



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2022 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2022-088

Proposal Title: St. Louis River Re-Connect

Project Manager Information

Name: Cliff Knettel

Organization: City of Duluth

Office Telephone: (218) 730-4312

Email: cknettel@DuluthMN.gov

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Acquire, preserve and enhance strategic quality natural resources and expand outdoor recreational access to the St. Louis River through additions and connections to state, regional, and local parks and trails.

Funds Requested: \$2,000,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30 2025

LCCMR Funding Category: Land Acquisition, Habitat, and Recreation (G)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): NE

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Statewide

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

The St. Louis River Estuary Area of Concern (AOC) is one of the most severely impacted areas in the Great Lakes Basin. Historical municipal and industrial waste disposal and unchecked land use practices, including dredging and filling habitat, resulted in AOC listing in 1987 for nine beneficial use impairments. These include fish consumption advisories, deformities, and tumors; excessive nutrient and sediment loading; degraded fish and wildlife populations and habitats; and beach closings and body contact. Residents recall being admonished by parents, "don't touch the water."

West Duluth neighborhoods that line the AOC once had vibrant commercial corridors linked to industry and maritime commerce. After mining collapsed in the 1980's, the retail areas were abandoned and housing and infrastructure fell into disrepair. Many residents suffer high rates of poverty, un- and under-employment, poor educational attainment, and poor health. Adults and youth do not have access to quality outdoor environments and activities that research shows are so important to developing environmental values. This is especially true in low-income neighborhoods where quality green space is lacking and residents have limited access to transportation. Recent initiatives brought about some redevelopment, which has now been curtailed by the pandemic.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.

The Initiative has leveraged over \$15M in outdoor recreation development and habitat acquisition and restoration: many facilities have been upgraded or added. The Water Trail, Heritage Trail and Waabizheshikana are a comprehensive strategy to expand Initiative efforts. Seven segments will be built over time, as resources allow.

- The Water Trail covers 16.5 miles, over 12,000 acres, and sports 11 distinct routes that cover 73 miles. Visitors can immerse themselves in the river's varied landscapes as well as access the complex, diverse ecosystems and cultures of the area. Enhanced river recreation and education opportunities improve quality of life and promote and enhance river restoration and preservation efforts not only for residents who have been disconnected from the river, but for all visitors.
- Wasbizheshikana will add 7 miles to the existing waterfront trail, creating a 10-mile-long accessible trail from the Irving neighborhood to Jay Cooke State Park that will connect the Water Trail to terrestrial parks and trails.
- The Heritage Trail interprets the cultures utilizing the river, as well as its wildlife, geography, and ecology. This plan connects a network of places and experiences with interpretive elements and content organized in a way that will enable implementation concurrently with trail construction.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

Long-term results

Outcome: Further the awareness of the many recreational uses, environmental, and conservation steps completed and underway.

Outcome: Added visibility and increased visits increases resources to achieve the vision for the river restoration.

Outcome: Showcase the cultural history of the river and world's largest freshwater estuary.

Measurable results

Outcome: Number of west Duluth residents reconnected to river by outreach and events, mobile app, marketing plan.

Outcome: .27 miles of restored trail

Outcome: 1.75 miles of new trail along the river

Outcome: 4.05 miles of new interpretive amenities

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Water Trail implementation

Activity Budget: \$406,679

Activity Description:

Phase I (complete) focused on obtaining National designation (2020), formalizing a leadership board, creating public information avenues (website, social media, news releases, kick-off event) and creating a route map. Phase II will hire a St. Louis River Alliance 1FTE. Coordinator to coordinate the implementation of the Water Trail with the development of Waabizheshikana. Tasks: Begin public outreach/marketing about the Trail, especially to west Duluth residents, but regionally and nationally as well. Explore low-cost capital investments such as creating paddling launches at existing public access points and new landing sites such as campsites, rest stops, and portages developed in conjunction with the expansion of Waabizheshikana.

Ambassadors recruited from west Duluth neighborhoods will inform residents and facilitate access to the river including day trips to and on the river as well as community events that bring together residents, stakeholders, and partners for feedback and planning on implementation of all three plans. Ambassadors are modeled on a successful model for engaging marginalized communities in new experiences. The Alliance will facilitate a national marketing plan, update the paper maps and develop a mobile app that includes the water routes, landings, access to Wassbizheshikana and connections to other trails and parks.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Recruit and hire qualified staff (Project manager and Project Technician/Admin	July 31 2022
Develop mobile app for water routes and access points and amenities	June 30 2023
National marketing plan in place	June 30 2024
Recruit Ambassadors - annually and by June each following year.	June 30 2025
Update and print maps - annually	June 30 2025
Outreach events, day trips, Steering Committee/public meetings - ongoing though each year.	June 30 2025

Activity 2: Reconstruct Waabizheshikana Segment 0 and build Segments 2 and 7

Activity Budget: \$1,306,521

Activity Description:

The seven miles proposed will enhance public access to the river via a bike/pedestrian trail and improve or create water access sites for paddlers of the Water Trail. Waabizheshikana will connect adjacent neighborhoods to the River and each other, enhance quality of life, and promote stewardship of the river's uplands and estuary. The Plan calls for construction in seven segments. Funding will support development/repair of three segments.

Segment 0 (3.3 miles): Repair the existing trail. Segment 0 connects the Lake Superior Zoo, Spirit Mountain Recreation Area, and Munger State Trail. It was upgraded in 2016 but has since experienced storm surge damage that damaged culverts and reduced the trail width.

