



Applying knowledge to improve water quality

National Water Program

A Partnership of USDA CSREES & Land Grant Colleges and Universities

Winter 2007

Conservation Professional Training Program



GREAT LAKES REGION

National Themes:

Animal Waste Management, Nutrient and Pesticide Management

Project Description

The Conservation Professional Development and Training program is a six-state project designed to provide both a base level of training for conservation staff (soil and water conservation districts/partner agencies, Extension, and private sector) and targeted training in specialized areas (such as pest management, comprehensive nutrient management planning, forestry, etc). Conservation Planning is the integral first step that all crop and non-cropland conservation decisions are built upon. True conservation planning involves not only a working knowledge of the science behind the resource and potential management solutions, but an understanding of the cultural, social and economic factors that influence a landowner's decisions. A farm's conservation plan is the base document from which all other land management options should start. This is especially important in meeting state, regional and federal Clean Water initiatives.

Project Goals

The Conservation Professional Training program is an ongoing program supported by multi-agency efforts. The project has fostered greater definition of how University Extension can assist its partner conservation agencies by providing training and professional development. Conservation professionals who complete the training program:

- Gain the necessary skills and knowledge to write conservation plans (esp. CNMPs and Nutrient Management Plans),
- Gain a holistic conservation perspective in order to write more effective conservation plans,
- Improve their ability to develop positive relationships with landowners that either require conservation plans or that voluntarily implement them,
- Help their agencies reach various goals for implementation of conservation planning, and
- Enhance their potential for career growth.



PROJECT CONTACTS

Kevin Erb

UW-Extension
1150 S Bellevue Street
Green Bay, Wisconsin 54302
Phone: (920) 391-4652
Email: kevin.erb@ces.uwex.edu

Ingrid West

UW-Extension
445 Henry Mall Rm. 202
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: (608) 265-3727
Email: iwest@wisc.edu

PROJECT PARTNERS

University of Illinois

Purdue University

Michigan State University

University of Minnesota

The Ohio State University

University of Wisconsin

Natural Resource Conservation Service
(NRCS)

For more information about the Great Lakes Regional Water Program, please contact:

Rebecca Power
University of Wisconsin
Regional Water Liaison
Phone: (608) 263-3425
rebecca.power@uwex.edu

Outcomes

Conservation Planning is the first step in resource protection, but limited agency staffing and program demands limit how many landowners agency staff can work with. Between Wisconsin and Minnesota, more than 50 private sector consultants have been trained in Conservation Planning. More than two hundred agency staff and TSPs have been trained in Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning across the region, generating more than 200 Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs) in Wisconsin alone in the past 18 months. Specialized training in CNMP components (Feed Management, Engineering) is greatly accelerating CNMP implementation on the farm. Trained TSPs and agency staff are developing 170 Pest management Plans, resulting in a seven-fold increase in acres planned in just three years.

TSPs from both Minnesota and Wisconsin who have completed the CNMP or Conservation Planning training reported using information learned during the sessions not only with clients who needed plans under cost share agreements, but with a wide range of landowners. More than half of those trained noted that they were more aware of environmental issues on client farms, and were making suggestions to at least 20% of their clientele based on what they had learned.

By partnering with agency staff and Land Grant institutions in curriculum development, deployment and implementation, we are able to build on each state's strengths and increase conservation delivery across the region. With the pilot phase complete, we are working with partners in all six states in the region to roll out the training in a cost- and staff-effective manner. An additional four curricula are currently under development.



www.uwex.edu/ces/regionalwaterquality

More information about conservation training
on the web at <http://conservationtraining.uwex.edu>