



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

Implementing a Multi-State Prof. Development/Training Program for Local Conservation Staff / TSPs

Objectives

An in-depth needs analysis showed that there are several priority areas that need to be addressed, not only in Wisconsin, but in the other states within the Great Lakes Region. We therefore took the approach of both single and multi-state pilots, with the goal of creating a curriculum that could be readily and easily adapted to local conservation and resource concerns.

Developed curricula include:

1. **Core Conservation:** 3 modules targeting newly hired (<5 years experience) staff, designed to bring staff up to a common base level of knowledge in people skills, evaluation techniques, conservation history and landowner education skills. (Jointly developed by WI/MN)
2. **Conservation Planning:** 4 modules that will bring employees to a common skill level (Jointly developed by WI/MN)
3. **Conservation Planning for CCA's/TSP's:** An introductory set of two one-day sessions for private industry before entering Conservation Planning (Jointly developed by WI/MN)
4. **Pest Management:** A three-module series on IPM and risk reduction tools (WinPST, Weedsoft). (Developed by WI with input from IL, IN, and MN)
5. **Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning (Comprehensive Livestock Farm Plan)** is a 3 module series for both TSPs and agency staff on CNMP development basics. It includes an Agronomic series, an Engineering Series, and a Feed Management module.
6. **Managed Intensive Grazing:** A four module series for both the private sector and agency staff on developing and implementing a grazing plan.
7. **Feed Management** is a new series with a Dairy and Beef module, (Swine and poultry under development)

Future curricula include Forestry (currently joint WI/MI team), Wetlands and a forestry/recreational land use focused Conservation Planning (also joint MI/WI).

Partnerships

This project is funded by a CSREES Section 406 Extension Education grant, with additional support from NRCS and land grant universities in participating states. The Core Conservation Training and Conservation Planning modules are a joint

WI/MN endeavor, with participation from NRCS and SWCD's in development and training. Additional partnerships are being developed with NRCS and local conservation agencies in each state. An advisory team of Certified Crop Advisors has been developed in Wisconsin to guide curriculum development.

Resources

In addition to CSREES funding, NRCS has contributed over \$200,000 to implement the program. Resource and time commitments from NRCS and Extension staff in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Land Conservation Districts have helped refine and implement the curriculum.

Regional and National Implementation

The University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Great Lakes Regional Water Leadership Team is currently working with NRCS to develop a national MOU for several of the curriculum areas. Once signed, both groups will work with other Land Grants that want to adapt this training program and approach to the needs of local conservation staff in each state. The MOU will allow each NRCS state office to recognize the training program, and develop their own approach to certifying individuals who have trained under the program.

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