



The River Voice

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Upcoming Events

Gales of November - November 2-3,
2012 Various Locations

St. Louis River: Past, Present &
Future Informational Social -
November 14 5-7 pm Spirit
Mountain

Swinging Bridge Update

Masthead Photo: The St. Louis River flows over Swinging Bridge in Jay Cook Park during the 2012 Flood (photo by Allen Anway, SLRA member)

The flood also took out all public access points into the park closing it for the summer. In October the west entrance will re-open the park to the public. This winter the park services will begin to rebuild the bridge, which will include higher accessible standards.

For more history about the swinging bridge visit this DNR website:
http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/jay_cooke/swinging_bridge.html

City of Duluth Flood Recovery

The damage caused to the St. Louis River watershed in June 2012 was extensive. Although the City is still in the process of identifying and prioritizing Duluth's damage sites, we are also aggressively completing both permanent and temporary repairs before winter. Public safety is our main concern and we are working hard to ensure that streets are repaired and holes are filled before snow cover hides these hazards. We are also completing major repairs to our storm sewer system to ensure that it is able to handle the coming spring runoff.

To date we have identified approximately 600 damage sites. These sites range in size from an entire street or reach of stream, to a single manhole or driveway culvert. All sites have been inventoried, photographed, estimated, prioritized, assigned, and scheduled for temporary or permanent repair as appropriate.

Contributors

Contributing Writers

Julene Boe, St Louis River Alliance
Chris Kliest, City of Duluth
June Kallestad, NRRRI
Joel Hoffman

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BN Culvert over Kingsbury Creek
City of Duluth photo

Funding for these repairs is coming for a variety of sources. Although FEMA and the State of Minnesota are going to reimburse many repairs, the City of Duluth is funding much of the work ourselves and we are also pursuing several other funding options for repairs that are not covered by State and Federal dollars.

Although many repairs have already been completed there are still many more to finish in the coming months and years. The City of Duluth greatly appreciates the help of the St. Louis River Alliance and its members and is looking forward to working with you more in the future.

Piping Plover Outreach Activities

St. Louis River Alliance staff presented several outreach programs to youth and adults in August and September. This included putting on two sessions at the Duluth Children Museum's First Friday, two workshops at the Harvest Fest. In addition, the staff presented at two events the Hartley Nature Center. This included a three-hour lesson about piping plover to 6 and 7 year olds who were attending the bird day-camp. At these events, participants learned what piping plovers looks like, sound like, and where they go in the winter and summer months. These young participants also learned why this species is endangered and what they can do to help the efforts to increase the number of nesting pairs in the western end of Lake Superior. Hands-on activities including coloring a white baseball cap to make it look like the head of a piping plover. Below is the group of Hartley bird camp participants modeling their new caps that they got to keep.



Piping Plover Hats were a hit with kids.

St. Louis River's Past, Present and Future: Social Event

The St. Louis River Alliance is sponsoring the first of a series of informational socials on Wednesday, November 14 from 5-7pm in the Moosehead Lounge at Spirit Mountain. The purpose of these events will be to provide an opportunity to share information about the how far the river has come from the days when it was so polluted that fish could hardly survive. Hear how the river has rebounded and what still needs to be done to remove it as one of 43 Areas of Concern on the Great Lakes.

Pat Collins, the new regional manager for MN DNR Ecological and Water Resources Division will give a presentation on the past, present and future effort to restore fish and wildlife habitat on the St. Louis River. Pat has nearly 20 years of experience working with efforts to restore the St. Louis River.

Come enjoy the spectacular view of the St. Louis River and an evening of conversation. There will be a cash bar and hors d'oeuvres. This event is free and open to the public. RSVP is requested and appreciated. For more information call 733-9520 or email slrcac@stlouisriver.org.

Environmental Milestones

Rachael Carson's Silent Spring is 50 years old and the Clean Water Act is 40 years old. In September 1962, Rachel Carson's book Silent Spring was published. This led to the modern environment movement that led to

the passing of the Clean Water Act by Congress on October 18, 1972. Its goal was that that all waters be fishable and swimmable where possible.

In the past 40 years, great strides have been made in treating sewage, industrial waste, and other pollutants that damage water resources. The Clean Water Act remains a vital part of protecting Minnesota's rivers and lakes, which are essential to the state's economy and quality of life.

Throughout the month of October, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency will highlight the rippling effect of the Clean Water Act, taking a closer look at the changes in the Mississippi in the Twin Cities, the work of local communities to overcome water pollution and improvements on feedlots in Minnesota.

Visit the [MPCA website](#) for details.

MDA offering flood assistance grants to farmers in 15 counties

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for state flood assistance from farmers severely impacted by record rainfall and flooding in June 2012. Grants are available to eligible farmers in **Aitkin, Carlton, Cass, Cook, Crow Wing, Dakota, Goodhue, Itasca, Kandiyohi, Lake, Meeker, Pine, Rice, Sibley, and St. Louis** Counties.

