



Stream Restoration and Enhancement Process Improvement Workgroup

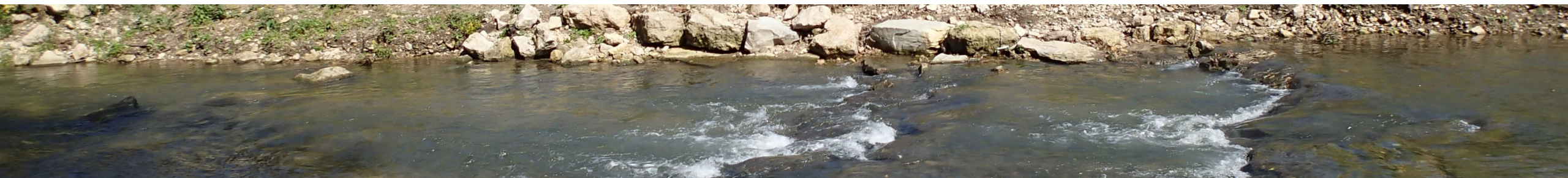
**Melissa Kuskie, Director, Ecological and Water Resources Division
Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Meeting
June 17, 2026**

Agenda

- Background
- Refresher:
 - Regulatory landscape
 - Existing/ongoing continuous improvement (CI) efforts
- Workgroup development and scope
- Project timeline
- Expected outcomes
- Questions

Background – what brought this effort together?

- Partners in stream restoration have shared frustration in the length of time it takes to complete projects
- January 2026 LSOHC meeting
 - Overview of regulatory landscape
 - Current and potential CI work
- Launch of 2026 CI Effort: Stream Restoration & Enhancement Process Improvement Workgroup



Authorizations Potentially Needed:

- Environmental Review
- Work in Public Waters Permit
- Threatened and Endangered Species Takings Permit
- USACE 404 permit and MPCA 401 water quality certification
- Wetland Conservation Act
- SHPO/OSA requirements
- Various local government authorizations

Existing/Ongoing CI Efforts

- Parallel processes when possible
- Internal forums/efficiency efforts/trainings: e.g., monthly field hydro meetings, Operation Dashboard Relief, annual programmatic training
- Staffing increases
- Evaluating areas of potential rule revision, such as additional allowances for use of natural materials
- Early coordination

Stream Restoration & Enhancement Process Improvement Workgroup Development

- DNR convened this workgroup to
 - Map the process for stream restoration and enhancement projects
 - Identify causes for delays
 - Prioritize improvements
 - Develop tools to support efficient projects in MN



Who is on the workgroup?

- LSOHC
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Coon Creek Watershed District
- Shell Rock River Watershed District
- Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers Watershed District
- Anoka Conservation District
- South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District
- Trout Unlimited
- Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
- Houston Engineering
- Department of Natural Resources
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Board of Water and Soil Resources
- Environmental Quality Board



Intentions of the Workgroup



- Partners and regulatory authorities in stream restoration and enhancement in Minnesota have a mutual understanding of regulatory process steps and how best to incorporate these processes into effective build project timelines.
- Partners and regulatory authorities will work together to identify efficiencies in their processes.
- Partners will experience less frustration in the length of time it takes to complete projects

What is the workgroup digging into?

- In scope:
 - Project planning
 - Environmental Review
 - Waters Permitting
 - Wetland Conservation Act
 - Federal permitting (401, 404)



Project Timeline

ID	Task	Mar 2026			Apr 2026			May 2026			Jun 2026			Jul 2026			Aug 2026			Sep 2026			Oct 2026			Nov 2026			Dec 2026																					
		2/22	3/1	3/8	3/15	3/22	3/29	4/5	4/12	4/19	4/26	5/3	5/10	5/17	5/24	5/31	6/7	6/14	6/21	6/28	7/5	7/12	7/19	7/26	8/2	8/9	8/16	8/23	8/30	9/6	9/13	9/20	9/27	10/4	10/11	10/18	10/25	11/1	11/8	11/15	11/22	11/29	12/6	12/13						
1	DNR Develop Project Plan	█			◆																																													
2	Assemble Project Team	█			◆																																													
3	Stream Project Process Mapping							█						◆																																				
4	LSOHC Update																			◆																														
5	Identify/Prioritize/Finalize Recommendations													█																		◆																		
6	Quick Wins Incorporated																			█												◆																		
7	Implementing Long-term Strategies																									█						◆																		
8	LSOHC Update																									◆																								



Progress Made and Next Steps

- Progress

- Developed the project plan
- Assembled the workgroup
- Held our orientation meeting
- Interviewed workgroup members
- Collected existing resources/
guidance used to support project
planning, review and permitting

- Next Steps

- Workshop to map collective experience
with pain points, and start to identify
improvements
- Workgroup members further develop
improvements with their colleagues
- Workshop to review, prioritize and start
implementing improvements
- Develop plan to pursue improvements that
will take longer to implement

What are the expected outcomes of the workgroup?

- Consensus on the mapped process for planning, review and permitting for stream restoration and enhancement projects
- Implemented "quick wins" to address pain points as they are identified
- Prioritized recommendations for additional improvements that may take more time



Thank you

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