



September 24, 2024

Dear Coastal Council,

## Happy Anniversary!

Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program and the Coastal Council are officially 25! I know we were all at different places 25 years ago. Today, our paths have come together to collectively invest in the people and projects that build a healthy and thriving coastal area. Thank you for being on this journey with us.

Saying 'thank you' and lifting the people that do the hard work of managing our coastal resources and communities are themes we intend to carry forward over this next year as we celebrate the last 25 years. Our first expression of that will be at an open house following the council's October 2 meeting. The event will provide elected leaders, municipal staff, past grantees, partners and collaborators in the area an opportunity to network and reconnect with colleagues. They can also learn about Coastal Program grants, get tips for building resilience, and find out how to use coastal data as staff showcase their areas of expertise. Carlton County is just the first stop, as we'll do this again in St. Louis, Lake and Cook counties after each of our scheduled meetings. We hope you'll join us for every one!

## A Busy Summer

Summer was not a slow season for us. In fact, it was one of the busiest yet. Working together, this small and mighty team:

- Worked with NOAA and a new grants system to receive our new award.
- Published the Annual and Small Grant Notices of Grant Opportunity ([mndnr.gov/mlscp](http://mndnr.gov/mlscp))
- Submitted four progress reports, an award extension request and two responses to specific award conditions to keep us in good standing with NOAA.
- Applied for \$900,000 in non-competitive capacity funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The \$300,000 a year starting December 2025 will accelerate habitat restoration and conservation planning across the entire coastal area, including access to the latest coastal data.
- Updated our web presence, including new main and 'Foundations' pages, as well as adding an events calendar. This is the first significant update in decades and will make it easier for users to find information they need.
- Brought together a multi-disciplinary team and a grant writer to define and propose a project for competitive funding under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. We're keeping our fingers crossed NOAA will invite us back to submit a full proposal. We'll know more in early October.
- Secured the services of another DNR unit to help complete the last outstanding task in our 2021 award. Once complete, a small coastal township will have a better understanding of how water runs off the land in their community.

- Reinvigorated work around a project to design living shorelines (a shoreline stabilization technique that uses natural materials to protect and improve the coast) at Temperance River State Park, Flood Bay Wayside and the Twin Points public water access.

And now with our 2024 coastal management award in place, we'll work together to:

- Prepare for our NOAA evaluation, which will cover the last six years of program work.
- Complete our Section 309 Assessment and Strategies, which is the formal way of saying we'll be looking at needs in nine distinct areas and identifying ways to improve operations in the highest priority areas.
- Launch efforts to increase Native voices in coastal places.

### **Overwhelmingly Thankful**

Our team is extremely fortunate to be able to work with each other, alongside tremendous partners at the DNR and with so many other change makers out in our communities, including you. Yes, the amount of work we all face can be overwhelming. More overwhelming is what is happening in this area now and the accomplishments over the last 25 years because people heed the call. Together, we've made great strides, and it is only going to continue.

Best regards,

Amber