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# Biden Administration and EPA Announce \$113M to fund Great Lakes Restoration Projects near Duluth, Minnesota

## Bipartisan Infrastructure Law accelerating long-awaited work in St. Louis River Area of Concern on Lake Superior

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**CHICAGO (May 17, 2022)** Today, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced over \$100 million in funding for Great Lakes restoration in portions of the St. Louis River near Duluth, Minnesota.

EPA has pledged \$81 million to complete restoration in Spirit Lake, an additional \$25 million for restoration at Munger Landing, and \$6.8 million for the restoration of Scanlon Reservoir. A large portion of these projects will be funded through President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

“This is an exciting day for everyone who loves the St. Louis River,” **said EPA Region 5 Administrator and Great Lakes National Program Manager Debra Shore.** “Thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the support from our private and state partners, we are on track to finish cleanup and restoration in the St. Louis River area of concern by the end of this decade.”

Today’s announcement follows the President’s announcement in February of \$1 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for the Great Lakes, which would allow for major acceleration of progress in cleaning up and restoring severely degraded sites, known as “areas of concern” or AOCs throughout the Great Lakes region.

“The Great Lakes are a major part of our way of life, providing clean drinking water, a home for fish and wildlife, and opportunities for outdoor recreation,” **said Sen. Amy Klobuchar**. “This critical investment will help clean up the St. Louis River in Duluth-Superior, while also combatting threats such as environmental degradation and invasive species. As one of the vice-chairs of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force, I’ll keep fighting to ensure Minnesotans can continue to safely enjoy the Great Lakes for years to come.”

“For thousands of years, people have treasured Lake Superior and the rest of the Great Lakes chain. They are important to many—including the Native American communities that have long lived near them and utilized nearby resources, tourists who visit them for outdoor recreation and businesses that rely on them for shipping,” **said Sen. Tina Smith**. “This important funding will help restore key areas of concern on Lake Superior. I’m proud of our work to pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which helped make these restoration projects possible.”

“Keeping our Great Lakes clean and healthy is critical to Wisconsin’s drinking water resources and economy,” **said Sen. Tammy Baldwin**. “I worked to secure an increase in funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and I proudly voted for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law which is providing the EPA funding to invest in our Great Lakes. Wisconsin is thankful that President Biden and EPA Administrator Regan understand just how important it is that we are ensuring our Great Lakes are protected for our way of life, our economy, and future generations.”

“I cannot thank our federal, state, and local partners enough for this transformational investment,” **said Duluth Mayor Emily Larson**. “Our staff and our residents care deeply about the St. Louis River and the shoreline along it. To see this restoration work continue to move forward, and to be possibly nearing its end, is a massive deal for us. From cleaning up former industrial sites, to restoring wild rice beds and improving public access to the river, and so much more, we are so thankful for the many investments into this work and we are committed to getting the work done, and done right.”

“Munger Landing, Spirit Lake, and Scanlon Reservoir are among the highest priority sites within the St. Louis River Area of Concern for their cultural and historical significance to Minnesotans,” **said Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Commissioner Katrina Kessler**. “The MPCA is grateful for investments made by the Great Lakes Legacy Act to clean up and restore these areas, helping us move closer to our ultimate goal of delisting the St. Louis River Area of Concern and supporting healthy families, recreation, and a strong economy.”

“The Wisconsin DNR is a proud partner in the important continued work to clean up the St. Louis River AOC. The Great Lakes Legacy Act agreements make it possible for federal, state and local partners to improve the quality of life for the public, outdoor recreation and local economies,” **said Wisconsin DNR Secretary Preston D. Cole**. “The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative continues to be one of the greatest regional conservation success stories in the nation. Like hundreds of other projects undertaken in Wisconsin to clean up toxic hot spots, this project will reduce pollution entering the Great Lakes and improve habitat.”

“Our partnership with the EPA has already led to significant improvements in the St. Louis River Estuary and at the former site of Duluth Works,” **said Duane Holloway, U.S. Steel Senior Vice President, General**

**Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer and Corporate Secretary.** “Today, we are furthering that commitment to the environment and the community and thank the EPA for its continued collaboration.”

Two phases of the remediation begun at Spirit Lake in October 2020 have already been substantially completed. A third phase of work will continue through 2023. The project involves dredging and removal of 406,000 cubic yards of impacted sediment and placing it into two newly built confined disposal facilities on site. Additionally, a 42-acre shallow, sheltered bay will be created, and a protective cap will be placed over 119 acres of estuary sediment. The Spirit Lake project will also provide significant recreational improvements, including construction of an additional, more than one-mile-long, segment of the waterfront Waabizheshikana – The Marten Trail, installation of interpretive signage, establishment of a publicly accessible waterfront with fishing, trails, and canoe-kayak put-ins. In total over 138 acres of habitat will be created or enhanced.

EPA is managing the Spirit Lake cleanup under the Great Lakes Legacy Act, a voluntary cleanup program funded by the federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding. As the GLLA non-federal sponsor, U.S. Steel is providing project management, technical expertise, and financial contributions to the cleanup.

Later this week, on Thursday, May 19, EPA and U.S. Steel will host a community meeting to provide information about the work planned for this year. The meeting will be at the Morgan Park Community Center, 1242 88th Ave. W, Duluth. A poster session will run from 5 to 6 p.m., followed by a presentation and Q&A from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

The remediation project at Duluth’s Munger Landing will provide a cleaner and safer area for recreation, fish, and wildlife. Approximately 100,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment and soil from the landing, channel, and nearby wetland will be dredged and covered with a clean layer of sand. The project will remove invasive species, install native plants, and restore underwater areas for fish spawning. The boat ramp will be temporarily closed during construction, then restored and replaced. Additionally, there will be a new sandy paddle sport launch area just north of the boat ramp. EPA anticipates that dredging will begin this summer and will be completed by the end of 2023. During this time, Munger Landing will be closed to the public. The city of Duluth also plans to add trails and expand water access for boaters and paddlers. The Munger Landing work will be completed through a cost-sharing partnership between EPA, the Minnesota PCA, the Wisconsin DNR, and an industry partner under the GLLA.

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