



City of Duluth - Parks and Recreation

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DATE: 11/13/2023 12:00:00 AM

SUBJECT: City of Duluth partners with St. Louis County to protect Tischer Creek

BY: Kelli Latuska, Public Information Officer

City of Duluth partners with St. Louis County to protect Tischer Creek

[DULUTH, MN] St. Louis County Public Works is scheduled to make numerous improvements on Woodland Avenue next year between Snively Road and Anoka Street, including repaving, replacing curbs and gutters, creating a center turn lane, and adding sidewalks, bike lanes, and pedestrian crossings for improved safety.

The County is working with the City of Duluth to add one other key feature to the project: a series of stormwater treatment basins in the northeast corner of Hartley Park. These vegetated basins will mimic natural wetlands, capturing and filtering the salt, sand, litter, and other pollutants from Woodland Avenue and 110 acres of the Woodland neighborhood that currently flow directly into Tischer Creek. The project will also reduce erosion along the creek by slowing the flow of runoff.

The stormwater treatment system will be constructed in a portion of the park that is heavily infested with buckthorn and other invasive plants. As part of the project, these invasive species will be removed and replaced with a wide variety of native upland and wetland trees and other vegetation that benefit butterflies, birds, and wildlife.

The stormwater basin project is expected to cost up to \$2 million. St. Louis County has already secured a \$1.5 million grant from the US Army Corps of Engineers and is seeking an additional \$500,000 from the state Clean Water Fund administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.

Once completed, the City of Duluth will host, own, and operate the system. The goals are to improve the water quality and trout habitat in Tischer Creek, and to protect the lands of Hartley Park and Hartley Nature Center. Hartley Park was designated by the City as the Hartley Natural Area in 2020. Stormwater management and habitat restoration are management strategies that further the goals identified in the 2014 Hartley Park Master Plan, 2019 Management Plan for the Hartley Natural Area, 2022 Natural Resources Management Program Plan, and 2022 Essential Spaces: Duluth Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan.

"It has been really exciting to see this project come together and grow over the last two years from a smaller, County-only project to a joint County-City project that builds on the knowledge and abilities that each entity brings to the table," said Carol Andrews, St. Louis County Public Works Environmental Engineer. "Now we can build a treatment system large enough to hold runoff from storm events up to two inches of rain in 24 hours that fits well into the park landscape and will only impact a small number of mature trees."

"At first this area will look quite disturbed, but over time the land will heal and the quality of the landscape will emerge. We will start seeing a diversity of plants and animals that invasive plants had historically pushed out of this part of the park, benefiting park users, the trout stream, and wildlife. It's a very exciting project from an ecological restoration perspective and I think is a model project Duluthians can be proud of," said Jim Shoberg, City of Duluth Senior Parks Planner.

The project is expected to be completed next year, though work to remove buckthorn may begin later this year. To learn more about the project, visit <https://duluthmn.gov/parks/parks-planning/progress-in-the-parks/woodland-hartley-green-infrastructure/>, or contact Carol Andrews, St. Louis County Public Works Environmental Engineer at (218) 625-3862 or andrewsc@stlouiscountymn.gov, or Kate Kubiak, City of Duluth Natural Resources Coordinator at (218) 576-8068 or kkubiak@duluthmn.gov.

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