

St. Louis River Area of Concern

Projects in partnership to restore the river and revitalize the community

Restoring Dune Habitat and Enhancing Public Access on Wisconsin Point

Purpose

This project restored important dune habitat on Wisconsin Point and addresses the Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat Beneficial Use Impairment in the St. Louis River Area of Concern. This project improved public access while protecting the sensitive dune habitats and historical sites on the point.

Wisconsin Point is a three mile long natural sand spit in Superior that divides Allouez Bay from Lake Superior. Together, Wisconsin Point and Minnesota Point form one of the longest freshwater sandbars in the world, making this a popular recreation area. The point is an important habitat for many species of fish and wildlife, rare plants, and migratory birds. The point is also a historic home to the Ojibwe people. A former Ojibwe village site and cemetery here have significant cultural value both in the past and today.

Status

Public access enhancement has been a goal of the City of Superior and Wisconsin Coastal Management Program for many years. Work was conducted on land owned by the City of Superior. Project construction was completed in 2019.

Prior to restoration, the dunes were crisscrossed with trails, inhibiting vegetation growth



Improved accessible parking and boardwalks



Restoration

- Improved infrastructure for public access, while protecting sensitive dunes and historical sites on Wisconsin Point.
- Consolidated parking from 20+ turnouts to approximately five parking areas. Improved access areas will increase the overall number of parking spots, infiltrate storm water runoff, and prevent erosion.
- Restored dunes that have been degraded and revegetate them with stabilizing native plants. Invasive plants removed.
- Installed Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant boardwalks over dunes for beach access across sensitive areas.
- Stabilized eroded areas of the Allouez Bay shoreline along Wisconsin Point Road.

Project outcomes included:

- 48,000 square feet of restored sand dune habitat
- 40,000 square feet of restored shoreline wetland
- 85 acres of restored pine barren forest dune habitat
- 150 acres of reconnected sensitive wildlife habitat
- 3,600 linear feet of restored and stabilized shoreline

Partners

- City of Superior
- Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- NOAA
- WI Coastal Management
- UW-Sea Grant
- UW-Superior

To Learn More:

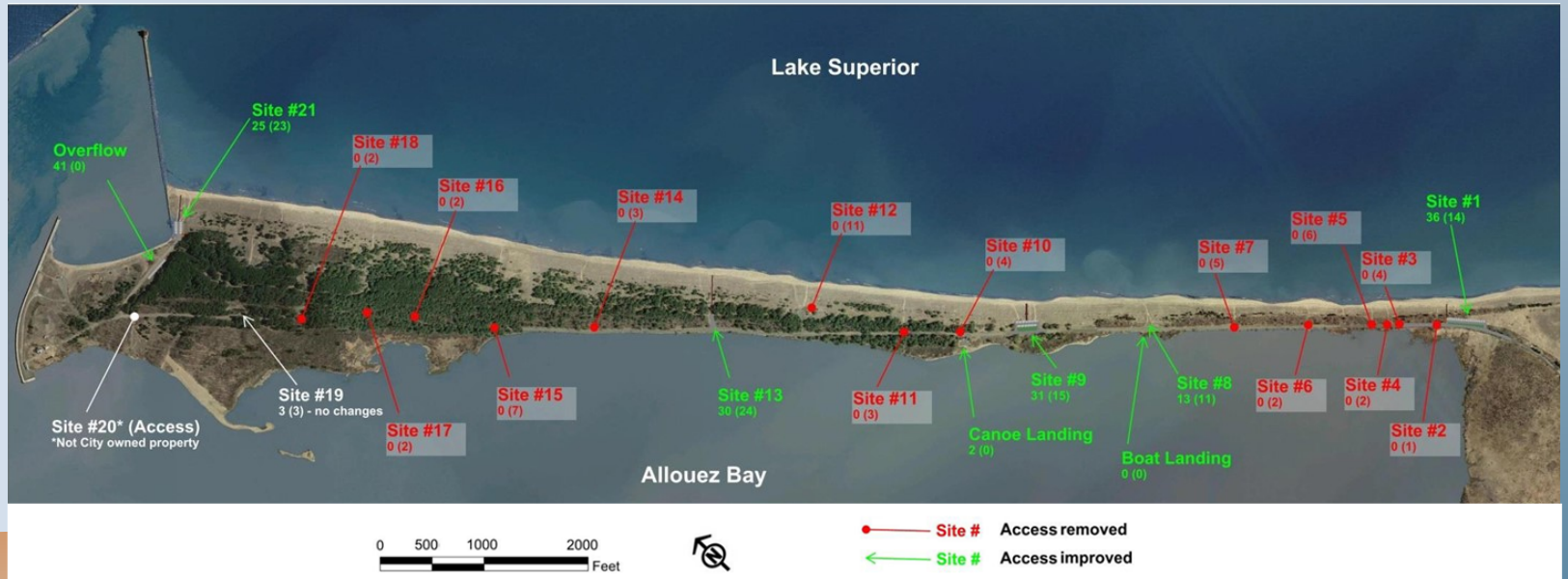
Visit dnr.wi.gov, search "St. Louis River AOC."

City of Superior: <http://www.ci.superior.wi.us/226/Wisconsin-Point>

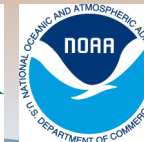


Top: Boardwalks provide beach access and allow re-established dune grass to cover the dunes.

Left: Living shoreline restoration on Allouez Bay. Plants with deep roots hold soil in place and are well suited to withstand waves, ice and changing water levels. Wave barriers protect plants until they become established.



Office of Great Waters



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