Segment 2 (3/4 mile): Munger Landing to Blackmer Park. Coincides with scheduled Estuary cleanup and enhancements to Munger Landing including an accessible paddle launch. Segments 1 & 3 will be constructed with a different funding source.

Segment 7 (1 mile): Perch Lake to Chambers Grove. A portion of the trail will be constructed by MnDOT as part of the Highway 23 improvements. Users can take the Duluth Traverse and Superior Hiking trail into Jay Cooke from Chambers.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Reconstruct Segment 0	June 30 2023
Construct Segment 2	June 30 2025
Construct Segment 7	June 30 2025

Activity 3: Waabizheshikana Interpretation**Activity Budget:** \$286,800**Activity Description:**

Install Interpretive components on Segments 0, 2, 7

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Install of all intepretive components	June 30 2025

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Kris Eilers	St. Louis River Alliance	Executive Director. The Alliance is charged with implementing the St. Louis River Estuary National Water Trail.	Yes

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this be funded?

Implementation will be executed in segments, with facilities/amenities particular to each trail constructed concurrently. Long-term development and sustainability of the Trails depends heavily on strong partnerships. Planning efforts identified over 60 partners in the St. Louis River Watershed alone, all with the capacity to assist in continued planning and implementation, marketing and promotional aspects, and on-going maintenance and stewardship. Funding likely will be from a combination of government partners, leveraging grant dollars, on-going operations of partners like the County and DNR, in-kind dollars from voluntary efforts of supporting nonprofits, and private donations.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Cliff Knettel

Job Title: Senior Parks Planner

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

Cliff Kuettel: 1997 UMD BS Geography and minor in Geology. 1997: Mid-Minnesota Development Commission and Arrowhead Regional Development Commission focused on comprehensive planning, housing studies and grant writing/administration. 1999: City of Superior, WI Planner and later as the Planning and Port Director. Headed the City's planning and zoning, economic development, land resource management and housing programs. 2003: Development Director, St. Cloud Housing and Redevelopment Authority, leading economic and housing development programs. 2009: Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS), and later Deputy Director of One Roof Community Housing. Led the agencies' neighborhood revitalization planning, residential lending, housing development and homeownership promotion programs. 2018 Community Development specialist with MSA Professional Services, specializing in grant writing and administration for parks and infrastructure projects. 2020: City of Duluth Parks and Recreation division as a Senior Park Planner, where he leads park planning processes and citizen engagement in park development projects.

Organization: City of Duluth

Organization Description:

Duluth has 11,000 acres of green space and 129 parks alongside Lake Superior and the St. Louis River that provide multiple outdoor experiences including myriad trails: 10 miles of horseback, 30 miles paved, and 16 miles gravel accessible; 38 miles (61k) of cross-country ski; 85 miles of bike-optimized; and 150 miles of hiking! Parks vary from small neighborhood playgrounds to extensive wildlands. Parks & Recreation offers a range of programs for youth to adults. Duluth's history and future are tied to the health, sustainability, and stewardship of the St. Louis River and Lake Superior. The St. Louis River Corridor Initiative (Initiative) invests in park and trail improvements from Lincoln Park to the Fond du Lac neighborhood to reconnect residents and visitors to the river, support restoration, enrich neighborhood quality of life, establish new visitor destinations, and stimulate appropriate development. Three interconnected master plans for the St. Louis River Corridor: St. Louis River Estuary National Water Trail Master Plan (Water Trail), the Heritage Interpretation Master Plan (Heritage Trail), and Waabizheshikana - The Marten Trail Mini-master Plan (Waabizheshikana), provide an opportunity to expand the Initiative and realize its goals.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	Project manger: 1fte (\$22/hr + 20% fringe). Manage Phase II Water Trail implementation: Convene Steering Committee, lead public events and day trips, manage Ambassadors, oversee development of mobile app and marketing plan. Coordinate all facility development with City of Duluth Waabizheshikana extension and interpretation.		X		3		\$169,727
St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	Executive Director: Administration and Oversight		X		0.15		\$35,152
St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	Ambassadors (4 @ \$18/hr x 8 hr/week) no benefits. Ambassadors are from the community and work to engage marginalized communities in River events and activities.		X		0.6		\$90,000
St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	Annually update and print Water Trail Route Maps.		X		0		\$10,500
St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	Outreach events, daytrip events on the river, public/Water Trail Steering Committee meetings to guide Trail implementation.		X		-		\$43,500
St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	Project technician/administrative support. Support Project Manager, support map update and mobile app development, support event planning and organization.		X		1.5		\$57,800
							Sub Total	\$406,679
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-

