

BWSR-produced video series aims to speed watershed board training



A new series of video trainings produced by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) aims to provide flexible, streamlined learning opportunities for watershed managers and commissioners and other local decision-makers.

Minnesota's 45 watershed districts and 17 watershed management organizations are each overseen by individual governing boards of managers or commissioners. County commissioners appoint watershed district managers and commissioners, but in the case of watershed management organizations, municipalities or counties make the appointments.

In response to a growing need for consistent onboarding trainings for watershed boards, BWSR developed "[Watershed Management](#)," a nine-module training series that covers the purpose, authority, policies, structure, and role of watershed organizations within Minnesota's conservation delivery system.

A supporting video training series titled "[Who's Who in Minnesota Water?](#)" offers a four-module overview of Minnesota's approach to water management, outlining the roles that local, state, Tribal and federal governments play in conservation delivery. This series is geared toward a broader audience, since it applies to professionals in a variety of roles.

"Watershed board members have varied backgrounds," said Minnesota Watersheds Executive Director Jan Voit. "They have private-sector and government backgrounds. Some are farmers and business owners. Many of them have experience in the watershed world, but others come to the job with little experience in conservation. That's why these videos are useful for both those who are new to or are experienced in watershed management."

Training for watershed board members is typically offered during a one-day workshop at the Minnesota Watersheds Annual Conference in early

December. But turnover on watershed boards can create a need for trainings that can be accessed anytime, anywhere.

"These videos can be viewed on demand on a board member's own time, as a follow-up to an in-person workshop, or they can be shown during board meetings for periodic educational refreshers," said BWSR One Watershed, One Plan Coordinator Julie Westerlund, who planned, created and launched the video series.

Westerlund, Voit and members of the Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators (MAWA) worked together to identify content that would be most useful to watershed board members. MAWA also arranged for several target audience members to review drafts and provide input to inform the final versions.

"Having a cohesive, streamlined set of training videos will help increase board members' knowledge about the complex, multi-layered world of water

governance in Minnesota," Westerlund said.

Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Administrator Laura Jester said the videos also offer useful information for existing commissioners and local partners.

"These videos are a great way to take in this complicated information in easy-to-understand, bite-size segments," Jester said. "I know they will be very useful for years to come."

Westerlund said she hoped the video series would free up time that state and local staff typically spend designing and delivering one-time workshops and trainings.

"These trainings can be used as a stand-alone course, but they can also be integrated into regular board meetings or in-person trainings," Westerlund said. "We're excited to provide versatile, consistent training content that can enhance local officials' knowledge and understanding of their roles within the larger conservation system."