

Spirit Lake Environmental Cleanup Continues Under GLRI

Spirit Lake GLLA Remediation and Restoration

Duluth, Minnesota

July 2021

For more information

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Steel Corporation have entered a partnership to clean up impacted sediment and soil within the Spirit Lake area of the St. Louis River in Duluth, Minnesota. This work is being conducted as part of the Great Lakes Legacy Act project agreement between EPA and U.S. Steel.

The site is located within the St. Louis River Area of Concern and is south of the Morgan Park neighborhood in Duluth. The site has in-water cleanup areas which include Spirit Lake, Unnamed Creek, and Wire Mill Pond as well as onshore clean up areas (*see map, page 2*).

Background

The purpose of the project is to address chemical constituents of concern, primarily polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, and associated heavy metals including lead, copper and zinc in the Spirit Lake area. The large environmental cleanup includes dredging, capping and monitoring impacted sediment. The cleanup will support the eventual delisting of the St. Louis River AOC and will result in benefits to people and the ecological system.

The cleanup operations began in October 2020. They are being performed by contractors to EPA and U.S. Steel.

2020 Work Activities

In October and November 2020, tree clearing and construction of temporary staging areas onshore were done to prepare the site for remediation activities. (*Continued on reverse page.*)

Cleanup possible through GLRI

The **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative**, or GLRI, was launched in 2010 to accelerate efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes. Sixteen federal partners work together on five priorities:

- Cleaning up [Great Lakes Areas of Concern](#).
- Preventing and controlling invasive species.
- Reducing nutrient runoff that contributes to harmful/nuisance algal blooms.
- Restoring habitat to protect native species.
- Conducting education and outreach for future restoration efforts.

GLRI's funds provide up to 65% of the cost of cleanup with a non-federal entity contributing the balance through a Great Lakes Legacy Act partnership – under which the Spirit Lake work is being done. GLLA partnerships have cleaned up 27 sites in six Great Lake states and remediated 4.6 million cubic yards of contaminated sediment.



Site restoration highlight: Before (left) and after (right) remediation and restoration of the Unnamed Creek. Plantings along the channel and in the floodplain will be completed in early summer 2021.

2020 Work Activities cont.

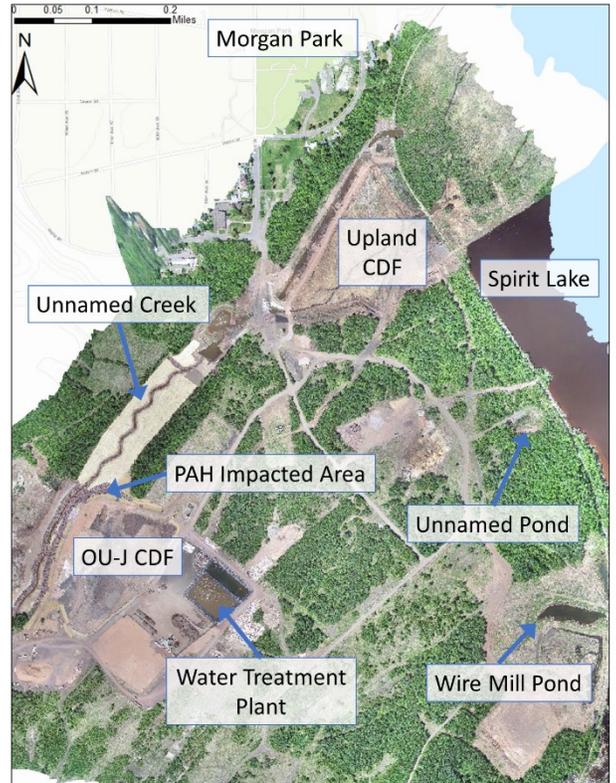
The foundation was constructed for the Operable Unit J (OU-J) confined disposal facility and the Unnamed Creek was diverted to allow cleanup work to begin in the creek floodplain. The PAH impacted area was also remediated. In December 2020, a new channel was constructed where the Unnamed Creek would be permanently rerouted. In addition, the storage pond at the water treatment plant was completed.

2021 Work Activities

During January/February 2021, final cleanup activities in Unnamed Creek were completed and contaminated materials were placed at the OU-J confined disposal facility. During the spring, the Unnamed Creek wetlands and channel were restored, and the first layer of Upland confined disposal facility foundation was placed. Following topsoil placement, planting in the floodplain was completed. Installation of the water treatment plant that began in 2020 was completed in May 2021. Dredging and capping in the Unnamed Pond will be completed in summer 2021.

Project Outreach

EPA continues to coordinate with the Morgan Park Community Center and other project stakeholders on resident outreach through the development of a community involvement plan and informational material.



FIRST CLASS

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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