

Pine Creek Stream Restoration Project FAQ

Why is there concern about Pine Creek? Pine Creek is a DNR-designated public water and a coldwater trout stream. Much of the canopy cover along the creek is box elder trees, which are a soft wood and highly susceptible to damage during windstorms. These trees have fallen in the stream, causing log jams and open patches of tree canopy, which in turn lead to still, warm water. The warming water has made the stream unsuitable trout habitat and has also adversely affected other wildlife such as invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, and waterfowl.

What will this project do to address these concerns? Pine Creek will be reconstructed to a more suitable width to depth ratio and streambanks will be regraded and reseeded with vegetation. Stream bends will be stabilized by reusing existing fallen trees to create root wads and toe wood, which will create fish habitat, stabilize the toe of the stream channel, and prevent future streambank erosion. Trees that provide little shade will be replaced with shady native trees, which will also be used to fill in existing areas of open canopy.

Who has been consulted for this project? The city has worked with DNR Fish and Wildlife Division Stream Habitat Specialist Dustan Hoffman and Minnesota Trout Unlimited Executive Director John Lenczewski. The design utilizes Iowa's River Restoration Toolbox, which allows the creation of stream restoration plans that are specific to the area.

Will it impact the golf course? The project will not impact the golf course. Construction may be visible while on the course, but it will not affect play.

Who will pay for this? The city received a grant from the MN DNR for \$500,000. The city received \$25,000 from the Carl and Vera Schmidt Foundation and \$35,000 from WinLaC to cover the engineering costs for the project. These funds will cover 90% costs of the project with the city providing the required 10% matching funds to complete the tree plantings and native prairie restoration along the stream.

Do the contractors selected have expertise in this kind of work? All contractors that bid for the project will have stream reconstruction experience.

Will all the trees along the stream be taken down? No, native trees along the stream that provide canopy cover will not be taken down.

What is the timeline for the work and subsequent restoration work?

Time Frame	Goal
December 30th, 2023	Grant funds awarded
Winter 2025	Final design and permit applications complete
Spring 2025	Project bidding
Summer 2025	Project construction
October 15th, 2025	Native seeding complete
Arbor Day 2026	City tree planting, year 1
Arbor Day 2027	City tree planting, year 2

What will it be like when it's done? Stream reconstruction will transform this stretch of Pine Creek. The changes to the stream channel and trees along the stream will be more immediate. The stream channel will be deeper, many trees will be removed and the in-stream features such as toe wood and rot wads will be visible. Establishment of native vegetation and restoration of the native tree canopy will take a few years. The goal of the project is to return Pine Creek to trout-suitable temperatures and speed up the water flow, so less sediment is deposited in the water. The areas along the bank will be full of native riparian species helping to stabilize the banks and hold soil in place. There will be trails along the creek so the public may have easier access for recreational activities.

What if we don't do anything? Pine Creek will continue to warm and become less suitable for trout and other native species. Sediment will continue to accumulate in the stream channel and bank erosion will continue unabated. Effects will ripple throughout connected waterways, including the Mississippi River, and in surrounding wetlands, degrading wildlife habitat, harming aquatic species and hurting public recreation.