Capital Expenditures								
		Segment 0 reconstruction	Existing trail ABA compliant Slope modifications, .27 miles. Reroute the existing trail away from the collapsing shoreine.					\$190,000
		Segment 0 reconstruction	Existing trail drainage improvements and culvert replacement					\$85,000
		Segment 0 Interpretive installations: 2 story poles @ \$41,400 ea. 1 Thunderbird sculpture @ \$36,000, Indian Point Pause @ \$30,000k, 2 Interpretive signs @ \$3800/ea	Cultural, ecological, and historical interpretation of the river region.					\$115,000
		Segment 2 Construction. - .72 miles of new trail	Extension of Waabizheshikana.					\$402,600
		Segment 2 Interpretive installations: 1 story pole @ \$20,700; 1 granite cairn @ \$4,000; 1 Turtle mound sculpture @ \$40,000; Munger Landing Pause @ \$30,000; 2 Interpretive signs @ \$3800 ea.	Interpretation of the culture, ecology and history of the river environment.					\$102,300
		Segment 7: New trail construction - 1.03 miles	Extension of Waabizheshikana					\$585,521
		Segment 7 Interpretive installations: 1 story pole @ \$20,700; 1 brownstone cairn @ \$3,800; 1 sturgeon sculpture @ \$45,000.	Interpretation about the cultures, history and ecology of the river region.					\$69,500
		Segment 2 Wayfinding signage. 2 trailhead directories @ \$4,900/ea; 1 4-sided trail marker @ \$843/ea + installation and contingency.	Wayfinding.					\$18,000
		Segment 7 Wayfinding signage. 2 Trailhead directory @ \$4,900 ea; 1 map& emergency sign @ \$2,700; 6 Trail markers @ \$843/ea; 4 general rule signs @ \$200/ea. + installation and contingency.	Wayfinding					\$25,400
							Sub Total	\$1,593,321
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$2,000,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Contracts and Services - St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	Project manger: 1fte (\$22/hr + 20% fringe). Manage Phase II Water Trail implementation: Convene Steering Committee, lead public events and day trips, manage Ambassadors, oversee development of mobile app and marketing plan. Coordinate all facility development with City of Duluth Waabizheshikana extension and interpretation.	<p>. The Alliance was selected by the Water Trail Steering Committee to implement the Water Trail Plan as well as manage the trail ongoing. The Alliance's longevity, experience, knowledge of the river, and relationships with local, state, and federal agencies are unique and ensure proper management and sustainability. The Alliance began as a Citizen Advisory Committee in 1987 to assist Minnesota and Wisconsin state agencies to develop a Remedial Action Plan (RAP) for the AOC. Members include individuals, families, businesses, organizations, local and tribal governments.</p> <p>The Alliance has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helped develop the RAP that identified the BUIs and their removal targets and actions. Prepared the Lower St. Louis River Habitat Plan for inclusion in the RAP. Led annual activities that connect people to the river. Monitors the endangered Piping Plover population. Assists with wild rice establishment and education efforts Participates in monthly AOC meetings and on BUI technical teams Advocates for BUI removals Helped secure \$25.4 million in Bond Funds to leverage \$47.2 million in Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Funds to remediate contaminated sediment. Implemented Phase I of the Water Trail <p>This is a single source contract.</p>
Contracts and Services - St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	Executive Director: Administration and Oversight	<p>Kris Eilers, Alliance Executive Director: Engaged in policy and program delivery in environmental protection, water quality, remediation and habitat restoration, intergovernmental affairs and community engagement/outreach in the Duluth area for a decade. Strong business and administrative skills, combined with 20+ years in the private corporate sector, set her and the Alliance up for many successes. Secured and managed an array of federal, state and local programs, including the bonding effort to fund the AOC clean-up.</p> <p>Kris has been instrumental to attracting thousands of people to the river through boat tours, volunteer opportunities, canoe/kayak trips and winter hikes. She has also dramatically grown the membership of the organization by over 500 percent over the past 5 years. Kris is driven by her life-long passion for water, and a child-hood dream of helping to restore the polluted waters of the St. Louis River that runs into Lake Superior.</p> <p>This is a single source contract.</p>
Contracts and Services - St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	Ambassadors (4 @ \$18/hr x 8 hr/week) no benefits. Ambassadors are from the community and work to	One of the foundational goals of the St. Louis River Alliance is to build connections between community members and the St. Louis River through multiple, annual, education, outreach and stewardship events. These events lead to actions and behaviors

4/7/2021

		engage marginalized communities in River events and activities.	that contribute to a sustainable, healthy and resilient environment. This is a single source contract.
Contracts and Services - St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	Annually update and print Water Trail Route Maps.	The Alliance developed and houses the Route Maps This is a single source contract.
Contracts and Services - St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	Outreach events, daytrip events on the river, public/Water Trail Steering Committee meetings to guide Trail implementation.	The Alliance was selected by the Water Trail Steering Committee to implement the Water Trail Plan as well as manage the trail ongoing. The Alliance provides multiple annual education, outreach and stewardship events about the river. This is a single source contract.
Contracts and Services - St. Louis River Alliance	Sub award	Project technician/administrative support. Support Project Manager, support map update and mobile app development, support event planning and organization.	Please see previous justifications for partnership with the St. Louis River Alliance. This is a single source contract.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [431a8e20-e67.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Maps include the overall scope of Waabizheshikana and the Water Trail, and close ups of Segments 0, 2, and 7....

