



DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

The St. Louis River Restoration Initiative

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Presented to the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
May 22, 2024



Photo by [Tim Beaulier](#)



The St. Louis River
flows 195 mi,
draining a 3,584
mi² watershed

The St. Louis River Estuary

- 11,000 acre coastal marsh
- 43 species of native fish
- 159 species of birds
- 43 species of greatest conservation need.



Gitchigami-ziibi

“the center of all good things”

Chief Biauswah (Bayaaswaa, “Dry One”), 1720-1825

The St. Louis River Restoration Initiative

St. Louis River Restoration Initiative Objectives:

- Restore legacy industrial sites
- Recover “lost” populations including Lake sturgeon, muskie, common tern & piping plover
- Support Lake Superior fish populations
- Improve the state's most diverse sport fish assemblage
- Enhance a globally “Important Bird Area”
- Improve access for all



The St. Louis River Restoration Initiative

How we began



**Where we
are today**

**Where we
are heading**

Legacy Impacts



Four coordinating agencies:



Others provide administrative, technical, and outreach support

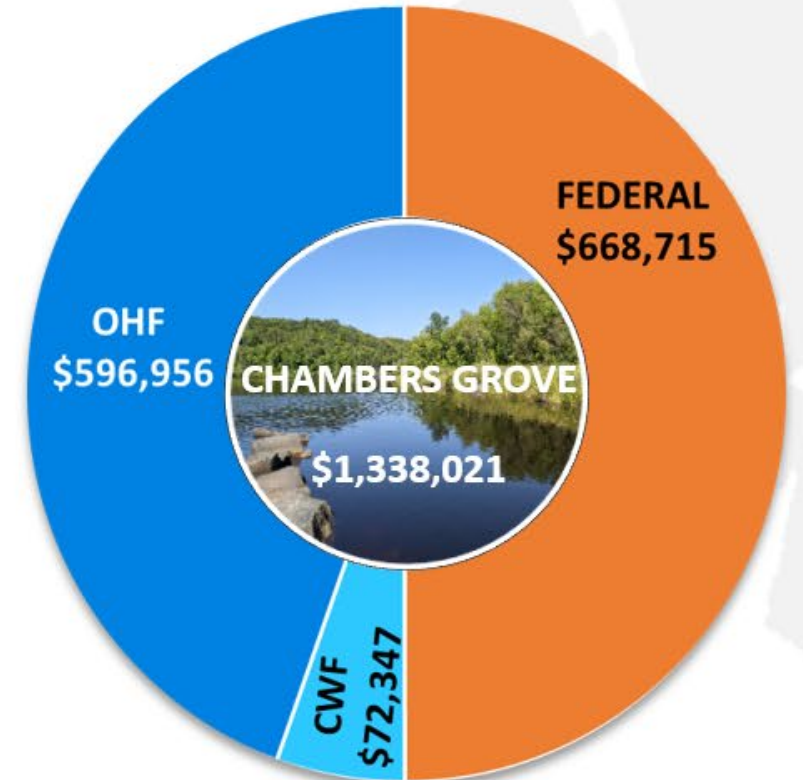
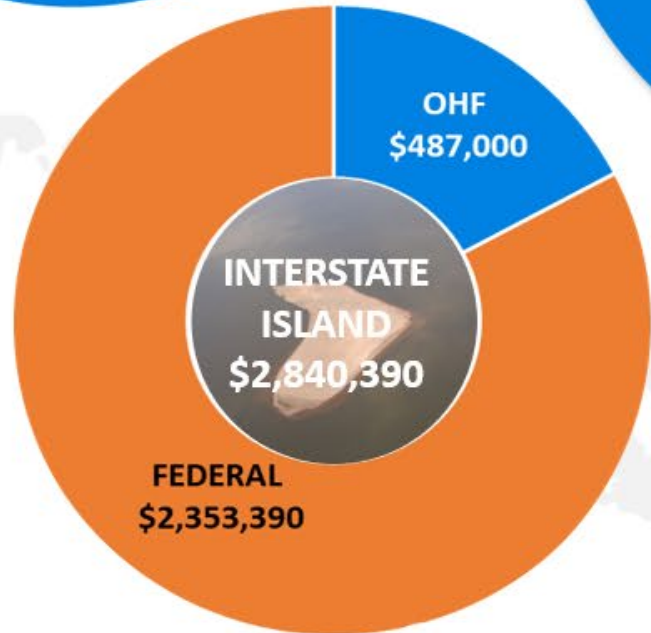
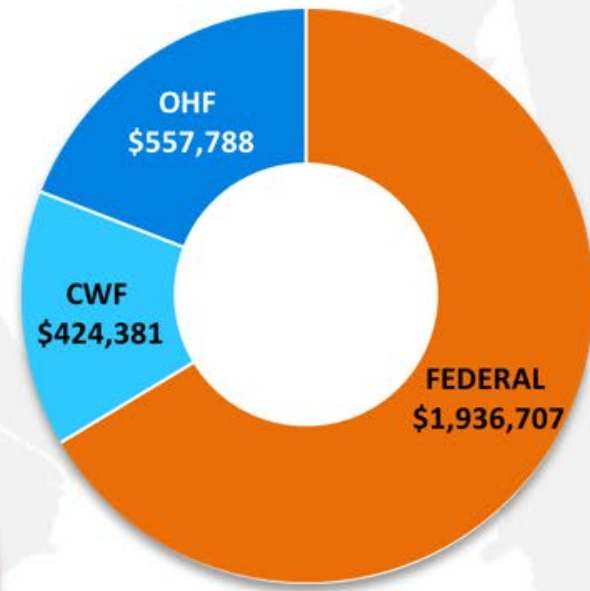
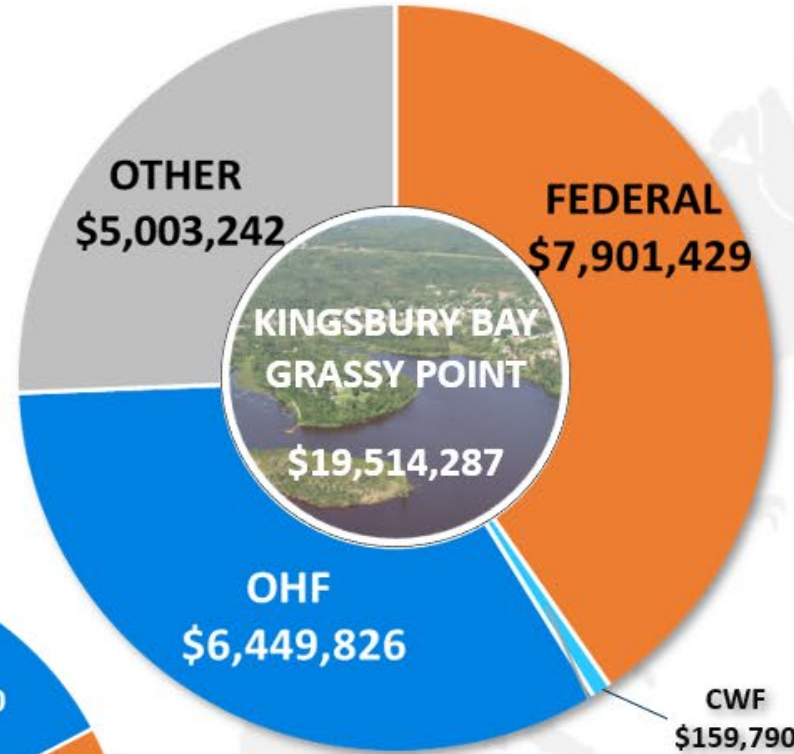
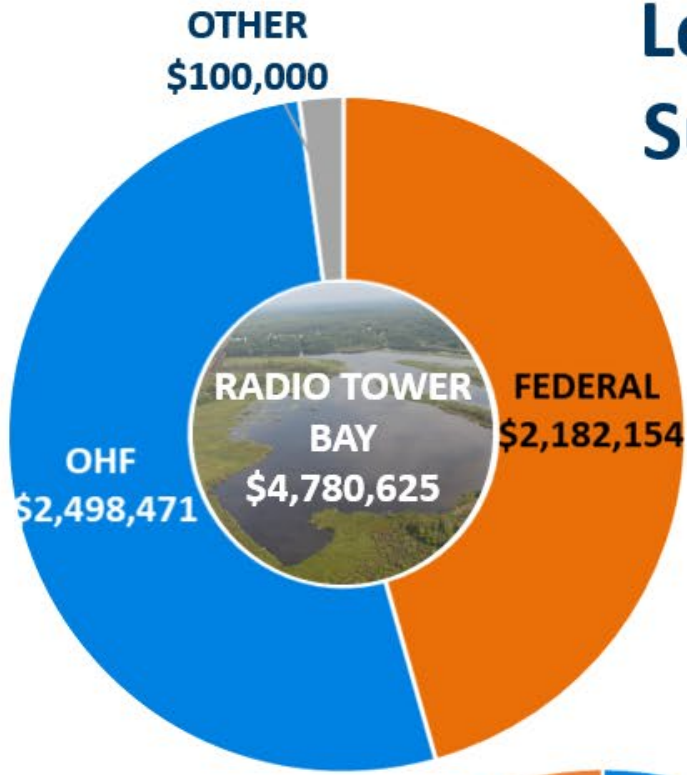


