

# BWSR fine-tunes wetlands training



*Dan Wheeler of the University of Minnesota, seated, explains characteristics of an upland soil sample during a five-day Wetland Delineation Certification Program course in 2017 at Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge near Little Falls.*  
**Photo Credit:** Ben Meyer

Wetlands are a critical brick in the foundation of Minnesota's natural resources.

These valuable landscape features can filter water to improve water quality, provide critical water storage during heavy rains, furnish plants and animals with homes and food throughout the year, and diversify Minnesota's many beautiful landscapes.



Wetlands are the Swiss Army Knife of Minnesota's water-quality tools.

With such diversity, it is important for local government partners to not only maintain their knowledge but also learn new wetland management and protection skills and techniques. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources' wetlands staff has developed

a new training effort aimed at ensuring partners remain highly trained and knowledgeable in wetland management.

This new training effort has two components.

The first is to shift from the one-time, annual training event held during BWSR Academy to a regional training structure focused on the differing needs of partners from northern and southern Minnesota. Each part of the state would have at least one annual training session. Training events may cover core curriculum, technical topics and/or regional topics chosen by the local wetland specialist.

As was the case with BWSR Academy, these local wetland training events would strive to be accessible, affordable and relevant.

The second component incorporates technology into the matrix of training opportunities. The Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) is a tool for managing and protecting wetlands. The process for

implementing WCA locally can be complex. Successfully managing the program requirements requires partners to keep abreast of the standards.

BWSR is developing online training modules that will allow local government partners to remain current with WCA's administrative requirements without leaving their offices. Expected roll-out is in early 2019.

Minnesota's wetlands are diverse, and the skills and knowledge required for their protection and management are complex. The new wetlands training effort is evolving to recognize both the complexity of the wetlands and the diversity of local government partners. This evolution will allow BWSR to be more responsive to partners' needs while being respectful of their time constraints.

This new process also will ensure that wetlands management keeps the many benefits from Minnesota's multi-purpose water-management tool flowing.