

Tuesday, October 21		Session 1		10:30 am - 12:00 pm	
Bringing Your Board to the Next Level			Embracing Thoughtful and Planned Fire		
Track: Org Capacity		Skill Level: Intermediate/Advanced		Track: Technical	
LGU Org: SWCD/WD				Skill Level: Intermediate	
<p>Basic board governance is the knowledge and skills that allow a board to efficiently operate. But where do you go when you have a functional board and want to bring them to the next level? You come to this session where we will talk about ways to up the performance of your board and explore real world scenarios that may create immediate stress but can result in long-term strengths. If you are ready to expect more from your board, come to this presentation that will empower you to bring your board to the next level.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Brett Arne & Matt Fischer – BWSR</i></p>			<p>This session will address the social and ecological issues of wildland fire in Minnesota, with an emphasis on communication strategies for engaging with landowners and the public. Participants will explore the ecological implications of the region’s fire deficit and learn how to have informed conversations that bridge the gap toward a more sustainable and fire adapted landscape.</p> <p><i>Trainer: Jason Andersen – Pheasants Forever</i></p>		
A Free Lunch Always Helps			10 Years of the Buffer Law – Impacts, Lessons, Road Ahead		
Track: Outreach		Skill Level: Beginner		Track: Fiscal & Programs	
LGU Org: SWCD/WD				Skill Level: Beginner/Intermediate	
<p>During this session, trainers will walk you through their stages of planning events for small and large crowds, including tools, timelines, event examples, advertisements, and measuring successes. We will discuss defining your goals, audience, and expected outcomes as well as successes versus failures. Finally, we will talk about collaboration and partnerships, to share the workload and the expense.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Heather Donoho – Pine SWCD, Miranda Wagner – Sherburne SWCD, Brittany Lenzmeier – Kanati Land Management</i></p>			<p>As the Minnesota Buffer Law (103F.48) marks 10 years, this presentation reviews its purpose, how it works, and the roles of SWCDs, Counties, Watershed Districts, and BWSR. The session will cover technical and enforcement authority, guidance, and how compliance has progressed statewide. We will walk through aerial imagery and field notes together to discuss real-world examples on determining buffer compliance. Tips and varied approaches from across Minnesota will highlight practical ways to meet buffer requirements. The session will also look ahead to future challenges and continued collaboration in protecting water resources.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Chad Hildebrand, Ethan Dahl & Laura DeBeer – BWSR</i></p>		
Digital Accessibility Fundamentals			Unearthing Soil Health: Forests to Cities		
Track: Emerging Topics		Skill Level: Beginner		Track: Wetlands & Soils	
LGU Org: All				Skill Level: Intermediate	
<p>Making your organizations websites, electronic documents, and other communications accessible to all people is not only a good practice, it’s also the law. An update to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) set compliance deadlines for all state and local government entities. Bring your laptop and learn what you can do today to get ready! Incorporating fundamental digital accessibility practices into your workflow results in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Content that’s more usable by everyone. *More reliable document formatting and web design/code. *Reduced organizational risk. <p>In this session you will learn how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Include accessibility into your documents and websites. *Identify potential accessibility issues. *Plan for and incorporate accessibility into your workflow. *Find training and other resources. <p><i>Trainer: Jay Wyant – Minnesota IT Services (MNIT)</i></p>			<p>Soil health is a vital concept extending beyond agriculture, crucial for the ecological function of Minnesota’s forests and urban environments. This presentation will explore what soil health means in these diverse non-agricultural settings, highlighting key challenges and management strategies. For forest soils, we’ll examine impacts from compaction, erosion, organic matter removal, and fire, demonstrating their direct relation to core soil health principles in active forest management. We’ll also delve into urban soil health, specifically presenting data collected by the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District. This will showcase how current sampling and ongoing research are shaping our understanding and informing land stewardship programs.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Lane Moser – University of Minnesota, Zach Dickhausen & Rachel Whittington – Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District</i></p>		
Governing Galaxies					
Track: Workshops		Skill Level: Beginner			
LGU Org: All					
<p>The government galaxies involved in protecting the State’s water quality can make navigating among the stars difficult for the novice. Local, state, and federal agencies each have their own gravitational pulls that can confuse even the most intrepid new employee. And then there are those landowners. Without a good star map, it is maddening! Attendees to this session will get a firm understanding for how the many galaxies align and how best to navigate toward the Clean Water Nebula while avoiding the dreaded bureaucratic black hole. This session is a must for all new employees.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Pete Waller & Jeff Hrubes – BWSR</i></p>					

