

WILDRIVERSCONSERVANCY.ORG

SPRING/ SUMMER 2023

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CONSERVING OUR WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS



WILD RIVERS
CONSERVANCY

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WILD RIVERS
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WHAT IS A FRIEND?

CRAIG HANSEN, SUPERINTENDENT, ST. CROIX NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAY;
DEB RYUN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2011, Wild Rivers Conservancy became the official nonprofit partner, or Friends Group, for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. Since that time, many people have asked what that means.

Traditionally, friends groups support parks as advocates to protect park resources, enhance visitor experiences, and create a strong sense of stewardship and involvement. Friends groups may also provide additional financial resources to advance common goals. With America's changing demographics and landscape, there is an ever-growing need to build strong public support.

Wild Rivers Conservancy has a formal agreement and an annual work plan with the Riverway. Our plan aligns the identified needs and priorities of the Riverway with the Conservancy's. The document spells out ways that we work together to increase our capacity to protect the ecological, cultural, and recreational value of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

The Conservancy supports and complements the National Park Service's work within the Riverway and outside its boundary. The Conservancy is not typical of many other friend groups in that a significant portion of our contribution to the park takes place throughout the St. Croix watershed.

Many exciting and impactful projects have stemmed from this formal partnership: natural resource work to aid native mussel restoration, the fight against aquatic invasive species, long-term bird monitoring, and new this year, a climate resiliency program to enhance the resources we protect; educational and outreach efforts like Rivers Are Alive and programming to get veterans on the river to inspire stewardship and love for the special places we all care for. These are just a handful of the specific projects and programs this partnership has produced that benefit the Riverway and communities throughout the watershed.

Most importantly, the Conservancy and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway have a common goal to protect the Riverway's natural resources and its beauty and cultivate future park champions. Together, we will ensure that future generations can enjoy the same experiences you have come to know and love on our wild and scenic rivers.

Board of Directors

Brynn Albrecht	Katelyn Claeys - Treasurer	Craig Hamer	Sarah Lovegreen
Sally Arneson	Chad Dayton	Einar Hanson	Stuart Neville - Chair
Doug Blanke	Loralee DiLorenzo	Doug Hemer	Kristina Smitten
Deborah Borek, M.D.	Jim Dorsey	Krista Hoeschen	Tom Swain - Past Chair
Bill Buell	Dorothy Goldie	Betsy Kremser - Secretary	Brian Van Abel

Welcome, New Conservancy Staff



Erika Van Krevelen
Volunteer Coordinator

"It's great to join Wild Rivers Conservancy as the new Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers play a critical role in conserving this special place and helping others discover and experience it for themselves. Their ongoing passion, commitment, and enthusiasm are inspiring, I'm grateful to get to work with them."



Alexis Monti
Climate Resiliency Specialist

As the Climate Resiliency Specialist, my role is to share some of the known best practices and management options to promote continued and improved climate resiliency on your land. Doing so will not only benefit your property but the whole St. Croix Watershed, for generations to come."



