

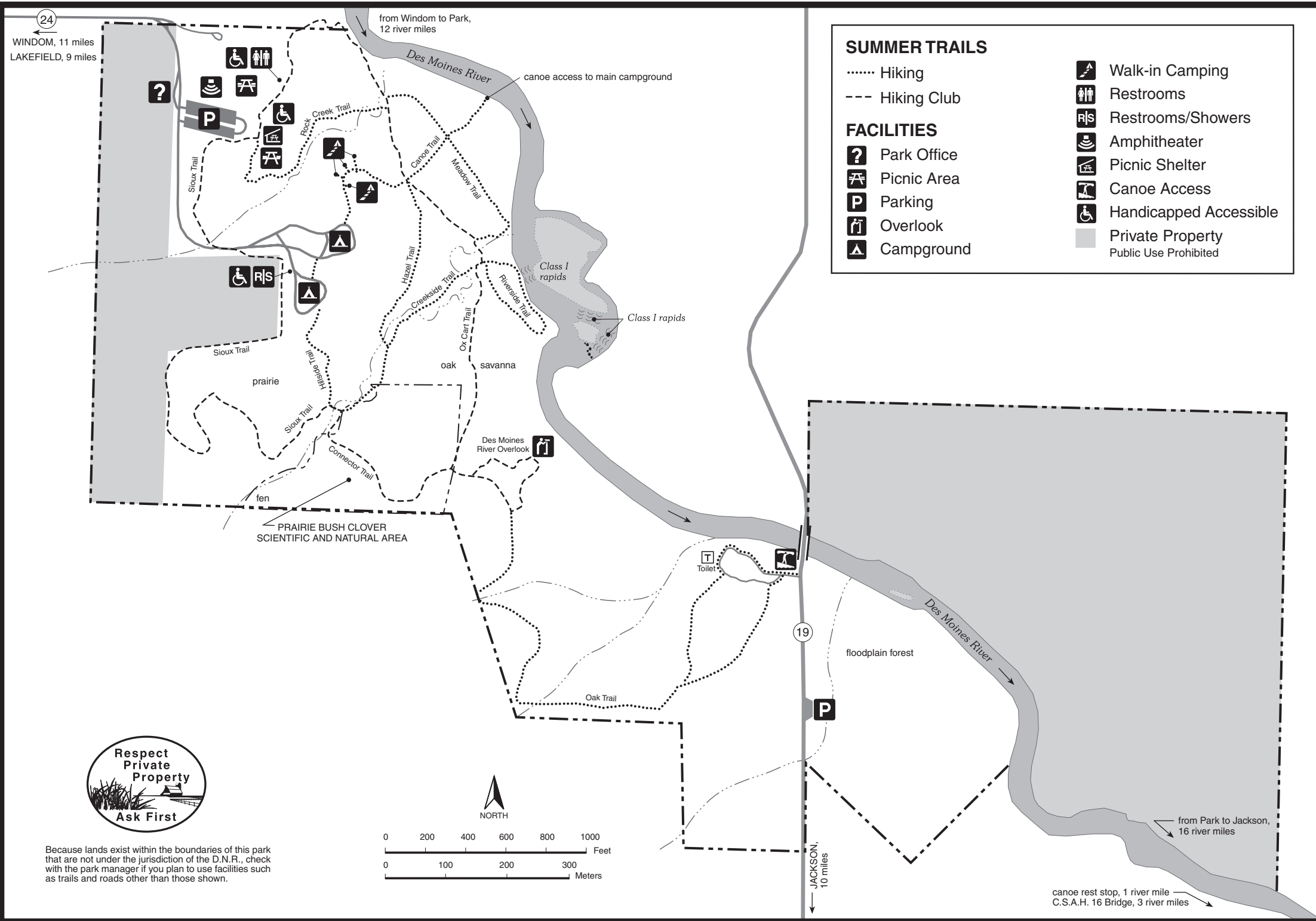
KILEN WOODS STATE PARK

FACILITIES AND FEATURES

- 33 campsites with tables, water, showers, toilets & fire rings
- 11 of above campsites with electric hookups
- 4 walk-in campsites
- Camping reservations
- Picnic area
- Multipurpose year-round shelter building with water, kitchen, reservations accepted
- 5 miles of hiking trail
- Public canoe access on the Des Moines River

VISITOR FAVORITES

- Des Moines River overlook
- Tallgrass prairie
- Canoeing on the Des Moines River
- Oak woods





KILEN WOODS STATE PARK

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kilen Woods State Park
50200 - 860th Street
Lakefield, MN 56150-3294
(507) 662-6258

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

(651) 296-6157 (Metro Area)
1-800-766-6000 (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

KILEN WOODS STATE PARK is located nine miles northeast of Lakefield, Minnesota in Jackson County. The park entrance is on Jackson County Highway 24, five miles east of Minnesota Highway 86. Highway map index: F-21.

