Hydrologic Restoration Activities
General Permit Application Checklist

Hydrologic Restoration Activities General Permit Application Instructions

Determine eligibility for this general permit:

- Choose an activity decision module on web, http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/waterways, ***or***
- Review the eligibility criteria below.
    - o If the project does not meet all of the eligibility standards, apply for an Individual Permit.
- Applicants are encouraged to request a pre-application meeting with a Water Management Specialist as prescribed in s. 30.2065 (1g) (f), Wis. Stats., especially if any of the following apply:
    - The project involves new or innovative practices.
    - Activities affect multiple waterways and wetlands.
    - The project may include permanent discharges to wetlands.
    - The project may affect ASNRIs or wetlands of high value as listed under 281.36(3g)(d).
    - The project may impound or divert water or change stream channels.
    - The project is located in a Zone A or Zone AE mapped floodplain.

To apply:

- Apply online using our online ePermitting System at http://dnr.wi.gov/permits/water.
- Include all required attachments. Each document must be less than 15 megabytes and our online system offers a help guide to reduce file sizes.
- Permit processing review times begin when all of the required application materials are received by the DNR. The department may require additional information to evaluate the project.
- If you have questions regarding your application, contact the local Water Management Specialist for your county http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Waterways/contacts.html#county.
- Your signed submittal of this project application checklist constitutes a request that certifying authority (State of Wisconsin) review and take action on this CWA 401 certification request, as required, within the applicable reasonable period of time.

Please note, prior to starting any work at the project site, you are responsible for:

- Obtain all necessary local (e.g., city, town, village or county) permits.
- Obtain U.S. Army Corps of Engineer permits or approvals, http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory.aspx.
- Obtaining all tribal permits or approvals.
- Any other applicable state permits.

Required attachments - Forms or documents you upload in our online ePermitting System

1. **Application form -** A complete, signed application form “Water Resources Application for Project Permits (WRAPP)” (Form 3500-053).
2. **Application fee -** Payment must be submitted through the ePermitting System as part of the application process. The appropriate fee will be viewable at the end of the ePermitting application submittal process.
3. **Application Checklist** – a signed copy of the permit application checklist certifying that the applicant agrees to meet the eligibility criteria and permit conditions established in WDNR-GP22-2024.
4. **Ownership documentation -** (i.e., copy of deed, land contract, current property tax statement/receipt)
5. **Photographs** that clearly show the on-the-ground conditions of the existing project areas. Remember that too much snow cover or vegetation may obscure important details. If possible, have another person stand near the project area for size reference. Color images are preferred.
6. **Site maps** that clearly illustrate the location and perimeter of the project site, and its relationship to nearby water resources (e.g. lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands), major landmarks and roads. Provide copies of relevant maps (e.g. wetland, aerial, topographical, soil, floodplain, or zoning maps), with the project location clearly identified. The Department offers a web mapping tool to assist in creating these maps at http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/surfacewater/swdv/.
7. **Endangered and threatened Resources** - The applicant is not required but is encouraged to request an endangered resources (ER) review letter before applying for the permit. Information on how to obtain a review can be found by visiting the website at http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ERReview/Review.html. The applicant can also visit the NHI Public Portal, http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ERReview/PublicPortal.html, to determine if a full ER Review is required. Read the ‘What is an ER Preliminary Assessment and what do the results mean?’ section to determine follow-up steps.

8. **Historical and cultural resources** - If you are aware there is a historical or cultural resource present, you are required to contact the Wisconsin State Historical Society to verify and receive documentation that the activity will not result in an adverse impact to these resources.

9. **Plans and Specs:** A complete application must include project plans that include the final project design and construction plans, including a project diagram that shows all the following:

    a. Project activities clearly identified in reference to wetland boundaries and describe how the wetland boundaries were determined. Project plans must clearly differentiate between proposed permanent and temporary wetland impacts.

    b. Project activities clearly identified in reference to waterways and describe how waterways were identified. Project plans must clearly differentiate between proposed permanent and temporary waterway impacts.

    c. The methods, materials, and equipment that will be used to carry out the project.

    d. The location and type of temporary and permanent silt fences or any other sediment/erosion control devices.

    e. Plan, profile and cross-sectional views with dimensions, along with the number and location of each proposed structure or activity.

    f. The construction schedule and sequence of work.

    g. For permanent fill in a waterway or wetland, a description of type, composition, and quality of materials.

