



Five years post 2012 Duluth Flood: Chester Creek restoration

July 2017 Snapshots

June 20, 2017 marked five years since the Duluth Flood of 2012. It was an event that forever changed Duluth. The area received a total of 7.25 inches of rain and some of the surrounding areas received 8-10 inches. This event triggered a Presidential Major Disaster on July 6, 2012 and on Friday, Aug. 24, 2012 Governor Mark Dayton signed a \$167 million disaster relief bill.



This flood caused damage all over the northland, much of it located in the riparian areas. Streambanks eroded, causing threats to private and public infrastructure, while also, degrading the riparian and in stream habitat and biota.

Many of Duluth's 16 cold water trout streams had significant damage. One of the most recreated streams is Chester Creek.

Children participating in the Chester Bowl Adventure Program located in Chester Park, where their philosophy of "Peace in the Parks" is emphasized in their everyday interaction and activities.

Chester Creek has a 7.1 mile watershed and is home to some of the oldest volcanic rock on earth. Because of the watershed's unique topography, lush forests and cold water it has a rich history of providing recreational opportunities for the community.

Chester Park was established in 1889 and is home to hiking, skiing, student adventure camps, festivals, fishing, field sports and mountain biking. At one point it was home to training for Olympic ski jumpers.

Location of the City's infrastructure and failure of one of the two dams, along with the public value, the stream was a high priority for the City of Duluth, the South St. Louis SWCD, Trout Unlimited, the Department of Natural Resources and other partners to focus restoration efforts.



Section of Chester Creek, which was restored using natural channel design principles with funding through BWSR-Disaster Relief Program from the 2012 flood. Installed summer of 2016.

In 2016 the City of Duluth completed three major restoration projects for Chester to project city infrastructure. These projects totaled \$487,000. Two of the projects used toe-wood methodology to create a floodplain bench from all natural materials: tree trunks, root wads, brush, soil and willow. This bench will reduce erosion from the stream bank, create fish habitat and provide native vegetation along the river corridor.

In the fall of 2017 the South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District will remove two dams, one that failed during the flood, re-align and stabilize the stream, provide trout habitat and increase resilience to future flooding with \$516,000.