

# OLD MILL STATE PARK



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.

## FACILITIES AND FEATURES

- 26 semi-modern campsites
- Primitive group camp
- Showers & electric sites
- Picnic area
- Picnic shelter
- Swimming pond
- Fishing
- Historic site
- Hiking trails
- Snowmobile trails
- Cross-country ski trails
- Sliding area
- Warming house
- Snowshoe rental

## VISITOR FAVORITES

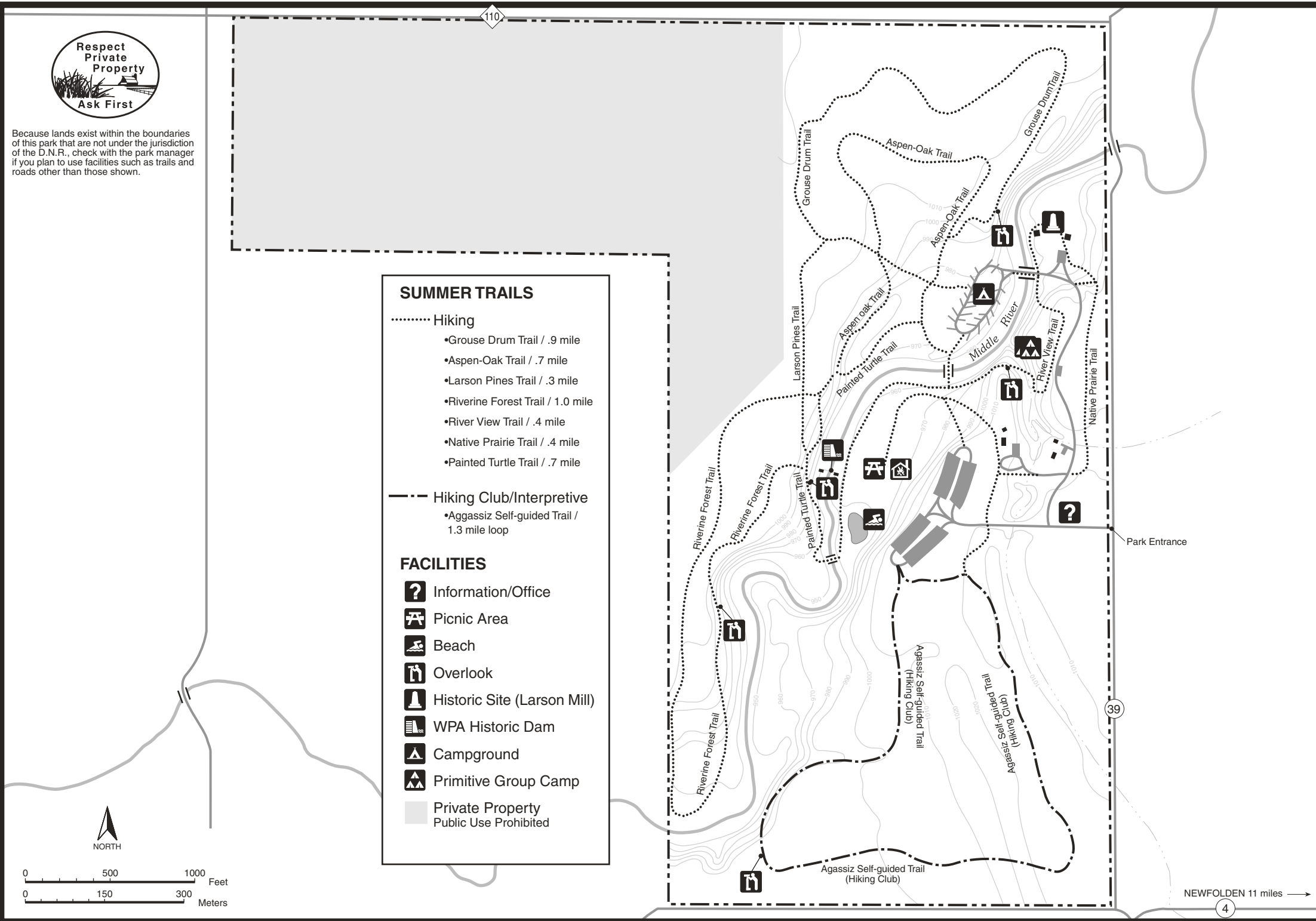
- Swimming
- Picnicking
- Camping
- Hiking