The St. Louis River is one of 43
“Areas of Concern”

St. Louis River Restoration Initiative Purpose



Leveraging Support for the AOC

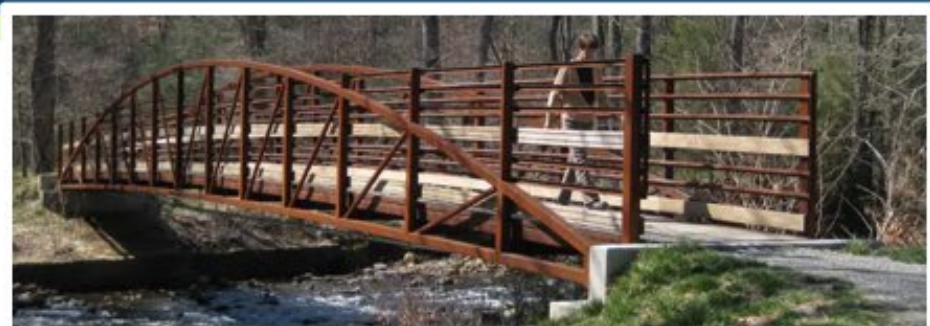


Status of Currently Funded Projects (ML2019-ML2023)



PHASE 3 (2024)

- Install trail bridge
- Complete connection!



Current work: Perch Lake 2022-2024



PHASE 2 (2023-24)

- Install culvert
- Improve connectivity
- Increase circulation
- Restore access

Leverage Available:
GLRI (EPA)