Tuesday, October 21		Session 2		1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	
Do you REALLY know who is in your community?			“Where is my JAA?!”		
Track: Org Capacity		Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate		Track: Technical	
LGU Org: All				Skill Level: Intermediate/Advanced	
<p>Your watershed/SWCD/county community goes beyond race and ethnicity, encompassing socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural differences, generational gaps, and varying abilities. This interactive session will equip you with practical tools to identify the diverse range of people who live, work, and play in your community and uncover the barriers that may be hindering their participation. We'll explore how to craft customized engagement that resonate with your unique community. Plus, you'll have the opportunity to build a lasting network of like-minded professionals, ensuring ongoing support as you integrate these crucial principles into your daily work.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Dr. Belinda Armstead, Karen Kill & Rosie Russell – Watershed Equity Alliance</i></p>			<p>Why doesn't my staff have Job Approval Authority (JAA) yet?" "I have a Masters, 20 years of experience, and have done 1,999 projects. Why don't I just get JAA?" These questions are asked on a weekly if not daily basis in Minnesota. Join NRCS and TTCP Ecological and Engineering staff on the journey to understand JAA delegation!</p> <p><i>Trainers: Aaron Janz & Dustin Jasken – USDA NRCS, Aaron Peter – BWSR</i></p>		
Forest Health Clinic			Elected Officials? EEEK!		
Track: Emerging Topics		Skill Level: Intermediate/Advanced		Track: Outreach	
LGU Org: All				Skill Level: Beginner	
<p>Are you interested in talking to landowners about what is killing their trees? In this workshop you will learn about common insect and disease issues you may come across in the forests of Minnesota from the DNR forest health team. We will cover common issue such as emerald ash borer as well as more difficult to identify diseases. You will also learn about additional tools to better understand forest health and how to report concerns.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Megan O'Neil, Brian Schwingle, & Eric Otto – Minnesota Department of Natural Resources</i></p>			<p>Do you shutter when you hear the words "elected official"? Do you simply want to vanish in their presence? Come and learn different ways to connect with your elected officials - those at city, township, county, state and federal levels. Promote your district. Invite them in. Be seen. Be heard. Be known. Walk away with ideas to put into practice. You might find elected officials aren't so scary after all, rather they can be your district's ally!</p> <p><i>Trainers: Tara Jensen – Wild Rice Watershed District, Anita Provinzino – North St. Louis SWCD</i></p>		
eLINK Essentials			Take a Walk on the Hydric Side – An Introduction to Wetland Soil Indicators – Part 1		
Track: Fiscal & Programs		Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate		Track: Wetlands & Soils	
LGU Org: All				Skill Level: Beginner	
<p>Unlock the essentials of eLINK! Learn key tips, tricks, as well as budgeting and reporting skills to become an eLINK expert. This hands-on session will guide you through entering sample projects from start to finish, helping you complete accurate progress reports the first time. All BWSR grant recipients are encouraged to attend.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Janna Fitzgerald & Michelle Jordan – BWSR</i></p>			<p>During this two-part session, attendees will learn how to observe, describe and apply a hydric soil indicator to a soil profile. The class will start with the glacial history of Minnesota and its landforms and then delve into soil development in wetland environments. Presentations will focus on those properties that can be used to identify hydric soils. During the second part of the session, participants will be in the field practicing writing a profile description through a hands-on exercise while applying a hydric soil indicator.</p> <p>Participant Requirement: field-appropriate clothing and footwear</p> <p><i>Trainers: David Demmer & Ben Meyer – BWSR</i></p>		
Building Position Descriptions with Adaptability & Flexibility (HR2)					
Track: Workshops		Skill Level: Intermediate/Advanced			
LGU Org: All					
<p>This interactive 90-minute workshop equips local government professionals with practical strategies to create dynamic, future-ready position descriptions (PDs). Participants will explore how to craft PDs that balance structure with adaptability, enabling roles to evolve with organizational needs, such as during responsibility reviews. Through real-world examples and hands-on exercises, learn how to align responsibilities with strategic goals, integrate flexibility, and future-proof your workforce while meeting compliance and HR standards. Leave with tools to build the PD: clear, flexible, and ready for change.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Melissa Barrick – Crow Wing SWCD, Riley Buley – Fillmore SWCD</i></p>					