Nestled in the wooded hillsides and grassy ravines along the west bank of the Des Moines River are 200 acres of nature and tranquility. Numerous all-season trails wind through the park's dry oak forest, sunny river bottom meadows, cool flood-plain forest, and brightly flowered oak savanna and prairie. Abundant wildlife can be observed

throughout the park while spectacular prairie sunsets can be enjoyed from the campground.

GEOLOGY: Over 15,000 years ago glacial ice, several thousand feet thick (known as the Des Moines Lobe) covered what is now southern Minnesota and Iowa. When the ice retreated, gently rolling hills, shallow prairie lakes and countless wetlands were left. Many of the small lakes and most of the wetlands have since been drained for agricultural purposes.

The Des Moines River originates at Lake Shetek in Murray County and flows southeasterly through Minnesota and Iowa on its way to the Mississippi River.

The river's journey begins through a broad and open valley. In many places the river has cut through a hundred feet of rock, sand and gravel known as glacial drift. In Jackson County where the valley is narrow, Kilen Woods lies deep and wooded.

WILDLIFE: River, woods and meadows provide year-round habitat for a diverse and abundant wildlife population.

Flowing quietly past the park, the Des Moines River provides aquatic habitat for beaver and muskrat. Resourceful anglers can pull walleye, northern, catfish and bullhead from the river's pools and numerous snags. Woodducks can be seen nesting in tree cavities along the river's edge while herons quietly stalk shallows and back waters. Only the noisy, flashy kingfishers disturb the river's stillness.

Oak trees growing on the steep river valley slopes annually yield a rich crop of acorns and attract deer, squirrels, woodpeckers, woodducks and many rodents.

Scattered bur oak trees, wild plums and hawthorns occur among prairie grasses and wildflowers at the edge of the Des Moines River Valley. On the tall shrubs, field sparrows and rose-breasted grosbeaks sing their claim of territory.

Large grassy ravines of big bluestem, Indian grass, blazing star and purple coneflower harbor jumping mice, jackrabbits and an array of colorful butterflies. Midway up the ravines are wet seepage areas called fens where sedges, unusual grasses and rare flowers predominate.

Seven-foot tall prairie grasses, butterfly milkweed and grey-headed coneflower dominate the late summer river bottom prairie. Spectacular flyers, tree swallows nest in cavities along this meadow's edge. Feeding on the numerous flowers, red admiral butterflies are seen all summer long while the swallowtail butterflies abound in late summer.

HISTORY: Long ago a nomadic peoples hunted and lived in the Des Moines River area. Little is known about them, for their story was recorded on the prairie's wind. It is thought they were here over 6,000 years ago and may have been the authors of the drawings and symbols etched in rock at the Jeffers Petroglyphs, 30 miles to the north.

The Dakota (Sioux) peoples were the earliest known inhabitants of this area before white men came. For hundreds of years they hunted bison, elk and waterfowl and collected the roots and herbs growing wild on the prairie.

It was not until the mid 1700s that the first white adventurers, trappers and traders set foot in this area.

