

Priority Action Items in The St. Louis River AOC

1) St. Louis River Citizens Action Committee Infrastructure

- ◆ The SLRCAC was instrumental in the development of the Stage One RAP document (identification of problems) and also facilitated the RAP progress report, including 43 Stage Two recommendations. Recently, the committee established itself as a non-profit organization and is working to restore, protect and enhance the St. Louis River by coordinating community efforts and increasing public awareness, while focusing on the AOC and helping to implement the St. Louis River RAP. Support for the SLRCAC infrastructure is an important priority for the St. Louis River AOC. Financial support is essential to promote the continued structural integrity and success of the organization by supporting the following:
 - building and maintaining a diverse membership
 - pursuing targeted outreach
 - completing and updating strategic plan
 - continuing to secure funding from a variety of sources

The following priority action items are facilitated by the SLRCAC. The SLRCAC provides an advisory and advocacy role for these items.

2) Contaminated Sediment and Soil Clean-up

- ◆ Contaminated sediment clean up is an important priority for the St. Louis River Area of Concern (AOC). Restoration of several impaired uses depends on sediment clean up to remove contaminants from the environment and restore habitat. Studies in the 1990s have provided an understanding of contaminated sediment distribution in this large and complex AOC, leading to more concentrated evaluations of certain “hot spots.” Work at these hot spots is in varied stages of development. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) received GLNPO funding to develop site specific sediment guidelines for clean up decisions in the AOC. Known hot spots include the following.
 - USX site, Duluth, MN. In Superfund program, Responsible Party (RP) is identified. No sediment clean up to date.
 - Interlake site, Duluth, MN. RPs identified. Sediment clean up options under consideration by MPCA Board.
 - Slip C, Duluth, MN. Sediment evaluation stage (currently unfunded).
 - 21st Ave. W. area, Duluth, MN. Sediment evaluation stage (MPCA is seeking GLNPO funding).

- Hog Island / Newton Creek system, Superior, WI. Upstream RP has completed some remediation. Characterization studies and evaluation of remedial options continue. Funding could be needed in next few years accomplish system-wide clean up.
- Howards Bay, Superior, WI. RCRA enforcement action with potential RP. Other RPs may be involved in future.
- Crawford Creek wetland, Superior, WI. Soil and sediment evaluations underway with RP under RCRA corrective action.

3) Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

- ◆ Mercury is a contaminant of particular concern in the St. Louis River and Lake Superior. A new project – the St. Louis River Watershed TMDL Partnership, or SLRWTP – will use the new “TMDL” process to develop a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for mercury. The TMDL process is designed to improve impaired waters such as the St. Louis River, where all facilities with discharge permits are operating within their permitted limits, yet pollutant levels exceed state standards. The TMDL process will complement the mercury-reduction work that is already taking place in the watershed.
 - The SLRCAC is working with the TMDL partnership to develop a workplan and seek funding to develop the load allocation.
 - Wastewater Treatment Plants: Both Western Lake Superior Sanitary District in Duluth, MN and the City of Superior, WI Waste Water Treatment Plant are working with a mercury reduction strategy.

4) Non-Point Source Pollution

- ◆ Red clay watershed management
 The high sediment yield of the red clay watershed is exacerbated by changes in the hydrologic system resulting from historical and continuing land uses. The Nemadji River Basin Project, an outgrowth of the RAP, was undertaken in the mid 1990s as a joint effort of Minnesota and Wisconsin local, state, and federal agencies. Its mission was to recommend remedial actions and treatments to implement restoration to beneficial uses within the basin. It concluded that management must include nonpoint source abatement, land use, and best management practices. Specific inventory and research recommendations were made. The project also concluded that successful implementation of the recommendations depends on leadership of a local watershed organization. To date, only the Minnesota side of the watershed has been funded for local implementation work. Funding for

implementation in the Wisconsin half of the watershed is also needed.

- Support implementation group on Wisconsin side to work together with Minnesota implementation group headed by Carlton County, MN.
- Implement Nemadji project recommendations in Wisconsin part of watershed.
- Continue the development of a basin Geographic Information System for entire watershed.
- Include the Nemadji River Basin in the riparian corridor management research initiative of the U.S. Forest Service.

◆ Urban Stormwater

The Stage 1 RAP (1992) identified stormwater and wet weather wastewater bypassing as contributors to several impairments in the AOC. Several of the Stage 2 recommendations in the RAP update (1995) address stormwater management and wastewater collection system infiltration / inflow issues.

Wisconsin

The City of Superior, WI has made great strides in this area. Stormwater management planning was begun as part of the three state Lake Superior stormwater study in the mid 1990s. As part of Superior's stormwater permit requirements, they have done extensive dry weather sampling to test for illicit discharges and have prepared detailed maps of the existing stormwater infrastructure. They are currently in the process of preparing plans to deal with flooding and bypassing during larger rain events and are preparing stormwater management plans to address pollutant, volume and velocity concerns associated with existing and potential new development. To assist with this effort, the City has allocated funds for a stormwater engineering position and is in the process of filling this position.

One of the projects that the City of Superior would like to tackle next is an extensive public information, education and involvement campaign to provide citizen input into the stormwater management plan. This would be a priority project to receive funding if any funds were available. This project would meet several high priority implementation items in the St. Louis River RAP as well as the Lake Superior LaMP.

Minnesota:

A new stormwater utility was created in Duluth. A needs assessment has been developed. The city will soon be working with a surface water contractor who will be working with stakeholders to address the city stormwater problems.

- an inventory of all outflows to streams, starting with Chester Creek
- additional creek studies conducted over the next 7 years
- storm water permits will be developed

Inflow / Infiltration

Inflow /in is a major problem in Duluth.

- overflows sites have been identified and additional money will be needed to correct the problem as it is more complex than previous study indicated

5) Habitat

Habitat restoration and protection are important priorities in the St. Louis River and Lake Superior. Land was acquired in Wisconsin (WERCO) and Minnesota and habitat restoration projects at Grassy Point, Hearing Island and Wisconsin Point have been completed. At present, a comprehensive habitat plan is being developed to assess the biological diversity and ecological integrity of the lower St. Louis River. The project will provide an estuary-wide vision for resource management and conservation, a consensus list of conservation and management objectives, targets and actions; and a project that is ready to submit for funding.

- In the Near Future: - Pursue habitat protection / restoration opportunities as they arise, in conjunction with the completion of Habitat Plan. Example - Clough Island acquisition.
- Conduct a survey of land uses along the St. Louis River and major tributaries. This information should be used to identify wetlands most important for buffering NPS pollution.
- This information will be given at workshops or presentations to the city zoning boards, planning commissions and county/town boards on the need to preserve these important wetlands, other wetlands bordering the river and tributaries, and vegetative strips on shorelines.
- Secure state protection of additional acres of shore lands on the St Louis River watershed which will protect existing wetland habitat.