Tuesday, October 21		Session 3		3:30 pm - 5:00 pm	
Mastering Workload for Managers/Administrators: From Vision to Execution			Let's go Track-or-Trading... for Water Quality!		
Track: Org Capacity		Skill Level: Intermediate/Advanced		Track: Technical	
LGU Org: All				Skill Level: Intermediate	
<p>Mastering workload is crucial for managers/administrators and essential for organizations seeking sustainable success. Through structured processes and forward-thinking strategies, organizations can remain resilient in an ever-changing landscape. In this session participants will hear creative examples of how the East Otter Tail SWCD and Stearns SWCD have utilized a teams approach to manage workload, promote cross-training, help staff within their organizations understand how everything is connected and works together, and ensure office tasks get done and public needs are met in a timely manner. Staff will also share how succession planning has been used to prepare future leaders, minimize disruptions, and foster long-term organizational success.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Kyle Weimann – Stearns SWCD, Darren Newville – EOT SWCD</i></p>			<p>Explore integrated approaches to BMP implementation and tracking through this session on water quality trading and HSPF/SAM/Tableau tools. Part 1 of this session will cover the use of MPCA's Water Quality Trading program to access more BMP cost share. Part 2 will focus on improving the tracking of BMPs and their impacts across the landscape with the MPCA Healthier Watershed and BMP Effects Estimator Tool (BEET) applications. You will experience practical insights, real-world examples, and tool demonstrations, the Tableau based BEET tools, which support reporting, planning, and decision-making for conservation professionals in Minnesota's water and soil resource management efforts.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Emily Zanon & Matt Drewitz – MPCA</i></p>		
Take a Walk on the Hydric Side – An Introduction to Wetland Soil Indicators – Part 2			Show Me the Numbers! BWSR Fiscal Grant Basics		
Track: Wetlands & Soils		Skill Level: Beginner		Track: Fiscal & Programs	
LGU Org: All				Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate	
<p>During this two-part session, attendees will learn how to observe, describe and apply a hydric soil indicator to a soil profile. The class will start with the glacial history of Minnesota and its landforms and then delve into soil development in wetland environments. Presentations will focus on those properties that can be used to identify hydric soils. During the second part of the session, participants will be in the field practicing writing a profile description through a hands-on exercise while applying a hydric soil indicator.</p> <p>Participant Requirement: field-appropriate clothing and footwear</p> <p><i>Trainers: David Demmer & Ben Meyer – BWSR</i></p>			<p>New to financial reporting on BWSR Grants or looking for a refresher? Join this session for a high-level overview of the Grants Administration Manual, guidance on determining BWSR billable rates, time tracking requirements, and what to expect during a financial reconciliation. Participants will gain a clearer understanding of their fiscal responsibilities as grantees.</p> <p><i>Trainer: Laura Godfrey – BWSR</i></p>		
Social Dynamics of Conservation Promotion using Media			Utilizing Technology for Soil Health		
Track: Outreach		Skill Level: Intermediate		Track: Emerging Topics	
LGU Org: SWCD/WD				Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate	
<p>Attendees will need to bring tie-down straps because they will be blown away by this lighthearted presentation on conservation outreach. We'll be sharing examples of various outreach activities using multiple media platforms to target plan priorities. Topics will include radio, commercials, social media, public service announcements and flat out savage public shaming efforts. Bring some Popcorn and Twizzlers cause this shows' gonna be lit!</p> <p><i>Trainers: Beau Kennedy – Goodhue SWCD, Caitlin Meyer – Olmsted SWCD</i></p>			<p>This presentation highlights the innovative use of drone technology to improve soil health through the efficient seeding of cover crops. Drones offer a fast, precise, and timely method to broadcast seeds over large or hard-to-reach areas, reducing soil compaction compared to traditional machinery. By enabling timely and targeted cover crop seeding, drones support better ground coverage, erosion control, and nutrient retention. The talk will cover how drone seeding works, its advantages over conventional methods, how to set up a drone seeding program, and what items are needed to legally start operations.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Kyle Richter & Colby Schroeder – Renville SWCD</i></p>		
Keeping Employee Handbooks Up to Date (HR1)					
Track: Workshops		Skill Level: Intermediate/Advanced			
LGU Org: All					
<p>This workshop guides attendees through the best practices for keeping their employee handbooks up to date. Learn about required legal and procedural updates and ensure your documentation reflects current workplace standards and compliance obligations. Attendees will leave with strategies for updating their personnel policies and employee handbooks to reflect evolving employment laws and practices.</p> <p><i>Trainer: Sonya Guggemos – MN Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT)</i></p>					