Photo Credit: Sam Greer

Current work: Mud Lake

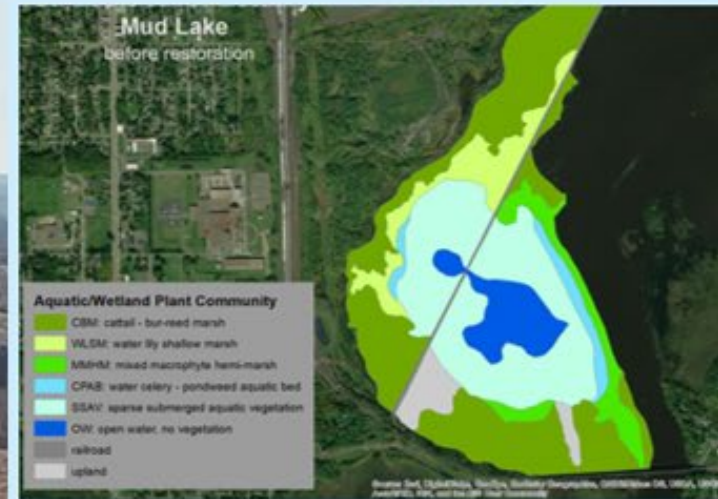
Construction estimate: 2025-2026



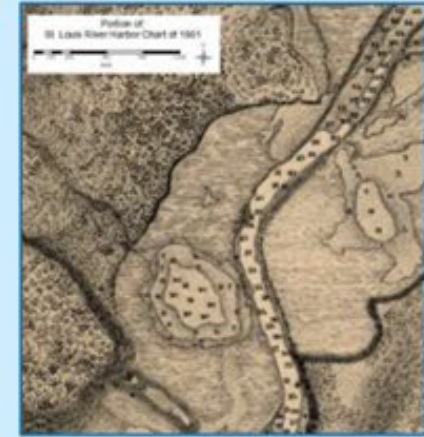
GOAL: Restore hydrologic connection at and diversify habitat

Leverage Available:

- GLRI (EPA)
- State bonding funds



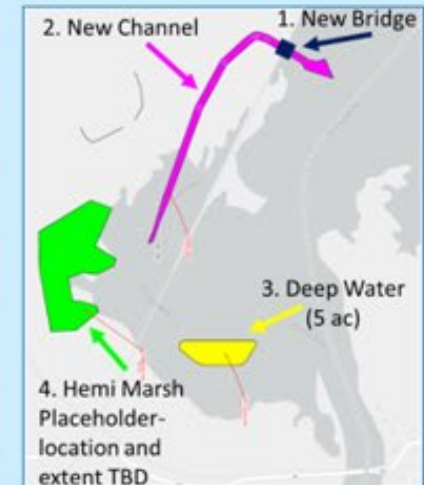
BASELINE VEGETATION SURVEY



HISTORIC (1861) CONDITIONS



DISSOLVED OXYGEN & GEOTECHNICAL DATA COLLECTION



30% DESIGN ELEMENTS

Current work: Kingsbury Bay Watershed *Substantially Complete Spring 2024*

GOAL: Restore habitat and reduce sediment delivery to Kingsbury Bay

- Restored 7 stream reaches totaling 2600 ft/5.4 acres
- Reduced sediment delivery by an estimated 429 tons/year
- Leveraged funds from a Superfund NRDA settlement




Current work: Forested Avian Habitat *336 acres In progress, or completed*

Duluth Stream Corps



GOAL: Improve resiliency in high quality coastal forests

- 20 species native shrubs & trees
 - Focus on benefiting birds, Green/Black Ash advance replacement
 - Leverage: GLRI (USDA-USFS), Superfund NRDA settlement,
 - Engagement: Community Action Duluth & YouthWorks
- 

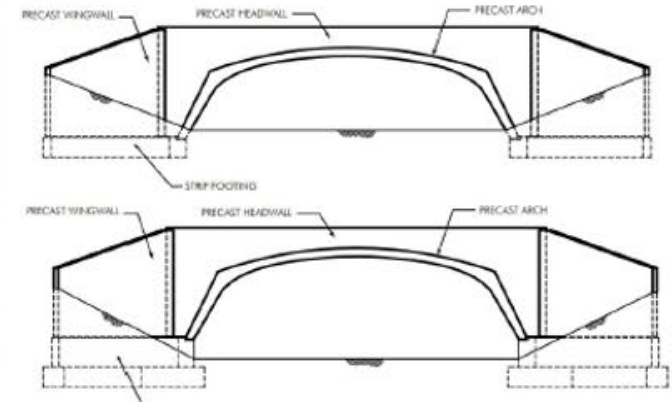
Current work: Knowlton Creek Fish Passage

Construction estimate: 2025



Example Structures

Foundations



Current status:

- Reaching 65% design
- Geotechnical investigation, wetland delineation, and arch. survey complete

