



The River Voice

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Spring has sprung. The ice is out and the birds are returning to the river. In addition to the wildlife, we humans have been active, too. Please enjoy reading about (almost) everything going on around the St. Louis River.

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 **July 22**.

Beauty and Fish Tumors - Addressing Two River Issues

The St. Louis River was listed as an Area of Concern because of nine issues that were identified in 1992. In a process to get the river delisted, two of these issues, also known as [Beneficial Use Impairments](#) are receiving attention from agencies in Wisconsin and Minnesota (the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the state departments of natural resources and Fond du Lac). These issues are fish tumors and deformities, and degradation of aesthetics (beauty). The MPCA has contracted the St. Louis River Alliance to facilitate agency and public meetings on the topics and, in a separate process, hired a consulting agency (Limnotech).

Work funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and

[In Other News\(letters\)](#)

Upcoming Events

June 4, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
[Lake Superior Watershed Festival](#)

Lake Superior College, Lower Parking Lot
2101 Trinity Rd., Duluth, MN
Contact: St. Louis River Alliance
slrcac@stlouisriver.org or (218) 733-9520

July 14-17
[Lake Superior Day](#)
or
<http://www.superiorforum.org>

River Ruminations

The St. Louis River was named by Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, an explorer to the region. He was awarded the Order of St. Louis by the king of France in 1749.

Lake Superior Magazine

Contributing Writers

Pat Collins, USFWS
Nelson French, MPCA
John Jereczek, MN DNR
Nancy Larson, WI DNR
Carrie Sanda, Douglas County



led by the USFWS has already begun on the fish tumor issue. In early May, nearly 20 people from the WI and MN DNRs, the USFWS, the USGS, the MN Land Trust and the Fond du Lac Reservation took to the river to catch 200 fish -- not for sport, but to sample them for deformities and tumors.

"This is the first time we've gotten a comprehensive sample of fish to look at for tumors," says Tracey Ledder, Wisconsin Area of Concern coordinator. "There was a study done in 1993 that included a comparatively small number of fish that did not find tumors."

The crews divided the AOC into four sections, catching about 50 fish (white suckers) in each for samples to be analyzed by the EPA and fish health expert Vicki Blazer of the USGS. The findings will be compared to similar fish data gathered from pristine Canadian sites as a reference.

The fish-catching effort was part of a larger study the USFWS is conducting on contaminants of emerging concern. For that effort, smallmouth bass were gathered as well as suckers around the 40th Ave West project area and the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District. The USFWS is interested in seeing what effects wastewater exposure has on the fish. They took samples of skin, blood, milt, eggs and gonads.

Public Response to Duluth Stream Corps Project is Encouraging

The crew from the Duluth Stream Corps Project has started plating trees and shrubs along local streams for habitat restoration purposes. Last month, the crew sent out mailings to streamside property owners and held neighborhood meetings about this two-year, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative-funded project.

"The response has been great," says Tim Beaster, Duluth Stream Corps project coordinator. "We've had 200 replies to our letter and dozens of



A white sucker awaits weighing and analysis in a study to assess the rate of fish tumors and deformities in the St. Louis River Area of Concern. Image courtesy of Tracey Ledder, Wisconsin DNR.

people showed up at the neighborhood meetings." The Stream Corps is in the process of conducting site evaluations on the properties. They've completed 90 evaluations and another 60 are scheduled. Many of the responses so far are from property owners along Miller and Tischer creeks. A project ground-breaking event is planned for this summer.

For more information on the Duluth Stream Corps, contact Tim Beaster with Community Action Duluth, (218) 726-1665 or tim@communityactionduluth.org.



Aaron Finke and Kurt Oelhafen conduct a site evaluation for the Duluth Stream Corps Project. Image courtesy of Community Action Duluth.

River Stewards Recognized

The St. Louis River Alliance presented its 16th Annual Environmental Stewardship Awards on April 5, 2011, at Spirit Mountain. These annual awards recognize the people, organizations, communities and institutions that have provided outstanding service toward restoring, protecting, and enhancing the St. Louis River and its watershed.

The following awards were presented:

Len Anderson Environmental Stewardship Award - Cindy Hagley, Minnesota Sea Grant, for her passionate leadership in educating and inspiring citizens through the Great Lakes Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence Program.

Sally Gibson Environmental Stewardship Awards - Frank Koshere and Dennis Pratt for their outstanding dedication and commitment to the protection of the St. Louis River.



Frank Koshere (center) receives the Sally Gibson Environmental Award for his dedication to the protection of the St. Louis River by Jack Ezell (left) and Will Munger (right).

Milton Pelletier Environmental Stewardship Awards - the Duluth Superior ECO Rotary and the W.J. McCabe Chapter of the Izaak Walton League. Duluth Superior Eco Rotary was recognized for exceptional commitment and involvement in community service projects that positively impact the St. Louis River watershed. The W.J. McCabe Chapter of Izaak Walton League was recognized for long-standing commitment to protecting the St. Louis River and educating the public about natural resources stewardship.

Willard Munger, Sr. Environmental Stewardship Awards -former Congressman James Oberstar and former Congressman David Obey for their distinguished leadership in Congress to restore and protect the St. Louis River.

Randy Marshall Environmental Stewardship Award -At Sara's Table Chester Creek Café for its efforts to protect the St. Louis River and Lake Superior through conscientious environmental business practices.

Special Recognition Environmental Stewardship Awards - The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and Bill Rogers, Bob Banks, Bob Cragin, and John Lindgren for their exceptional leadership and commitment toward the successful acquisition of Clough Island.

Congratulations to all the award-winners!

