

shores, and national forests. Public participation in outdoor recreation has increased greatly in recent years, and in the years ahead there will be an even greater demand for recreational opportunities.

The concept of a National System of rivers is neither inconsistent nor incompatible with our concepts of park and recreational development. One of the great challenges facing us today is to make available to the public a broad spectrum of recreational opportunities. In our national recreational system, there really ought to be something for everybody.

The St. Croix River—and its main tributary, the Namekagon—were studied in detail by the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture as part of their coordinated, broad-scale study, initiated in 1963, of the need to preserve a nationwide system of scenic or wild rivers. The conclusion of the joint study was that the rivers were fully qualified for inclusion in the national system.

North from its confluence with the Mississippi for some 130 miles, the St. Croix River marks the boundary between Wisconsin and Minnesota. At a point near Riverside, Wisconsin, the St. Croix swings into Wisconsin and meanders in a northeasterly direction to its headwaters near Gordon, Wisconsin. Along its upper reaches, the St. Croix is joined by an equally beautiful river, the Namekagon.

The Upper St. Croix north of Taylors Falls, Minnesota, as well as its main tributary—the Namekagon—is an outdoorsman's paradise. There are many miles of riverbank covered with mixed hardwoods and conifer forests; along these stretches there is superb white water canoeing. Small mouthed bass and walleyed pike abound in these waters. Wildlife is abundant along the banks and adds an exciting dimension to a canoe trip along the river.

The lower St. Croix, south of Taylors Falls and St. Croix Falls, meanders through hills and gorges presenting some of the loveliest scenery in the Midwest. Timbered, gently sloping banks surround the river and its many narrow, winding sloughs. This area has already been developed to some extent; inclusion of this segment of the river in the National System would insure the protection of its scenic beauty and would develop it for broad recreational use by the public.

Based on plans developed by the Department of the Interior, the proposed St. Croix and Namekagon National Scenic River area would consist of about 85,000 acres of land and 21,000 acres of water, including 151 miles of the St. Croix River and 85 miles of the Namekagon River. Of the total land acreage, about 15,000 acres is in public ownership, including State and county forests and parks. Further, there are about 80 unsurveyed islands in the river which are in the public domain.

About 70 miles of the St. Croix River north of Taylors Falls has been owned for more than 40 years by Northern States Power Company. Northern States has not only maintained this stretch of the river in its natural state but also they have opened the area to the public for canoeing, camping and fishing. For their efforts, Northern States deserves the praise of all of us.

Over the years, Northern States has refused to sell or lease these lands or to exploit them in any way, and on numerous occasions in the past ten years, they have explored ways to preserve their holdings on the St. Croix in perpetuity for recreational uses. Northern States has, in the past, conferred with the Conservation Departments of both Wisconsin and Minnesota on how best to preserve these lands and cooperated fully with the joint Interior-Agriculture team in its study of the river.

Negotiations with the company are continuing in an effort to work out a suitable working agreement between the Federal government and Northern States Power Company to cover these valuable holdings. I am very pleased to see that private industry is both interested and willing to work with the Federal government in the development of public recreational lands. Such a partnership would represent a significant step forward in our efforts to develop quality public recreational lands and holds exciting promise for other such arrangements in the future.

On privately held land along the upper St. Croix and the Namekagon—other than that owned by Northern States—the Interior Department plans to acquire scenic and recreational easements which would cause as little disruption of the existing land use patterns as possible. On the lower St. Croix, the same recreational zoning technique that has worked so well at the Cape Cod National Seashore would be utilized. In the event that zoning does not meet the Secretary's standards, the acquisition of easements rather than purchase is planned.