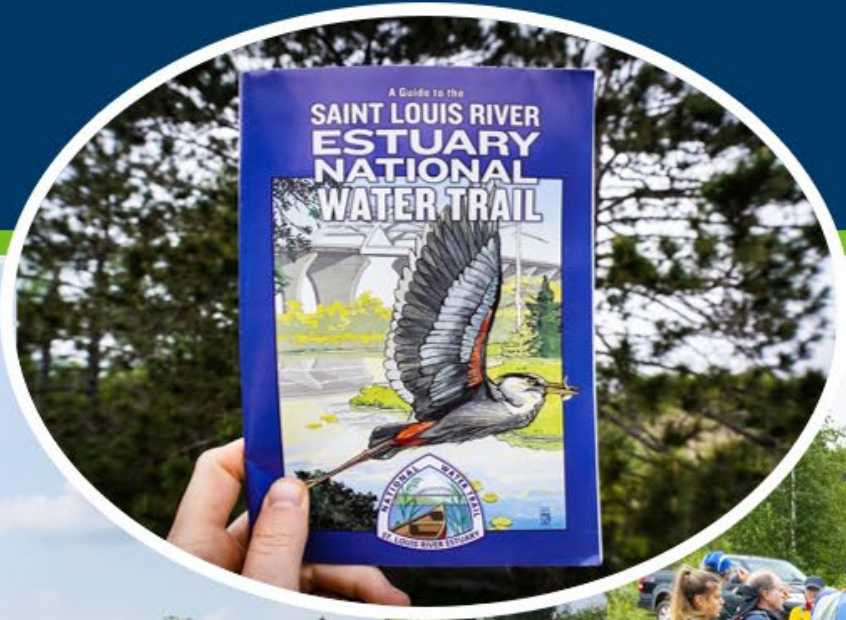
Anticipated leverage funding through “Get Out More”

Seeing the Results

Photo: City of Duluth



Seeing the Results



St. Louis River Alliance



City of Duluth

Restoration to Revitalization Metrics



- ✓ Summer campground occupancy up 27%
- ✓ Slip/dock rental doubled (since 2013)
- ✓ RV sites 100% booked with waiting list
- ✓ 3x increase river frontage property value
- ✓ \$100k+ investments in recreational equipment
- ✓ Average daily traffic on portions of the Waabizishikana Trail has quintupled since 2018 (11.4 to 55.9)

Seeing the Results: 2023 Manoomin Camp!

MANOOMIN CAMP

SEPTEMBER 11-15TH, 2023

9AM-3PM, DROP IN ANYTIME

Allow 3 hours for participating in all activities

Join us in a guided paddle to the wild rice restoration sites and welcome manoomin back to Gichi Gami Ziibi (the St. Louis River). Try your hand at harvesting, and experience each step in the finishing process (drying, parching, jiggling and winnowing).

IF YOU PLAN TO HARVEST RICE, PLEASE BE PREPARED BY HAVING YOUR MN STATE WILD RICE HARVESTING PERMIT, TRIBAL ID OR 1854 CARD.

Please bring a lunch if you plan to spend the lunch hour at the event.

