



**DULUTH NATURAL AREA PROGRAM
NOMINATION:**

**LESTER-AMITY-HAWK RIDGE
NATURAL AREA**

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 14, 2025**

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Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory

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District

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DULUTH NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM

*Legislative Code,
Chapter 2
Article XXIX, Sec. 2-
152*

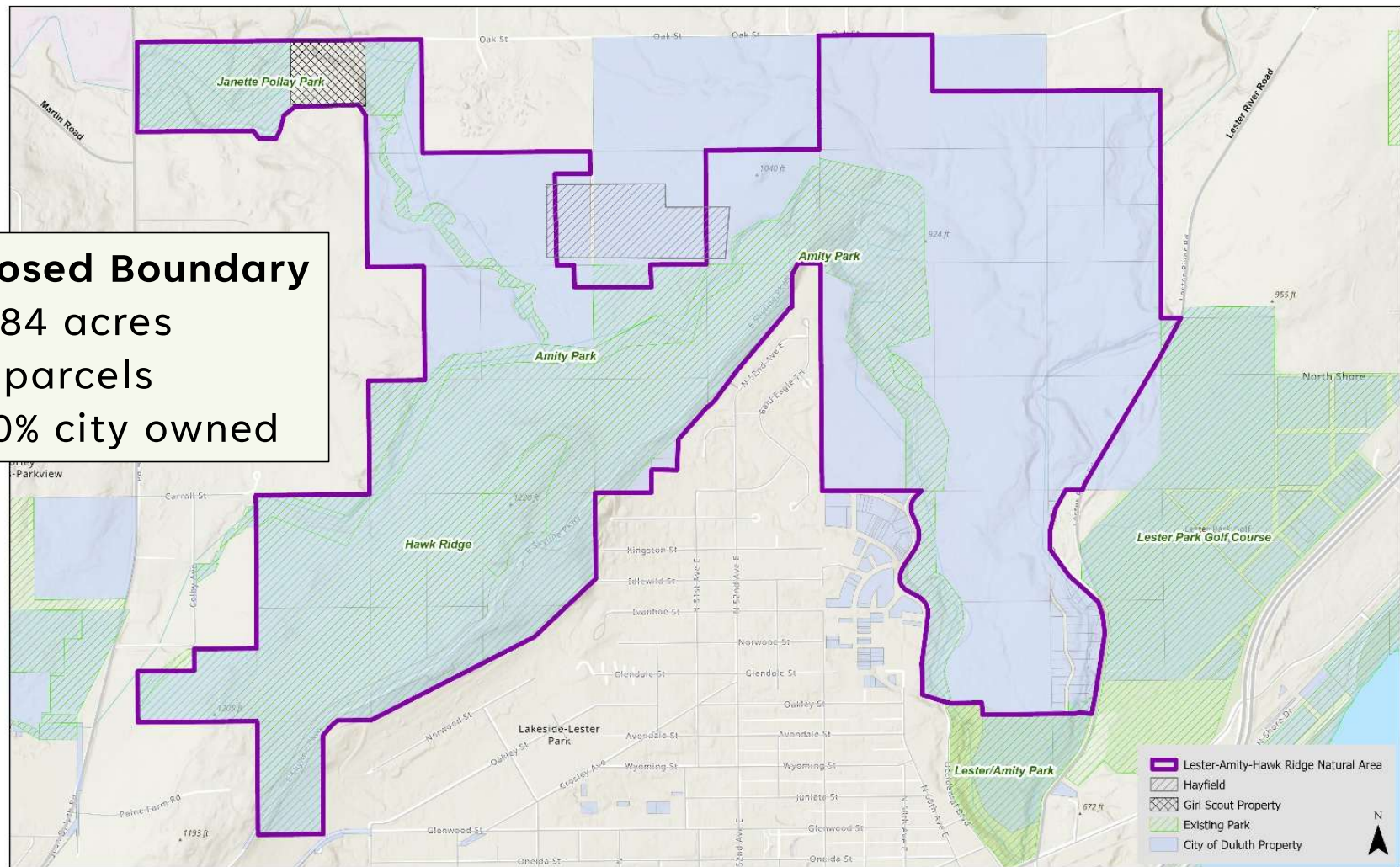
The ability to nominate certain lands with
environmental value as permanent open space

Designating these lands ensures we will always have
access to these special places to appreciate nature and
enjoy the outdoors. In doing so, we are preserving our
natural heritage for the public good by:

- Ensuring the city can better manage our forests,
streams and wetlands
- Supporting diversification of our region's economy
- Promoting the well-being and happiness of our
citizens and visitors
- Maximizing resiliency for a changing climate through
services these lands provide (e.g., controlling
stormwater runoff, supporting ecological diversity)

