



Applying knowledge to improve water quality

Great Lakes

Regional Water Program

A Partnership of USDA CSREES
& Land Grant Colleges and Universities

Winter 2009

Multi-state Conservation Professional Training Program

**GREAT LAKES
REGION**



National Themes:

Animal Waste Management
Nutrient and Pesticide Management
Pollution Assessment and Prevention

Project Description

The Conservation Professional Training program is a six-state initiative that provides both a base level of training for conservation staff (soil and water conservation districts/partner agencies, private sector consultants, Extension) and advanced technical targeted training in specialized areas (such as pest management, comprehensive nutrient management planning, forestry, etc).

In an era of shrinking local, state and federal agency budgets (both for technical assistance and cost-share), landowners are relying more and more on the private sector as a source of technical information and assistance. This trend will continue as environmental regulations continue to affect livestock producers of all sizes, particularly small and medium-sized operations with more limited resources. To address this water quality issue, University Extension systems in the Great Lakes Region have created a number of innovative curricula that foster the adoption and adaptation of agricultural conservation practices and various types of conservation plans. The initiative trains Extension staff, private sector consultants, co-op agronomists, Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs), Technical Service Providers (TSPs), as well as state natural resources staff, Land/Soils and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – the “Conservation Advisors” who work with farmers on conservation issues.

Project Goals

- increase the capacity of the private and public sectors to implement conservation practices through hands-on science-based training;
- spread more consistent conservation information and messages across the region and, where appropriate, include state-specific information and messages;
- more effectively meet the training needs of conservation professionals who work across state lines; and
- increase participation in existing programs.



Students examine a karst formation.

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Outcomes

In 2008 over 1100 conservation advisors participated in a regional needs assessment. Following this a multi-state roundtable was held focused on regional conservation training priorities and directions.

- increased sharing of research information, curriculum, and partner needs across states;
- reduced duplication of efforts in curriculum development, record keeping, and multi-state outreach to partners;
- provided wider access to the best resources for teaching various subjects through regional website;
- increased ability to leverage multi-state and national resources to complement existing state resources;
- formed/enhanced interagency training committees at the state level in three states;
- initiated curriculum sharing in Cover Crops, RUSLE2, Invasives Plant Management;
- realized the greatest number of trained private sector conservation planners (MN/WI); and
- trained over 400 CNMP Planners (agency and private sector trained in six states).



Learning at the 2008 Manure Expo.



www.uwex.edu/ces/regionalwaterquality

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/regionalwaterquality/conservationtraining>