



## *The River Voice*

Issue 16

March/April 2015

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### Upcoming Events

St. Louis River Summit  
March 31 - April 1  
UW Superior Yellowjacket  
Union  
Superior, WI (preregistration  
required)

River Talks  
St. Louis River in Your Own  
Words  
March 31st 7:30 pm

## SLRA Prepares for the Return of the Piping Plover

The St. Louis River Alliance is excited for the migration season of the critically endangered shorebird, the piping plover! SLRA is continuing work on habitat restoration and education to create a safe place for the piping plover to nest on Wisconsin and Minnesota Point beaches, supported by a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.



Piping Plover and Chick- USFWS Photo

Last year, two different piping plover were spotted visiting Shafer beach and one on Minnesota point. The birds have not nested here since the 1980's due to loss of habitat, predation, and disturbances by humans and their pets. Extensive work was done

NERR Learning Center,  
Barker's Island

SLRA Stewardship Awards,  
April 16th 6:30 pm  
Superior Public Library

### Contributors

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WIDNR

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Wisconsin Sea Grant

Cover Photo Credit:  
"Spring Break Up on the River"  
by Maury Aaseng

**The SLRA is grateful to the  
Duluth Superior Area  
Foundation for helping to make  
this newsletter possible.**

### SLRA River Partners

We thank our new, valued  
River Partners for their support  
of SLRA!

Hartel's/DBJ Disposal  
Companies

LHB/Duluth Superior  
Community Area Foundation

United Northern Sportsmen



to restore habitat on Wisconsin point (Shafer Beach) last year in partnership with USFWS, Wisconsin DNR, Douglas County and the City of Superior.

From April 15-June 15, the road leading to Shafer beach and Dutchman's Creek entry on Wisconsin Point will be closed to protect the area from excessive foot traffic and loose pets during nesting season. This decision was made by Douglas County, City of Superior and the University of WI Superior to keep this area safe for the birds during the very critical period when piping plover look for a safe place to build their nests on the beach.

Data collected by our monitors over the last 4 years shows that piping plover stop regularly on the beaches but have not stayed to nest. Disturbances were present on the beach 85% of the time monitored, including loose dogs, human traffic, bonfires, fireworks, and camping on the beach. The road closure during this short time will help give the vulnerable birds the added security needed to find a safe place to nest. The gate will be installed early this spring with educational signs. Beachgoers can still access to Wisconsin Point via Wisconsin Point Road.

Great Lakes Piping Plover are listed as critically endangered by the federal government. There are currently only 70 nesting pairs in all of the Great Lakes, and none in the Twin Ports area. The St. Louis River Alliance, USFW, Douglas County, City of Superior, Wisconsin and Minnesota DNR's, city of Duluth are all working together to provide a safe, viable nesting area to increase the chances that this rare shorebird does not go extinct.



SLRA has also recently created a fun new hat depicting the Piping Plover to help spread the word; they are available at our office for \$15; stop on by or get in touch at the info below.

For more information on how you can help, including becoming a volunteer piping plover monitor, please contact Kris at 218-733-9520 or kris@stlouisriver.org.

## Reel in and Recycle: Monofilament Recycling Program to begin

The SLRA is preparing to launch a monofilament fishing line recycling campaign along the St. Louis River Estuary. As part of our mission of fostering stewardship of the river and facilitating collaboration, the SLRA is coordinating the installation of monofilament recycling bins to safely collect, track and recycle discarded monofilament line.



Monofilament line poses a threat to fish & wildlife

Bin. MI Sea Grant Photo. and is harmful to the environment. Monofilament takes ~600 years to decompose and can cause damage to boats due to prop entanglement. Once collected, the monofilament line will be shipped to the Berkeley Conservation Institute in Iowa, where it will be melted and re-used to create fish habitat structures and fishing tackle boxes. The main objectives of the program are to:

(1) increase awareness about the harmful effects of monofilament line to fish & wildlife; (2) decrease the amount of monofilament entering the St. Louis River Estuary and Lake Superior; and (3) to increase and foster stewardship of the river/estuary. The SLRA is planning on having several bins installed before the fishing openers at selected MN & WI boat ramps and marinas along the St. Louis River Estuary.

Recycling bins will be clearly marked with educational signage. Special thanks to the cities of Duluth and Superior, MN & WI DNR's, local marinas, businesses and community organizations for their help with this worthwhile project. For more information about this program please contact Jill DiDomenico at [jill.plover@gmail.com](mailto:jill.plover@gmail.com) or 218 733-9520.



## 20th Annual Stewardship Awards Call for Nominations

SLRA is seeking nominations for this year's Environmental Stewardship Awards. These annual awards recognize individuals, organizations, businesses, schools, and institutions that have provided outstanding service toward restoring, protecting, and enhancing the St. Louis River and its watersheds.

