park that are not under the jurisdiction of the D.N.R., check with the park manager if you plan to use facilities such as trails and roads other than those shown.

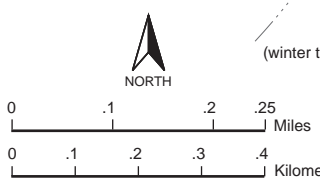


ALL- SEASON TRAILS

- Hiking/Skiing
- Level of Skiing Difficulty
- easy
- ◻ more difficult
- ◻ most difficult
- - - Hiking/Snowmobiling
- - - Hiking/Snowshoeing
- Hiking Only

FACILITIES

- ☺ Visitor Center
- ☺ Picnic Area
- ☺ Trail Sanitation Station
- ☺ Campground
- ☺ Walk-in Campsites
- ☺ Waterfall
- ☺ Primitive Group Camp
- ☺ Private Property
Public Use Prohibited
(except on designated trails)



27 to FAIRBAULT, 12 miles

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NERSTRAND BIG WOODS STATE PARK

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Nerstrand Big Woods State Park
9700 - 170th Street East
Nerstrand, MN 55053
(507) 333-4840

Department of Natural Resources
Information Center
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040

(651) 296-6157 (Metro Area)
1-888-646-6367 (MN Toll Free)

TDD (Telecommunications
Device for Deaf)
(651) 296-5484 (Metro Area)
1-800-657-3929 (MN Toll Free)

DNR Web Site: www.dnr.state.mn.us

NERSTRAND BIG WOODS STATE PARK is located about 45 miles directly south of the Twin Cities. Nerstrand Big Woods is a good example of a forested recreation area.

HOW TO GET THERE FROM THE NORTH: Approximately 11 miles SE of Northfield. From Hwy. 3 take Hwy. 246 SE out of

Northfield and follow signs to park.

HOW TO GET THERE FROM THE SOUTH: Twelve miles NE of Faribault. Take Hwy. 20 NE from Hwy. 60 E out of Faribault, turn right on Hwy. 27 at Cannon City and follow signs to park.

This park is comprised of one of the last remnants of Big Woods vegetation along with rolling hills and valleys, traversed by Prairie Creek with its picturesque waterfalls. The Big Woods is reflective of the central hardwood community during pre-settlement times, containing sugar maple, basswood, elm, green ash and ironwood trees, over 50 varieties of wildflowers, and many varieties of ferns and mushrooms.

The original woods was about 5,000 acres in size when the first settlers arrived in 1854. These pioneers soon realized that the best way to assure themselves of a perpetual wood supply was to set up a series of small woodlots in the center of the Big Woods, mostly in five and ten-acre parcels. During the 1930s, with the development of mechanized logging, major clearcutting was done on several hundred acres of the park. In the late '30s and early '40s, many people were working to protect the area and preserve it as a state park. By the early 1940s, a plan was worked out allowing the State Department of Conservation and U.S. Forest Service to acquire the land. By 1945, a good portion of the 1,280 acres of land was acquired and Nerstrand Big Woods was established by the Minnesota Legislature.

The natural resources of Nerstrand Big Woods provide visitors with a place to view and study the abundance of wildflowers and birds, or a place to meander in solitude absorbing the scenic beauty of the landscape.

GEOLOGY: Geologically, Nerstrand Big Woods State Park is comprised of two near-

ly horizontal layers: a layer of glacial drift about 150 feet thick overlying a layer of Platteville Limestone. The clayey material throughout the highlands of the park is the glacial drift. The limestone is visible only where the drift has been eroded away, such as at Hidden Falls and along the Prairie Creek bottoms.

The limestone is much older than the glacial drift. The limestone was deposited at the floor of a shallow sea during the Ordovician period almost 500 million years ago.

The glacial drift is modern by comparison. Rice County has been covered by glaciers several times in the past million years. The drift in Nerstrand Big Woods is older than that found in western Rice County. As the most recent glacier which deposited drift west of Interstate 35 melted, it sent huge amounts of meltwater rushing through the Prairie Creek watershed and eroded the deep valley seen in the park today. The downcutting of the creekbed was arrested when limestone bedrock was encountered.

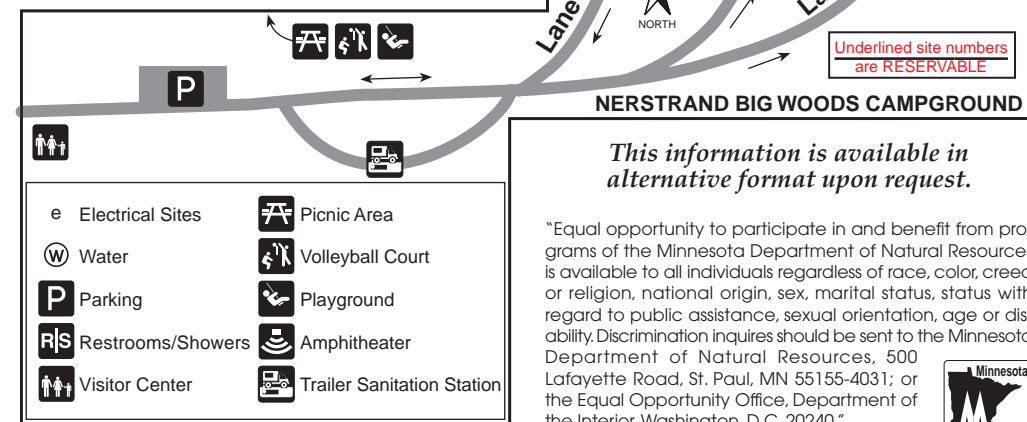
The depth of the glacial drift in the park is known both by the elevation of the bedrock exposed in the creek and the fact that the water well drilled at the park headquarters went down 139 feet before hitting rock. The elevation of bedrock in the well (1041 feet above sea level) is nearly level with Hidden Falls.

The soils in the park are formed on the glacial drift, and, in the valley bottom, on sediments deposited by the stream. Most of the soils in the park were formed under deciduous trees, although prairie grasslands soils appear in a few areas.

SO EVERYONE CAN ENJOY THE PARK... This state park was established to preserve the natural and aesthetic features of the Big Woods and help meet the diverse recreational and educational needs of park visitors. All park visitors have an obligation

to preserve these features. Please observe the rules designed to keep our park clean and to protect plants and wildlife.

- The park is open year-round. On a daily basis, the park gate is closed from 10:00 P.M. to 8:00 A.M. the following morning except for registered campers.
- Camp only in designated locations.
- The use of firearms, explosives, air guns, slingshots, traps, seines, nets, bows and arrows, and all other weapons is prohibited in state parks.
- Pets must be restrained on a leash no longer than six feet. Pets are not allowed in park buildings.
- Park in designated areas only.
- Motor bikes and other licensed vehicles are allowed only on park roads, not on trails.
- Enjoy park wildlife and plants but please respect them. Do not pick or dig up plants, disturb or feed animals, or scavenge dead wood.
- Build fires only in designated locations—fire rings or fireplaces. Wood is available for purchase from park staff. Portable stoves or grills are permitted.
- Daily or annual permits are required for all vehicles entering a state park. They may be purchased at the park headquarters or the Information Center in St. Paul (see "FOR MORE INFORMATION" to left).



This information is available in alternative format upon request.

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