Online Survey Gathering Input on Access to Minnesota's Coast, Estuary

Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program has launched an online survey to gather data on what residents and visitors think about public access to Lake Superior and the adjoining St. Louis River Estuary. In the two weeks since its start, almost 500 people have shared their thoughts.

The 10-question survey, available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/coastaccess>, is open to anyone who lives, works, or plays along Minnesota's 189-mile coast and in the estuary. Responses are being collected through **June 17, 2011**. Take a moment now to have your voice heard.

With the survey, the Coastal Program hopes to get a snapshot of people's impressions of the quality and quantity of public access locations up and down the coast and in the estuary. In addition, the Coastal Program expects to learn about the visitation habits of Minnesota residents and tourists and the types of activities they participate in while in the area.

For more information about the survey or to receive a copy in an alternative format, contact Clinton Little at (218) 834-1446 or clinton.little@state.mn.us.

Keene Creek - Home for Wayward Shopping Carts



Just some of the 40 people who helped with the clean up (left to right): Tari Rayala, Matt Kohlin, Lee Kohlin, Pat Kohlin, Marie Zhuikov, Rick Gitar, Lori Gitar, Cory Gitar, Cheryl Gitar.

Over 40 volunteers braved rain and soggy feet to help with the St. Louis River Alliance's annual clean up event. This year, the beneficiary was Keene Creek in West Duluth. Command central was the Irving Community Center, where the volunteers registered before going into the field. They pulled 14 shopping carts from area businesses out of the creek and over two dozen tires. By the end, a 30-cubic-yard dumpster was full of refuse pulled from the creek, including a sign that said, "Good Americans Don't Litter."

Special thanks go to Northwoods Children's Services for providing excellent volunteer support. The Western Lake Superior Sanitary District provided garbage hauling and dumpster services.

River People News

John Jereczek recently accepted the position of Lake Superior Habitat Coordinator for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. This is a new, federally funded GLRI position developed to support coordination between the Minnesota DNR and the Lake Superior Binational Program. John will be working in Two Harbors, Minn. He had been the Lake Superior Binational Program Coordinator for the Wisconsin DNR. John will continue to work with the many partners involved in the Lake Wide Management Plan. His prior experience includes 10 years as an aquatic ecologist for Three Rivers Parks where he worked on stream hydrology, nutrient transport, limnology and wetland studies. He also worked at the Natural Resources Research Institute conducting GIS analysis. John can be reached at john.jereczek@state.mn.us or (218) 834-1444.



Frank Koshere retired from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in March after 34 years as an aquatic biologist. Frank's knowledge of aquatic plants and aquatic ecology lead him to become DNR's expert in aquatic plant management. He had a large hand in developing the program for aquatic plant management in the state and steered lake organizations to develop overall plans for their lakes. A speaker in much demand, Frank enjoyed sharing his knowledge with lake groups and the public.

In 1998, Frank moved to Superior after many years working in Spooner. He quickly took a special interest in the St. Louis River and became involved in the annual canoe trips by the St. Louis River Alliance and offered a popular annual kayak trip on the river sponsored by the Wisconsin Natural Resources Foundation. Frank has a special interest in history and enjoyed learning about the St. Louis from Jerome Blazevic and others.

One of Frank's many hobbies is photography. His photos are seen in calendars, presentations, and publications. On his last day at the DNR, he expressed how proud he was to have served the people of the state and their environment. Frank will be missed at the DNR. He is still in the area, where he and his wife are building a new house.



Carrie Sanda is the new Douglas County Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Coordinator. The position is funded by a grant through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to work on AIS projects throughout the county. The project goals are to control, eradicate and prevent AIS from spreading; prevent new AIS infestations; and provide education and outreach programs.

The last two years, Carrie worked for the City of Superior providing education and outreach on stormwater and water pollution prevention. Carrie has a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Minnesota Duluth and a master's degree in education from the University of Minnesota. She can be reached at csanda@uwsuper.edu or (715) 394-8525.

New Lake Superior-Lower St. Louis River Team Formed



The new MPCA Lake Superior-Lower St. Louis River Unit. Left to right: Jim Anklam, Carri Lohse-Hanson, Nelson French, Brittany Story and Marc Hershfield. Image courtesy of the MPCA.

With support from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has formed a new Lake Superior-Lower St. Louis River Unit. The new team will work with and complement the work of the Watershed Unit led by Pat Carey and the Remediation Unit led by Doug Beckwith. This will provide for an increased focus on working with the community to further efforts to protect and restore the St. Louis River Bay. The team includes unit supervisor Nelson French, Jim Anklam, Marc Hershfield, Carri Lohse-Hanson and Brittany Story (see image).

The team will work with agency partners and the community to identify and focus resources on restoring the St. Louis River to a healthy condition with the goal of delisting the nine impaired beneficial uses leading to eventual removal of the Area of Concern designation. This team will also provide leadership in addressing Lake Superior-wide and Great Lakes issues.

French and Anklam are new to the MPCA and together bring over 60 years of conservation experience to the team. Hershfield, Lohsi-Hanson and Story are current agency staff who have been assigned to the new unit.

In Other News(letters)

The May issue of Lake Superior Magazine featured, "[River Revival](#)," a

story about renewed life along a cleaner St. Louis River.

Local wildlife photographer and author Sparky Stensaas posted these [videos](#) of courting diving ducks on the St. Louis River this spring. He says, "I've really enjoyed watching...the crazy head throw and toylike buzz of the goldeneyes, the exotic crest and head shake of the hooded mergansers, the tail fanning of the common mergansers and the head pumping of the buffleheads."

The Stryker Bay project was featured by the Duluth Seaway Port Authority in the spring issue of "[North Star Port](#)." Look on pages 6-7.

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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