

# *Jones Lake State Park General Management Plan*



**North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**

**Division of Parks and Recreation**

**Coastal Region**

**February 2017**

# I. MISSION AND PURPOSE

## MISSION STATEMENT:

**Conservation:** To protect North Carolina’s natural diversity through careful selection and stewardship of state parks system lands;

**Recreation:** To provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities in the state parks system and throughout the state; and

**Education:** To encourage appreciation of North Carolina’s natural and cultural heritage through diverse educational opportunities; for all citizens of and visitors to the State of North Carolina.

**Our purpose:** The State of North Carolina offers unique archaeological, geologic, biologic, scenic and recreational resources. These resources are part of the heritage of the people of this State. The heritage of a people should be preserved and managed by those people for their use and for the use of their visitors and descendants.

## PARK PURPOSE:

Carolina Bays are geological formations that are found in the loose, unconsolidated sands that form a cover within the Atlantic Coastal Plain, with the greatest concentration of Carolina Bays in Bladen County. Their origin has long been a matter of speculation and debate. Carolina bays are shallow, oval depressions oriented in a southeast-northwest direction. Jones and Salters lakes are classic examples of water-filled Carolina bays. Both bays have a shallow bottom with the deepest point southeast of the center of the bay. Both have a raised sand rim, best developed at the southeast end. The shorelines vary from sand to peat. Peat deposits also surround the lakes and fill the non-lake remainder of the bays. The term “bay,” in this case, refers to the distinctive vegetation – such as loblolly Bay – that slowly fills these depressions. Only a few bays still contain water, as most have filled naturally with sediment and vegetation.



**Visitor Center**

The outstanding biologic resources include high quality aquatic and shoreline communities typical of bay lakes, such as Xeric Sandhill Scrub, Wet Pine Flatwoods, Pond Pine Woodland, High and Low Pocosin, Atlantic White Cedar Forest, and Natural Lake Shoreline. The Jones Lake Registered Natural Heritage Area includes almost the entire park, including Jones and Salters lakes. Species of special interest include white wicky (*Kalmia cuneata*) and red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*).



**Shelter**

Jones Lake State Park is an important regional recreational resource. The park offers a natural setting for varied recreational activities such as swimming, hiking, camping, picnicking, fishing, boating and nature study. The primary interpretive theme focuses on the Carolina Bays. Recreational activities are limited to preserve the quality of the recreational experience and to protect the outstanding natural resources of the park. Park development undertaken with Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance requires that the park be retained and used for public outdoor recreational purposes.

Jones Lake State Park offers exceptional scenic vistas of Jones and Salters Lakes and their largely undeveloped shorelines. The broad expanses of tea colored water, the sand lake rims, and the dense bay forests contrast to one another. In places, pond cypress trees work together with Spanish moss which grows along the shore or in the shallow water. Trails meander through major natural communities of Carolina bays, offering opportunities to walk through and view pine forests, densely vegetated bog areas of Carolina bays, and lakeside flora.

Jones Lake State Park exists so that its valuable geological, biological, recreational and scenic resources can be protected. The Division of Parks and Recreation is charged with preserving these resources and providing park experiences that promote pride in and understanding of the natural heritage of North Carolina.

## **II. HISTORY**

The 224-acre Jones Lake and the 315-acre Salters Lake have a long history of public ownership. In 1827, legislation passed the General Assembly that expressly forbid land covered by the waters of any lake within North Carolina from being recorded for private ownership. In 1929, the General Assembly passed legislation declaring that all lakes greater than 50 acres in size belonging to the state should never be sold but always retained for the use and benefit of all the people of the state, thus clearly indicating the public trust nature of such land and waters.

Because of the Great Depression, during the 1930s the federal government established various conservation programs in order to create jobs. As a result, approximately 35,000 acres of sub marginal farmlands and other properties in the Bladen County area, including the land around Jones and Salters Lakes, were purchased. Under management of the Resettlement Administration from 1936-1939, recreational facilities were constructed at Jones Lake. In July of 1939, the state leased the federal lands and established the first North Carolina state park for African Americans that included Jones and Salters Lakes. In October of 1954, the federal government gave the land being leased to the state. The deed requires that the land be used for public purposes. After civil rights advances, the park became fully integrated in 1966.

The bay lakes region of Bladen County was settled during colonial times. Jones Lake was known as Woodward's Lake for Samuel Woodward, a Justice of the Peace in the mid-1700s. The lake was later renamed for Isaac Jones, a landowner who donated a tract of land on which Elizabethtown was established in 1773. Salters Lake received its name from Sallie Salter, a Revolutionary War heroine who spied on the Tories encamped in town.

Over 100 years after the area was settled, landowners farmed along the river lowlands and creek

bottoms. Abundant Longleaf Pines were used for the production of naval stores, primarily providing turpentine, pitch, and timber. Due to the growth of the turpentine, lumber and cotton industries, the local population soon increased beyond the soil's capacity to support it. However, by 1935, with the fall of the cotton farmer and the exhaustion of industry, large segments of the local citizens found themselves on sub-marginal land.

The Great Depression of the 1930's was a trying time for the country. In order to create jobs, the federal government poured millions of dollars into conservation. For state parks, federal assistance programs created a tremendous amount of development and acquisition, giving the park system its momentum to move forward.