Eligible losses may include, but are not limited to, feed and forage damages, damages to buildings or other agricultural structures, agricultural equipment losses, organic and specialty crop losses, and other related farm or ranch damages and expenditures. Expenses for clean-up and debris removal are also eligible.

The application form can be found on the MDA website at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/disaster/floodgrant.aspx>. Applications must be postmarked by October 24, 2012. The applications will be reviewed and audited by MDA staff, with funds expected to be delivered in January.

While this flood assistance may not cover all losses, it should help in the recovery and rebuilding process. Due to limited funds and uncertainty about the number of applications, MDA cannot estimate the level of reimbursement for individual applicants.

For more information about the program, contact MDA's Minnesota Farmer Assistance Network at 1-877-898-6326.

Predicting Plant Growth in the St. Louis River Estuary by June Kallestad, NRRI

There's a place in the St. Louis River Estuary some call "Coffee Ground Flats" because the bottom of the aquatic ecosystem is covered with a deep layer of century old wood chips. In the 1800s thriving sawmill owners used the estuary as a convenient place to dispose of wood waste.

Today we're trying to reverse the damage from that and other development practices that have made some areas of the estuary unsuitable for marine life. UMD's Natural Resources Research Institute is putting their computer modeling talents to work to help the cause. Funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NRRI scientists are generating models to predict where aquatic vegetation will regrow if certain restoration practices are applied. If the plants come back, so will the bugs and the fish and the birds... the goal is remediation to restoration.

NRRI researchers have collected data at former industrial sites at 21st and 40th Avenue West. Their survey includes plants, bugs and birds currently living there, as well as the area's underwater topography and wave energy. A variety of computer simulated islands will be modeled to predict if large scale engineering in the area of concern will help break up the wave action and allow more plants to grow.

"This will give the planners an idea of what to expect rather than just guessing," George Host, NRRI GIS Lab Director, explained. "It adds solid science to the decision making process."

2012 River Tour Emphasizes Economic Benefits of the St. Louis River

In September, over 170 local residents, business and community leaders along with resource managers were together on a tour of the St. Louis River. During this cruise, speakers presented information about past, present and future impacts that the river has had and will have in the area.

The emphasis was on the economic impact from the port activities as well as from large amounts of federal and state funding that have been invested to clean up and restore the river. These improvements have led to improved conditions for fish, which has led to better fishing. Participants learned that people are now coming for all over the country to fish for muskies. There is still much to be done to move the river from being an Area of Concern to an Area of Recovery.



River Tour. Photo by Kathleen Gates

At the end of the tour, Julene Boe, St Louis River Alliance, gave all participants two take-home assignments: Seek ways to connect to the river and share with others what they learned about river on the tour.

Speakers included; Duluth Mayor Don Ness, Bob Browne, Superior City Council; WI Rep Nick Milroy, Dr. Tony Barrett, College of St Scholastica, Keith Okeson, Muskies Inc; Tony Cuneo, A.H. Zeppa Foundation; Jim Sharrow, Duluth Port Authority, Nelson French, MPCA; Nancy Larson, WDNR; and Lisa Anglos, MDNR.

The tour was sponsored by the St Louis River Alliance, funded in part by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and with a contribution from the LimnoTech.

NOAA Web-based Economic Tools Available

Economists with NOAA report that in 2009, 273,410 people were employed in businesses that depend on Great Lakes resources, earning \$6.9 billion in wages and producing \$14.5 billion in goods and services. The findings are available through NOAA's Economics: National Ocean Watch (ENOW) website at www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/data/enow/.

The ENOW data set provides unique insights into what drives the economies that depend on the ocean and Great Lakes and how they relate to the overall economy. The information contained in the ENOW data set can help key stakeholders make more informed decisions and help them achieve balance between progress and preservation.

The ENOW dataset includes six economic sectors: living resources (e.g., fishing and seafood markets), marine construction, marine transportation, offshore mineral extraction (e.g., oil and gas exploration), ship and boat building, and tourism and recreation. Four indicators measure each sector: employment, gross domestic product, wages, and the number of business establishments.

Three ENOW tools include:

[Coastal County Snapshots](#) – Users select a coastal county of interest and this tool does the rest, providing fact sheets with charts and graphs explaining jobs by sector, average wage per employee, and other findings. Choose the "Ocean Jobs" or "Wetland Benefits" snapshots to see ENOW data.

[Economic Infographics](#) – This tool showcases vivid graphics and summaries of the ocean or Great Lakes economy broken out by coastal region, state, and the entire U.S. Also included is a [NOAA national report](#) on ENOW data findings.

[ENOW Explorer](#) - This tool allows users to visualize and interact with the data on a more detailed level.

Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detection Research in the St Louis River by Joel Hoffman, EPA Mid-Continent Eco Div.