Welcome, Incoming Board of Directors

Dorothy Goldie, Einar Hanson, and Krista Hoeschen

Thank You, Outgoing Board of Directors

George Boody, Andrea Jorgenson, Amy Short, and Mary Uppgren

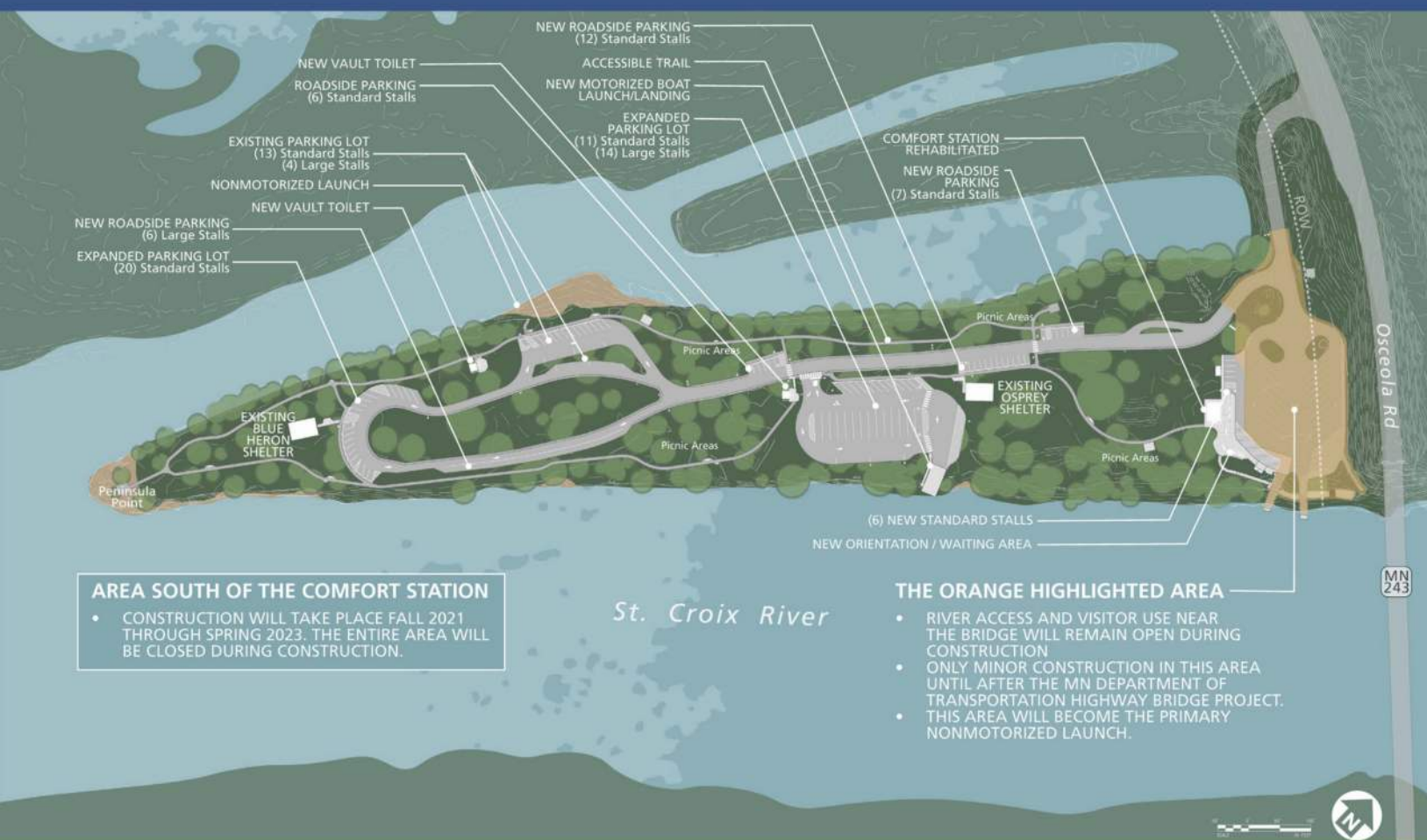


OSCEOLA LANDING REHABILITATION

Osceola Landing is one of the St. Croix's busiest river landings. The National Park Service's (NPS) long-time goal is to improve the landing and day-use area, enhancing safety and improving the visitor experience. It has been built with resilient construction materials for long-lasting service life. Construction began in the fall of 2021 and the day-use area has been closed since. When phase one of rehabilitation is complete in early summer, visitors will experience new and improved amenities.

What are some of the site improvements or enhancements you will find at Osceola Landing?

- Separate motorized and non-motorized boat launches will improve traffic flow and public safety
- More parking spaces have been added
- Visitors will see new interpretive signs, benches, shade shelters, a drinking fountain, and an accessible pathway
- Hazardous trees were pruned or removed, and a more diverse stand of trees was planted
- Riverbank natural erosion control methods will stabilize the shoreland
- Accessibility incorporated into the new loop trails, vault toilets, picnic sites, visitor resting benches, and park grills
- Energy-efficient lighting, electrical, plumbing, and other utility enhancements have been installed





Why did the National Park Service implement these improvements?

Improvements were needed to address safety concerns among pedestrians, motorized boaters, and non-motorized boaters. In doing so, the National Park Service is improving Osceola Landing to enhance day-use activities and the interpretive, orientation, and wayfinding experience; enhance management of commercial use operations; address shoreline erosion and hazardous trees; and address congestion and deferred maintenance of visitor facilities.

Why does the project have two phases?

The project is split into two phases to ensure newly built elements are not impacted by the future Highway 243 Bridge replacement project. Phase two, the rehabilitation of the northern parking and watercraft landing area, will be implemented upon completion of the new bridge.