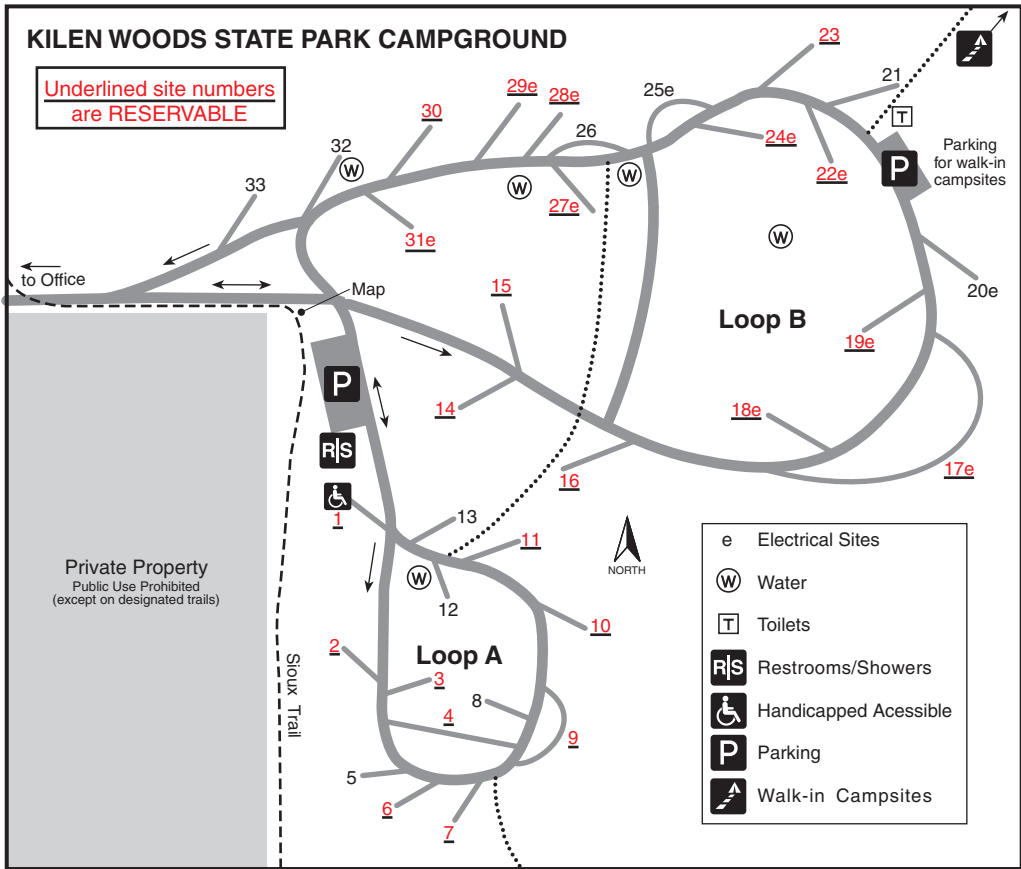
In the 1830s Joseph Nicollet led an expedition that traversed the Des Moines River Valley. He provided one of the most accurate descriptions and maps of southwestern Minnesota. Nicollet noted an area slowly rising to several hundred feet above the surrounding open plains. This "plateau of prairie heights" held grand views of prairies, rivers and lakes surrounding the area. Kilen Woods lies on the eastern edge of this region he called the "Coteau des Prairies".

The treaty of Traverse de Sioux of 1851 opened this hilly prairie country to the first pioneers and settlers. The Dakota Indians were removed to a reservation along the Minnesota River. Ten years of life on the reservation became frustrating. Finally, cheated out of their money, denied adequate food and shelter, a number of the Dakota resorted to violence during August of 1862 in a last desperate attempt to regain their ancestral lands and dignity.

Part of this tragedy spilled into the Des Moines River Valley as 20 Jackson County settlers from the river valley lost their lives. Fear removed the others to places further south for several years. When the settlers returned, they would change the face of the river valley forever.

Plow and oxen quickly turned the prairie wilderness into farms and communities. The advent of railroads quickened the pace of immigrants into the county and hastened the destruction of the prairie. Blizzards, droughts, grasshoppers and windstorms plagued early settlers of the river valley throughout the years. Pioneer homestead dugouts, ox-cart trails and log cabins can still be found in the park and along the river valley.

In 1945, the Minnesota State Legislature authorized the creation of a state park along the Des Moines River. The park was named after Agil Kilen, from whom most of the park land was purchased.



Included in the purchase were 21 pioneer homestead woodlots.

Kilen Woods State Park has been referred to as "an oasis in the farm belt" of Minnesota. As it was true for the native Americans and pioneers of yesteryear, so it is for the park visitor of today.

SO EVERYONE CAN ENJOY THE PARK...

State parks were established to preserve and protect the natural and scenic features of Minnesota. Please help us protect your park by observing these rules:

- Camp only in designated areas.
- Plants, flowers, rocks or artifacts are for all to enjoy. Please leave them where they are.
- Buy firewood from park manager. Leave dead wood on the forest floor.
- Build fires only in fire rings or fireplaces provided.
- Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than six feet.
- Motorized vehicles may not use park trails.
- Loud noises or other disturbances are prohibited after 10:00 P.M.
- Park is closed from 10:00 P.M. until 8:00 A.M.

- No horses allowed on trails.
- 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.

"Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is available to all individuals regardless of race, color, creed or religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, age or disability. Discrimination inquires should be sent to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4031; or the Equal Opportunity Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240."

© 6/2008 by State of Minnesota,
Department of Natural Resources



DNR Maps