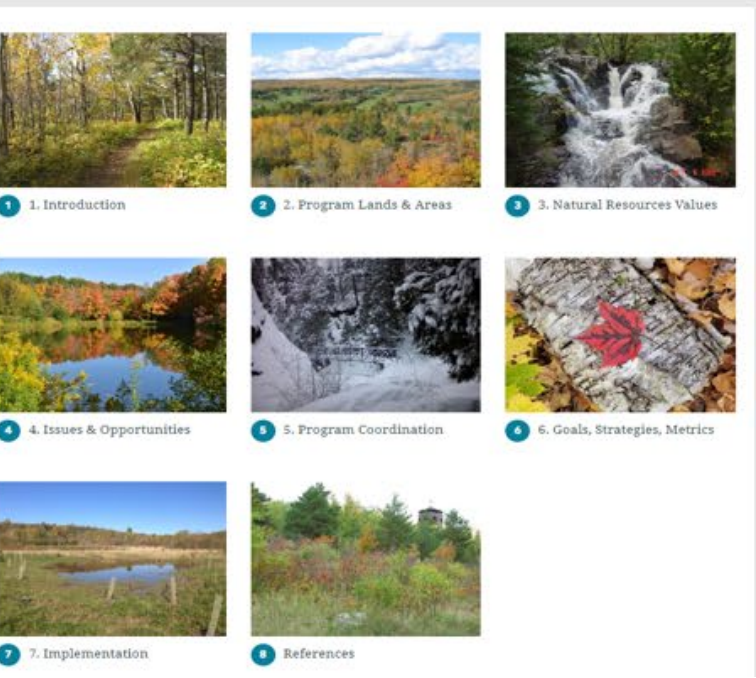
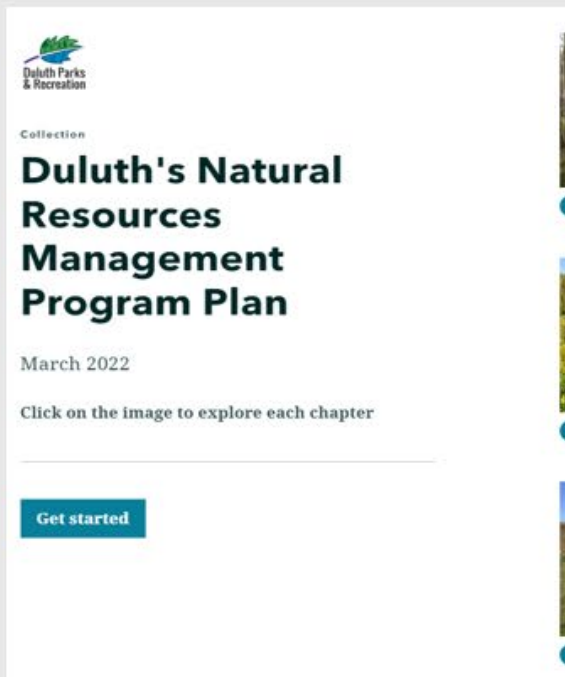
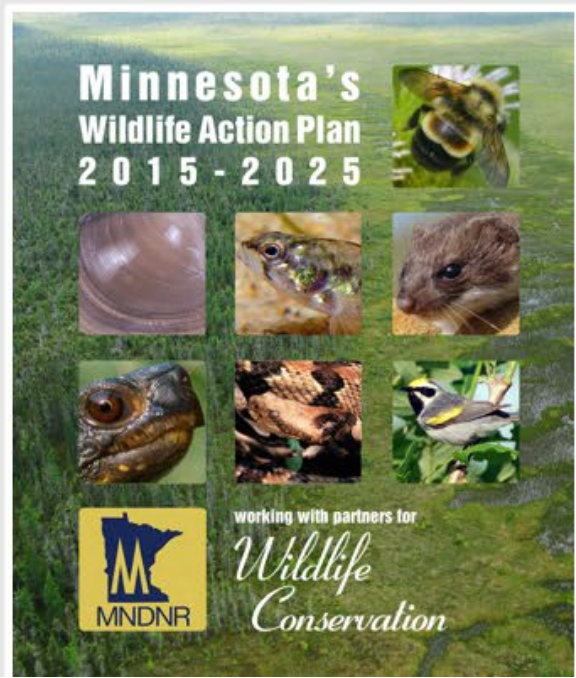
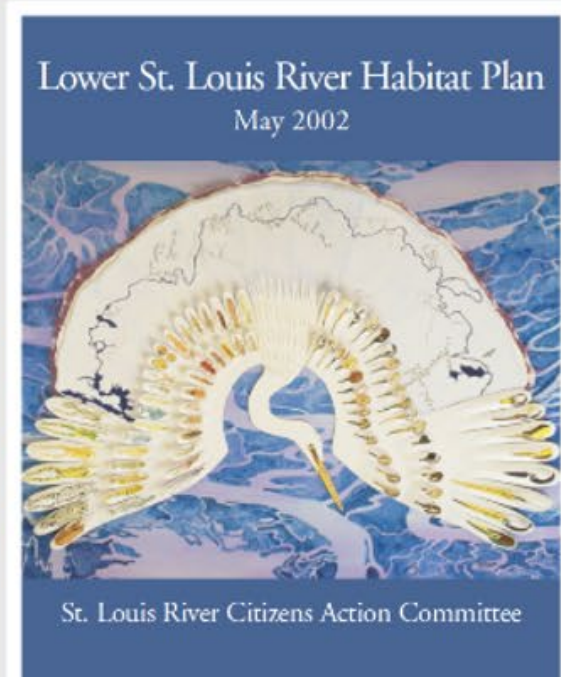
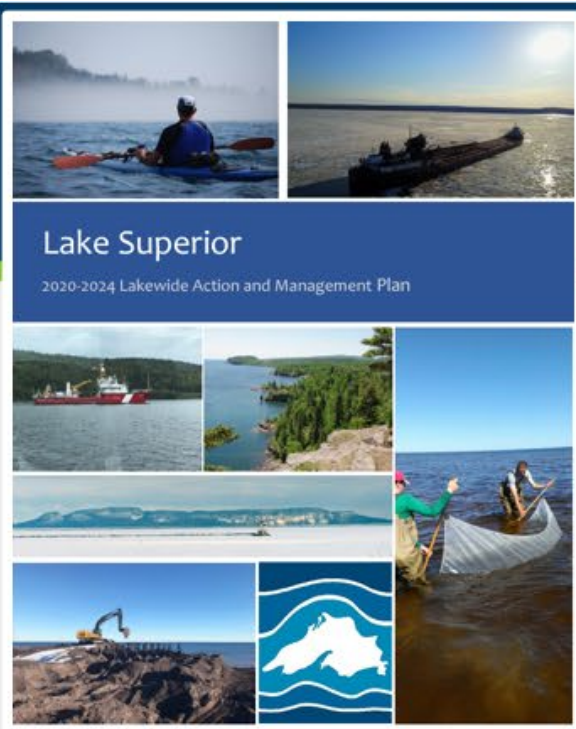
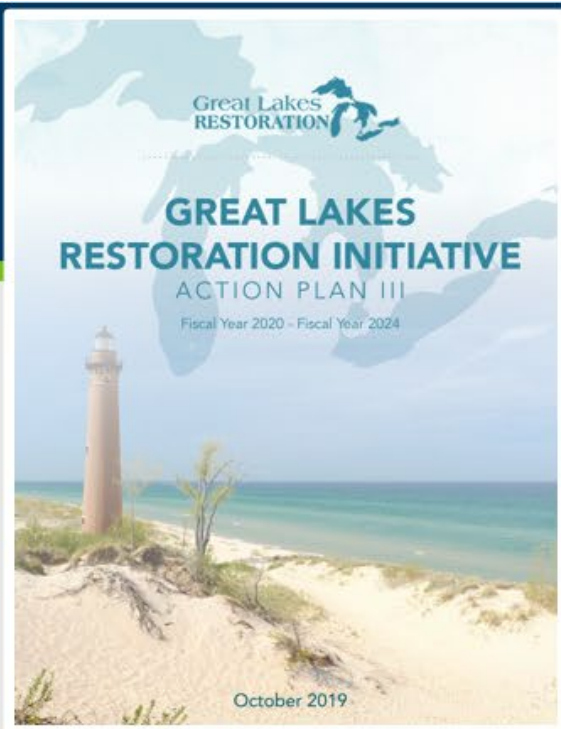
PLANNING ON COMING?

GIVE US A HEADS UP AT:

[HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/NXN41UF67DT29XHQ9](https://forms.gle/NXN41UF67DT29XHQ9)

CHAMBER'S GROVE PARK
13404 MN-23, DULUTH, MN 55808





What becomes of the SLRRI program after the AOC work is done?



**Thriving
Lake Superior
Estuary Marsh**

Carol Lent



**Healthy, connected
Terrestrial Habitats**



Resilient Streams

Photo credit: Ken Greshowak

Closing Thoughts

The St. Louis River Estuary is...

- An unmatched habitat resource
- Unique and incredibly diverse

We are making a difference!



Ashley Sullivan



Dawn Parendo