    h. The location of any disposal area for dredged or excavated materials, if applicable.

    i. Maps of the project site with information that includes: the most recent Soil Survey map, WI Wetland Inventory map, topographic map, floodplain information, and aerial photographs. All maps must show basic map elements (e.g., scale) and clear directions to the project site with project and property boundaries clearly labeled. The aerial photo shall also show the locations of all proposed wetland fill or discharge clearly labeled, if applicable.

    j. Describe any long-term operation and maintenance plan to ensure practice(s) functions properly over the life of the structure.

    k. Current photographs that represent existing site conditions where the project will occur. Photos must show a clear and unobstructed view of the waterway/wetland within the project area.

10. **Hydrologic Restoration Project Narrative description of your proposal on a separate page, including the following:**

    a. Describe the project and hydrologic restoration goals focusing on the net improvements to hydrologic conditions, connections, or function.

    b. Describe the expected measurable outcomes, which may be presented as a range. Explain tools or methods used for any quantitative predictions and the rationale for any qualitative metrics.

    c. Describe the current watershed and site context (i.e., Where is the project located? What are the water management concerns? What is known about the root causes of hydrologic degradation?).

    d. Describe the historical context of the system. (i.e., How has the system behaved historically? What anthropogenic alterations have occurred? What is the potential for recovery of natural system hydrologic processes? What can be achieved at the project site following the proposed activities?).

    e. Describe any consequences of inaction.

    f. Describe any constraints that limit restoration potential and how the restoration plans have been adjusted to accommodate these constraints (i.e., full, or partial restoration and why). Constraints can be physical, economic, social, or due to landowner preferences/permissions.

    g. Describe likely or expected co-benefits to be achieved (i.e., water quality improvement, improved habitat, reduced flood risks/damages).

    h. Describe the restoration plans, including proposed action(s) and practices. As applicable, include reference to existing NRCS conservation practice standards and their associated design standards. If the proposed practices diverge from NRCS standards, describe how they differ and why.

        Note: Many NRCS conservation practice standards may be applicable in restoring hydrology including, but not limited to: Channel Bed Stabilization (584), Dike or Levee (356), Clearing/Snagging (326), Conservation Cover (327), Critical Area Planting (342), Spoil Diversion (572), Diversion (362), Open Channel (582), Pond (378), Shallow Water Development and Management (646), Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395), Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580), Structures for Water Control (587), Wetland Restoration (657), Grade Stabilization Structure (410), and Wetland Enhancement (659).

Note: Section 50.74 and 50.882, ATCP 50, Wis. Adm. Code, may also contain helpful information on the practices of hydrologic restoration and stream restoration.

i. Describe how the proposed actions will promote recovery of hydrologic processes and why the proposed practices are appropriate for this site. Examples of resource specific processes include but are not limited to:

   i. For waterways, system processes include bank migration, sediment movement, channel migration, and flooding.

   i. For wetlands, system processes include storage, infiltration, and connectivity.

   ii. For floodplains, system processes include connectivity, energy reduction, and floodwater retention.

j. If the project includes activities that straighten, dredge, or armor navigable stream channels, then describe the nature of these activities, why they are a necessary element to achieve the hydrologic restoration purpose, and the limits to these activities.

k. Describe the nature and extent of any disturbances to navigable and non-navigable waterways, including how they support hydrologic restoration. Discussion should address any of the following that apply:

   - Describe any temporary impacts to waterways and specify the extent and duration of the temporary disturbance and how the area(s) will be restored.
   - Describe any proposed structure below the Ordinary High Water Mark.
   - Describe how proposed structures will affect adjacent and upstream properties, and the actions that will be taken to address flooding or impeded drainage on adjacent and upstream properties.
   - Describe how the project will affect navigation in navigable waterways and if there are negative impacts, why they are necessary to hydrological restoration.
   - Describe how any proposed structure affects fish passage.

l. Describe the nature and extent of any wetland disturbance, including why it is an appropriate part of the proposed hydrologic restoration plan. Discussion should address any of the following that apply:

   - If any temporary impacts to wetlands or waterway, specify the extent and duration of the temporary disturbance and how the area(s) will be restored.
   - If the project plan includes any permanent conversion of wetland type or alteration to areas of special natural resource interest, specify and clarify how those impacts are designed to achieve net improvements to hydrologic condition, connections, and functions.
   - If permanent wetland fill is proposed, provide a detailed explanation of efforts to avoid and minimize those impacts to the greatest extent practicable and why they are a necessary element of the project.
   - Describe how the project will maintain wetland hydrology in the remaining wetlands.