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
City of Duluth Resolution	cd9d98e1-fac.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
City of Duluth Support Letters	68a969c9-99b.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

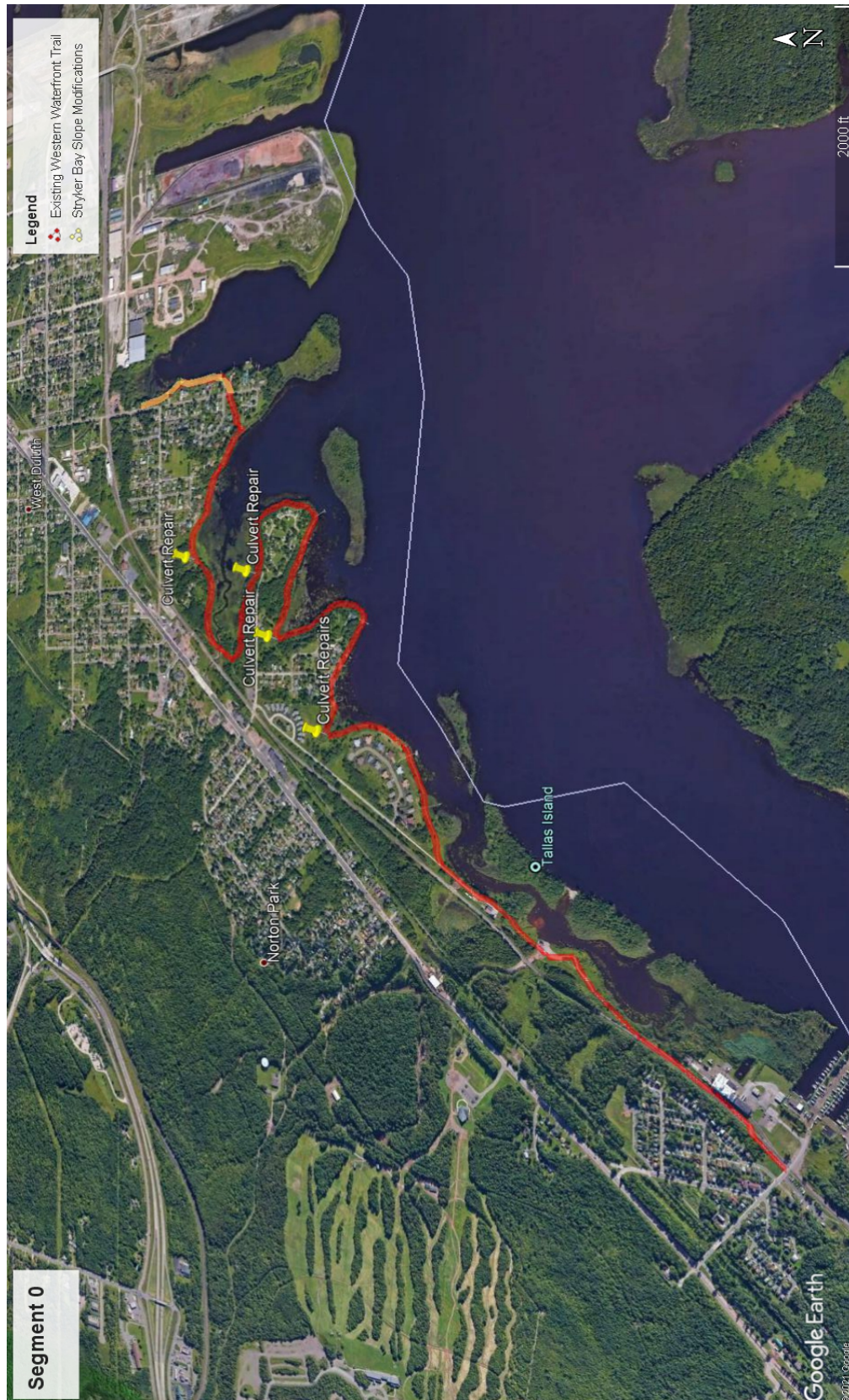
No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

