



# WATER RECREATION SAFETY PROJECT UPDATES

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KELSEY PRIHODA

June 5, 2024 ~ Harbor Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

*Image credit: UMD Marketing and Public Relations*

# RECREATION AND WATER SAFETY PROGRAM



Keeping Minnesotans and visitors safe in and around Lake Superior.

For more information, please visit: [seagrants.umn.edu/programs/recreation-water-safety](http://seagrants.umn.edu/programs/recreation-water-safety).

## Dangerous Currents



Image credit: cascadevacationrentals.com

## Paddle Safe Twin Ports



Image credit: Kelsey Prihoda/MNSG

## Drowning Hazards in the St. Louis River



Image credit: Chin Wu/University of Wisconsin

# RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AFTER DELISTING



## Area of Concern Designation

- In 1987, the lower 39 miles of the St. Louis River, including the estuary, were listed as one of the 43 Areas of Concern on the Great Lakes.

## Remediation and Habitat Restoration

- The current goal is to construction projects in 2026, with the remaining beneficial use impairments removed by 2029.



# HARBOR SAFETY WORKGROUP

Workgroup of the Harbor Technical Advisory Committee Navigation Subcommittee.

## Project-Driven Workgroup

- Established in 2019 through a U.S. Coast Guard and Minnesota Sea Grant partnership to respond to concerns from the shipping community with respect to recreational paddlers.
- Advisory group for Paddle Safe Twin Ports.
- Re-engaged in 2022 to advise the “Identifying and Forecasting Drowning Hazards in the St. Louis River Estuary” project.
- Project and workgroup end date: May 31, 2024.



# FINAL (FOR NOW) MEETING: MARCH 28, 2024

- 1. St. Louis River Water Recreation Safety Fact Sheet**
  - One-page fact sheet for print
  - Companion webpage (hosted by Wisconsin Sea Grant)

- 2. Project Update**
  - Summary of previous field season monitoring efforts
  - ArcGIS StoryMap of historic drownings in the St. Louis River Estuary
  - Real-time surface current model

- 3. Project Workshop Planning**
  - What do you hope to learn during the workshop?
  - Who didn't participate in the first workshop that should be invited to the final workshop?
  - Format and venue

- 4. Workgroup Future**
  - Is there a need for the workgroup after the drowning hazards project ends?

# Identifying Drowning Hotspots in the St. Louis River Estuary

- Date:** May 9, 2024
- Time:** 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. CDT
- Location:** Confluence Room, Lake Superior Estuarium:  
3 Marina Drive, Superior, Wisconsin 54880
- Facilitators:** Natalie Chin, Wisconsin Sea Grant (WISG)  
Kelsey Prihoda, Minnesota Sea Grant (MNSG)
- Registration:** [https://z.umn.edu/ID\\_Hotspots2](https://z.umn.edu/ID_Hotspots2)

## PROJECT WORKSHOP AGENDA

### Participants of this workshop will:

1. Engage with the project team and network with folks who are passionate about water recreation safety.
2. Understand the results from the research project, and use that information to make recommendations that will enhance safety messaging on the Paddle Safe Twin Ports website ([paddlesafetwinports.org](http://paddlesafetwinports.org)).
3. Become familiar with the research project outputs, including the project story map, St. Louis River Estuary current model, and St. Louis River Estuary water safety fact sheet.



# NEXT STEPS

## Finish Drowning Hazards Project

- Addition of three – four launch sites to paddlesafetwinports.org
- Addition of temperature to St. Louis River current model
- Final report to Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program and Wisconsin Coastal Management Program

Current model:

[https://infos.cee.wisc.edu/CORE/SLRE\\_currents.php](https://infos.cee.wisc.edu/CORE/SLRE_currents.php)

ArcGIS StoryMap: <https://arcg.is/1HH8Pn>

## Future Work – Workshop Outcomes

- Today is a starting point
- If we don’t get tools into the hands of users then we’ve failed
- We need a better understanding of the seiche effect for forecasting
- Promotion of recreation
- Formation of a community of practice

# QUESTIONS?



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“We serve Minnesotans who need water science. We provide accessible research data to industry leaders, policymakers, educators, community organizations, municipal governments, university stakeholders, and citizens of all ages. If the science doesn't exist, we fund it to ensure it gets to those in need.”

John Downing, Director  
Minnesota Sea Grant

*Image credit: Cait Dettmann/MNSG*