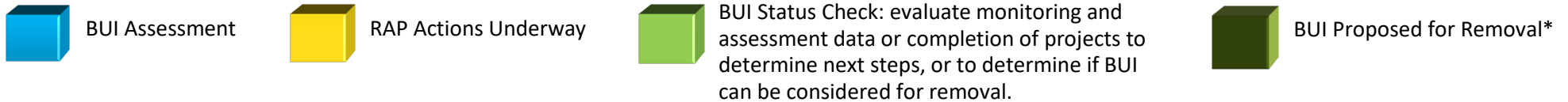
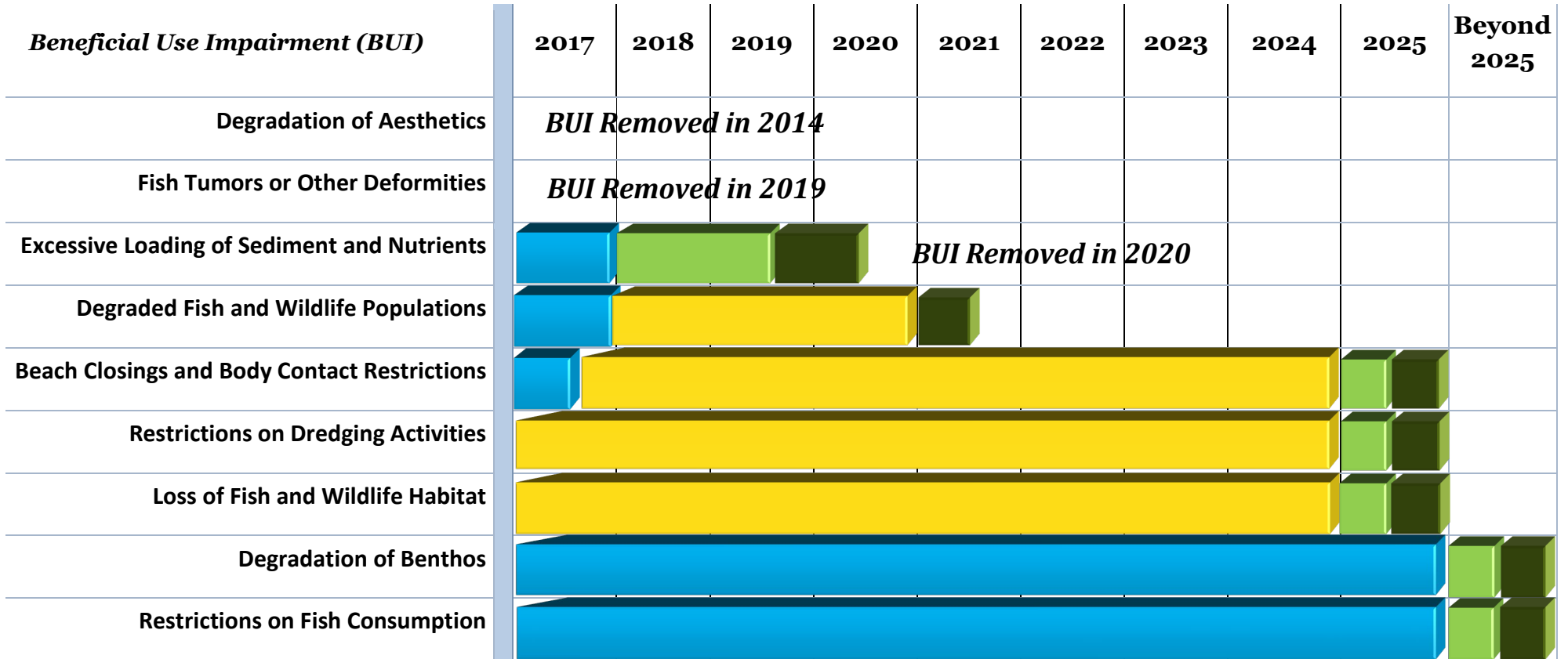


# St. Louis River Area of Concern

## Beneficial Use Impairment Removal Timeline



\* BUI removal dates are approximate based on best professional judgement. Results from BUI assessments and technical team recommendations may alter these dates. More information about each BUI can be found in the Remedial Action Plan posted on the Wisconsin DNR website <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/GreatLakes/StLouis.html>.

# Projects and Milestones

The St. Louis River AOC has made significant progress towards BUI removal and has a goal to substantially complete all remediation and restoration construction actions by the fall of 2024. Status and key tasks for the remaining BUI's are listed here.

**Degraded Fish and Wildlife Populations:** All management actions will be complete by the end of 2020, including avian habitat restoration at Interstate Island, Piping Plover habitat restoration, and Lake Sturgeon tissue evaluation. Because the Lake Sturgeon removal objective had not been met, an assessment was completed to evaluate levels of legacy pollutants in Lake Sturgeon. Data collected in the AOC suggest that legacy pollutants are not limiting population recovery and it is likely that populations may be affected by factors outside of the AOC program such as sturgeon lifecycle or introduced species. The removal package development is underway and the anticipated BUI removal date is 2021.

**Beach Closings and Body Contact Restrictions:** Two management actions have been completed and the remaining four management actions are underway. A “no swimming” sign is still present at US Steel/Spirit Lake site and “warning” signs are still present at Crawford Creek and Munger Landing. Because sign removal is dependent on the completion of associated remediation projects, BUI removal is slated for 2025.

**Restrictions on Dredging Activities:** Thirteen of 29 management actions are complete and the remainder are underway. Howard's Bay construction started in 2020. Azcon/DSPA Slip was completed in 2020. Wisconsin completed sampling to assess the need for remedial action at five sites and a report with recommendations is expected in early 2021. BUI removal is slated for 2025.

**Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat:** Nine management actions are complete and the remaining 12 management actions are underway. Restoration at the Kingsbury Bay and Grassy Point sites is nearing completion, but finishing work will carry over into 2021. 19,000 cubic yards of biomedium was added to the 40<sup>th</sup> Ave West shoals in 2020. Phase one of the Little Balsam Creek fish passage culverts project was completed in 2020. Work continues to restore Wild Rice to enhance habitat in the estuary with 14,000 pounds of rice seeded in 2020. BUI removal is slated for 2025.

**Degradation of Benthos:** Post construction monitoring is the only management action in this BUI and it will occur at multiple sites. This work has begun at the reference sites and at each aquatic habitat site where construction has been completed. The post-construction data will be compared to the pre-construction biological data already collected and benthic metrics will be used to assess the outcomes of aquatic restoration projects. Adequate benthic recovery time may vary based on site specific factors, and preparation of this BUI removal package will take place after the final pre-to-post construction assessment is completed.

**Restrictions on Fish Consumption:** All four management actions are underway. The mercury study management action was started in 2017 and will assess sources of mercury in AOC and reference site fish. Funding for additional mercury and PCB analysis was requested in 2020 and, if funded, data analysis will be complete in 2022, after which an integrated fish mercury characterization report will be prepared. Initial PCB modeling is complete. Recovery monitoring of fish consumption advice is planned through 2025, after which the potential for BUI removal will be evaluated.