**View of Jones Lake – a coastal bay**

The federal government purchased sub-marginal farm lands in the Jones Lake area at an average cost of \$4.51 per acre, and the Resettlement Administration managed the area from 1936-1939.

In order to stimulate the depressed economy, a program of land conservation and utilization began. With local materials and craftsmanship, the Resettlement Administration developed a recreation center at Jones Lake. A large bathhouse, beach, refreshment stand, and picnic grounds were constructed.

In 1936, the National Park Service working with the state created a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in the area to provide emergency work for the depressed area (State Lakes Master Plan, 1977).

The property was turned over to the state of North Carolina on July 1, 1939, for operation under a lease agreement. In October, 1954, the land was given to the state by the federal government. Jones Lake opened in the summer of 1939 as the first state park for African Americans. In later years the park, like all other North Carolina parks, became fully integrated.

Besides serving as a source of recreation, the park has played other important roles in history. During World War II, Jones Lake was open only for picnicking and fishing while the area was used by the Anti-Aircraft School from Camp Davis for special training programs. In the spring of 1970, the area achieved prominence when astronomers gathered there to view a total eclipse of the sun.

As of June 1, 2016, Jones Lake State Park manages 1,669 acres.

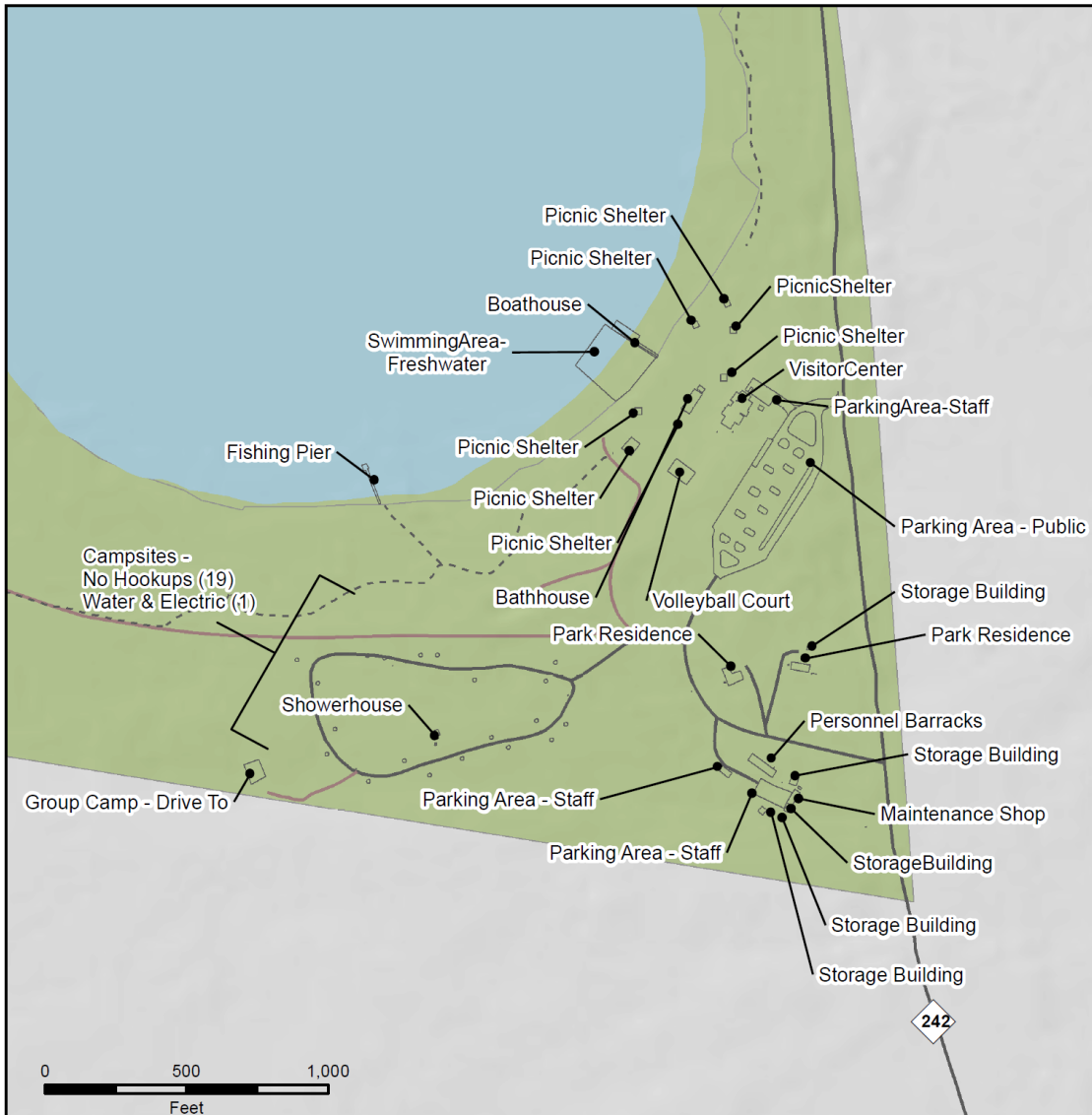
### III. THEMES AND INVENTORY

#### Themes of Jones Lake State Park

Theme Type	Theme	Jones Lake Significance	State Parks System Representation
Archeological/Historic	Recreation	High	Adequate
Biological	Blackwater Coastal Plain Floodplains	High	Moderate
Biological	Coastal Plain Non-alluvial Mineral Wetlands	Moderate	Little
Biological	Dry Longleaf Pine Communities	High	Moderate
Biological	Natural Lake Communities	High	Adequate
Biological	Peat Dome Pocosins	High	Adequate
Geological	Natural Lakes and Ponds	High	Adequate
Geological	Peatlands and Interstream Wetlands	High	Adequate
Geological	Carolina Bays	High	Adequate
Scenic	Forests	Moderate	Adequate
Scenic	Marshes	High	Moderate
Scenic	Meadows/Grasslands	High	Little
Scenic	Reservoirs/Lakes	High	Adequate
Scenic	Swamps	High	Adequate
Scenic	Scenic Vistas	High	Moderate