Wednesday, October 22	Session 1	8:30 am – 10:00 am
Crash Course in Cultural Resource Management & Archaeology		WCA Special Considerations with an Emphasis on T&E, RNC, and calc fens
Track: Org Capacity Skill Level: Beginner/ Intermediate LGU Org: All		Track: Wetlands & Soils Skill Level: Beginner/Intermediate LGU Org: All
<p>This session is a crash course in Cultural Resource Management and Archeology in Minnesota, with a focus on the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC). It includes a brief overview of MIAC as an agency, a discussion of state and federal cultural resource laws, the role of MIAC under those laws, commonly used archaeological terms, how to deal with the public, the procedure for inadvertent discoveries, case studies, and resources and instructions on the formal Project Review process.</p> <p>Participant Requirements: Laptop and notetaking supplies</p> <p><i>Trainers: Lilly Geraghty, Selena Bernier, & Isaac Weston – Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC)</i></p>		<p>The purpose of this session is to introduce participants to the process that WCA LGU/TEP members need to review wetland applications for Special Considerations. The session will discuss Threatened and Endangered Species, Rare Natural Communities and Calcareous Fens that are all coordinated with the DNR. Tools that will be introduced include helpful GIS layers in the Geospatial Commons, Wetland Finder, and Conservation Explorer. Participants will take away from this session the ability to successfully review and process WCA applications with special considerations.</p> <p>Participant Requirements: Laptop for class exercise</p> <p><i>Trainers: Jennie Skancke – MN DNR, Cade Steffenson – BWSR</i></p>
Integrating Geologic Atlas Data into Water Resource Management		Practical AI Tools for Conservation Professionals – Part 1
Track: Technical Skill Level: Beginner LGU Org: All		Track: Workshops Skill Level: Beginner LGU Org: All
<p>Geology, climate, and land use control groundwater distribution, availability, and quality. The County Geologic Atlas program uses geologic mapping and groundwater characterization to describe aquifer distribution and sensitivity to pollution. Geochemical data is used to describe water quality and the rate of groundwater movement in aquifers, which are useful for water resource and land use planning. In Olmsted County, atlases have been used to help answer questions such as “which aquifers can provide high volumes of natural unimpacted water” and conversely “where is the best place in the county to site a landfill”. Attendees will gain familiarity with atlas products and learn how they are used in water resource and land use management in Olmsted County.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Caitlin Meyer – Olmsted SWCD, Bob Tipping – MN Geological Survey, John Barry – MN DNR</i></p>		<p>Learn how to unlock the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to transform your work. This engaging workshop equips LGU staff with practical AI knowledge tailored to their roles. No prior AI experience required! Discover how AI can simplify, enhance, and jump start your everyday and less routine tasks responsibly from drafting documents to planning events. Through interactive demos and collaborative exercises, you’ll gain hands-on experience and the ability to bring AI-driven solutions back to your job. Walk away with knowledge in applying AI tools to responsibly boost efficiency, spark creativity, and dedicate more time to conservation efforts.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Melanie Bomier, Ara Gallo & Becca Reiss – BWSR</i></p>
Community Based Partnerships for Creating Pollinator Habitats		Drainage Water Management – Benefits, Site Selection, and Opportunities
Track: Outreach Skill Level: Beginner LGU Org: All		Track: Emerging Topics Skill Level: Beginner/Intermediate LGU Org: SWCD
<p>Are you interested in increasing community engagement through the creation of pollinator habitat. In this session you will learn how the MN SEED Project, which is a community-based organization, creates a locally adapted, free native seed economy that teaches participants all aspects of the seed cycle from collecting, and processing to growing and sharing. Come learn about our replicable model and specific strategies you can apply for seed collecting, growing and building community supported conservation.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Courtney Tchida – MN SEED Project, Erin Loeffler – BWSR</i></p>		<p>Drainage Water Management (DWM) uses a control structure to manage a drainage system’s outlet height. Managing the outlet height allows the manager to control the timing and volume of water drained. Reducing the drainage volume can store water in the soil profile to increase crop yields while reducing the amount discharged nutrients. There are manual and automated control structures available, with automation providing a number of distinct advantages. Yield increases from DWM are commonly in the 5-15% range, and nutrient loss reductions average 10 to 15 lbs. per acre per year. This session will focus on the benefits and site selection for manual and automated options.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Andy Craig, PhD, PE, TSP – Ecosystem Services Exchange, Josh Shuler – Agridrain</i></p>
Grants Streamlining Process		
Track: Fiscal & Programs Skill Level: Beginner/Intermediate LGU Org: All		
<p>It’s time to pop open the hood and take a closer look at the grants streamlining process and public roll-out of the recently reformatted Grants Administration Manual (GAM). Attendees will gain an understanding of why policies have been repackaged, an overview of the changes, the structure of grant program requirements, along with the new, polished layout of the GAM.</p> <p><i>Trainers: James Adkinson & Adam Beilke – BWSR</i></p>		

Wednesday, October 22		Session 2		10:30 am – 12:00 pm	
Navigating the Future: A Strategic Planning Experience			From Design to Longevity: Infrastructure O&M Strategies		
Track: Org Capacity		Skill Level: Intermediate/ Advanced		Track: Technical	
LGU Org: SWCD/WD				Skill Level: Beginner	
<p>Strategic planning helps organizations navigate the future by providing a structured approach to decision-making and long-term success. Essentially, strategic plans act as a roadmap by providing clear direction for achieving long-term goals. Without a strategic plan, organizations risk wandering aimlessly to reach their destination. In this session, participants will learn why the Cass and Isanti Soil and Water Conservation Districts chose to develop strategic plans, what processes they used to develop them, how BWSR PRAP grants helped cover costs, and how the plans are being used to facilitate local decisions and measure organizational success.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Dana Gutzmann – Cass SWCD, Tiffany Determan – Isanti SWCD</i></p>			<p>Starting early on operation and maintenance (O&M) planning can make your projects easier to manage. This session will help you explore different methods of drafting Operation and Maintenance Plans and finding the option best suited to your project. We'll explore engineering design considerations during initial planning and design phases to ensure quality and effective O&M of BMPs for long-term care. Examples and lessons learned from smaller field scale BMPs to larger capital improvement projects will be shared. In addition, technologies will be covered that could enhance inspections and planning.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Bailey Bocchino – ISG, Tracy Halstensgard – Roseau River Watershed, Kerry Netzke – Area II MN River Basin Projects</i></p>		
Soil Health Toolbox: Mentors, Agronomists, and Soil Health Teams			Practical AI Tools for Conservation Professionals – Part 2		
Track: Wetlands & Soils		Skill Level: Intermediate		Track: Workshops	
LGU Org: SWCD				Skill Level: Beginner	
<p>This presentation will provide tools to develop a mentorship program that can utilize your farmers that are successfully implementing soil health practices plus a farmer's most trusted advisor, agronomists. This session will give you suggestions on how to involve agronomists and these farmers using soil health practices to support and provide technical assistance to your farmers that want to make a change. We will also provide information how to best choose and develop a local soil health team to provide ideas for programs, promotion, education, field days and workshops.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Kay Gross – Southwest Prairie Technical Service Area, Doug Bos – Cottonwood SWCD, Bruce Johnson – Traverse SWCD</i></p>			<p>Learn how to unlock the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to transform your work. This engaging workshop equips LGU staff with practical AI knowledge tailored to their roles. No prior AI experience required! Discover how AI can simplify, enhance, and jump start your everyday and less routine tasks responsibly from drafting documents to planning events. Through interactive demos and collaborative exercises, you'll gain hands-on experience and the ability to bring AI-driven solutions back to your job. Walk away with knowledge in applying AI tools to responsibly boost efficiency, spark creativity, and dedicate more time to conservation efforts.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Melanie Bomier, Ara Gallo & Becca Reiss – BWSR</i></p>		
Measuring Forest Management Water Quality Benefits			The Free App for Technical Assistance (TAAp)		
Track: Emerging Topics		Skill Level: Beginner/Intermediate		Track: Outreach	
LGU Org: SWCD				Skill Level: All	
<p>The benefits of forest cover on a landscape are bountiful including water quality. From filtering pollutants to holding soil in place, it's not a surprise to conservation professionals that superb water quality is often found where there is a high percentage of forest cover. But how can those benefits be quantified, especially in the world of watershed planning? In this session, you will both come to understand the impacts of forest cover on water quality and preview a tool that SWCDs can use to track water quality improvements from forestry practices.</p> <p>Participant Requirements: Laptop, have access to their 1W1P goals, and/or a forestry plan to try out this state of the art, cutting edge assessment tool</p> <p><i>Trainers: Matthew Picklo – Itasca SWCD, Moriya Rufer & Scott Kronholm – Houston Engineering</i></p>			<p>A start to finish session describing the inception of the FREE field app available to SWCD's and County staff to use as they complete site inspections. Hear about the brainstorming and building strategy that was used to develop the TAAp; now being used in McLeod, Sibley, and Renville Counties. This session will show you what can be done with this free tool and explain ways it can be modified to meet each offices specific needs. This app is currently built to complete Wetland Conservation Act, Buffer Law, and Compliance inspections, as well as document Technical Assistance requests.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Christy Christensen & Joel Crawford – McLeod County, Ryan Freitag & Coleton Draeger – McLeod SWCD</i></p>		
QuickBooks and General Accounting					
Track: Fiscal & Programs		Skill Level: Beginner/Intermediate			
LGU Org: SWCD/WD					
<p>QuickBooks training will focus on how to use the accounts receivable, accounts payable and record adjusting entries. We will also walk you through fixing balances that are incorrect in accounts receivable and accounts payable. An update on accounting changes will be provided.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Samantha Hoskins, Michael Peterson & Matthew Stacken – Peterson Company, LTD</i></p>					

