

WATER RESOURCE

Winter 2025 Newsletter

Volume 2: Issue 1

At ISG, we are problem solvers. Our team of planners, architects, engineers, and scientists are committed to partnering with you to help address your water management challenges. Read this issue to gain expert insights, learn about project success stories, and find out about available resources to help you achieve your water quality goals, resulting in a healthier community, economy, and environment.

Positive Imprint: ISG Case Studies



Click on image to view larger.

Farr's Landing Mitigation Bank Restoration

Grand Meadow Township, SD

[Read More Here](#)

The Farr's Landing Mitigation Bank Restoration project, located in Minnehaha County, South Dakota, marks the state's first stream as well as combined wetland and stream mitigation bank. The project encompasses 110 acres and focuses on improving water quality, stabilizing streams, enhancing habitats, and restoring natural hydrology and vegetation. ISG worked with regulatory authorities to develop the stream quantification tool and led project design to restore approximately **5,500 feet, and re-meander 2,603 feet, of a tributary** to the West Branch Skunk Creek. Designs rehabilitate wetland vegetation, disable drainage features, and strategically scrape wetlands to boost ecological function.

The after-restoration image above was created by ISG visualization specialists to showcase environmental impacts of the Farr's Landing design, which helped streamline communication and decision-making for the project. Phase 1 construction is to be completed this summer and Phase 2 will wrap up in the fall.

Once complete, the project will restore floodplain connectivity and native habitats to support long-term ecological stability.

Leveraging Applied Technology

See What Could Be: The Impact of Design Visualization

Design sheets can be challenging to interpret, especially for complex water resource projects. Whether showcasing improved water quality, enhanced drainage, or restored ecosystems, design visualization empowers decision makers to see what could be and build consensus with confidence.



Click on image to view larger.

Still-Image Rendering: Drainage Water Recycling Design

Whitmore, IA

For watershed and wetland projects, it can be difficult for an untrained eye to identify existing and proposed site elements and how they can work together. Visualizations like the one above made it easier for the Iowa Department of Agriculture (IDALS) and project stakeholders to understand this innovative drainage water recycling design.

Deep-Dive Rendering: Fountain Lake Habitat Restoration

Albert Lea, MN

[View All Renderings Here](#)

Through design visualization, the [Shell Rock River Watershed District](#) looked beneath the surface of Fountain Lake and learned how restoration efforts would impact each layer of the aquatic environment.

In The Know: Funding Opportunities

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

Multipurpose Drainage Management (MDM)

Clean Water Funds

- Applications due quarterly, 2025 due dates have not been posted yet
- 10% match required
- Funds practices that provide water quality benefits to drainage projects

Water Quality + Storage Program

- Next application round anticipated to open early in 2025

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)

Climate Resilience Funds

Implementation Grants for Stormwater Resilience

- Applications due February 27, 2025
(*want to apply, but concerned about deadline? ISG can help!*)
- Applications are submitted through the SWIFT portal
- Projects funded through this program should prepare local stormwater infrastructure for the impacts of climate change—specifically addressing water quantity and preventing localized flooding
- MPCA will be hosting an informational meeting about this opportunity on January 14, 2025 at 2 p.m.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program*

Traditional, Metro, and New Applicant Grants

- Applications are due February 19, 2025
- Awards range from \$5,000 to \$500,000
- Eligible activities include restoration, enhancement, or acquisition
- Projects may take place on public lands or waters or private lands protected by a permanent conservation easement

Expedited Conservation Projects

- Application rounds in 2025 close on January 13, 2025; March 10, 2025; and May 12, 2025
- Awards range from \$5,000 to \$50,000
- Eligible Activities include Restoration or Enhancement
- Projects may take place on public lands or waters only

*Note: this program has a habitat focus, but may include water quality and quantity components.

Grant Success

Congratulations to our partners on these recent BWSR Clean Water Projects and Practices Grant program awards!

- Reeds Lake Ravine Stabilization and Subwatershed Assessment
 - \$76,500 awarded
 - Grant Partner: Waseca County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
- Le Sueur County Lake Subwatershed Assessment
 - \$207,075 awarded
 - Grant Partner: Le Sueur County and SWCD
- Wetland for the Improvement of St. James Creek
 - \$347,072 awarded
 - Grant Partner: Watonwan SWCD

