

## Project Profile: Restoring Fire to Maintain Minnesota Point Pine Forest

### *Project Summary*

Minnesota Point 50, in partnership with a diverse coalition of agencies, tribal, and community organizations, has received multi-year funding from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Program to restore beneficial fire to Minnesota Point's pine forest.



The Minnesota Point project aims to restore and protect the old growth pine forest, a designated Scientific and Natural Area, which is facing urgent threats from erosion, unplanned wildfires and lack of good fire, and increased visitor pressure. This coastal dune ecosystem is also the ancestral and contemporary homelands of the Ojibwe people, who historically used fire as a land stewardship tool. The project will implement prescribed burns as a method of ecological and cultural restoration, targeting a reduction in understory tree density by at least 40% and top-killing 50% of woody shrubs and returning cultural fire regimes to the landscape. Additionally, the project will promote the growth of fire-dependent plants such as blueberry and bearberry, enhance habitat for the Northern Long-eared Bat, and decrease invasive plant species. Key activities include developing and executing a detailed burn plan, conducting pre- and post-burn monitoring, and engaging the community through educational events and community-based science initiatives. Expected outcomes include the resurgence of native plant species, improved habitat conditions for wildlife, and increased public engagement with the forest. The project will also foster long-term partnerships and leverage additional funding for ongoing fire management efforts. By restoring fire to this unique ecosystem, the project will enhance public access and enjoyment while ensuring the sustainability of the forest for future generations.

### *Project Partners*

Key project partners include Fond Du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Minnesota DNR/Scientific and Natural Areas, the City of Duluth, Park Point Community, Club, Minnesota Point 50 (MP50), Good Sky Guidance, Dovetail Partners, Ethical Embers LLC, University of Minnesota Cloquet Forestry Center, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We will engage with additional community organizations throughout the lifetime of the project.

*Grant award period:* August 1, 2025 - May 19, 2028

*Award amount:* \$200,000

*Image:* A representative view of the coastal mixed red and white pine forest condition of Point Pine Forest Scientific and Natural Area and adjacent City of Duluth lands. View from the St. Louis estuary towards Lake Superior, Spring 2007. Source: [MHAPO](#)