How was the project paid for?

The \$3.5 million project was funded through the NPS "Rec Fee" funding program. While St. Croix National Scenic Riverway does not charge an entry fee, the park is eligible to apply for dollars collected via fees at other national parks.

Thank you

The NPS would like to thank everyone for their engagement and comments during the design phase of the project. Your comments informed the design and the final product. And thank you for your patience during the construction phase. The rehabilitation project is expected to be completed in early summer and we look forward to re-opening the renovated landing site.

For more information, please visit nps.gov/sacn or call 715-483-2274.



CREATE A CLIMATE RESILIENT BACKYARD

ALEXIS MONTI, CLIMATE RESILIENCY SPECIALIST

Climate change impacts are a growing global and LOCAL threat. Minnesota and Wisconsin trees are stressed from a changing climate that negatively impacts our communities, increases forest vulnerability to pests and disease, and reduces forest productivity. Forests hold an essential place in our fight to help mitigate the effects of climate change; trees are our best allies! Healthy trees sequester carbon, meaning they remove carbon dioxide from the air and store it in their wood. They help manage water runoff when it rains. They clean the air we breathe and give back oxygen. In short, we couldn't have a healthy climate without healthy trees.



One of the best ways to build a resilient backyard is to plant "climate-change winner" trees. By incorporating trees better adapted to a changing climate, you'll have a more resilient landscape. Some of the trees that are predicted to do well here are:

- Basswood
- Black cherry
- Oaks (black, white, bur, pin, and red)
- Black walnut
- Hackberry
- Maples (red, silver, sugar, and boxelder)
- Eastern white pine

Consider taking inventory of your trees and monitoring their health. After all, healthy trees have numerous benefits. We all have fond memories of trees; they are beautiful and restorative, they have economic value alive and harvested, and they provide wildlife habitat. Managing forests big and small, with climate resiliency in mind, will ensure the success and health of our forests well into the future.





SUSTAINING MEMBERS: A NONPROFIT'S SUPERPOWER

BETHANY COX, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Here's a nonprofit secret: monthly donations can have just as much impact as a large, one-time donation.

"My small monthly gift adds up over the year and makes a big impact." - Anonymous

Sustaining Members are committed to a thriving watershed all year long through an unrestricted monthly gift that can be paid in a convenient, ongoing way.

Monthly giving is not just about making a donation. It's about making an even greater impact.

Impact can be a lot of different things. It can be the scholarships needed to fund a Title I classroom field trip to the Riverway. It can be the grant that makes an unpaid dream internship into a paid experience. Or, it might be one more volunteer raising galerucella beetles to combat invasive purple loosestrife.

The Conservancy is excited to expand our sustaining membership with you.

"It is easier to spread out the payment over time rather than make a large once-a-year contribution." - Gary

Your monthly donation, combined with the generosity of many donors just like you, gives the Conservancy one more way to responsibly budget and plan our programs around a predictable revenue stream - a sense of certainty in these uncertain times.

"Wild Rivers Conservancy wisely spends every dime they receive, including my monthly gift, to make a big impact because they are passionate and knowledgeable about what they do." - Sarah

Please join us in becoming a
SUSTAINING MEMBER
——— today! ———

scan me!





WILD RIVERS CONSERVANCY
OF THE ST. CROIX AND NAMEKAGON
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WILDRIVERSCONSERVANCY.ORG



@wildriversconservancy

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SAVE THE DATE

FOREVER WILD: ANNUAL CONSERVANCY FUNDRAISER

9.14.23

RUSTIC ROOTS WINERY | SCANDIA, MN

Details: wildriversconservancy.org/support/foreverwild

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OPEN WATER:

A Conservancy Celebration

Friday, April 21 | 5:30 - 8:30 PM | Lake Elmo Inn

Open water season is upon us! Let's connect with fellow river lovers, revel over a delicious dinner, and enjoy an enthralling presentation by supporter Debra Mitts-Smith, titled *What Big Eyes You Have: A Cultural History of the Wolf*.

Plus, we'll celebrate the winners of our annual Watershed Steward and Every Kid in the Croix Awards!