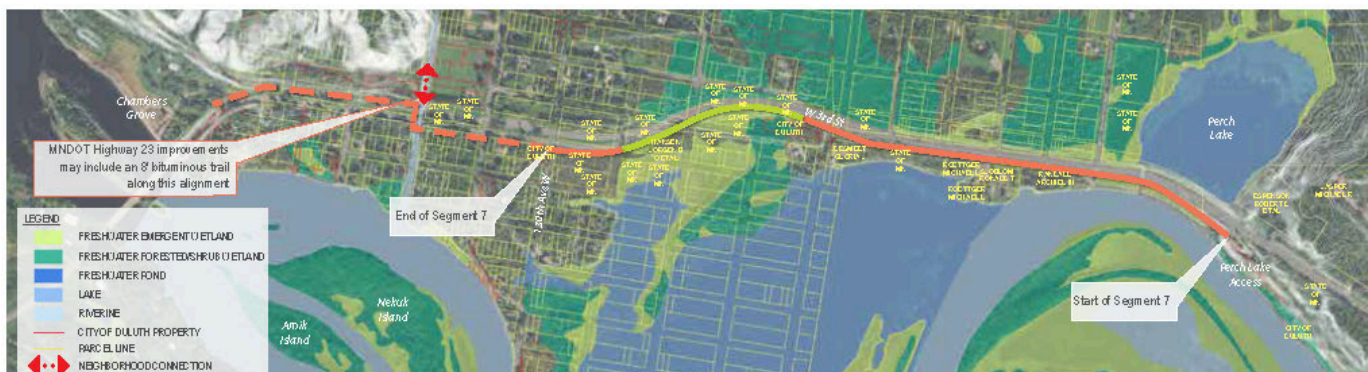


Wassbizhshikana Trailheads & Local Trail Access Points Overview Map



Segment 0

Segment 2

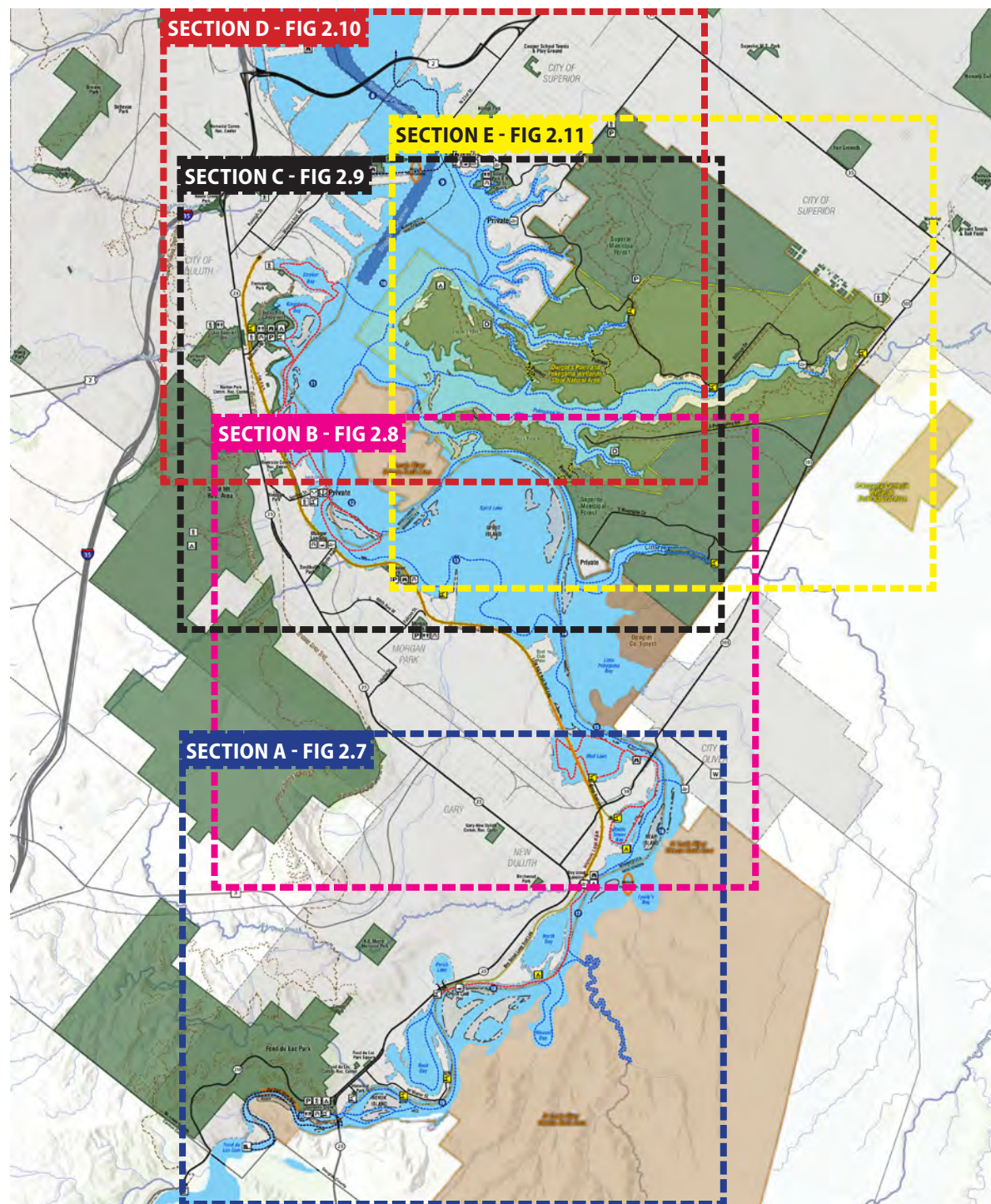


Segment 7

02 MASTER PLAN

St. Louis River Estuary Water Trail & Facilities Mapping

The following maps (Figure 2.7—2.10) identify the various routes and both existing and proposed sites of the proposed St. Louis Estuary Water Trail.



02 MASTER PLAN

The potential National Water Trail designation does not in any way restrict any motorized use of the St. Louis River Estuary

