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Minnesota Land Trust honors City of Duluth as Partner of the Year, national natural spaces planning leader

October 20, 2022, Saint Paul, Minn.—On Saturday, October 29, 2022, at 1:30 p.m., the Minnesota Land Trust will honor the City of Duluth as its Partner of the Year at the DECC Harbor Side Convention Center in Duluth. City leadership (including Mayor Emily Larson) and Land Trust staff and supporters will gather to celebrate the City as a national model for realizing the potential of outdoor recreation and green space preservation as essential community attributes.

For years, the City of Duluth has proven itself to be a civic-minded conservation leader. From voters approving the 2011 city parks and libraries referendum to establishing the St. Louis River Corridor Initiative, from designating the St. Louis River and Hartley Natural Areas to instituting the Natural Resources Management Program Plan, residents and City leaders alike have invested in protecting natural landscapes for all Duluthians to enjoy.

The investments have paid dividends. Duluth residents have more access to trails and natural areas than almost any city in America. And wild, open spaces are more than luxury assets. The City of Duluth has recognized their integral public benefits: they keep air and water clean, reduce flooding, and provide citizens with healthy, restorative spaces to enjoy—essential resources for all, especially during the isolation of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Partner of the Year award commemorates both the City’s unique vision and intention and its collaborative relationship with the Minnesota Land Trust. The Land Trust could not have asked for a better partner in its work to secure funding, plan and coordinate restoration projects, engage the public, and maintain momentum.

“We applaud the dedication of City leaders, outdoor recreation groups—and ultimately Duluth residents themselves—to provide world class outdoor amenities and preserve its green space. The long-standing partnership between the City and the Land Trust has been one of the organization’s greatest highlights,” said Kris Larson, the Minnesota Land Trust’s Chief Executive Officer.

At a time when cities throughout the state of Minnesota are planning their futures, the City of Duluth stands as a model for not only capitalizing on its natural assets and outdoor recreation

opportunities, but also ensuring that these opportunities are more equitably available to its residents.

The Land Trust looks forward to working with the City on future projects even while celebrating the partnership's achievements. Though the Land Trust and the City have accomplished much, there remains much to be done. Voters will have a renewed opportunity this November to show their support for Duluth's parks with the Park Fund Referendum—a ballot measure that, if approved, would increase funding for existing parks' operations, maintenance, and improvements.

The Minnesota Land Trust will present the Partner of the Year award as a part of its 2022 Treasured Places event. The event will feature a presentation on the City of Duluth's contributions. The Land Trust will also honor David and June Guckenberger as Landowners of the Year, Nona Goertz as Volunteer of the Year, and the Northridge Estates Association with a Special Recognition award.

Event Details

Minnesota Land Trust 2022 Treasured Places Awards Ceremony and Social

Saturday, October 29, 2022

Harbor Side, Duluth Entertainment Convention Center

Canal Park, Duluth, Minnesota

Awards Ceremony: 1:30–2:30 p.m.

Social: 2:30–4:00 p.m. Cash bar; complimentary coffee and desserts

Awards ceremony and social are open to the public. Pre-registration (by October 26, 2022) is required: mnland.org/treasured-places

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About the Minnesota Land Trust: The [Minnesota Land Trust](http://mnland.org) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to protect and restore Minnesota's most vital natural lands in order to provide wildlife habitat, clean water, outdoor experiences and scenic beauty for generations to come. The organization has completed 655 conservation projects statewide, permanently protecting over 74,000 acres of natural and scenic land and over 450 miles of fragile shoreline.

A [conservation easement](http://mnland.org/conservation-easement) is a voluntary, legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or other qualified agency that permanently limits certain uses of land in order to protect its conservation values. Landowners continue to own and enjoy the land, provide for its ongoing care, and control land access. Once created, the conservation easement is binding on all future owners of the property. More information can be found at www.mnland.org.