Nomination forms can be found on the website site, [www.Stlouisriver.org](http://www.Stlouisriver.org), or by emailing kris@stlouisriver.org to request one. The deadline for submitting nominations is Tuesday, March 31, 2015. (Hurry! A couple days late is likely okay for good ideas.)

The awards will be presented at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Environment Stewardship Awards Ceremony to be held on Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm at the Superior Public Library.

## Upcoming River Events

### **The River Talks**

Grab a mug of coffee or maybe a glass of beer and learn about the St. Louis River Estuary at the same time. Wisconsin Sea Grant and the Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve are starting the second year of informal, science café-type evening talks about the estuary.

#### *Special Bonus Talk Opportunity:*

Mar. 31, 2015 -- The St. Louis River in Your own Words: Results from NOAA's Stakeholder Engagement Interviews in the St. Louis River Estuary, 7:30 p.m., Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve Learning Center, 3 Marina Dr., Barker's Island, Superior, WI For more information, visit the WI [Sea Grant Website](#).



## Road Sand collection sites begin

Decades ago, it was considered good practice to sweep excess spring road salt, sand, and debris into the streets for the sweeper to pick up. Today, we are much more mindful of the impact that our storm sewers have on our sixteen trout streams, the St. Louis River, and Lake Superior. We make every effort to eliminate loose debris and grit from hard surfaces such as streets and parking lots because we know how quickly it can run off into the storm sewer and into receiving waters.

Each spring, City of Duluth stormwater staff place road sand collection sites around the city. These sites are intended to give the citizens an environmentally friendly option for disposal of the road salt and sand from their sidewalks and boulevards other than sweeping it into the streets.

The city has placed four roll-off containers at popular locations across the city. These are: Chester Park, Wheeler field, Piedmont

community club, and the Duluth Heights community club. These containers will remain in place through the month of April and into early May. They are intended for disposal of small, homeowner-level quantities of road sand and salt from sidewalks and boulevards. They are not dumpsites for brush and debris. Please contact Program Coordinator Chris Kleist at 218-730-4063 or ckleist@duluthmn.gov for more information.

## Lincoln Park Shines partnership encourages energy conservation

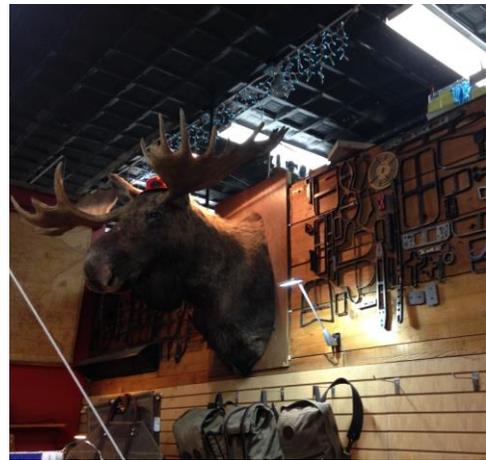


Bent Paddle Brewing Kegs

A new partnership has begun in the Lincoln Park neighborhood to help local businesses develop plans and designs for projects that save energy and water and include solar technologies. "Lincoln Park Shines" is a

partnership between UMD Engineering students (Civil and Mechanical), Ecolibrium3, Lincoln Park Businesses, Minnesota Power and Comfort Systems.

Exploring energy and water efficiency projects could help these businesses save money in the long term, and also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and resource consumption near the St. Louis River. The students are gaining real-world experience and hands-on training to assist



Frost River Moose

businesses in their energy efficiency and sustainability efforts. Businesses include: Frost River, Duluth Grill, Lake Superior Brewing, Bend Paddle Brewing, Park State Bank and the Community Solar Garden demonstration project.



Students, Staff and Duluth Grill staff

The student groups participated in site assessments with utilities, and are now writing up plans to present to the businesses at the end of April.

## River People

The Wisconsin DNR has welcomed two new fisheries biologists to the Superior Service Center, where they will be working on a new survey of walleyes in the St. Louis River and other projects.



Kirk Olson is a new limited term fisheries biologist. He will be assisting biologists in Superior and Brule with fish sampling, data analysis and report writing. Since 2005, Kirk has worked as a for several natural resource management agencies, including the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe,

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Sawyer County Land and Water Conservation, and the Yakama Nation Tribe. Kirk holds a Bachelor's of Science from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point in Fisheries and Masters of Science from the University of Minnesota Duluth.



Aaron Nelson is a Fisheries Technician-Advanced and is excited to be back to a familiar area where he will have an opportunity to work on the Lake Superior tributary streams where his interest in all things trout related took hold. He is a 2002 graduate of Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. He worked for nearly a decade in Rhinelander and Woodruff as a Fisheries Technician LTE for Fisheries

Management and Water Resources conducting fish surveys of area streams and lakes. Away from work, he is an avid fly angler, fly tyer, and rod builder and uses fly tackle almost exclusively to pursue a wide range of fish species from brook trout to muskies.

## 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](http://www.stlouisriver.org)