Scientists with the US Environmental Protection Agency's Mid-Continent Ecology Division in Duluth are working to develop efficient strategies for early detection of aquatic non-native species in the Great Lakes. Since 2005, they have been using the Duluth-Superior harbor as a testing ground for their research. To date, the research has focused on early detection of non-native fish and benthic invertebrates (aka bottom-dwelling bugs) using traditional (morphological) identification of species.

This past summer, research continued with two new areas of inquiry. First, with EPA scientists in Cincinnati, they are advancing DNA techniques for molecular taxonomy and community-level species identification. Second, they are evaluating the use of fish larvae for early detection of non-native fishes.

To support this research, two major surveys occurred in the harbor this past summer. During late-April to early July (i.e., periodically throughout the major spawning period), about 150 fish larvae samples were taken from across the harbor using a variety of sampling equipment: a tucker trawl, a neuston net, a larval fish beach seine, and light traps. Also, during August and September, about 120 benthic invertebrate samples were taken across the harbor. Again, samples were obtained using a variety of equipment: a PONAR grab, a benthic sled, hester-dendy colonization plates, and a sweep net.



Sampling with a larval beach seine near Howard's Bay

Past work in the Duluth-Superior harbor has demonstrated there are a substantial number of non-native species - some widespread, some only few in number - but it will take several months before the current status of the harbor is known. This is because both larval fish and benthic invertebrate samples require sorted and identifying in the laboratory with the aid of microscope, which takes some time.

Inquiries regarding this research can be directed towards Jack Kelly (kelly.johnr@epa.gov), Joel Hoffman (hoffman.joel@epa.gov), or Anett Trebitz (trebitz.anett@epa.gov).

Gales of November event to be held for 25th year

The 25th annual Gales of November is the Lake Superior Marine Museum Association's annual maritime conference and fundraiser will be held November 2 & 3 at various locations. The event will feature special tour options, maritime related educational breakout presentations, a trade show, an interactive "maritime activities area," a silent auction, and an opportunity to win the summer 2013 Cruise of a Lifetime raffle on the 1,000-foot *Edwin H. Gott*. education breakout sessions and a trade show. Social activities will include two luncheons and a Opening gala reception.

Gales of November Keynote speakers will be:

Nov 2: Bob Krumenaker, National Park Service Superintendent at the Apostle Islands, will present "Managing the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: A Behind the Scenes Look at the Challenges of Maintaining Maritime Heritage."

Nov 3: Dr. James Delgado, Director of Maritime Heritage, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA,) presenting "The Great Museum Beneath the Seas".

Tickets to Gales of November are required. Details and registration information can be found at www.LSMMA.com or call 218 727-2497.

River People News

WI Dept of Natural Resources:

Nancy Larson began her new position as the Wisconsin DNR's Northern Region Water Leader at the end of August. She now manages WDNR water programs in the northern 18 counties of the state. These programs include fisheries, drinking water, water resources and Lake Superior programs, wastewater, non-point and storm water, waterway and wetland permits. Nancy was the Lake Superior basin water team leader for 4 years before taking this promotion. She started at the WDNR 23 years ago, with her first assignment as the St. Louis River Remedial Action Plan coordinator for Wisconsin. Nancy looks forward to continuing to support the great work on the St. Louis River and Lake Superior. She will continue to have her office in Ashland where she can be reached at 715/685-2913 or nancyj.larson@wisconsin.gov.

MN Dept of Natural Resources:

Bob Leibfried, MN DNR's Regional Manager for Ecological and Water Resources in Grand Rapids is retiring on October 1st.

Pat Collins has been chosen to be Bob Leibfried's his replacement. Pat started with the DNR in 1993 and has had diverse experiences in ecological and water resource management and is well connected with a diverse set of partners in helping DNR and others manage our natural resources more sustainably.

Pat has served as the manager of Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program. For the past two years he has been working for the US Fish & Wildlife Service in the St Louis River estuary through an Interagency Personnel Agreement between the USFWS and the Minnesota DNR. Pat recently reflected on this two-year assignment, "It has been a great opportunity to focus my attention on a place that is incredibly important to the health and well being of our region, both biologically and

economically. It is also a place that has a lot of importance to me personally. It has been gratifying to be part of so many exciting things happening here."

Ruth Oppedahl left her position as Natural Resources Educator in August for the WI Extension Service to become the Executive Director of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin. In an email with this news, she said, "It will be very hard to leave this area, but exciting to have a great opportunity to support natural resources in our state. I have loved my fourteen years by Lake Superior, and will miss all the great partnerships we have had in the Lake Superior Basin." The Natural Resources Foundation (NRF) raises money for rare and endangered species, State Natural Areas, the Wisconsin Master Naturalist program and other wonderful initiatives. NRF helps connect people with nature and offers over one hundred field trips around Wisconsin. NRF also provides endowment fund management for local conservation organizations.

Become a Member

The St. Louis River Alliance is a member-based organization made up of citizens, business and government members working together to protect, restore and enhance the St. Louis River. Members can participate in special events and programs. For more information, visit our website: www.stlouisriver.org

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