\*See the Systemwide Plan for references to Theme and Inventory terms. Themes have both actual and “potential” future needs to be at a park.

# FACILITY INVENTORY JONES LAKE STATE PARK

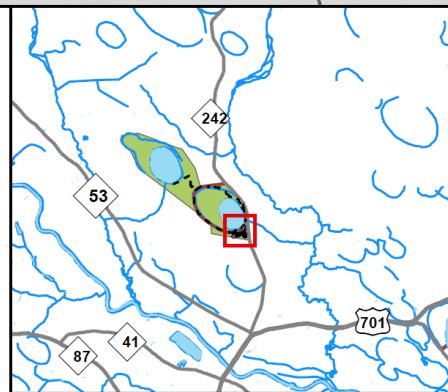


## Jones Lake State Park Facility Inventory

September 2015



- Existing Trail
- Road - Paved
- Road - Unpaved
- Existing Facilities
- State Parks Unit



TRAILS INVENTORY  
JONES LAKE STATE PARK

Trails Inventory	Hiking
Bay Loop Trail	4.00
Cedar Loop Trail	1.00
Salters Lake Trail	1.25
<b>Jones Lake SP Totals (miles)</b>	<b>6.25</b>

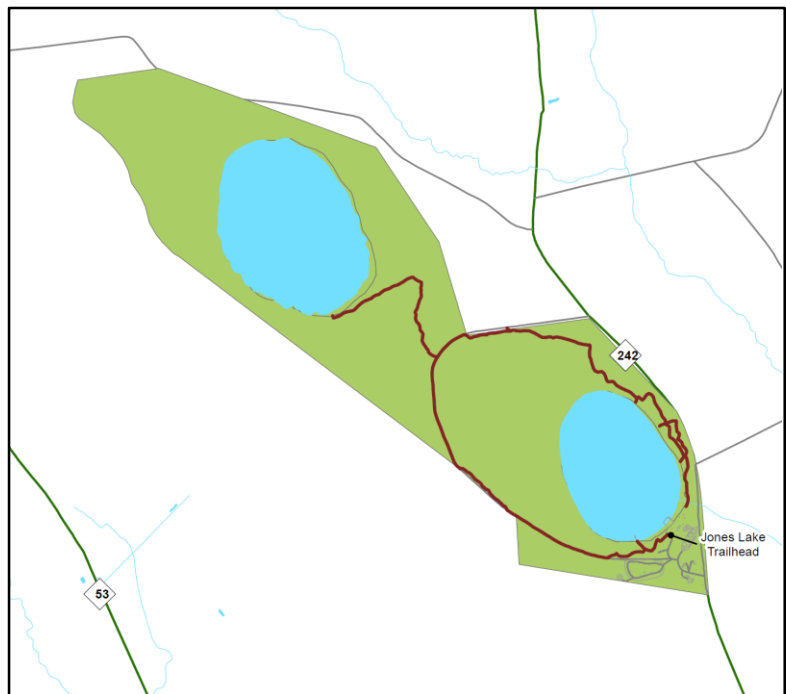
**HIKING:**

**Bay Loop Trail:** Trailhead is located at the picnic area or campground. It is a 4 mile loop around Jones Lake, offering a chance to experience the habitats of a Carolina bay. Wander through dense vegetation and over boggy soil to view lovely lakeside flora. Large pond cypress trees, draped with Spanish moss, line the shore and grow in the shallow water. Leatherwood plants with delicate white flowers, also called “titi”, overhang the water’s edge. Several short side-trails lead to the lake, allowing hikers a chance to catch their breath while viewing the vista across the lake. Bay Trail also traverses through sand ridge communities.

**Cedar Loop Trail:** offers a 1.0-mile journey through both the bay forest and sand ridge communities. This section of trail is part of the Bay Trail.

**Salters Lake Trail:** is a 1.25 mile, loop trail that connects the Bay Trail to Salters Lake. The trail passes through bay forest as well as sand ridge communities and ends at the shoreline of Salters Lake.

