



Learning in Action: 2015 BWSR Academy

December 2015 Snapshots

For the last several years, BWSR Academy has been a staff development destination for conservation professionals in Minnesota. This was another record-breaking year, as 420 attendees gathered together to learn with and from each other this past October.

The goal of the Academy is to provide high quality training for local government (LGU) staff that maintains and improves the delivery of conservation work and meets the shared expectations of BWSR and local resource management boards. The 2015 BWSR Academy engaged attendees in the training sessions to support the work of hundreds of conservation professionals from across Minnesota with new ideas, skills and a refreshed determination to improve the water and soil resources of our state.

“BWSR Academy is a training event I look forward to every year. I think it is a wonderful opportunity for all the staff,” one attendee reported.

The Academy features sessions which are interactive, engage the attendee in the learning during the session, and align the session content to real world application in conservation work. Academy session topics are selected based on input from BWSR staff and LGU partners. This year’s seven tracks included timely and relevant sessions on collaboration, climate adaptation, 2015 soil erosion legislation, stormwater best management practices, Farm Bill Assistance, sessions on the Wetland Conservation Act, the ReInvest In Minnesota program, and buffer legislation and updates, shared services, grants management, field office of the future and many other in the 54 concurrent sessions.

The success of BWSR Academy is due in large part to collaboration between BSWR and LGUs staff in developing the Academy. Staff from all sections of BWSR work together to design, plan and deliver the Academy. Local LGUs provide input into sessions, and provide their time and expertise as trainers. The Academy also provides networking opportunities, where conservation staff can learn from each other in both formal and informal settings.

The approach is working. 96% of attendees who responded to a post-event survey said the Academy met their professional development expectations, and 99% said they would attend again in the future. With another successful Academy in the books, BWSR staff are already hard at work planning for an even better BWSR Academy in 2016.



2015 Academy participants received training topics as diverse as soil identification and strategic planning.