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City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: City and U.S. Corps of Engineers Announce Park Point Beach Nourishment Next Steps

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

City and U.S. Corps of Engineers Announce Park Point Beach Nourishment Next Steps

[Duluth, MN] On March 19, the City of Duluth provided the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with a right of entry to place signs warning residents and visitors of aluminum cans and fragments left behind from dredge material that was placed to assist with Park Point beach erosion issues. Signage was posted earlier this week at the following locations:

- At the 7th Street retaining wall, at the beginning of the beach
- At the 8th Street beach access point
- At the 12th Street Beach parking lot

Additional signage will be placed next week at the following:

- At the 22nd Avenue beach access point

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers offered a statement in regards to the signage.

“This issue was first identified to us in late October 2020 and the U.S. Corps of Engineers has taken responsibility for aluminum fragments showing up within the beach nourishment material. We’ve been in constant contact with the City and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and working with them to first, place temporary signs warning the community and second, to initiate a cleanup plan that meets our stringent standards and our partner’s expectations.”

On March 12, Mayor Emily Larson sent a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers requesting a Section 111 Study on Park Point. A Section 111 Study comes from the 1968 River and Harbor Act. The Act authorizes the Corps of Engineers, in this case, the Detroit District, to investigate potential impacts on adjacent shorelines and construct projects for the prevention or mitigation of shore damages attributable to federal navigation works. The Section 111 program is critical to the Corps' desire to maintain a healthy and natural shoreline.

The Detroit District last completed a Section 111 study on Park Point in 2001. That study determined the federal navigation structures were only partially at fault for increased erosion at Park Point. The price tag for the recommended fix was \$13.3 million. That exceeded the maximum federal investment of \$12 million. That effort did not move forward.

The requested study is in the beginning stages of going through the federal funding process before it can be initiated.

However, if authorized and funded, the U.S. Corps of Engineers would work collaboratively with the City of Duluth to ensure that the most state-of-the-art methods are used to understand the science and the recommendations in the study.

The City will be in touch with our federal delegation to make them aware of local support for the Section 111 Study.

City Administration appreciates the opportunity to request a Section 111 Study from the U.S. Corps of Engineers and remains committed to finding solutions for the erosion problems along the beach at Park Point.

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