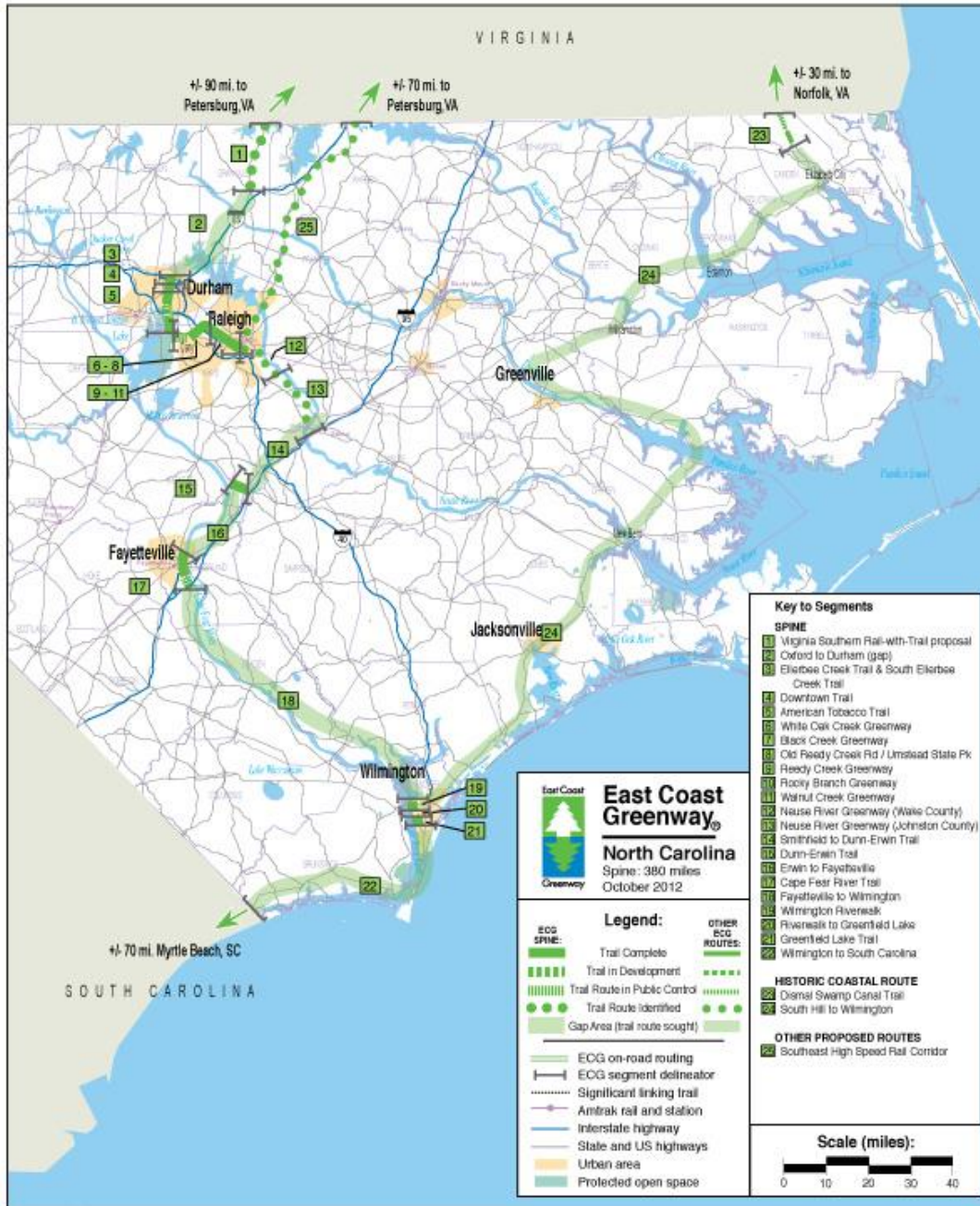
In 2004, trail improvements were made along 5 miles of trails, which included adding a gravel surface. Some existing trails on the western side of Jones Lake that were located on unsuitable soils through the bay forest were abandoned.



TRAILS INVENTORY  
JONES LAKE STATE PARK

**Regional Trail System:**

East Coast Greenway Regional Trial system is within the planning corridor/cap area near Jones Lake State Park .



Original map prepared by  
**GREENWAYS**  
THE COOPERATIVE  
LAND TRUST FOR NORTH CAROLINA  
North Carolina Trail Planning  
Green Spaces Planning