Wednesday, October 22	Session 3	1:00 pm – 2:30 pm
<p>You Have New Lidar – See How Counties are Applying it in the Field!</p>	<p>Don't Curb your Enthusiasm for Stormwater BMPs!</p>	
<p>Track: Emerging Topics Skill Level: Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced LGU Org: All</p>	<p>Track: Technical Skill Level: Beginner/Intermediate LGU Org: SWCD/WD</p>	
<p>Every county in Minnesota has access to new Lidar recently collected through partnerships with the State and the USGS. This new data is superior to previous lidar projects. Modern tools can visualize, analyze, and measure from the office or field to help in both project planning and day-to-day operations of conservation offices. We'll review the new Lidar available and focus on how Le Sueur County has put this data to work. Live demos will show the lidar classified point cloud, 1-ft contours, culvert inventory, hydro-enforced DEM, closed depressions, flow accumulation models, slopes for ordinance review, and soil erosion vulnerability models. The County will also talk about how this data is helping with grant applications and how it's being applied in the field.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Mike Schulz – Le Sueur County SWCD, Adam Derringer – Ayres Associates, Inc.</i></p>	<p>Stormwater BMPs come in many shapes and sizes; from those that slow water, to those that reuse water, and even those that physically remove pollutants before it can reach water. Varying practices provide a spectrum of water quality benefits, and success depends on drainage extents, soil conditions and landscape limitations. Participants will hear an overview of successful implementation of novel and traditional small-scale urban stormwater BMPs including but not limited to: infiltration basins, iron-enhanced sand filters, hydrodynamic separators, wetland restorations and enhanced street sweeping programs.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Casey Thiel – Chisago SWCD, Kelly Perrine – Vermillion River Watershed JPO</i></p>	
<p>Strategic Content and Media Creation for Conservation Outreach</p>	<p>Storage Here, Storage There, Storage Everywhere!</p>	
<p>Track: Outreach Skill Level: All LGU Org: All</p>	<p>Track: Fiscal & Programs Skill Level: All LGU Org: All</p>	
<p>In water and soil conservation; visuals, materials, and content matter. This hands-on, interactive session is designed for professionals of all stages looking to sharpen their social media and visual communication skills. Whether you're managing a district's digital presence, writing stories, or want to make your next outreach handout more appealing to your audiences, we'll dive into tools, tips, techniques, and strategies for crafting compelling physical and digital visuals and content. This isn't just another PowerPoint presentation, come ready to do some work. And yes, we will even talk about AI.</p> <p>Participant Requirements: A laptop is required.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Kendra Sommerfeld – Rice Creek Watershed District, Lauren Hazenson – Ramsey-Washington Watershed District</i></p>	<p>Struggling to get storage projects on the landscape? This session will cover funding sources available for the modeling, design and implementation of water storage projects, both above and below ground. Early coordination and planning, permitting considerations, and site/design capabilities will be explored with the intent of attendees familiarizing themselves with the process. Prioritization, anticipated outcomes, and cost effectiveness of projects will all be explored. Lessons learned will be shared by a successfully implementer of several Water Quality & Storage grants, Area II MN River Basin Project.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Rita Weaver – BWSR, Kerry Netzke – Area II MN River Basin Projects</i></p>	
<p>Managing Your Projects or Projects Managing You?</p>	<p>Reach Farmers Faster: Why They Say Yes – Part 1</p>	
<p>Track: Org Capacity Skill Level: Intermediate/Advanced LGU Org: All</p>	<p>Track: Workshops Skill Level: Beginner/Intermediate LGU Org: All</p>	
<p>Conservation planning and management, almost by definition, requires paying attention to many things at once. Deadlines, communication, meetings, plans, documents, and managing team workload are all on different schedules and have different partners. Keeping track of all that without something falling through the cracks requires, discipline, organization and a system that equips you to stay on top of it all. This session will help you develop habits, techniques, and tools that allow you to meet your responsibilities, delegate to and manage your team, and potentially free some time for creative solutions and adaptive management.</p> <p><i>Trainer: Moriya Rufer – Houston Engineering</i></p>	<p>Participants will explore the Reach Farmers Faster methodology through a combination of case study insights, interactive learning, and practical exercises in a fun-infused learning environment. The workshop introduces tools for setting measurable goals, understanding producer audiences, and creating custom messages that resonate with farmers. From social media strategies to field day planning, attendees will leave with concrete resources to boost program engagement. The session is suited to both general and crop- and program-specific outreach efforts.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Deborah Carter McCoy, Britta Dornfeld, & Jasmine Baxter – Environmental Initiative</i></p>	
<p>Overview of Federal and State Wetland Banking Programs</p>		
<p>Track: Wetlands & Soils Skill Level: Beginner/Intermediate LGU Org: All</p>		
<p>During this session both Army Corps of Engineers and BWSR staff will walk through the review process for wetland banks. Course participants will walk away with a better understanding of the main steps to establishing a wetland bank in Minnesota. The presentation will cover topics that include application contents, actions eligible for credit, performance standards and credit releases.</p> <p><i>Trainers: John Overland – BWSR, Leslie Day – US Army Corps of Engineers</i></p>		