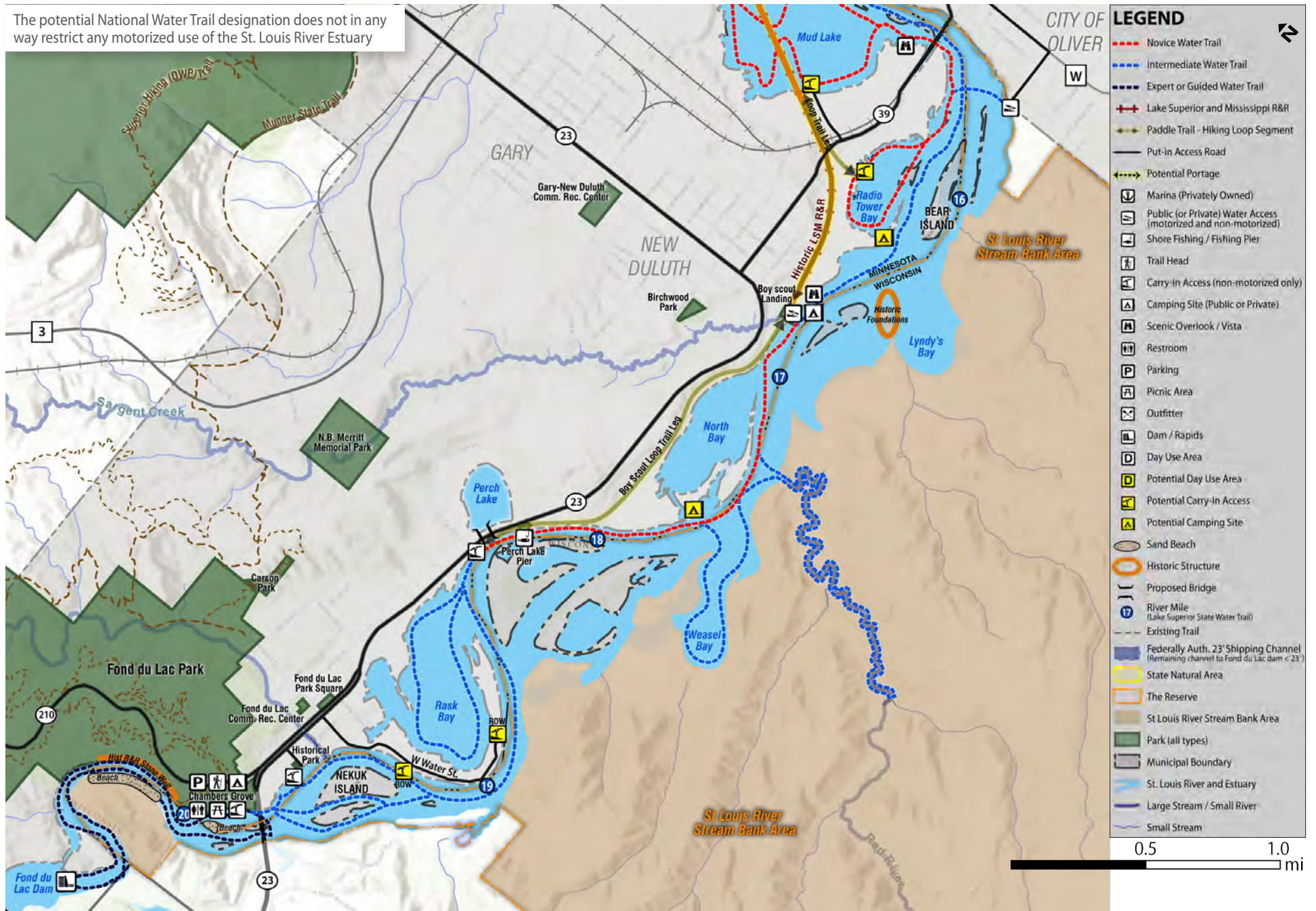


FIGURE 2.7 SECTION A - ST. LOUIS RIVER ESTUARY TRAILS AND FACILITIES

Potential improvements/ facilities on the Wisconsin side are proposed through this planning process; the viability of these proposals will be determined through a WDNR property master planning process, consistent with Wisconsin laws.

02 MASTER PLAN

The potential National Water Trail designation does not in any way restrict any motorized use of the St. Louis River Estuary



FIGURE 2.8 SECTION B - ST. LOUIS RIVER ESTUARY TRAILS AND FACILITIES

Potential improvements/ facilities on the Wisconsin side are proposed through this planning process; the viability of these proposals will be determined through a WDNR property master planning process, consistent with Wisconsin laws.

02 MASTER PLAN

The potential National Water Trail designation does not in any way restrict any motorized use of the St. Louis River Estuary