REGISTER BY APRIL 13, 2023

More information and entree choice descriptions available at

WILDRIVERSCONSERVANCY.ORG/EVENT/OPEN-WATER

5:30 PM Social

6:30 PM Dinner



7:00 PM Awards

7:30 PM Speaker



OPEN WATER REGISTRATION FORM

Reservations and payments can also be made online at: wildriversconservancy.org/event/open-water

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

REGISTER BY APRIL 13

_____ Tickets @ \$60 each

_____ **Total Enclosed**

_____ Chicken Calvados

_____ Baked Lemon Tilapia

_____ Stuffed Spaghetti Squash

To purchase a table of 10, please reach out to our office at 715-483-3300 or info@wildriversconservancy.org

Please make checks payable to Wild Rivers Conservancy and mail to: PO Box 938, Osceola, WI 54020

OPEN WATER:

— A Conservancy Celebration —

Friday, April 21 | 5:30 - 8:00 PM | Lake Elmo Inn

Join Wild Rivers Conservancy on Friday, April 21 for Open Water: A Conservancy Celebration.

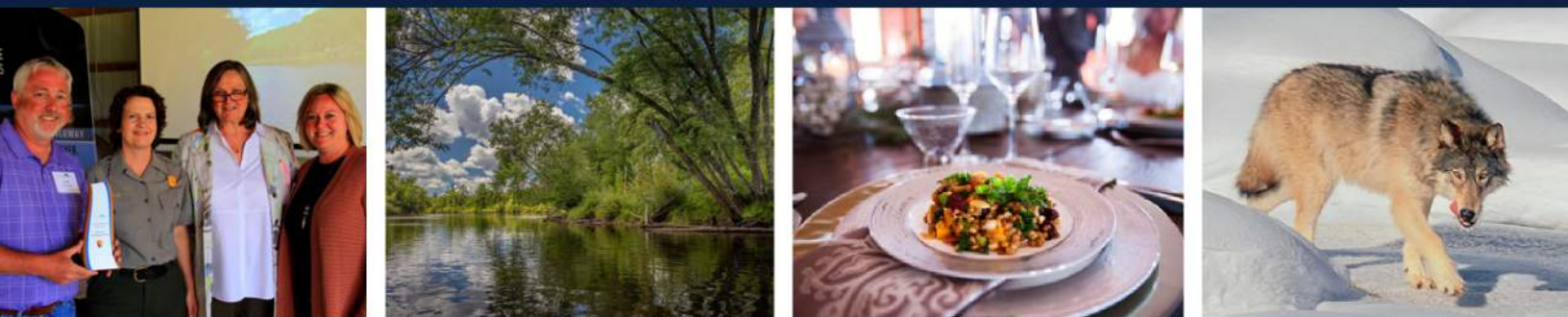
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Social hour 5:30 PM | Dinner 6:30 PM | Featured speaker 7:30 PM

Plus, the Watershed Steward and Every Kid in the Croix Awards are back! The St. Croix Stewardship Award recognizes the contributions of those who fight to protect, enhance and celebrate our national park and extraordinary natural resources. The Every Kid in the Croix Award celebrates schools of all sizes, rural and urban, that prioritize inspiring their students to be stewards of our world-class natural resources.

REGISTER BY APRIL 13, 2023

WILDRIVERSCONSERVANCY.ORG/EVENT/OPEN-WATER



WILD RIVERS
ST. CROIX CONSERVANCY NAMEKAGON

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GROWING OUR REACH

WENDY TREMBLAY, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR



Volunteers have played a critical but limited role in achieving the mission of the Conservancy and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway to date. Our small but mighty crew helps to ensure visitors and residents can experience and enjoy the vibrant and healthy ecosystem of the Riverway and its watershed. We have reached a point that makes it clear that if we want to provide meaningful experiences for volunteers, we need dedicated staff to recruit, train, and match people to opportunities. With a more structured and robust program, volunteers can provide support well beyond our staff capacity for land restoration, park maintenance, education programs, outdoor recreation, citizen science monitoring, and more.

Since our founding, we have helped protect the health of the river; but, with growing threats, we must remain diligent and expand our capacity to support the watershed. By engaging new Riverway champions such as youth and non-typical park visitors, we can build a sense of community around the St. Croix and Namekagon Valleys and help inspire community action to protect its rare ecological integrity.

Taking the next step forward, the Conservancy has hired a full-time Volunteer Coordinator. This position will be responsible for creating and implementing a joint volunteer program including recruiting, training, and connecting volunteers to opportunities within the St. Croix River Watershed. If you are interested in connecting with this staff member, contact info@wildriversconservancy.org





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