Wednesday, October 22	Session 4	2:45 pm – 4:15 pm
Prioritize, Target, Measure Application (PTMapp) and other Pollution Reduction Estimator Tools		Navigating Conflict: Tools for Finding Solid Ground
Track: Technical LGU Org: SWCD/WD	Skill Level: Intermediate	Track: Outreach LGU Org: All
<p>This session is designed for Soil and Water Conservation District and Watershed District staff, showcasing practical applications of PTMapp and other conservation planning tools. Through expert insights and real-world examples, participants will learn how these tools can support effective decision-making and enhance local land and water resource management across Minnesota.</p> <p>Participants will need to bring a laptop with PTMapp installed on their computer.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Udai Singh & Camron Gaspord – BWSR, Scott Kronholm, PhD – Houston Engineering</i></p>		<p>Are you stuck in the swamp with a contentious topic? Are difficult conversations leaving you drained? Are residents throwing mud at project ideas? Do you want to improve how you communicate with difficult people but don't know where to start? Dealing with conflict constructively is an essential skill in today's world. While it can be hard, conflict also presents an opportunity to strengthen relationships and find creative solutions to tough problems. In this training, you will learn what conflict is, why we need it, and how to work with it. You will explore how mind-sets prepare you for difficult conversations and you will gain concrete communication tools to use in tense situations.</p> <p><i>Trainer: Katie Pratt – Minnesota Office of Collaboration and Dispute Resolution</i></p>
Soil Health Your Way: Partnering with Producers Beyond Contracts		WBIF Plan, Progress, & Evaluation
Track: Wetlands & Soils LGU Org: SWCD/WD	Skill Level: Intermediate	Track: Fiscal & Programs LGU Org: All
<p>Minnesota producers often desire healthier soils but prefer to avoid bureaucratic processes. This training provides actionable tips for working directly with farmers to progressively implement soil health practices tailored to their operations, independent of cost-share contracts. Learn how to build trust, understand individual needs, and offer flexible, farmer-driven solutions for long-term soil health adoption across the state.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Tyler Knutson & Jared House – BWSR</i></p>		<p>You've been working hard to put your Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan into action. So, what's next? Many partnerships are now approaching a key milestone: the mid-point assessment and plan renewal phase. This is a critical time to evaluate progress toward your goals, incorporate new data, and update your plan to ensure it remains relevant and effective. In this session, BWSR staff will share their insights on the mid-point process and highlight the importance of keeping partners engaged in plan upkeep. You'll gain a deeper understanding of mid-point assessments, plan amendments, and discover practical strategies for sustaining engagement and participation in ongoing plan maintenance.</p> <p><i>Trainer: Julie Westerlund – BWSR</i></p>
Navigating the Future of Conservation Planting		Reach Farmers Faster: Why They Say Yes – Part 2
Track: Emerging Topics LGU Org: All	Skill Level: Intermediate	Track: Workshops LGU Org: All
<p>Approaches to plant selection in conservation is evolving to include considerations such as a future climactic conditions and assisted migration. Both ecological and political influences have shaped past policy for forests and grassland plant selection. In this session, you will learn about how vegetation guidelines are being updated to include such considerations and learn about how some SWCDs may be navigating the topic. Information on climate adapted trees and useful resources available for making decisions on plantings will be provided as tools to use in your work. Participants will practice using these tools in the session to make decisions in difference scenarios.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Dan Shaw – BWSR, Nate Quadhamer – Lake County SWCD</i></p>		<p>Participants will explore the Reach Farmers Faster methodology through a combination of case study insights, interactive learning, and practical exercises in a fun-infused learning environment. The workshop introduces tools for setting measurable goals, understanding producer audiences, and creating custom messages that resonate with farmers. From social media strategies to field day planning, attendees will leave with concrete resources to boost program engagement. The session is suited to both general and crop- and program-specific outreach efforts.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Deborah Carter McCoy, Britta Dornfeld, & Jasmine Baxter – Environmental Initiative</i></p>
Is Your Organization at Risk? Strategies for Assessing Risk		
Track: Org Capacity LGU Org: SWCD/WD	Skill Level: Beginner/Intermediate	
<p>Local governments need to be resilient and be able to make informed decisions that safeguard conservation goals for the future. This session will address the types of risk organizations face, offer practical tools to assess organizational risk, and offer strategies for to prioritize and mitigate significant risks. Through real-world examples and interactive exercises, participants will learn to identify, assess, and address risks in areas of finance, staffing changes, audit preparedness and other areas.</p> <p><i>Trainers: Jacob Rossow & Jason Weinerman – BWSR</i></p>		