Map updates by ECGA

©2012 East Coast Greenway Alliance

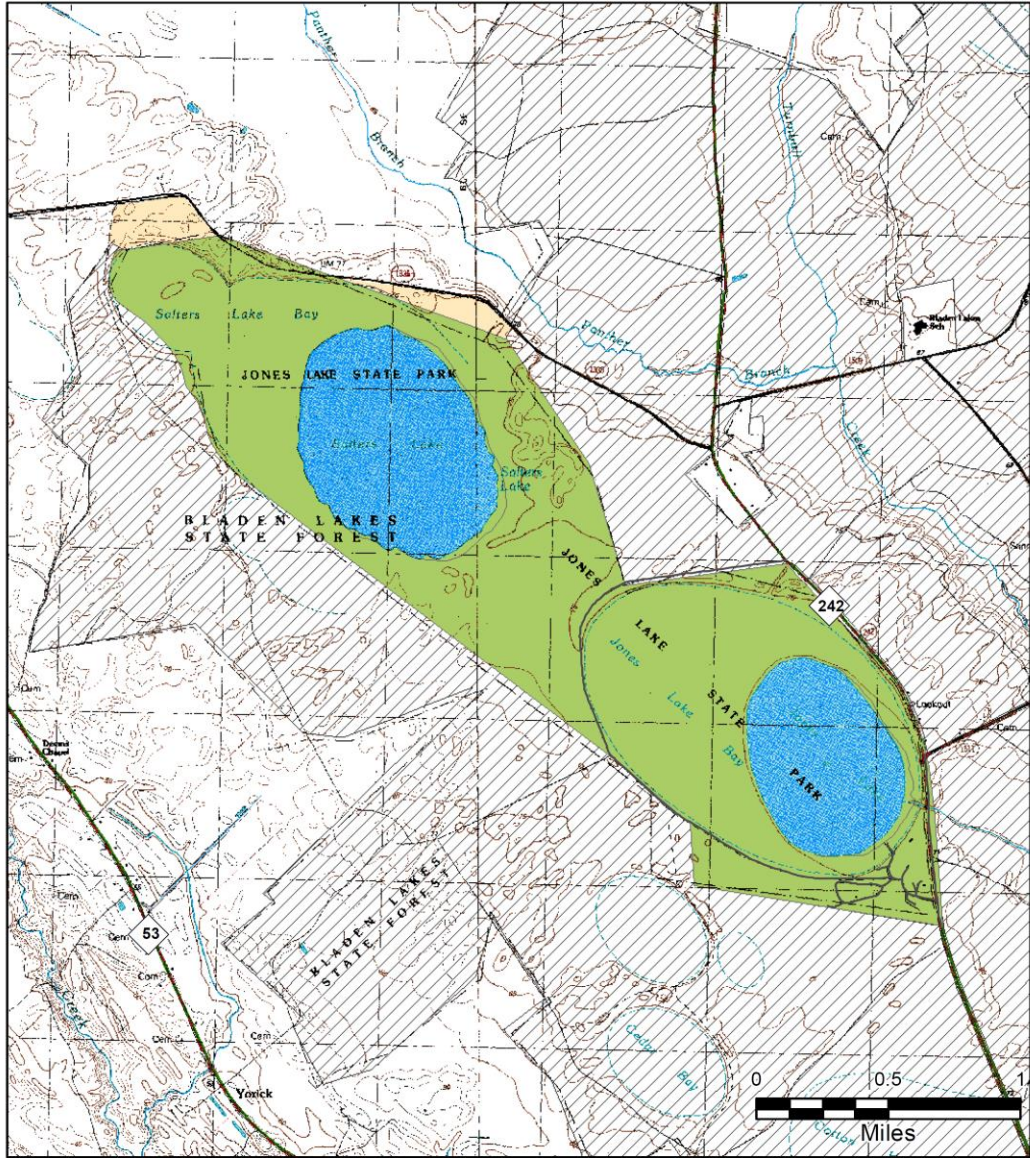


## IV. PLANNING

Jones Lake State Park



LAND PROTECTION PLAN  
 JONES LAKE STATE PARK  
 NO CRITICAL ACRES NOTED



JONES LAKE STATE PARK



December 2015

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|--|--|
| <p><b>State Parks Unit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #90EE90; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Primary resource protection</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #FFD700; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Inholding</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #FFFF00; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Scenic protection</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ADD8E6; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Water quality protection</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #DDA0DD; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Facilities development</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #FFDAB9; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Buffer</li> </ul> | <p><b>Other Conservation Land</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, gray 2px, gray 4px); margin-right: 5px;"></span> Federal</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, gray 2px, gray 4px); margin-right: 5px;"></span> State</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black; background: repeating-linear-gradient(90deg, transparent, transparent 2px, gray 2px, gray 4px); margin-right: 5px;"></span> Other</li> </ul> |
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PROJECT EVALUATION PROGRAM LIST  
 JONES LAKE STATE PARK

Project #	Project Title	Cost
1	Campground Improvements	\$689,348
2	Picnic Shelter	\$165,822
3	Personnel Barracks Renovations	\$244,472
4	Warehouse	\$386,805
5	Backcountry Camping at Salters Lake	\$100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,586,447</b>

\*\* Estimated project cost does not include contingencies, design fee, nor escalation.

**1. Campground Improvements**

The scope of work includes: upgrade a number of existing campsites to electric and full hookups. In addition, the project will demolish and replace the existing shower house.

The park now has 20 tent/trailer campsites. The current shower house does not meet N.C. Building Code or universal standards. There are no universal campsites nor a dump station. The proposed project will improve ten (10) existing campsites by adding borders, screenings, and including one handicapped site. The ten other sites will be converted to electric sites, and a few additional sites will be added to the existing campground area if possible. The existing shower house will be removed and replaced at the same site.



**Existing Showerhouse does not meet clearance and will be demolished**

Campground Improvements: a universal vault toilet will be installed at the group camp area. Water and electric lines will be extended as needed to campsites and other areas, and a dump station.

**2. Picnic Shelter**

A picnic shelter will be constructed in the day use area. Site furnishings will include: 8 universal tables and 2 grills. Electricity and water will be extended to the site from an existing source. No fireplaces will be included. The existing large shelter is the most frequently used facility at the park, and this project will construct a second one somewhat smaller in size to be rented to the public.

**3. Personnel Barracks Renovations**

The Visitor Center construction was completed in 2005, including exhibits, teaching classrooms and office space. This project will expand the barracks area within the maintenance area and renovate to universal and State Building Codes. Barracks are

important to the recruitment and retention of temporary personnel. Local housing is difficult to find for seasonal staff in this rural area.

**4. Warehouse**

This project will extend water and electric lines, convert the pump house storage building to a flammable storage building, extend pavement in the maintenance area and construct a 1,700 SF equipment storage shed in the existing maintenance area.

**5. Backcountry Camping**

This project will provide sites at Salters Lake. Scope of work includes: Universal vault toilet will serve boating and fishing, three platform camping structures, and group camping area. Existing hiking trails are located in this area.

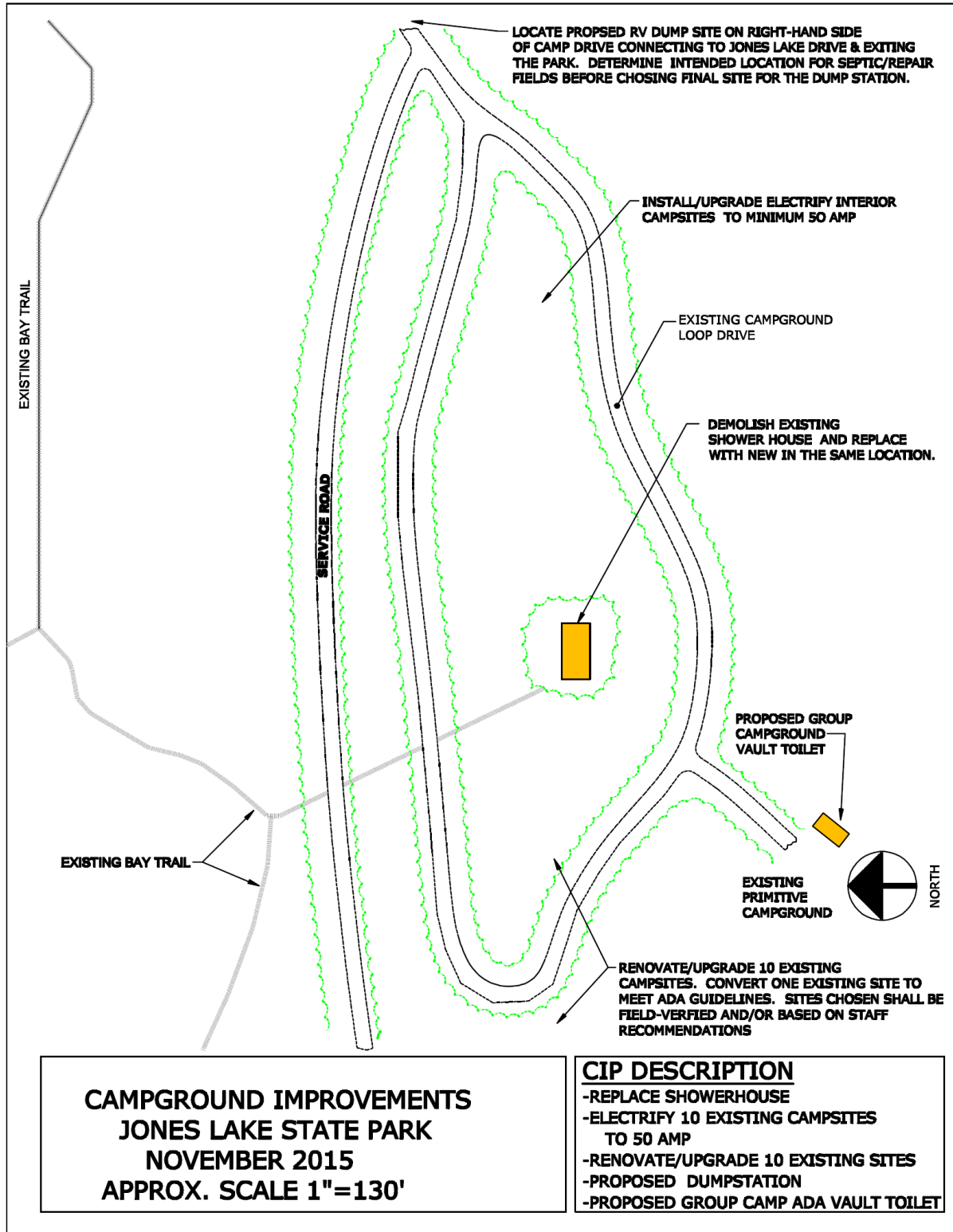


**View of Salters Lake**

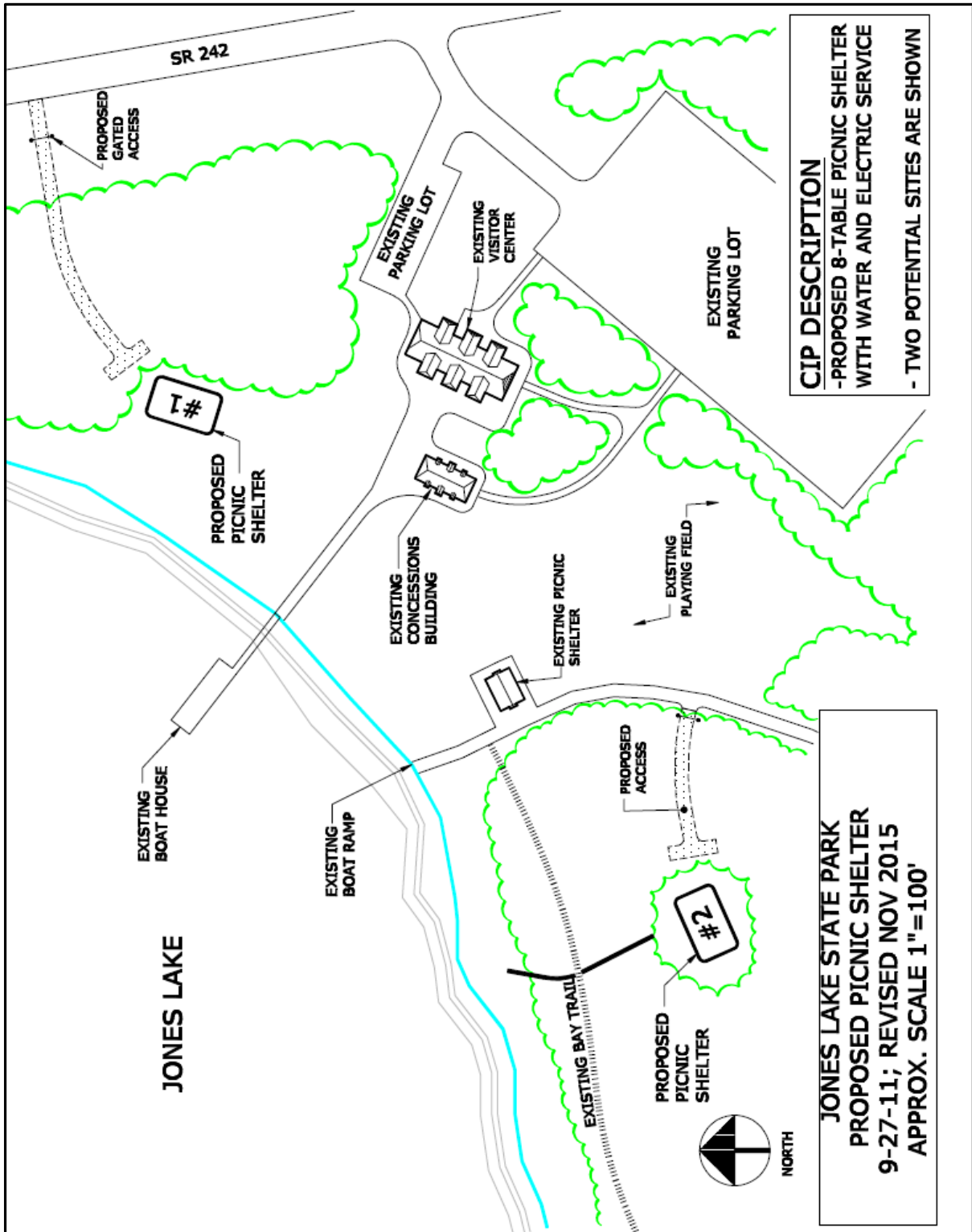


**Woodpecker**

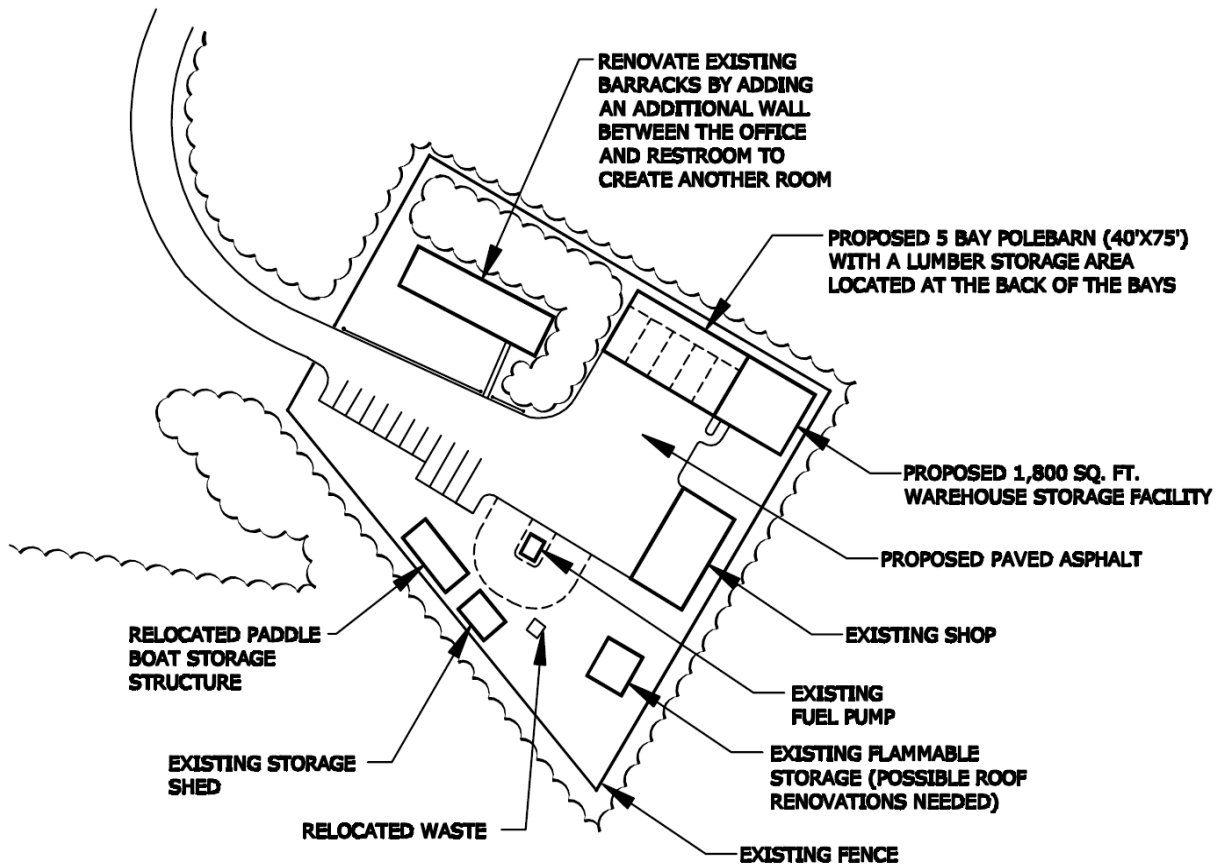
JONES LAKE STATE PARK  
 PROJECT #1: CAMPGROUND IMPROVEMENTS



JONES LAKE STATE PARK  
 PROJECT #2: PICNIC SHELTER



JONES LAKE STATE PARK  
 PROJECT # 3: PERSONNEL BARRACKS RENOVATIONS  
 PROJECT #4: WAREHOUSE

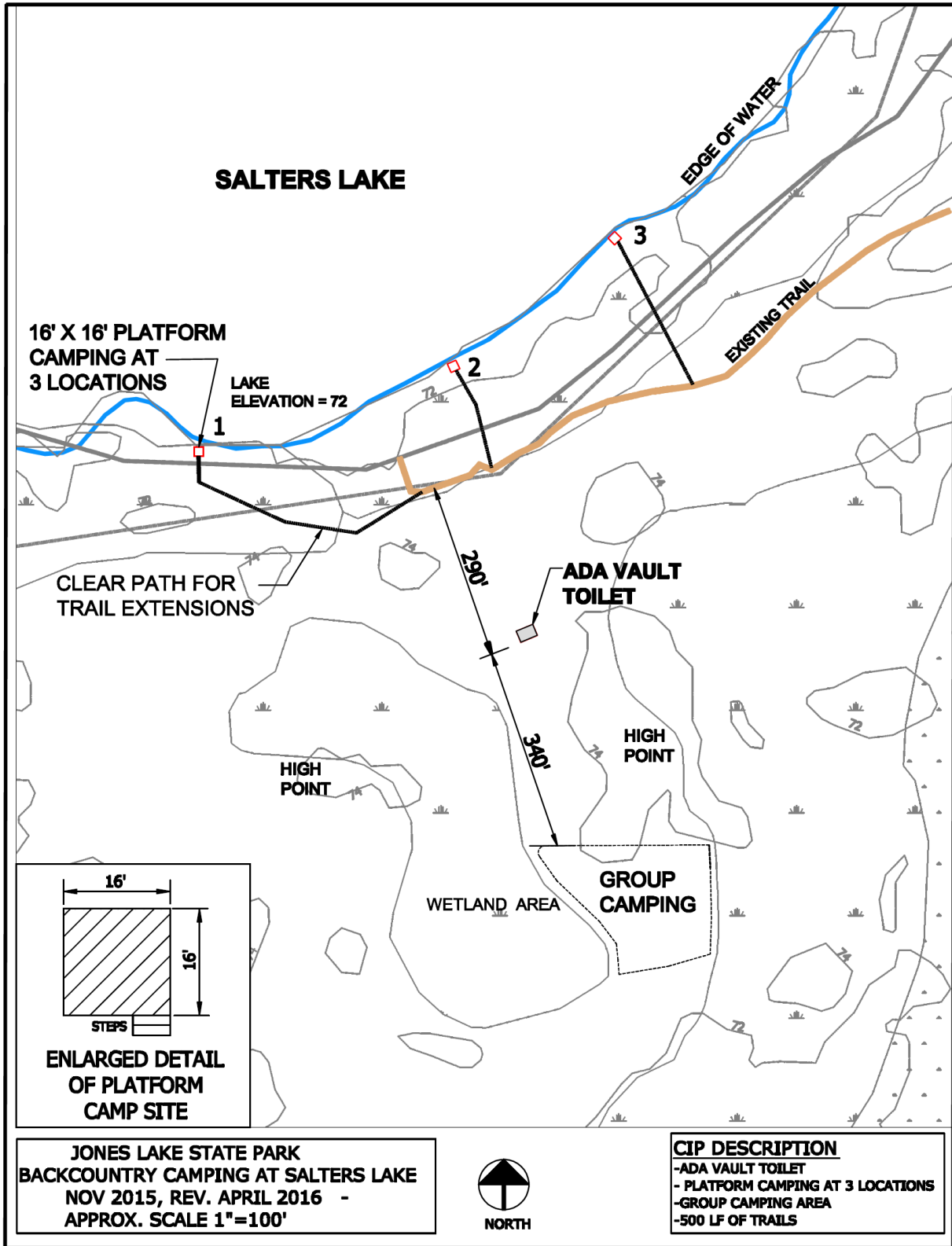


**PROPOSED MAINTENANCE AREA  
 JONES LAKE STATE PARK  
 FEB 2012 - APPROX. SCALE 1"=100'**

**CIP DESCRIPTION**

- BARRACK RENOVATIONS
- POLEBARN
- WAREHOUSE STORAGE

JONES LAKE STATE PARK  
 PROJECT # 5: BACK COUNTRY CAMPING AT SALTERS LAKE





PARK MAP  
JONES LAKE STATE PARK

