



BWSR training takes many forms

August 2013 Snapshots

Hot off the trail from a month-long statewide eLINK training tour, the Board of Water and Soil Resources' (BWSR) training coordinator Jenny Gieseke is grateful for the patience of local government partners.

In June 2013, BWSR staff led 16 classroom style training sessions at nine locations around the state and introduced more than 300 LGU staff to the features of the new eLINK system. Each training session offered participants the opportunity for hands-on learning.

"As we ran into glitches during the recent eLINK training, our participants were understanding and patient. It's wonderful working with local government staff who know we are in this together and that technology can sometimes be frustrating," Gieseke said.

That patience was rewarded, Gieseke said, as participants realized the new eLINK system is more user-friendly. "It was neat watching the participants' moods change from trepidation to relief as they learned the new system," Gieseke said.

The training evaluations revealed more than 88 percent of the participants said they felt more prepared to use the system as a result of the sessions.

Not all training takes place in the classroom

BWSR's wetland staff members are often found leading training sessions in the field. In late May, approximately 20 LGU staff attended a wetland training session in Rochester, Minn. The session focused on Hydrology Indicators and featured both classroom and in the field training. BWSR wetland staff members also collaborate with the University of Minnesota to prepare and deliver courses related to the Wetland Delineator's Certification Program.

Webinars are also a large part BWSR's training program, and the first half of 2013 was no exception. BWSR staff led webinars on the new Local Road Wetland Replacement Program and Easement Monitoring, and collaborated with the NRCS on a three-part Soils Health Webinar series. Evaluating the series, LGU partners said they appreciated the flexibility and time savings associated with the webinar format. As one participant in the Soils Health series said, "Thanks for providing this learning opportunity in an easily accessed, well run, attention keeping manner!"

And last but not least, the BWSR Academy offers a variety of training opportunities in one setting. Held in October each year, attendees of the 2.5 day academy often find themselves attending training in classroom settings, participating in small group activities and getting hands-on experience out in the field.

Not all training topics work equally well in all settings and BWSR's training program focuses on matching subject matter with the appropriate training format. By continuing to update and rethink training sessions, BWSR staff are able to implement fresh approaches to training for Minnesota's Conservation Professionals. If you have questions about BWSR's training program, contact Jenny Gieseke at 507-381-3131 or at jenny.gieseke@state.mn.us.



BWSR staff member Conor Donnelly teaches an eLINK training seminar in June 2013.