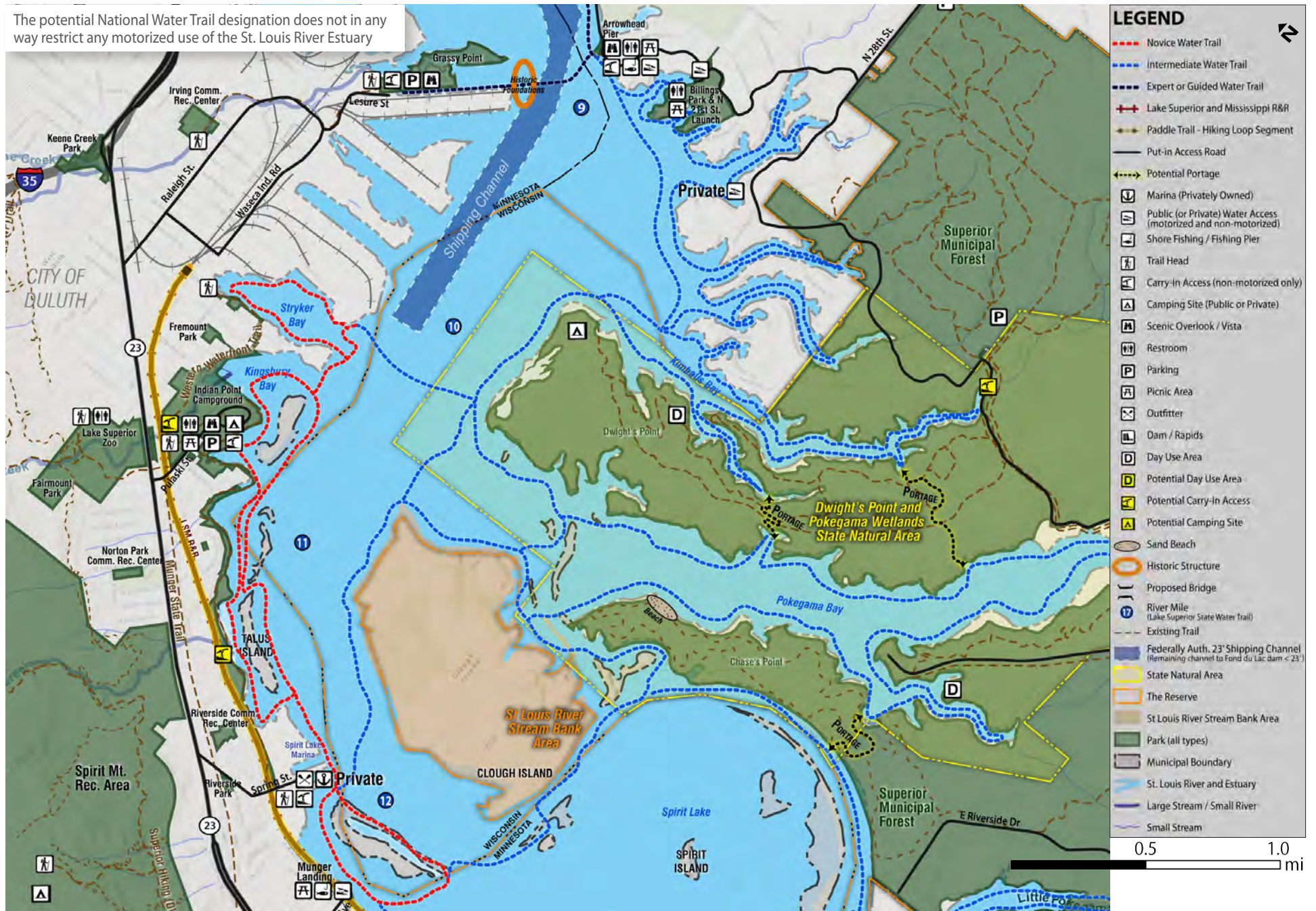


FIGURE 2.9 SECTION C - ST. LOUIS RIVER ESTUARY TRAILS AND FACILITIES

Potential improvements/ facilities on the Wisconsin side are proposed through this planning process; the viability of these proposals will be determined through a WDNR property master planning process, consistent with Wisconsin laws.

02 MASTER PLAN

The potential National Water Trail designation does not in any way restrict any motorized use of the St. Louis River Estuary