Proposed Boundary

- 1,184 acres
- 82 parcels
- 100% city owned



Proposed Lester-Amity-Hawk Ridge Natural Area

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DNAP
SCIENTIFIC
CRITERIA

- Important Bird Congregation Area
- Natural Water Feature Area
- Special Species Area
- Significant Plant Communities Area
- Geological Landform Area



IMPORTANT BIRD
CONGREGATION AREA





HAWK RIDGE NATURE RESERVE

- Globally important migratory corridor
- 60,000 raptors and 200,000 other birds are counted annually during Fall migration
- Record of 201,826 raptors counted in 2003
- Migrating birds originate from summer breeding areas as far north as the Arctic and have winter destinations as far south as South America
- 59 species of greatest conservation need identified

HAWK RIDGE BIRD NATURE RESERVE

- Annual bird counts contribute to long-term research data sets
- Important site for banding research on raptors and passerines
- 80,000 annual visitors (local and tourists)
- Economic impact during fall migration is \$22M from 35,000 tourists



NATURAL WATER FEATURE
AREA





AMITY CREEK

- East Branch of Amity Creek is the best trout fishery in Duluth
- Robust population of naturally reproducing Brook Trout
- Ranks 5th among north shore streams based on Brook Trout sampling
- One of the least urbanized watersheds in the city – 3% developed



AMITY CREEK

- East branch and mainstem are listed as impaired for turbidity
- EPA Nine Key Elements Plan was completed, and management actions have been identified
- South St. Louis SWCD and Trout Unlimited are investing more than \$2M in state and federal funds to restore the stream corridor over the next 10 years

SIGNIFICANT PLANT
COMMUNITIES AREA





NATIVE PLANT COMMUNITIES

- Nine native plant communities
- Wetland plant communities contribute to groundwater recharge and water quality
- Wetland and upland communities offer foraging and nesting habitat for migrating birds
- Continuous forest is an important wildlife corridor connecting to Lakewood Township on the east and Tischer Creek on the west

NATIVE PLANT COMMUNITIES AT HAWK RIDGE

| Hawk Ridge Plant Community Survey 2014 | | | |
|--|------------------|---|--------------|
| DNR CODE | DNAP Code | Plant Community Name in DNAP | Acres |
| FPn73a | CPn79a | Northern Alder Swamp | 32.56 |
| FFn57a | FFn67 | Northern Floodplain Forst | 15.38 |
| MHn35b | MHn5b | Northern Rich Maple-Basswood Forest | 23.9 |
| ROn23a | ROn1a | Northern Rock Outcrop | 63.38 |
| WMn82b | WMn1a | Northern Sedge Meadow | 0.06 |
| FDn33b | FDn2d | Poor Dry-mesic Bedrock Aspen-Birch-Fir Woodland | 107.72 |
| FDn33a | FDn2f | Poor Dry-mesic Great Lakes Pine Woodland | 10.43 |
| WFn55a | WFn71c | Wet Black Ash Swamp | 52.9 |
| MHn46b | MHn62b | Wet-mesic Black Ash - Sugar Maple Forest | 43.21 |

SPECIAL SPECIES AREA





CANADA BUFFALO BERRY *SHEPHERDIA CANADENSIS*

- Documented in the proposed natural area since the 1940's
- Narrow range – found only in 7 counties in the state close to the Canadian border
- Prefers rocky outcrops in full to part sun in difficult to access eroding cliffs or scrubby upland habitats
- Higher density of the species within the proposed natural area than in other areas of the state

GEOLOGICAL LANDFORM AREAS





HAWK RIDGE

Mid-Continent Rift
(about 1.1 billion years ago)

- Diabase rock ridge is more resistant to erosion and weathering than the surrounding rock

Great Ice Age Glaciation
(over the last 2.5 million years)

- Formed the Lake Superior Basin

DESIGNATING THE LESTER-AMITY-HAWK RIDGE NATURAL AREA



WILL NOT

- Alter the trails plan
- Place limitations on the development or sale of private property adjacent to the natural area

WILL

- Bring valued open space under city ownership and protect it from sale and development
- Lead to management plans that provide for protection and restoration
- Assure park and trail plans are consistent with natural resource conservation goals
- Serve as a focal point for partners to assist the City with management activities

We bring together a powerful partnership with support from six NGOs for the management of the 1200-acre Lester-Amity-Hawk Ridge Natural Area.



Thank you for your careful consideration of this nomination.

QUESTIONS?

