

ZIPPEL BAY STATE PARK

FACILITIES AND FEATURES

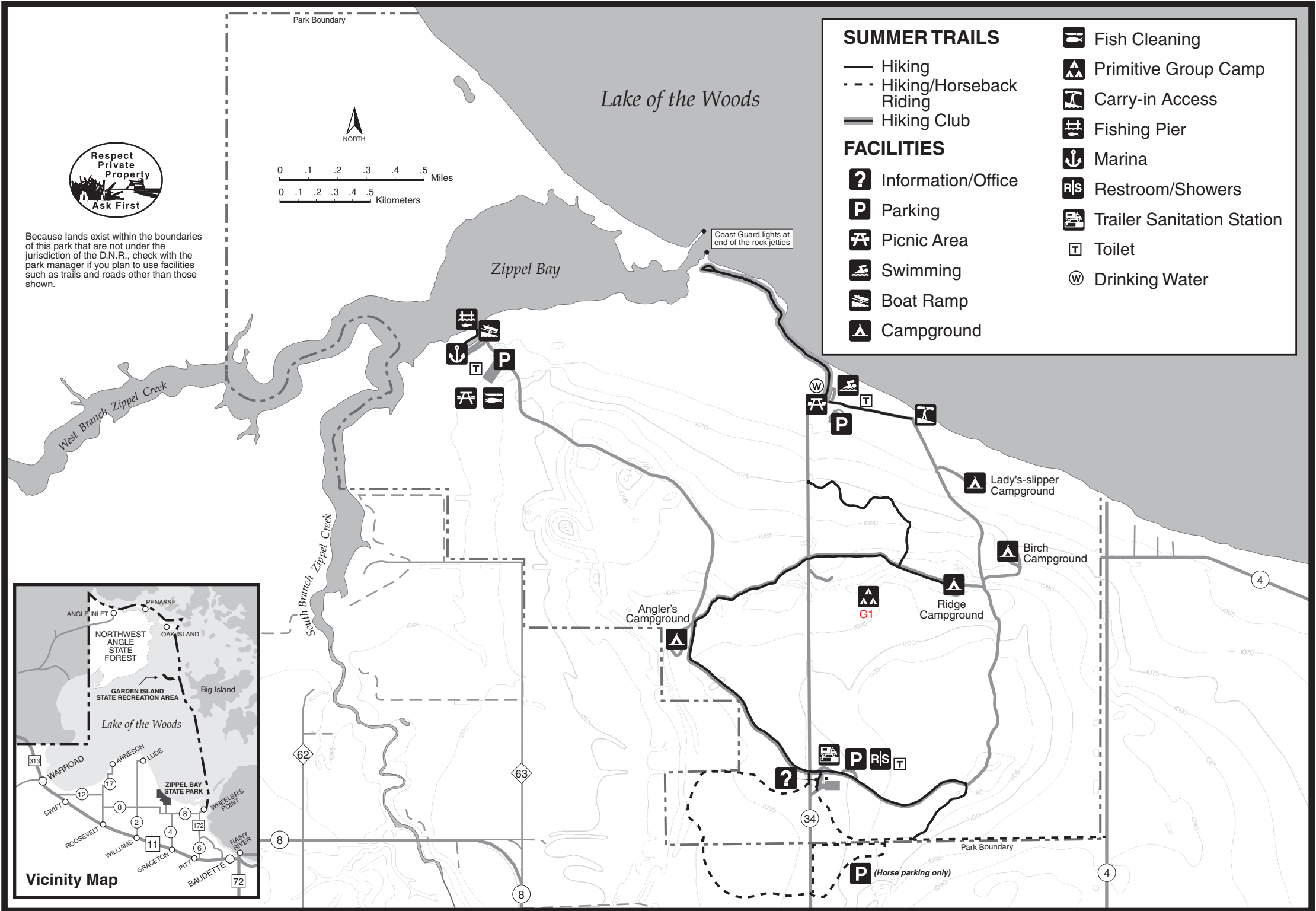
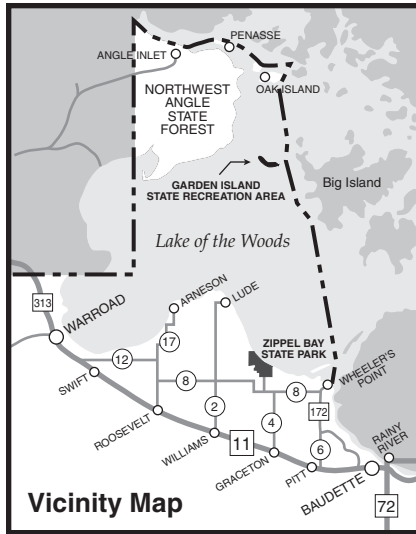
- Swimming beach on Lake of the Woods
- Nature trails
- Group camping area
- Beachcombing
- Public boat harbor, launching ramp and docks on Zippel Bay with access to Lake of the Woods
- Picnic area on Lake of the Woods
- Lake fishing with sightseeing and fishing launch service from the boat harbor (by arrangement)
- Fish-cleaning facility
- 60 drive-in campsites in birch and pine forests
- Trailer sanitation station
- Horseback riding trails