m. Describe any proposed fish or wildlife enhancement activities and how they relate to the proposed hydrologic restoration plan.

n. Describe site preparation and stabilization plans, including measures you will use to minimize erosion and siltation into surface waters and wetlands. Construction shall follow Department approved best management practices as outlined in ss. NR 151.11 and 151.12, Wis. Adm. Code, or must describe any variance from those standards. The technical standards are found at https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/, keyword “stormwater technical standard.”

o. Describe revegetation plans, including the method, source and materials involved in revegetation.

p. Describe measures you will use to minimize the spread of invasive species. The project should follow Department approved best management practices as outlined in NR 40, Wis. Adm. Code, or must describe any variance from those standards. These protocols and practices can be found at https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/, keyword “invasive species BMPs”.

q. Describe any known uncertainties or risks and how you propose to minimize them.

11. For projects that require structures across a waterway, a completed HRGP structures checklist, if required by the department.

Eligibility Criteria

Projects that do not meet all criteria are not eligible for this general permit. If your project does not qualify for this general permit, you may apply for an individual permit.

A. General Eligibility Criteria	☐
The project must have a primary purpose of improving hydrologic conditions, connections, and functions.	☐
Project applicant is the landowner or easement holder or otherwise has legal authorization to proceed with the project.	☐
The project must demonstrate a net environmental benefit and/or improvements to the public interest in navigable waters by improving the hydrologic conditions, connections, and function, including but not limited to predictable improvements to one or more of the following: a. The physical condition of surface waters. b. Connections to other surface water and groundwater; or c. Reestablishment of hydrologic processes or functions such as sediment transport, nutrient cycling, groundwater recharge and baseflow maintenance.	☐
The project will return, to the extent possible, wetland, stream, and floodplain hydrology to a natural and self-regulating condition to accomplish one or more of the following objectives: a. Slow the flow of runoff. b. Reduce flood peak flows. c. Restore surface and groundwater interactions. d. Improve water quality. e. Increase soil retention. f. Increase groundwater infiltration. g. Increase base flow. h. Increase upper watershed storage; or i. Increase flood resilience.	☐
Hydrologic restoration activities may take place in and adjacent to wetlands, streams, floodplains, and drainageways, including those that are no longer present but are restorable.	☐
The project will not adversely impact an Area of Special Natural Resource Interest (ASNRI). The project may alter the flow of water in, to, or from an ASNRI only if the activities restore or repair surface or subsurface connections within the ASNRI or between the ASNRI and other waters of the state and results in a net environmental benefit.	☐
The project may result in minimal adverse impacts to waterways and/or wetlands regulated under ch. 30 and s. 281.36, Wis. Stats., if those impacts are temporary.	☐
The project may result in permanent but net-positive changes to biotic and abiotic environmental conditions.	☐
Construction shall be accomplished in such a manner as to minimize erosion and siltation into surface waters and wetlands. All erosion and sediment control measures shall meet or exceed the applicable technical standards listed under subchapter III of ch. NR 151, Wis. Adm. Code. Technical standards to implement the performance standards can be viewed at https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/, keyword “stormwater technical standard”.	☐
The project does not include any of the following activities: a. Construction of artificial wetlands. b. Construction of stormwater retention or detention ponds. c. Construction of large dams, as defined under s. 31.19(1m), Wis. Stats. d. Construction of dams that pose a risk to life, health, or property. e. Activities that straighten, berm, dredge, or armor streams channels, except when proposed as a necessary element of a larger hydrologic restoration plan. f. Fish and wildlife habitat enhancement activities that are not associated with a larger hydrologic restoration plan.	☐
If the project is located in a regulated floodplain (official Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or local zoning map), the applicant has certified that they are working to or have obtained applicable floodplain permits or approvals from the local zoning authority.	☐
If the project is located in a regulated shoreland, the applicant has certified they are working to, or have obtained applicable shoreland permits from the local zoning authority.	☐

No activity is authorized which is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a threatened or endangered species or a species proposed for such designation, as identified under the Federal Endangered Species Act and/or State law or which is likely to destroy or adversely modify the critical habitat of a species as identified under the Federal Endangered Species Act.	☐
The activity will not result in adverse impacts to historical or cultural resources and will comply with s. 44.40, Wis. Stats., as determined by the Department.	☐
Follow the most recent department approved washing and disinfection protocols and department approved best management practices to avoid the spread of invasive species as outlined in NR 40, Wis. Adm. Code. These protocols and practices can be found on the at https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/, keyword "invasive species BMPs".	☐

B. Eligibility Criteria for Projects Located in or Adjacent to Navigable Waterways

In addition to the general standards in A, the following standards apply to all activities in or adjacent to navigable waterways.

