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Governor Doyle Nominates St. Louis River Estuary as a National Estuarine Research Reserve Site

Also Announces \$1.73 Million in Grants for Wisconsin's Coastal Communities

SUPERIOR – Governor Jim Doyle announced today the nomination of the St. Louis River as a National Estuarine Research Reserve. The nomination paves the way for a federal designation that will raise the national profile of Wisconsin's Great Lakes resources and capture additional federal funds to study and provide community outreach.

"Today, we are taking another step towards the long term protection of our Great Lakes," Governor Doyle said. "This designation promotes the appreciation, understanding, and protection of the unique freshwater estuary systems of Lake Superior, North America's largest freshwater resource."

The St. Louis River was one of 35 sites evaluated by the state and its nomination is the result of several years of hard work and support from citizens, local and tribal governments, organizations and conservation agencies. The designation would include the development of a research center on Lake Superior's south shore dedicated to making the area a regional leader in research and educational outreach related to freshwater estuaries.

It would join a national system of 27 research reserves, building on existing private, local, state and federal investments in natural resource protection, research and education. The St. Louis River is the largest U.S. tributary to Lake Superior and forms the headwaters of the entire Great Lakes system. Its waters and wetlands are nationally significant and provide critical habitat for birds, fish and plants.

Governor Jim Doyle also announced today more than \$1.73 million in grants to help protect and enhance Wisconsin's coastal communities. Administered by the Wisconsin Department of Administration's Coastal Management Program, the 38 grants will be used by local and state governments, as well as non-profit and educational organizations to assist with coastal projects totaling over \$4.2 million.

The intergovernmental and private sector collaborations aided by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Grants advance the Council of Great Lakes Governors' mission to protect and restore the largest single source of fresh water in the United States—the Great Lakes. As chair of the council, Governor Doyle is working with his Great Lakes colleagues, federal cabinet agencies, tribes, the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors and the Canadian Great Lakes Provinces to ensure that the Great Lakes region is economically sound and environmentally conscious in addressing today's problems and facing tomorrow's challenges.

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The Wisconsin Coastal Management Program balances natural resource protection and sustainable economic development along Wisconsin's Great Lakes coasts. The program awards federal funds from the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management and U.S. Department of Commerce, to local governments and other entities for innovative coastal initiatives.

Additional information about the Coastal Management program can be found at:

<http://coastal.wisconsin.gov>

For a complete list of grants please visit:

<http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us//docview.asp?docid=13779>