



## Legislation Text

File #: 20-0273R, Version: 1

### RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FINAL DESIGNATION OF THE ST. LOUIS RIVER NATURAL AREA TO THE DULUTH NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM.

#### CITY PROPOSAL:

RESOLVED, that the Duluth City Council hereby makes the following findings of fact pertaining to the property described on Exhibit A on file in the office of the city clerk and denominated thereon as the St. Louis River Natural Area (the "SLRNA").

(a) The property within the SLRNA consists of parcels which are one of the best remaining viable examples of areas of special or unique ecological or environmental significance to the city of Duluth because they contain features which meet all five of the science criteria defined in Article IV of the Duluth Natural Area Program guidelines:

- (1) Significant Native Plant Communities Area - Plant surveys for the nomination identified 17 significant native plant communities including the naturally viable Lake Superior estuary marsh community that exists predominantly in the St. Louis River estuary within the state.
- (2) Special Species Area - Two state-listed special concern species, discoid beggarticks (*Bidens discoidea*) and soapberry (*Shepherdia canadensis*), one state-listed endangered species, two leaf waterweed (*Elodea bifoliata*), and 52 special bird species were identified in the natural area in surveys conducted for this nomination.
- (3) Important Bird Congregation Area - A plethora of bird species congregate in the proposed natural area for nesting, foraging, and migratory habitat including shorebirds, waterbirds, waterfowl, and migratory landbirds.
- (4) Natural Water Features Area - The St. Louis River Estuary and four state designated trout streams (Keene, Kingsbury, Stewart, and Knowlton Creek), are located within the proposed natural area.
- (5) Geologic Landform Area - The geologic formation of Duluth is represented by landforms present in the nominated natural area, particularly the backwater areas of Rask Bay, North Bay, Radio Tower Bay, and Kingsbury Bay. These bays visually indicate the drowned river mouth that once flowed into Glacial Lake Duluth.;

(b) The documentation demonstrates that the various properties listed on Exhibit B meet or exceed the requirements of the **Natural Areas ordinance and are on file WHERE?**

(c) Those properties within the SLRNA listed on Exhibit B are owned by the city and are therefore eligible to be designated as included in the SLRNA.

(d) Those properties within the SLRNA listed on Exhibit C meet the criteria set forth in Subparagraph a above, but are owned by private or other public owners which owners have not yet provided consent to the designation of the property as a Natural Area under the program and to the imposition of controls in the form of a management plan thereon is not included in the SLRNA at this time but may be included if and when the parcels are acquired by amendment;

(e) That the designated area is in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that pursuant to Section 2-155 (b) of the Duluth City Code, 1959, as amended, that

portion of the St. Louis River Natural Area described on Exhibit B is hereby designated as a Duluth Natural Area.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Management Plan for the SLRNA, attached hereto as Exhibit D is hereby approved and the appropriate city officials are authorized to take all necessary action to implement the management plan

RESOLVED FURTHER, that pursuant to Section 2-255(b) of the Code, the follow protections and controls are hereby imposed on those properties designated as part of the SLRNA pursuant to the resolution:

- a. Shall be held in perpetuity as a permanently protected natural properties for the benefit of the city's residents
- b. Any development or use of such lands shall be consistent with the management plan for the SLRNA

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:** This resolution authorizes city officials to approve the designation of the St. Louis River Natural Area for the Duluth Natural Areas Program. The Duluth Natural Areas Program was established in city code to preserve Duluth's natural heritage for the public good by protecting lands of special environmental significance. City code outlines a two-step process to designate a specific place as a Duluth Natural Area. This resolution completes step two, the development and approval of a land protection and management plan. Step one was approval of the nomination which established a new Duluth Natural Area on a provisional basis. Step two, is for the approval of the management plan which makes the designation permanent. The designation was unanimously approved by the Natural Resource Commission and Planning Commission. Though not required by city code, Parks Commission was also informed of the management plan content.