### 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.

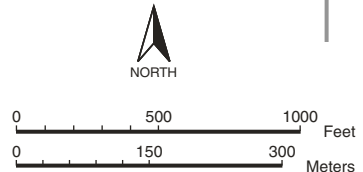


### SUMMER TRAILS

- ..... Hiking
  - Grouse Drum Trail / .9 mile
  - Aspen-Oak Trail / .7 mile
  - Larson Pines Trail / .3 mile
  - Riverine Forest Trail / 1.0 mile
  - River View Trail / .4 mile
  - Native Prairie Trail / .4 mile
  - Painted Turtle Trail / .7 mile
- Hiking Club/Interpretive
  - Agassiz Self-guided Trail / 1.3 mile loop

### FACILITIES

- ? Information/Office
- ⛺ Picnic Area
- 🏖 Beach
- 🏠 Overlook
- 🏰 Historic Site (Larson Mill)
- 🏰 WPA Historic Dam
- ⛳ Campground
- ⛳ Primitive Group Camp
- Private Property  
Public Use Prohibited



NEWFOLDEN 11 miles →



# OLD MILL STATE PARK

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Old Mill State Park  
33489 - 240th Avenue NW  
Argyle, MN 56713  
(218) 437-8174

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)

**OLD MILL STATE PARK** is located in Marshall County, 13 miles east of Argyle, Minnesota or 11 miles west of Newfolden, Minnesota. Access to the park is one-half mile off County State Aid Highway 4.

Old Mill State Park contains examples of the landscape as seen by the first settlers over a century ago. The riverine forest contains most of the same plants and animals found here originally. Small areas of oak savanna and prairie can still be found on the beach ridges. Wet

prairie still survives in the lower areas. The old grist mill is the focal point of the park. When running, it gives a feeling of the history of the Red River Valley. A restored cabin can be found near the mill adding to this feeling.

Trails are provided for the hikers in the summer and for skiers and snowmobilers in the winter. Wildlife is readily seen within the park. Beaver can be seen cutting trees along the river and many times they can be seen swimming in the river. Moose, along with other wild animals, move through the area.

The swimming beach and picnic area are favorite summertime spots for park visitors. The magnificent stone buildings and bridges set the tone for this area.

**GEOLOGY:** Just a short time ago, geologically speaking, this entire part of the state was covered by a vast freshwater lake, Lake Agassiz. Although the area was left fairly level by glacial activity before the lake formed, the lake is responsible for the large level areas found here.

The lake level dropped in stages after each new outlet was uncovered. Each time this occurred, a new shoreline was exposed. Ice movement and wave action produced the large beach ridges found throughout the Red River Valley. One of these beach ridges is located about 1 1/4 miles east of the park. On a day when ground fog covers the area this ridge can serve as an observation point where a person can look out and imagine the shore of the ancient lake.

The river valley was cut by the river flowing over the loose sediments left behind by the lake. Each time the lake level dropped, the river would rapidly cut the channel deeper. Where it cuts across old beach ridges, rapids developed because of large rocks the current could not remove.

The steep walled valley and narrow flood plain are typical of a young river valley. The dam is placed in a narrow part of the valley.

Some of the newest geologic features are visible along the west edge of the park. These are the small dunes forming along the edge of fields outside the park. With time, they may intrude into the park proper.

**WILDLIFE:** Old Mill is an oasis of native prairie and riverine forest surrounded by fertile agricultural lands left by ancient Lake Agassiz. The water course area and patches of aspen parkland provide wildlife habitat among the farmed areas. The river valley acts as a travel corridor for many species including deer, moose, bear, timber wolves and otter. Beaver and fox are common as are white tailed jack rabbits and snowshoe hare.