Any fish and wildlife habitat enhancement activities or structures are only eligible when designed as an element of a larger hydrologic restoration project and: a. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) technical standards are met or exceeded. b. Any modifications to NRCS standards are addressed with the project narrative and approved by the local Department fisheries biologist.	☐
To minimize adverse impacts on fish movement, fish spawning, and egg incubation periods, material may not be removed during any of these periods: • September 15th through May 15th for all trout streams; to determine if a waterway is a trout stream, you may use the WDNR website trout maps. • September 15th through June 15th on all Great Lakes tributaries upstream to the first dam or barrier. • November 1st through June 15th for Lake Michigan waters surrounding Door County including Green Bay and all harbors and bays. • September 15th through July 1st for Lake Superior waters surrounding Douglas County including St. Louis River and all harbors and bays. • March 1st through June 15th for ALL OTHER waters. **Note**: Per s. NR 1.02(7), Wis. Adm. Code, the Department identifies and classifies trout streams to ensure adequate protection and proper management of this unique resource. To determine if a waterway is a trout stream, you may use the Designated Waters Theme on Department's Surface Water Data Viewer at https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/, keyword "surface water data viewer". **Note**: The local Department Fisheries Biologist may waive or modify timing restrictions in writing. To request waiver or modification of fish spawning timing restrictions for your project, please include a request in the narrative portion of your permit application.	☐
The project shall not result in significant adverse impacts to fishery spawning habitat, including obstruction of fish passage, adversely affect bird breeding areas or substantially disrupt the movement of species that normally migrate from open water to upland or vice versa (i.e., amphibians, reptiles and mammals) as determined by the Department.	
Any structures placed at or below the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) shall not impair the use of a publicly accessible boat ramp and associated public piers or designated carry-in-only watercraft access site.	

Operation of equipment on the stream bed must comply with the following best management practices: a. Use temporary matting to protect the streambed as necessary. b. Keep equipment movement on the stream bed to a minimum. c. Equipment is kept on streambed for as little time as needed to complete the project and removed when not in use. d. Pre-inspect vehicles/equipment on all operating days to avoid leaks.	

C. Eligibility Criteria for Projects that Impact Wetlands In addition to the general standards in A, the following standards apply to all activities that impact wetlands:	
For projects with permanent discharges of fill materials into wetlands, the project will have a net positive environmental impact, cannot practicably avoid wetland impacts and has minimized wetland impacts to the greatest extent practicable to realize the net environmental benefit.	☐
Discharge of dredged or fill material will not adversely impact the following resources: Great Lakes ridge and swale complexes, interdunal wetlands, coastal plain marshes, emergent marshes containing wild rice, boreal rich fens, or calcareous fens, or sphagnum bogs that are located in the area located south of a horizontal line drawn across the state based on the routes of STH 16 and STH 21 west of Lake Winnebago and on USH 151 east of Lake Winnebago.	☐
Wetland impacts are not allowed for any type of constructed storm water treatment facility.	☐
The project is not eligible for authorization under a “Superior SAMP” permit reviewed by the City of Superior, Wisconsin.	☐

Other Authorities

☐ By checking this box, I certify that the proposed project will not occur in a mapped floodplain (official Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or local zoning map), or if the project is located in a regulated floodplain, I am obtaining or have obtained applicable floodplain permits or approvals from the local zoning authority.

Certification

☐ I certify that I have read and understand all project eligibility criteria and agree to design and construct my project in accordance with all listed eligibility criteria found in this checklist. In addition, I agree to meet all conditions required for structure placement as identified in the above referenced eligibility criteria

This form may be signed electronically, pursuant to Wis. Stat. Chapter 137. By checking the electronic signature acknowledgement box and typing your name, you are expressing intent to sign this form and certifying that all information contained herein is true, accurate, and complete, to the best of your knowledge and belief. If you decline to sign this form electronically, you must physically sign this form and all other forms required for your project.

Signature _____ Date Signed _____