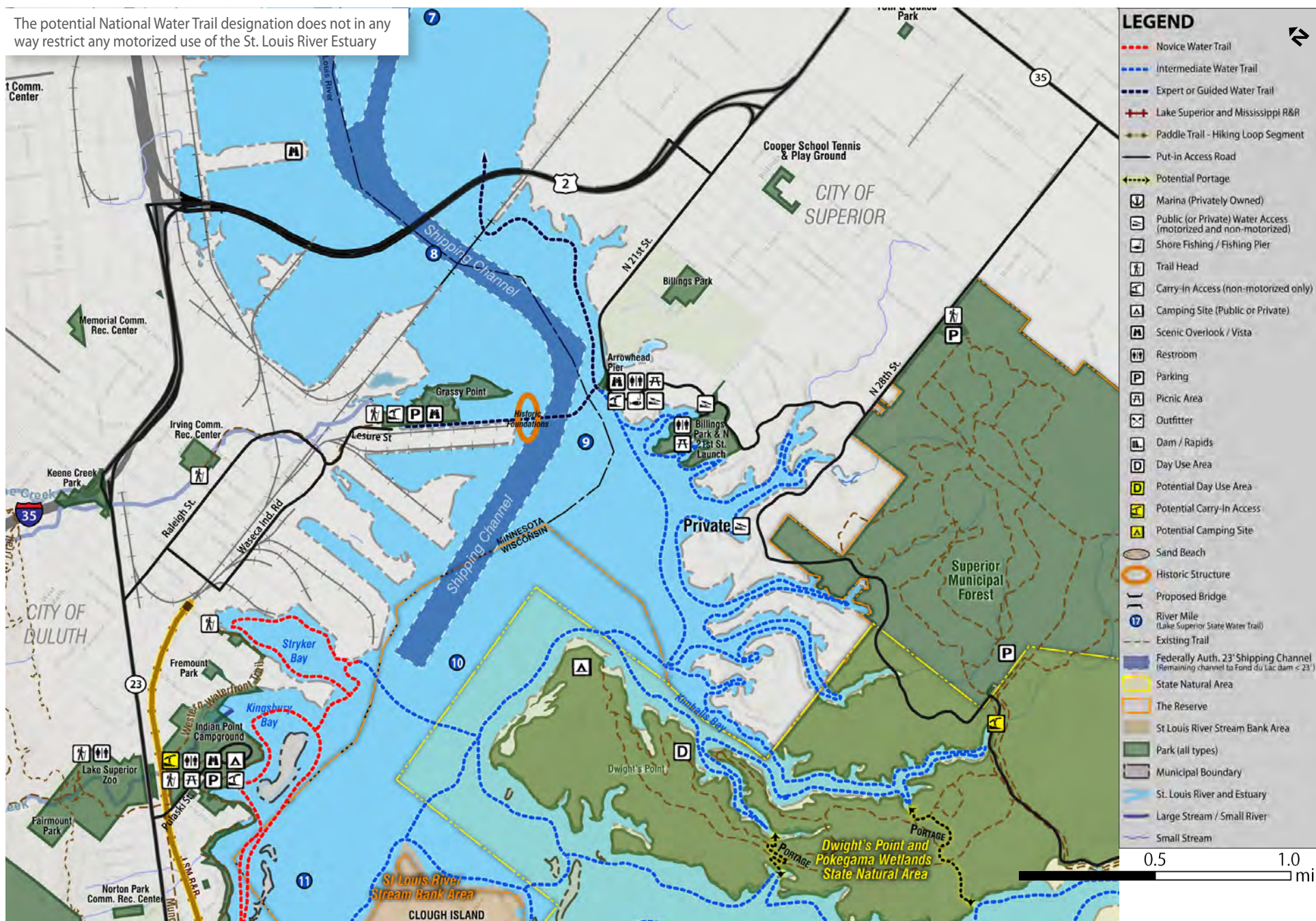


FIGURE 2.10 SECTION D - ST. LOUIS RIVER ESTUARY TRAILS AND FACILITIES

Potential improvements/ facilities on the Wisconsin side are proposed through this planning process; the viability of these proposals will be determined through a WDNR property master planning process, consistent with Wisconsin laws.

02 MASTER PLAN

The potential National Water Trail designation does not in any way restrict any motorized use of the St. Louis River Estuary

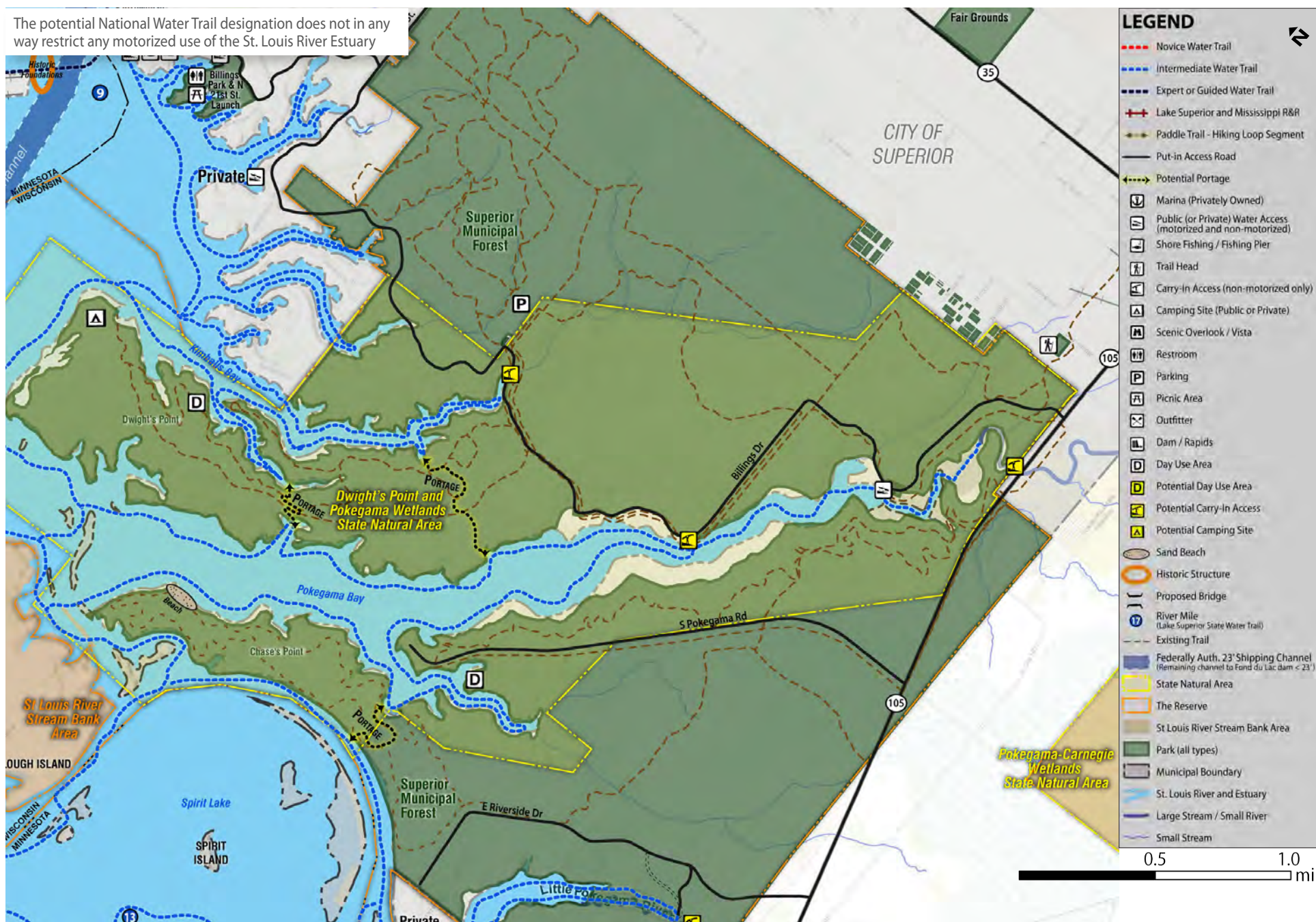


FIGURE 2.11 SECTION E - ST. LOUIS RIVER ESTUARY TRAILS AND FACILITIES

Potential improvements/ facilities on the Wisconsin side are proposed through this planning process; the viability of these proposals will be determined through a WDNR property master planning process, consistent with Wisconsin laws.