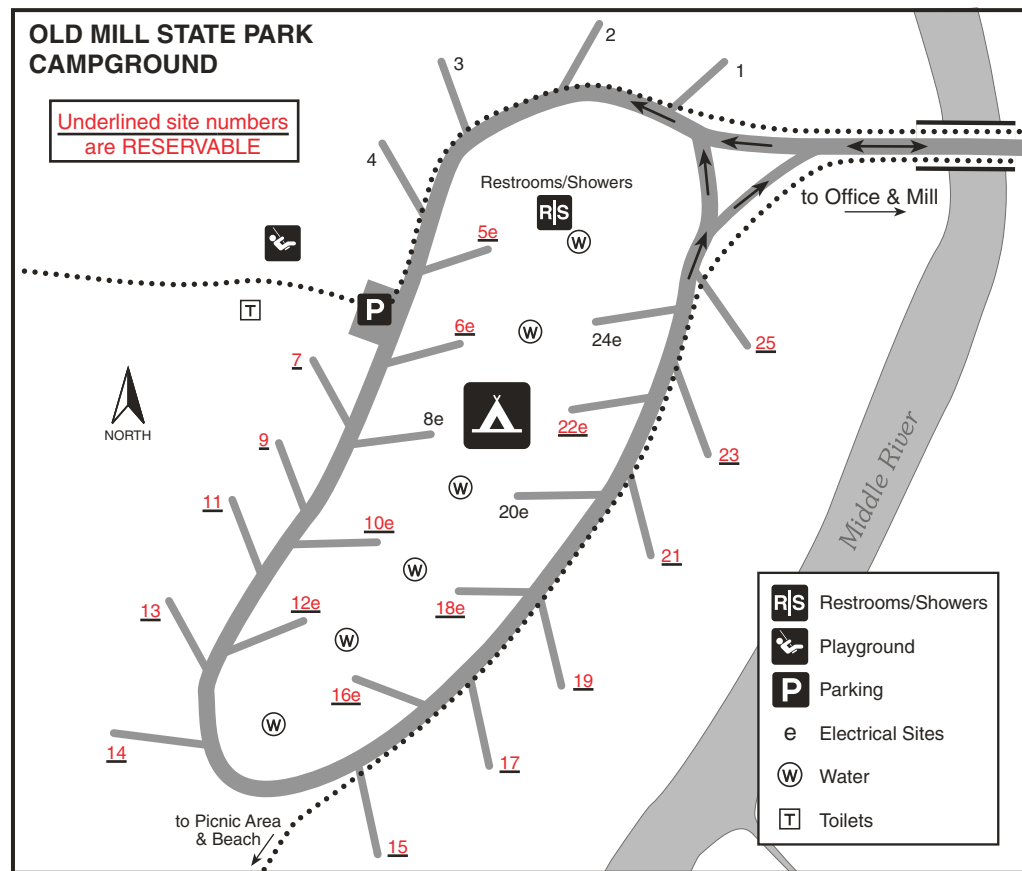
In spring and fall, birds migrating through this portion of Minnesota add another dimension to the parks wildlife. Warblers, finches and hawks, among others, are abundant during migration. About 100 species of birds reside in the park. Scarlet tanagers, saw-whet owls, pileated woodpeckers, and meadow larks are common summer residents. Marsh and red-tailed hawks hunt small animals and sharp-tailed grouse dance in the spring mating season.

A recent study of the amphibians and reptiles in the park show a number of common species. Reptiles include the common garter, prairie garter, red-bellied, and smooth green snakes. Watch for western painted turtles sunning on logs along the rivers. For early spring visitors, frogs and toads, such as the spring peeper and great plains toad, provide an evening concert—sometimes an overpowering din.

**HISTORY:** The area now in the park was homesteaded in 1882 by the Larson family. In 1886 Lars Larson Sr. built the original mill, a water powered mill, downstream from it's present location. In 1888 that mill was destroyed by flooding and was rebuilt in 1889 as a wind powered mill, but that lasted for only a very short time before it was blown over in a wind storm. The water powered mill was rebuilt later that same year upstream in an area outside of the park. Lars Larson's son, John, started a mill at the same location and used the Case steam engine No. A359 for power. In 1897 both mill were moved to the area where the "Old Mill" now stands.

The mills were owned and operated by several people before being sold to the state in 1937.

The steam engine and the mill were rebuilt in 1958 and are operated on Labor Day weekend



each year for visitors. Ask the Park Manager or the Naturalist for the grinding dates for this year.

The beach ridges of the old lake were travel routes across the treeless expanses of western Minnesota. These ridges were used by native people and their trails were followed by settlers when they first came into the area.

The beach ridge just east of the park is one of these travel lanes. For the early settlers this ridge was known as the Pembina Trail. The oxcart trail and the river crossing are still evident about a half mile east of the park. These carts were made entirely of wood and, without greased axles, were so noisy that they could be heard for miles. Try to imagine what an oxcart train must have sounded like!

**INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM:** During the summer, the Park Naturalist conducts programs each Sunday at Old Mill. Check the program schedule posted throughout the park for activity

times. A self-guiding trail, the Agassiz Trail, with interpretive brochures and signs is located at the south end of parking lot to point out interesting natural features of the park. Interpretive signs and an audio interpretive presentation are located in the mill area. This trail also serves as the Hiking Club Trail.

*This information is available in alternative format upon request.*

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