Thursday, October 23

Session 1

8:30 am – 10:00 am

Climate Change: Tools and Conversation Strategies for Adaptation

Zoom out to Zoom in – Tools for Peatland Restoration

Track: Emerging Topics **Skill Level:** Beginner/Intermediate
LGU Org: SWCD

Track: Wetlands & Soils **Skill Level:** Intermediate
LGU Org: All

Climate change can be an overwhelming topic for service providers. “What do I need to know about climate change? How can I have effective conversations, and what actions can build resilience to climate change?” Join University of Minnesota Extension educators to learn more about the basics of projected climate changes to the state and tools available through the Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership and more that can get you targeted, reliable information about climate change adaptation, such as the Resilient Farm Planning Tool. We'll spend the second half of the session sharing lessons learned from on-farm visits, engaging in activities that build confidence in climate conversations and discussing how TSPs can integrate climate adaptation into existing responsibilities and goals.

This session will provide an overview of how restoration and conservation programs have evolved to take a landscape level approach to build resiliency, make critical landscape connections and enhance carbon sequestration. The session will introduce participants to a suite of tools which can enable them to "zoom" from site level to landscape level in their restoration planning. The session will then focus on peatland restoration with an overview of The Nature Conservancy's Peatland Playbook - highlighting the role of MN peatlands in climate strategies. The session will conclude with an introduction to the BWSR Potentially Restorable Peatlands Mapping Tool and challenge participants with an exercise on identifying potentially restorable wetlands.

Trainers: Katie Black – University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership, Natalie Hoidal – University of Minnesota Extension, Dru Larson – Dakota County SWCD

Trainers: Kristen Blann – The Nature Conservancy, Dan Shaw & Suzanne Rhees – BWSR

Beyond the Fence Line – From Acres to Allies

Working for Local Government, It’s Just Different

Track: Outreach **Skill Level:** Beginner/Intermediate
LGU Org: All

Track: Org Capacity **Skill Level:** Beginner/Intermediate
LGU Org: All

Meeting a brick wall when it comes to getting humans onboard? Whether it’s neighborhood association presidents, farmer producers, a local “family name”, or governmental partners, building relationships is essential to moving the conservation needle. In this session you will learn some key strategies to get beyond the front door and around the kitchen table. You’ll walk away with the framework of how to make a plan, and “set the table” for the best possible outcome. Whether you’d like to grow your confidence entering new conversations or need some new tactics for long-held difficult ones, this session is for all those seeking trust, partnership and participation. Feel free to bring any successes and failures to workshop!

Working in government is just like working for any other organization, right? Not quite. Working for local government means that you are a public servant. Being a public servant means that there are both constraints and obligations to local government employment. Public servants benefit from things like pensions and a sense of purpose, but can also experience constraints like salary caps, statutory requirements, high expectations for transparency and fairness, and reporting to officials. These aspects of public sector work are generally not taught in school, so may come as a surprise to new hires. This session will introduce you to the foundations of being a public servant and provide tools for thriving in a local government environment.

Trainers: Emily Dick – Prio Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District, Troy Kuphal – Scott SWCD

Trainers: Anne Sawyer & Jason Weinerman – BWSR

Working Trees on Agricultural Landscapes and Savanna Restoration

RIMarkable! RIM Reserve From Beginning to End – Part 1

Track: Technical **Skill Level:** Beginner
LGU Org: SWCD

Track: Workshops **Skill Level:** All
LGU Org: SWCD/WD

This session will provide an overview of the five main agroforestry practices and facilitating practices. Participants will learn how to meld landowner goals and current site conditions to best match them with the right tree in the right place for ecological and economic benefit. The session will include a deeper dive into savanna restoration utilizing biological brush control and silvopasture practices in Minnesota.

Join BWSR Easement Section staff to learn the most important details behind RIM Reserve. We'll cover the RIM process from beginning to end, including program background, RIM sub-programs, the application process, easement processing, SURVEYS!, and stewardship of existing easements. Information covered will be applicable to staff new to the RIM Program and to those with years of experience. Necessary updates to policies and processes within the RIM program are continuously being made, and this workshop will provide those details as they overlap with the work local governments do to support prospective and current RIM easement landowners.

