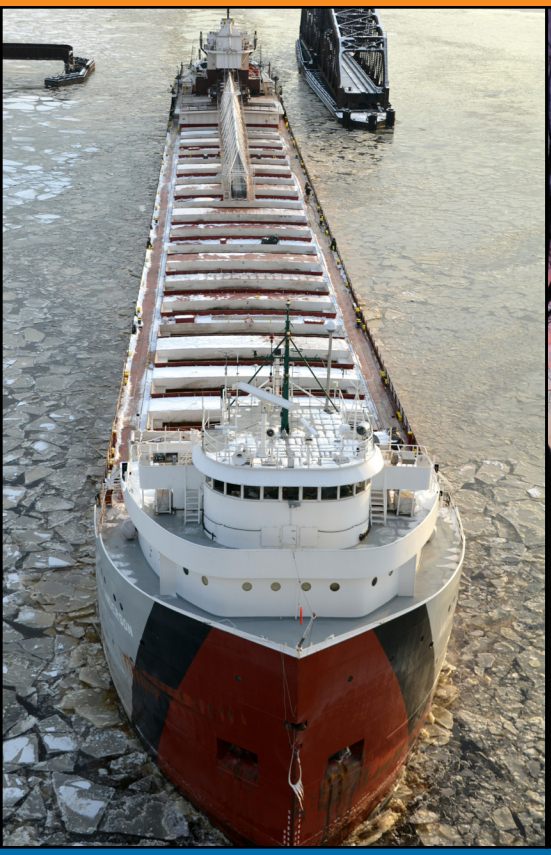


St. Louis River Area of Concern

2014 Progress Report

Prepared by the St. Louis River Alliance, a partner of the Area of Concern Coordination Team which includes:

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Funded by:

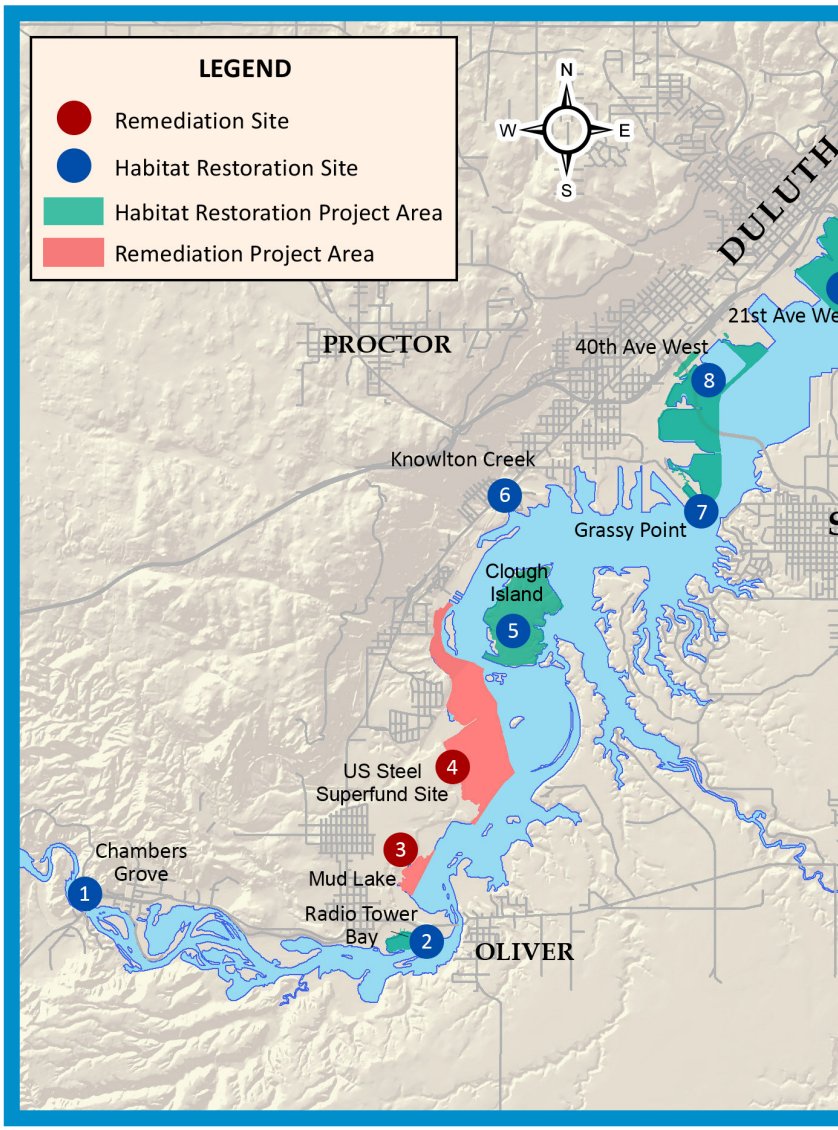
Area of Concern 2014 Highlights

Implementing the Remedial Action Plan

The St. Louis River Area of Concern Remedial Action Plan (2013) is a roadmap to remove nine impairments listed for the river. State, Tribal, and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and research institutions are working together to clean up contaminated areas and restore habitat that was lost due to historical impact; before regulations protected our water resources. The goal is to remove these impairments and delist the St. Louis River Area of Concern (AOC) by 2025.

Current projects in the St. Louis River AOC:

- Aquatic habitat restoration designs are being developed for Chambers Grove 1,Knowlton Creek 6, Grassy Point 7, 40th Ave W 8,21st Ave W 9, and Pickle Pond 11.
- Aquatic habitat is being restored at Radio Tower Bay 2 by removing wood waste from historic sawmill operations.
- Habitat on Clough Island 5 is being restored through conifer planting and invasive species control.
- A pilot project at 21st Ave W 9 is using clean dredge materials from the navigational channel to restore shallow bay habitat and soften shoreline for better fish habitat.
- Remediation projects are underway to characterize and clean up contaminated sediments in the estuary. Project sites include Mud Lake West 3, U.S. Steel Superfund Site 4, Crawford Creek 15, Howards Bay 10, and several other slips in the harbor.
- The Degradation of Aesthetics impairment will be the first to be submitted for removal in the St. Louis River AOC. Water quality improvements and better industry practices and regulations have helped to improve the beauty of the river.
- Be on the lookout for a new website coming in 2014 that will highlight the science and the stories of the St. Louis River Estuary. The website will also be an easy way to keep you better informed of the latest progress on the river.



Wild Rice Study

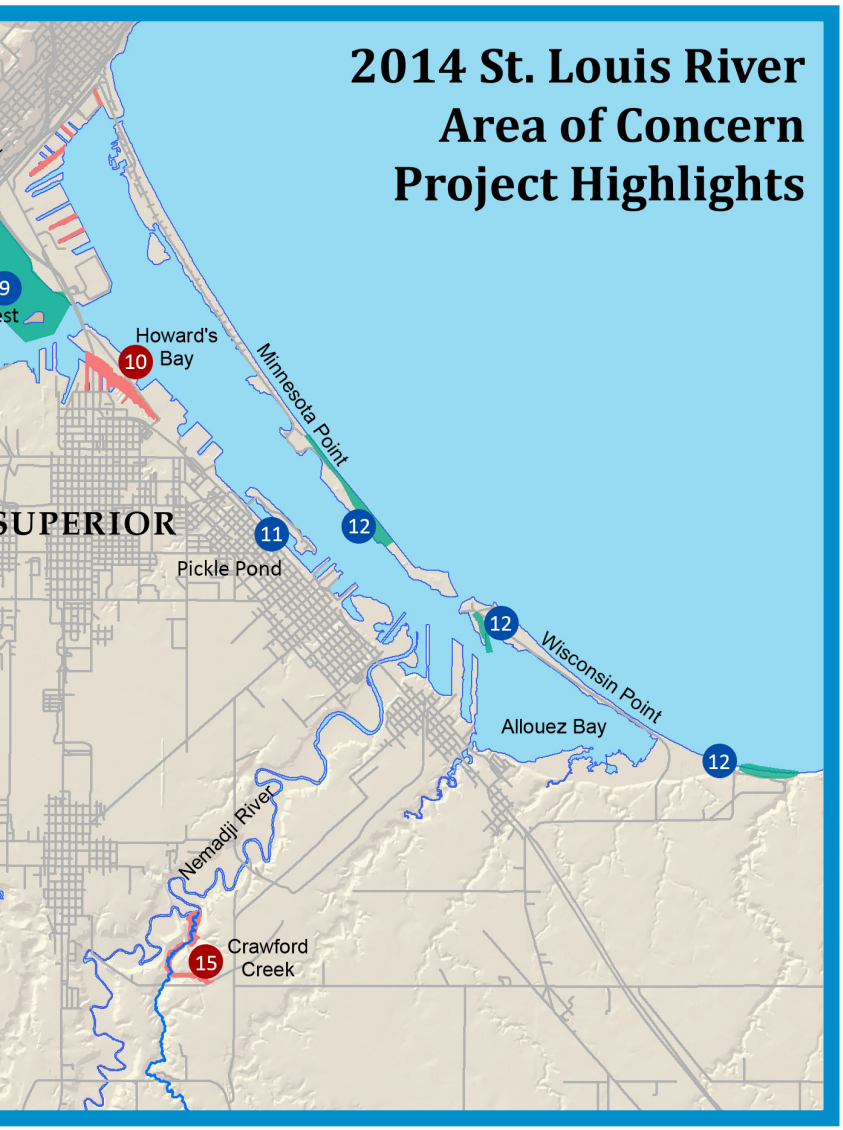
Historic information suggests that many of the wetlands in the estuary had once been home to large wild rice stands. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is leading a project to seek out the most suitable places for wild rice restoration. The study includes collecting information from past wild rice studies as well as gathering information about current conditions in the estuary. A team of professionals will collect data in the field this summer to identify the sites with the greatest potential for growing wild rice. In addition, a wild rice "cookbook" will be developed on how to prepare, seed, and maintain wild rice restoration sites in the estuary. The Minnesota Land Trust will use this information to reach the goal of restoring 150 acres of wild rice in the estuary by 2015.

Photo on left: Wild rice grows in a shallow bay on the St. Louis River.

Education & Habitat Restoration for the Return of the Piping Plover

The St. Louis River Alliance is conducting a five-year project to restore piping plover nesting habitat at beaches in the estuary. The Piping Plover is a critically endangered migratory shorebird that has not successfully nested in the Twin Ports in over 25 years. The project is focused on Minnesota Point and Wisconsin Point beaches 12 as well as a small wildlife refuge along Allouez Bay. Improvements to restore nesting habitat in these areas include invasive species control, debris cleanup, vegetation removal, installation of signs and temporary gull exclosures.

Education and outreach throughout the project has reached over 2000 citizens through local school presentations and public events. Volunteers are stepping up to help monitor beaches during the piping plover nesting season. The sighting of five piping plover in the past two years is encouraging and with continued efforts plovers will stay to nest soon! For more information or to volunteer, visit www.StLouisRiver.org



A male piping plover forages on Minnesota Point in 2013. Photo courtesy of Michael Furtman.

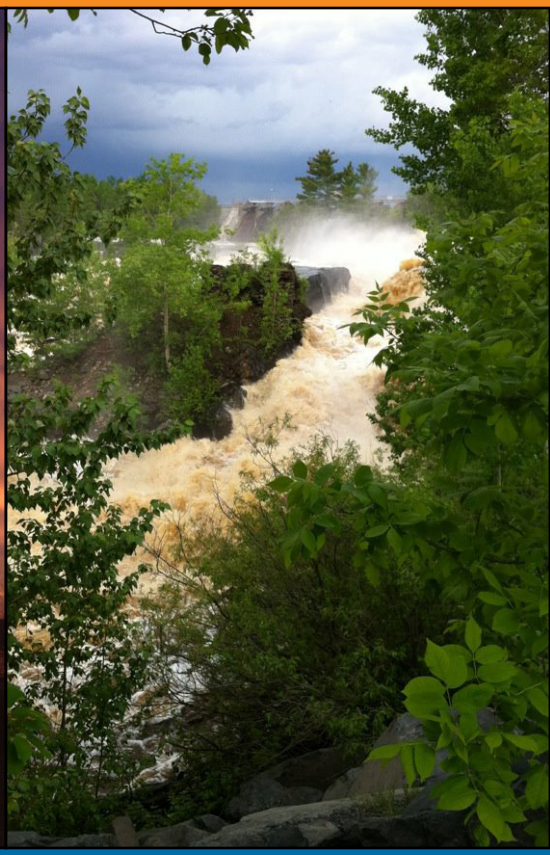
Paleolimnology Sampling

Paleolimnology is the science behind historic sediments in lakes and rivers. Scientists from the Natural Resources Research Institute will look at undisturbed sediment cores pulled from the bottom of the river. The layers of fossils, chemical composition, and sediments can show how the river has changed over time.

Water quality in the St. Louis River has been subject to human-induced environmental changes since settlement of the region approximately 300 years ago. Water quality during the industrial era was very poor due to the lack of wastewater treatment. This study will help provide a better understanding about water quality in the past, and improvements in water quality since the industrial era. The data are being collected and analyzed in 2014 with plans for preliminary results in 2015.

Photo on left: Core samples being taken at Duluth harbor 2013.





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City of Duluth
City of Superior
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Douglas County, Wisconsin
Duluth Seaway Port Authority
Lake Superior BiNational Program
Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve
Metropolitan Commission –Harbor Tech Advisory Committee
Minnesota Sea Grant
Minnesota Lake Superior Coastal Program
Minnesota Land Trust
Natural Resources Research Institute
St. Louis River Alliance
The Nature Conservancy
South St Louis Soil and Water Conservation District
University of Minnesota Duluth
US EPA Midcontinent Ecology Division
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Western Lake Superior Sanitary District
Wisconsin Coastal Program
Wisconsin Sea Grant
1854 Treaty Authority

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources

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