Let's Connect: Upcoming Events

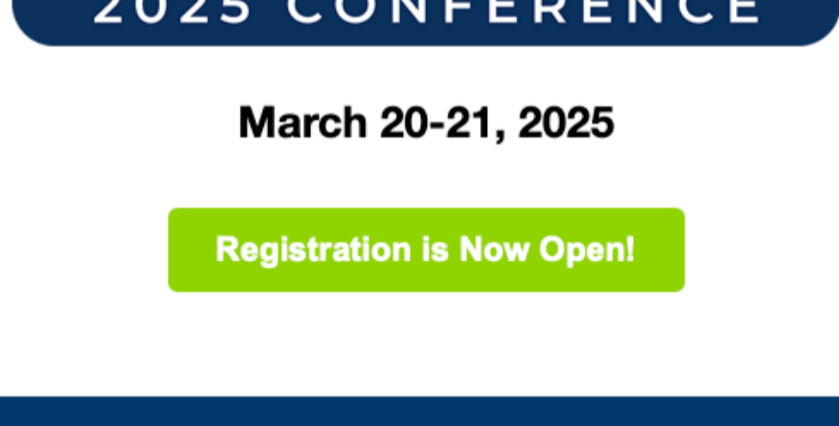
January 28–30, 2025

[2025 Minnesota Erosion Control Association \(MECA\) Conference*](#) in St. Cloud, MN

*ISG to receive an Award of Environmental Excellence

February 23–26, 2025

[2025 Upper Midwest Stream Restoration Symposium](#) in Dubuque, IA



March 20-21, 2025

[Registration is Now Open!](#)

Event Recap + ISG Happenings

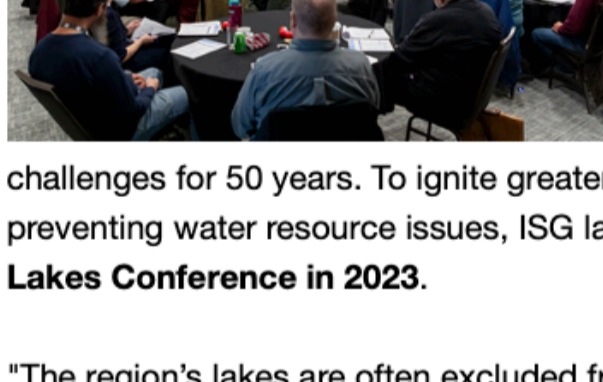
2024 North American Lake Management Society

November 5–8, 2024

South Lake Tahoe, NV

[Julie Blackburn, CFM](#), and [Paul Marston, CFM](#), presented *Making Waves in Southern Minnesota Lake Stewardship* at the 2024 NALMS conference. The session highlighted the importance of lake management and regional education in addressing challenges faced by overlooked southern Minnesota lakes, which often exceed water quality standards, content with invasive species, and lack funding alignment with Minnesota's Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan.

Results from ISG's recent Southern Minnesota Lakes Conferences showed an increase in stakeholder empowerment from sharing lake ecology knowledge, restoration strategies, and tools to develop and implement management plans. Attendees learned proven techniques for fostering citizen involvement and enhancing aquatic health via case studies that focused on lake management and funding solutions.



Why ISG Began The Southern Minnesota Lakes Conference

As an engineering firm with roots in Mankato, Minnesota, ISG has experienced and helped to address the region's water resource

challenges for 50 years. To ignite greater action and interest in mitigating and preventing water resource issues, ISG launched the **Future of Southern Minnesota Lakes Conference in 2023**.

"The region's lakes are often excluded from traditional funding because those funding streams prioritize less impacted lakes where restoration isn't as challenging," said Julie Blackburn, CFM, ISG Water Business Unit Leader, "We have found in our work on similar projects, that engaging the public on the positive impacts of lake management and the resources available to make such projects possible is a powerful tool to ignite action."

Embracing a citizen-driven approach to lake stewardship, the conference equips attendees with knowledge on lake ecology, funding strategies, monitoring, and restoration approaches to drive meaningful restoration efforts.

Now entering its third year, the conference will return **March 21-22, 2025**, continuing its mission to educate citizens, foster collaboration, and inspire action among local stakeholders. A social event Friday evening will highlight local success stories.

"The Southern Minnesota Lakes Conference is vital for empowering citizens to take an active role in improving aquatic health. State and local agency representatives provide practical tools and knowledge on funding opportunities, monitoring techniques, and watershed management to build a community of informed stewards who can drive meaningful efforts and ensure long-term sustainability for our water resources," said Paul Marston, CFM, ISG Environmental Practice Group Leader.

Through this initiative, ISG continues to shine a spotlight on overlooked lakes, advancing restoration goals and ensuring healthier, more resilient ecosystems for generations to come.

[Learn More + Register Here](#)

"ISG's conference provided context to better understand technical monitoring results. The panel discussion around 'what is a healthy lake' was very helpful to better understand lake responses to changes. Previously all we hear is, "We are improving water quality and you'll like it." Outlining what response (i.e., more vegetation) would be expected and spending time up front communicating this would have saved us a lot of effort in the past."

- **Joe, Spirit Lake Protective Association Board Member**

"I hear a lot of 'we just didn't know this was available' regarding a program, cost share, technical guidance, and more. The biggest barrier is people don't know what they don't know."

- **Trevor, Le Sueur County Environmental Services**

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