Trainers: Caleb Langworthy – Savanna Institute, Tyler Carlson – The Nature Conservancy

Trainers: Sara Reagan & Lucy Dahl - BWSR

Contracts, Files, Reviews, Oh my!

Track: Fiscal & Programs **Skill Level:** Beginner/Intermediate
LGU Org: All

Don't be overwhelmed by the complexities of contract administration at the local level. Whether it is file setup, checklists, local tracking, preparation for reconciliation, or contract detail, the audience should leave the session with a clear understanding of the expectations of operating and delivering a local financial assistance program. Roleplaying scenarios between a wide variety of characters involved in on-the-ground practice implementation will highlight crucial details when contracting.

Trainers: Matt Fischer, Michelle Jordan & Pete Waller – BWSR

Beyond Water Quality: The Basics of Data Science

Track: Org Capacity **Skill Level:** Beginner/Intermediate
LGU Org: All

This session introduces local government staff to the foundational concepts of data science, with a focus on practical applications. Participants will explore key topics including types of data, basic data collection methods and sources, and techniques for organizing datasets. The session will cover accessible tools for visualizing and presenting data to support clear communication with decision-makers and the public. Designed for non-technical audiences, we will use real-world examples and interactive activities to build data literacy and confidence. By the end, participants will better understand how to apply data to improve programs, manage organizations, and inform community engagement.

Trainer: Jason Weinerman – BWSR

Drainage Viewing: Voodoo Math or Helpful Conservation Tool?

Track: Technical **Skill Level:** Beginner
LGU Org: All

Drainage Viewing can seem like a process that is cloaked in secrecy and uncertainty. That said, it is vitally important to ensure drainage projects and maintenance costs are equitably distributed to landowners who are benefited by the system. This information can also be a useful tool in finding willing landowners and good locations for conservation. This session will pull back the curtain on what goes into the viewing process, why it is needed for drainage systems and how it can be a useful conservation tool if you understand the basics.

Trainers: Tom Gile – BWSR, Bryan Murphy – H2Over Viewers

Outreach for all Generations

Track: Outreach **Skill Level:** Beginner/Intermediate
LGU Org: All

Reaching diverse age groups with conservation messages isn't one-size-fits-all. This interactive session explores how different generations, from the Silent Generation to Gen Z, prefer to engage with content including print, digital, and in-person activities. Participants will be able to design and implement outreach strategies that effectively engage multiple generations, enhancing program participation and community impact. Learn what's working in other Districts and discover new ideas to promote conservation in your area.

Trainer: Teresa DeMars – Rice SWCD

BWSR's Living Landscape Initiative

Track: Fiscal & Programs **Skill Level:** Intermediate
LGU Org: All

As a result of Minnesota seeing measurable drops in wildlife populations, BWSR created the Living Landscape Initiative to help guide and set goals for BWSR's habitat programs. Attendees will learn what factors were used to create this initiative, best practices for creating habitat networks in their work areas, and BWSR programs that can be used to achieve their habitat goals.

Trainers: Jason Beckler, Dan Shaw & Erin Loeffler – BWSR, Matthew Stacken – Peterson Company, LTD

Financing today's Farm: Filling the Bin without Breaking the Bank

Track: Wetlands & Soils **Skill Level:** Intermediate
LGU Org: All

This session will do a deep dive into farm economics, looking at some historical perspectives in farm economy, then stepping through a case farm to learn about machinery, cropping, and overall management costs to maintain soil health, family living, and keeping up with today's technology. After attending, participants will have a better perspective of the financial opportunities and constraints that farmers have to move their farm forward.

Trainers: Keith Olander – Minnesota State Northern Agricultural Center of Excellence, AgCentric, Cory Detloff – Ag & Energy Center, Farm Business Mgt, Central Lakes College

RIMarkable! RIM Reserve From Beginning to End – Part 2

Track: Workshops **Skill Level:** All
LGU Org: SWCD/WD

Join BWSR Easement Section staff to learn the most important details behind RIM Reserve. We'll cover the RIM process from beginning to end, including program background, RIM sub-programs, the application process, easement processing, SURVEYS!, and stewardship of existing easements. Information covered will be applicable to staff new to the RIM Program and to those with years of experience. Necessary updates to policies and processes within the RIM program are continuously being made, and this workshop will provide those details as they overlap with the work local governments do to support prospective and current RIM easement landowners.

Trainers: Sara Reagan & Lucy Dahl - BWSR

Making Waves: Wake Boating on MN Lakes

Track: Emerging Topics **Skill Level:** Beginner
LGU Org: All

Wake Boats are making waves—literally and figuratively—on Minnesota lakes, fueling economic growth but also causing shoreline erosion, property damage, and sediment disturbance. Since 2019, Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLR) has led efforts to address these impacts by partnering with researchers, supporting local communities, and driving public policy. In this session, you'll learn about the wake boat issue, new boater education requirements, a new statewide education campaign, and ongoing research. Participants will also learn about some local strategies implemented to protect lakes from wake boat impacts.

Trainers: Jeff Forester & Sami Selter – MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates