



The River Voice Issue No. 4 August 2011

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Upcoming Events

August 9, 7-9 p.m.

Upper Great Lakes Study

[Public Meeting](#)

Yellowjacket Union, UWS

1605 Catlin Ave.

Superior, WI

August 20, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

St. Louis River Alliance

[Annual Canoe Tour & Picnic](#)

Munger Landing

Duluth, MN

River Ruminations

From an elevation of 1,179 feet above sea level in Cloquet, the St. Louis River

It's summer and life on the river is in full swing. River environmental projects, however, are only now gearing up after the shutdown of the Minnesota government. The three-week hiatus interrupted progress on several administrative and on-the-ground and projects, including those happening in the 40th and 21st Avenue West areas and Radio Tower Bay.

We are glad the MN folks are back to work, and glad for the support of partners in WI and the federal government. Although some work was stalled, we still have plenty of stories to share in the *River Voice*.

If you have a story or image for the next issue, send it to Marie Zhuikov at the St. Louis River Alliance: mariez@stlouisriver.org. The next deadline is **Sept. 16**.

Little Fish, Big News Sturgeon Reproducing in St. Louis River

It's an exciting time for sturgeon in the St. Louis River. In mid-June, four young sturgeon were collected in an area below the Fond du Lac dam by tribal biologists. This is the first evidence of sturgeon reproduction in the river in many decades and the discovery earned space in the Twin Cities newspapers and the *Duluth News Tribune*.

drops 577 feet down to Lake Superior, which is 602 feet above sea level.

Lake Superior Magazine

Contributing Writers

Jane Anklam, West WI Land Trust
Ruth Oppedahl, Univ. WI Extension
Becky Sapper, Lake Superior NERR
Adele Yorde, Duluth Seaway Port Authority



Lake sturgeon, the type of sturgeon found in the St. Louis River and other Great Lakes river systems such as the Mississippi, St. Croix and Chippewa, were once very abundant. They were plentiful in the St. Louis River until the early 1900s. In addition to overharvesting, their populations declined from river pollution and dam construction.



One of the young sturgeon collected from the St. Louis River. Image courtesy of Brian Borkholder of the Fond du Lac Tribe.

Efforts to reestablish sturgeon in the St. Louis River began in 1983 with a sturgeon fingerling stocking program by the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources, which lasted until 2001. To improve sturgeon spawning habitat, rocks and boulders were placed downstream of the Fond du Lac Dam during 2009 by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and The Nature Conservancy.

Sturgeon recovery is tied to the recovery of the St. Louis River. The river is a designated Area of Concern (AOC). One of the issues associated with the St. Louis River AOC is degraded fish and wildlife populations. Progress to increase populations of native fish species such as the sturgeon will help address this issue.

There is no open season for lake sturgeon in the Wisconsin and Minnesota waters of the St. Louis River Estuary, so angling for them is prohibited. If you catch a sturgeon while fishing for other legal fish species, you should release it as quickly and gently as possible.

For more information, see the St. Louis River Alliance's new [sturgeon web page](#). The Alliance is also in the process of producing a brochure about sturgeon as part of a public education program supported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Hog Island Celebration Held June 27

The Hog Island remediation to restoration project has been a long time in coming. In June, the [Douglas County Land Conservation Department](#), [Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources](#) and [St. Louis River Alliance](#) celebrated the restoration work accomplished in the project area. Project funders were on hand from the [National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration](#) and the [Great Lakes Commission](#) to tour the site and meet with restoration partners.



WI Congressman Sean Duffy makes a point during the Hog Island Celebration ceremony.

The project included the removal of tons of contaminated sediment, invasive cattail control work, reseeded of wild rice and the installation of 20 woody fish habitat structures in Hog Island's Bay. On hand to celebrate this progress was Rep. Sean Duffy (WI) who praised the partnerships

committed to the preservation of Lake Superior.

The plan guiding the restoration is found [here](#).

Press coverage can be found at:

[Superior Telegram](#) (Superior, Wisconsin)

[WDIO Channel 10/13 ABC](#) video clip

[Northland's News Center](#) video clip

[Fox 21 News](#) video clip

Nemadji River Basin Project Protects Land, Earns Award



Image courtesy of the West Wisconsin Land Trust.

The Lake Superior Binational Program recognized Douglas County on July 17 for its "Outstanding Contributions to Protect and Restore the Lake Superior Basin;" specifically, the Nemadji River Basin project land purchase of 3,995 acres. The project provides permanent protection of riparian, flood plain wetland and boreal forest uplands for the Nemadji River Basin in Superior, Wisc.

In 2007, Wausau Timberlands was interested in selling the land as one parcel, and agreed to work with West Wisconsin Land Trust (WWLT) and The Conservation Fund (TCF) on public ownership.

Protection of the land is called for in the St. Louis River Habitat Plan. National, state and local conservation and natural resource documents stress the area's importance to the health of the St. Louis River system. Aside from water quality, the land itself supports unique habitat as indicated by the Wisconsin DNR's initiative to establish a state natural area there.

With assistance from WWLT and TCF, the Douglas County made application and was awarded a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program and the WDNR Stewardship Fund to purchase the property. The management plan calls for

restoration to a boreal forest landscape.

With the public stewardship dollars comes the assurance that the property is available for public use and enjoyment. Considering there is remarkable scenery, a long stretch of the North Country Trail, and a formidable paddling route gracing this fantastic "north country" property, enjoyment will come naturally.

Piping Plover Shorebird Recovery Gets Boost with Grant

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program awarded a grant of \$250,000 to the St. Louis River Alliance for a five-year project to restore piping plover nesting habitat to Wisconsin Point and the St. Louis River Estuary.

Piping plovers are one of the most endangered shorebirds in the world and have not been known to nest locally in over 25 years.

Fewer than 70 breeding pairs

exist in the Great Lakes, mostly in Michigan. The project supports the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's goals of restoring the population of plovers in the Great Lakes to 150 breeding pairs in hopes of removing it from the Threatened and Endangered Species List. The project will also help restore habitat and wildlife populations to the estuary as part of the process to have it delisted as a Great Lakes Area of Concern.

"This is a great opportunity for the piping plover," said Gerald Niemi, professor of biology at UMD and plover expert. "There is substantial potential habitat for the piping plover in this area, but management and protection of open sandy beach habitat from predators and human disturbance will be critical."

For more details, read the [news release](#).



A Great Lakes piping plover. Image courtesy of Alice Van Zoeren.

Our Port is Tops



Image courtesy of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority.

The Port of Duluth tied for first place honors with the Port of Mobile when the Railway Industrial Clearance Association (RICA) announced its rankings of the top 10 ports in North America.

In presenting its Port Service Awards, RICA recognized Duluth and its Clure Public Marine Terminal (this harbor's only general cargo terminal), for the quality of its facilities and overall service. The terminal, which covers 120 acres at the center of the Duluth-Superior harbor, is owned by the Duluth Seaway Port Authority and operated by Lake Superior Warehousing Co., Inc. LSWCI has earned a world-class reputation for the safe, efficient handling of dimensional and heavy-lift cargoes, most notably the million freight tons of wind turbine components handled since 2005.

See a [news release](#) about the accomplishment.

Annual Canoe Tour Date Set

Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 20 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. That's when the St. Louis River Alliance is holding its annual canoe tour and picnic. This year's event will explore Clough and Tallas Islands. It will start from the Munger Boat Landing at the end of Clyde Avenue in Smithville. See the event [web site](#) for more info.

River People News



The Lake Superior NERR has hired **Deanna Erickson** as its education coordinator. Deanna holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point in natural resource management and is completing a master's degree from the University of Minnesota Duluth in environmental education. She has worked as an educator and administrator in outdoor and

environmental education for the past 13 years, for organizations that include the Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, Student Conservation Association, The Four Corners School of Outdoor Education, The Whale Camp in New Brunswick, Canada and as the director of outdoor education at Pathfinder Ranch, a residential outdoor education program near Idyllwild, CA.

As the education coordinator, Deanna will plan, implement and evaluate the LSNERR education program through on-site and educational outreach activities and through the development of educational facilities including trails and exhibits. Deanna will work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other Research Reserves to collaborate on national estuary and coastal ecosystem science curriculum. Deanna will also be working closely with the community through advisory committees, education institutions and individuals to fulfill the Reserve's education objectives. Contact her at deanna.erickson@ces.uwex.edu or (715) 392-3141.



The LSNERR has hired **Dr. Shon Schooler** as its research coordinator. Dr. Schooler has a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. His master's degree and doctorate are from Oregon State University.

Shon's doctoral research included studying the impact of two

invasive plant species (purple loosestrife and reed canary grass), on wetland plant and animal communities; introduction and post-release monitoring of agents for biological control of purple loosestrife; modeling spread of biological control agents; and site selection and pre-release monitoring toward biological control of rush skeleton weed.

Between 1999-2000, Dr. Schooler worked for Earth Design Consultants, developing a stratified sampling program for assessing lamprey distributions in coastal catchments using GIS and multivariate analyses. In December 2003, Dr. Schooler moved to Australia to take up a postdoctoral position with Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) in Brisbane. In 2007, Dr. Schooler became a Research Scientist with CSIRO Entomology where he worked on effective, safe and sustainable methods to manage invasive aquatic plants in Australia.

As the research coordinator, Dr. Schooler will be responsible for the research program at the LSNERR. He will interact with advisory committees, research institutions and individuals to fulfill the research objectives of the reserve. In addition, he will serve as a liaison with the scientific community, promoting data utilization and acting as the primary contact for scientists performing research in the reserve. Dr. Schooler will collaborate with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other reserves on research initiatives across the NERR System. Contact him at (715) 392-3141.

The St. Louis River Alliance (SLRA) has hired several part-time staff members for the summer. [Kristi Heintz, Tom Deschenes and Jeff Clusiau](#) are performing stream monitoring tasks. Tom is a student at the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) in environmental studies. Jeff is a chemical engineering student at UMD. Tom and Jeff are also [GLISTEN](#) stewardship liaisons. GLISTEN is a program that incorporates stewardship goals and objectives into college work to provide students with opportunities to participate in service learning projects. The Western Lake Superior GLISTEN Cluster includes UMD, UWS, Lake Superior College and Northland College with several community organizations, such as the SLRA, Great Lakes Aquarium, and Community Action Duluth. This fall Jeff and Tom will be incorporating their summer work experiences into classroom learning. Kristi, who also works at Lake Superior College as a lab assistant and environmental coordinator is performing SLRA web site maintenance duties.

In Other News(letters)

Local filmmaker Wendy Grethen has produced a 38-minute video about the history of Lincoln Park. It focuses on the culture and industries of the area, but also touches on St. Louis River history. It includes interviews with six local people who have lived or had businesses in the neighborhood. Watch the video online at: <http://www.vimeo.com/23691137>.

Minnesota Sea Grant's "Seiche" newsletter recently mentioned a new [web site](#) devoted to water monitoring on Minnesota's Park Point. ParkPointBeach.org provides easy access to the latest rip current warnings and beach water quality status updates. Users can also sign up to receive email alerts about water quality for specific beaches in the estuary, around Duluth and the North Shore.

About Us

The St. Louis River Alliance is a nonprofit organization of citizens and groups working together to protect, restore and enhance the St. Louis River.

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