



**2010**

***BWSR Training Strategy***



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*The BWSR 2010 training strategy was developed as part of the Training Needs Assessment Report, located online at [www.bwsr.state.mn.us](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us) in the training section.*

# 2010 BWSR Training Strategy

## PURPOSE:

**Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)** 2010 training strategy seeks to provide an intentional plan for our role in supporting and building conservation local government organizational effectiveness.

The plan builds on the BWSR's past approaches to training and rich history of training events and programs. The plan uses the 2010 needs assessment process which included: local government staff and board engagement in focus groups and/or survey, BWSR staff interviews, and partnerships with key partners<sup>1</sup> working in the conservation training field.

## NEED:

With Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment funding for conservation and water quality practices currently estimated at \$150 million/year for 25 years, BWSR recognizes the increased opportunity for program delivery and the need to ensure programs are implemented with quality efficiencies that are connected to on-the-ground results.

Links between learning and performance are well-established. Programs and practices do not effectively protect and improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat – unless they are properly selected, marketed effectively and correctly designed and implemented.

Measures and outcomes are not realized - unless pollution reduction estimates are accurately calculated, and outcomes recorded and reported. Wise use of state financial resources are not assured - unless budgets and programs are tracked and organizations accountable for dollars spent.

BWSR recognizes the value in connecting learning to performance. In the community of soil and water conservation, well-trained assistance for local delivery of conservation programs and practices is crucial to ensure that dollars spent have impacts on water and soil resources - ultimately connecting us to the outcomes within watersheds.

## AUDIENCE:

The primary audience is the local government units for which BWSR is the administrative agency. This includes: Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Watershed Districts, Watershed Management Organizations, and County water management.

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<sup>1</sup> See needs assessment for more information. Key partners include Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, MN Association of Watershed Districts, MN Association of Conservation District Employees, MN Association of District Administrators, MN Interagency Conservation Training Workgroup (MN Department of Agriculture, University of MN, MN Pollution Control Agency, MN Department of Natural Resources, NRCS, and others).

## APPROACH:

The strategy addresses three areas of BWSR work:

- Defining BWSR's niche with local government training priorities
- Improving BWSR's function as trainers
- Increasing BWSR's internal professional development and performance

With limited resources, both local governments and BWSR must target training and partner with local, state and federal organizations where possible. BWSR's training focus should be only one component of increasing organization effectiveness; other public, private, and non-profit organizations also have niches and areas of influence.

This strategy is based on the BWSR Training Needs Assessment report, compiled in spring 2010.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

The intention of any training program must be to deliver results. This strategy must be realistic, attainable, and in recognition of other partner niches.

Over the next year, BWSR will implement recommendations to:

- ✓ **Deliver increased training communications to LGU partners using new online methods and existing BWSR channels** (such as PRAP process or board conservationist meetings with LGUs).
- ✓ **Support intentional individual development plans (IDPs), for BWSR staff and LGU partners, to improve professional performance and organizational effectiveness.**
- ✓ **Continue BWSR's role in implementing specific training events such as the BWSR Academy and WCA/WDCP programs.**
- ✓ **Determine BWSR's niche in these priority training areas: conservation marketing; personnel management, fund-seeking, grant writing, outcomes and measures, planning, and pollution estimators.**
- ✓ **Increase effectiveness of learning strategies and trainer roles into all BWSR delivered trainings through program design support and coaching.**
- ✓ **Incorporate learning measures into training and program evaluations.**

Specific recommendations and intended results are outlined in the table that follows. A BWSR Training team has been established to determine priorities and to develop specific action steps, roles, and timelines for the strategy.

## BWSR 2010 TRAINING STRATEGY:

Recommendation	Intended Result
<b>A. COMMUNICATIONS</b>	
A1. Develop system to regularly communicate BWSR & partner trainings	LGUs will have increased access to training opportunities – allowing better decisions and prioritizations for their time.
A2. Continue providing BWSR’s training information on website. Increase website/email use to note ALL upcoming BWSR trainings.	LGUs will have increased access to training opportunities – allowing better decisions and prioritizations for their time.
<b>B. TRAININGS / EVENTS TO CONTINUE IN 2010</b>	
B1. Continue BWSR’s role in WCA and WDCP training, including partnership with U of MN.	More effective TEPs will better deliver/implement statute.
B2. Continue BWSR Academy as an important training event for the agency.	Attending LGU staff will exhibit improved performance in implementing their work (both technical and org development).
B3. Continue promoting BWSR’s work by participating in Associations’ key mtgs (such as MAWD, MASWCD, AMC annual conventions; boot camps; etc)	Boards will demonstrate program competence when making decision governing the organization. Knowledgeable boards make better governance decisions using BWSR program funds. Boards stay engaged through peer-to-peer learning (& reporting back from events).
B4. Continue training delivery of BWSR program priorities and partnerships	LGU staff will demonstrate new or increased skills delivering BWSR-related program work.
<b>C. POSSIBLE NEW TRAINING DEVELOPMENT IN 2010</b>	
C1. Incorporate distance learning trainings where possible as it meets BWSR’s needs assessment.	Economic and timing efficiencies realized in self-directed learning.
C2. Develop 2010-2011 training priorities and that focus BWSR’s niche	Increase in systematic training attention at LGU level leads to better trainings improved performance.
C3. Maintain flexibility to capitalize on new training opportunities.	Incorporating appropriate existing curriculums or partnering on opportunities will provide additional advantages to our LGU partners.

Recommendation	Intended Result
<b>D. BWSR ROLES AS TRAINER</b>	
D1. Support/coach BWSR staff trainers to incorporate local-level learning strategies in regional or state training delivery.	Improved BWSR training delivery will lead to better participant recall of material, increased use/application in the LGU work, and better connections with training and outcomes.
D2. Develop and incorporate a mini-needs assessment worksheet to be used by staff prior to new training development.	Accountability and best use of training time/resources will be confirmed. LGUs will not be expected to attend new trainings unless it has been established why it's needed and what are expected learning objectives.
D3. Incorporate measures of learning & application into evaluations.	BWSR will document what learning outcomes are realized for internal and external reporting (legislature and others).
D4. Create a "BWSR trainer database" to capture all BWSR's training events and efforts as trainers.	BWSR will record, tally, and promote the important training work we do towards improving performance.
<b>E. BWSR STAFF DEVELOPMENT</b>	
E1. Use web-format to share internal program controls and staff expertise as appropriate.	Increased consistency among staff for delivery of BWSR programs. Creating forums to coach/troubleshoot without the need for formal training can be more efficient at getting the job done.
E2. Incorporate a more consistent approach to staff professional development, promoting it in annual work plans and discussed at performance reviews.	Increased connections between skills and tasks improve work performance.
E3. Create economies of scale by incorporating similar individual staff development needs to provide group training.	Increased connections between skills and tasks improve work performance.
<b>F. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION IN FUTURE YEARS (2011 AND BEYOND)</b>	
F1. Consider BWSR's niche for future training opportunities.	
F2. Determine value in creating a database that captures LGUs served.	