SERVICE INFORMATION

- Firewood available at park headquarters
- Ice available at all nearby resorts
- Groceries and gas available eight miles east from the park entrance and at most nearby resorts
- Launch services, both half and full-day fishing excursions, can be arranged through nearby resorts
- Public telephone available in the park
- Fishing license, bait and tackle available at resorts and in Baudette and Williams, MN



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.





ZIPPEL BAY STATE PARK

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Zippel Bay State Park
3684 - 54th Avenue NW
Williams, MN 56686
(218) 783-6252

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)

mndnr.gov/parks

ZIPPEL BAY STATE PARK is located ten miles northeast of Williams, Minnesota on Lake of the Woods. Entrance to the park is from Lake of the Woods County State Aid Highway 8. Highway map index F-3.

Located in a jack pine and birch setting along a two-mile sand beach shoreline of Lake of the Woods, Zippel Bay State Park offers a peaceful yet unique park experience. Lake of the Woods dominates the scene at this most northern Minnesota state park—and rightly so.

Lake of the Woods is ocean-like in its size and moods. Imagine, a lake with 1,485 square miles of water, 65,000 miles of shoreline and 14,000 islands! Standing on the fine sand beach at Zippel Bay, park visitors are 80 miles from the northern

tip of the lake! The lake is 55 miles across at its widest and varies in depth from 4 to 35 feet deep in the southern bays to over 150 feet deep in northern areas.

Beachcombers have commented, after walking the beach many times, that it’s always a new experience, a new scene. The mood of the lake is always changing, from three-foot high crashing waves, approaching storms and lightning flashes, to an eerie stillness with faint sounds from a thousand raucous gulls, out of sight in the lake’s interior.

A walk along the beach at Zippel Bay State Park can bring rewarding experiences ranging from the sights and sounds of common terns fishing the shoreline, to the feel of heavy “black sand” comprised of iron ore flakes that have been pulverized and sorted by the continuous, powerful wave action. Tangled driftwood is abundant and massive.

The 3,000-acre state park offers a swimming beach on the big lake and a boat access and harbor in the sheltered calm of Zippel Bay. During June and July, four species of lady’s-slippers and many other orchids can be observed along the park’s trails. Each year visitors discover the park’s blueberries, Juneberries, pin cherries, chokecherries, cranberries, wild strawberries and edible mushrooms. Small clearings in the park afford opportunities to view deer and other wildlife. The gently sloping topography throughout the park is interrupted by several abrupt slopes (old beachlines of Lake of the Woods) and by several prominent rock outcroppings. A beautiful view of Zippel Bay can be enjoyed atop the granite-like outcrop next to the boat harbor.

HISTORY: Evidence of prehistoric people living in the area has been found along the Rainy River, east of Zippel Bay, and at other sites in the vicinity of Lake of the Woods, indications of a long and varied history of human habitation of this region.

In 1732, when the French explorer Pierre Gaultier de la Verendrye crossed the lake with an exploration party of more than 50, he reported an area populated with Cree, Monsonis, Assiniboine and Dakota Indians. The Ojibwe (or Chippewa) had not yet pushed westward in large numbers as far as Lake of the Woods. Verendrye established Fort St. Charles on what is now Magnuson’s Island in the Northwest Angle of Lake of the Woods.

From this outpost, Verendrye managed the exploration work which would eventually open up the north and west to a tide of traders who came to gather the rich harvest of furs provided by the forest and lake environment. Fort St. Charles was abandoned by 1763, when claim to the area was transferred to the British. The next 75 years have become known as the golden age of the French-Canadian voyageurs, who, with their impressive 26-foot birch bark canoes, called “North Canoes” became the main characters in the story of this region.

Determination of the exact boundary between the

United States and Canada is yet another interesting story. The Treaty of Paris in 1783 established U.S. control over the area. However, the use of the term “northwest corner of the Lake of the Woods” led to 50 years of controversy. How do you determine the northwest corner of a lake so irregular that shorelines point in every direction of the compass? An agreement was reached in 1842 when a treaty between the United States and Britain officially established the boundary between the two countries.

In 1887, William M. Zippel, one of the first white settlers in the Zippel Bay area, took up residence on a point of land at the entrance to Zippel Bay. By 1909, a small hamlet and fishing village, consisting of a post office, cold storage building and sheds of fishermen, had grown up at the site. The Zippels fished Lake of the Woods and came through a channel to a back bay of Zippel Bay where they docked. Fish were stored in a warehouse on the site until they were transported to town and railroad landings in the northern part of the state. Today, all that remains of the Zippel hamlet are building foundations, depressions and scattered debris.

In 1959, in order to provide lake access and recreational opportunities, Zippel Bay State Recreation Area was established. With original boundaries encompassing 2,766 acres, it was not until 1963 that a major park development began, and by 1967, most of the existing park facilities were completed.

WILDLIFE: This park’s location on the northern border of Minnesota affords opportunities to observe an interesting variety of wildlife not common elsewhere in the state. Visitors have opportunities to observe coyote, black bear, mink, fisher, otter and even the rare pine marten, a relative of the mink and fisher. Timber wolf are occasionally seen or heard in the park. Deer are common in the park and, on occasion, a moose is sighted.

Birdwatching is a popular activity with a good number of species present at any season of the year. Associated with the big lake are white pelicans, double-crested cormorants; herring, ring-billed, Franklin’s and Bonaparte’s gulls and four species of terns. Bald eagles nest in the park and osprey can be seen in the bay and along the lake. In early morning you may hear the low-pitched, loud, musical rattle call of the greater sandhill crane. These large, uncommon birds nest in the large marsh north of Zippel Bay and at other sites in Lake of the Woods county. Shorebirds abound along the park’s two-mile beach front. Among them, you may occasionally be able to spot a piping plover, an endangered species that nests and feeds in the area.

FISHING: Lake of the Woods is well known for its outstanding walleye fishing. In May, June and July, fishing with a leech or nightcrawler on a slip sinker near the bottom in 8-30 feet of water usually produces results. Sauger, the smaller relative of the walleye, are also abundant in Lake of the Woods and are usually part of the catch during a day of fishing on the big lake. Check the

fishing regulations for special limits on walleye and sauger. Within Zippel Bay, along the rushes and weed beds, visitors can land a nice catch of northern pike. During certain times of the year, the bay can also yield a good stringer of walleye. Smallmouth bass, perch and muskie are also found in Lake of the Woods.

Lake sturgeon, although an insignificant part of the present-day fishing opportunities, were once an important fishery and earned a place in the colorful history of Lake of the Woods. At the turn of the century the Zippel Bay fishery, located at the mouth of Zippel Bay, as well as other commercial fishing operations, netted the lake sturgeon for its eggs used in making caviar. After stripping the eggs, these large fish were cleaned and shipped to various markets. A sturgeon steak made an excellent meal. The lake sturgeon is a primitive yet interesting fish, estimated to reach 100 years of age and attain weights of over 250 pounds! It is still found in Lake of the Woods and occasionally caught on hook and line; however, little is known of their relative abundance.

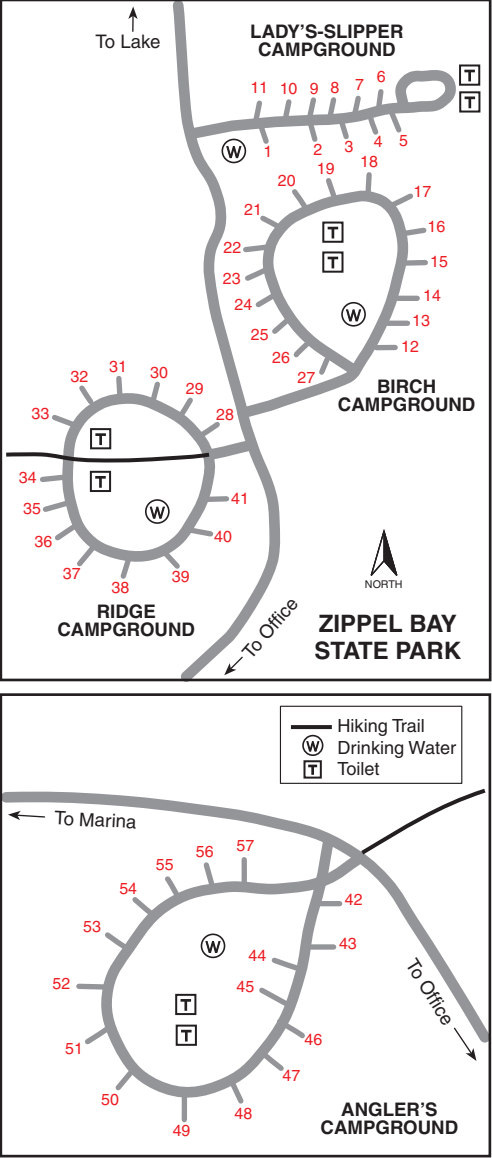
INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS: Each year, at least one special program is scheduled for Zippel Bay State Park. Occasionally, other programs are offered such as boat tours to Pine and Curry Islands to learn about the endangered piping plover. Inquire at park headquarters for program offerings this year.

Interpretive signs and brochures are currently being developed on several important and interesting subjects of the park: park history, birdlife of Lake of the Woods, lake facts and orientation, and fishery history.

THE PIPING PLOVER—AN ENDANGERED SPECIES: Will the piping plover survive? This small white and brown shorebird is already nearing extinction in other Great Lake states. Research, habitat management and conscientious visitors may help this tiny bird survive.

Lake of the Woods may be the largest breeding area remaining in Minnesota and the Great Lakes region; yet, the population on Lake of the Woods is less than 50 breeding individuals. Zippel Bay itself is one of only four known breeding areas on the lake, however, successful nestings are infrequent. Individual birds are occasionally spotted using the beaches as feeding or nesting areas.

Pine and Curry Islands in Lake of the Woods, near the southeast corner of the lake, preserve habitat for the largest concentration of nesting birds. These islands have been protected by the Nature Conservancy and the State Scientific and Natural Areas Program to help keep the bird’s population from plummeting to extinction. Ongoing research and monitoring of the remaining nesting birds help us learn how to protect this species. You can help, by being aware of this bird’s precarious situation. If you encounter any nesting birds along the beach, please, back away from the nest slowly. Keep a good distance from both nesting and feeding birds.



This information is available in alternative format upon request.

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