

2010 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2012

Funding Source: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

Legal Citation: M.L. 2010, Chap. 362, Sec. 2, Subd. 8a

Appropriate Amount: \$368,000

PROJECT TITLE:	Minnesota Conservation Apprenticeship Academy
PROJECT MANAGER:	Steve Woods
AFFILIATION:	Board of Water and Soil Resources
MAILING ADDRESS:	520 Lafayette Road
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WEBSITE:	www.bwsr.state.mn.us
FUNDING SOURCE:	Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
LEGAL CITATION:	M.L. 2010, Chap. 362, Sec. 2, Subd. 8a

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$368,000

Overall Project Outcome and Results

Many of Minnesota's conservation districts' most experienced conservation professionals and practitioners are nearing retirement age but due to budget constraints will not be replaced until they have left employment. Consequently, Minnesota is missing a great opportunity to transfer knowledge and experience to the next generation responsible for Minnesota's conservation.

While college graduates with conservation-related degrees are knowledgeable in technology, theory, and research methods, their practical, on-the-ground skills need development. Communicating with landowners and adjusting designs for field nuances are vital skills for the success of conservation projects and are best learned from seasoned professionals. In turn, apprentices bring knowledge of emerging technologies and other innovations to improve the quality and productivity of current conservation efforts. This allows for a cross-pollination of ideas and solutions for natural resource challenges.

From 2011 to 2012, 65 students were placed with 60 Conservation Districts. During this time, the apprentices planted 33,339 trees, took 5,219 samples to monitor water quality; provided environmental education to 1,495 people; conducted 1,372 surveys; restored 1,542 acres of habitat through invasive species removal; completed 466,773 square feet of rain garden planting and maintenance; 272,173 square feet of erosion control and shoreline restoration; and 12,933,645 square feet of seeding. Due to the 2011 state shut down, a shifting of allocated funds allowed for the placement of an additional 35 students with conservation districts in May of 2013.

This program has benefits to both students and conservation districts. 100% of apprentices indicated the hands-on experience gained during the apprenticeship will enhance their future

academic studies, and that they now have increased technical conservation skills and are more prepared for a future career in conservation.

98% of the Districts were satisfied with the work their apprentices completed, and 100% indicate they would participate in the program again. Managers also indicated that the work conducted by the apprentices increased the amount of conservation practices delivered by their districts during the program period.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

***This section NOT intended to count toward recommended 300 word length for Abstract**

Directions:

1. *How has information from your project been used and/or disseminated?*

Information from the project has been disseminated through reports to LCCMR, press releases by BWSR and the Governor's Office, local press releases by SWCDs, and through the Conservation Corps newsletter and annual report. Information was used to recruit apprentices and increase awareness of the project.

2. *What communications and outreach activities have been done in relation to your project? For example: have tools or techniques developed through your project been adopted by a group; presentations relating to the project been made; has work pertaining to the project been published?*

Communication and outreach activities include the aforementioned reports, press releases, and electronic newsletters. Additionally, BWSR and Conservation Corps staff conducted outreach to SWCDs to find optimal matches between districts and apprentices. Through the course of their work, the apprentices conducted significant outreach to land owners and residents in topics ranging from easement protection, to water quality education, to plant biodiversity.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) 2010 Work Program Final Report

Date of Report: August 15, 2013
Final Report
Date of Work Program Approval: June 16, 2010
Project Completion Date: June 30, 2013

I. PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Conservation Apprenticeship Academy

Project Manager: Steve Woods
Affiliation: Board of Water and Soil Resources
Mailing Address: 520 Lafayette Road
City / State / Zip: St. Paul, MN 55155
Telephone Number: 651-297-7748
E-mail Address: steve.woods@state.mn.us
Fax Number: 651-297-5615
Web Site Address: www.bwsr.state.mn.us

Location: Statewide applicability

Total ENRTF Project Budget:	ENRTF Appropriation	\$ 368,000
	Minus Amount Spent:	\$ 367,036
	Equal Balance:	\$ 964

Legal Citation: M.L. 2010, Chap. 362, Sec. 2, Subd. 8a

Appropriation Language:

\$368,000 is from the trust fund to the Board of Water and Soil Resources in cooperation with the Minnesota Conservation Corps or its successor to train and mentor future conservation professionals by providing apprenticeship service opportunities to soil and water conservation districts. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2013, by which time the project must be completed and the final products delivered.

II. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS:

Many of Minnesota's conservation districts' most experienced conservation professionals and practitioners are nearing retirement age but due to budget constraints will not be replaced until they have left employment. Consequently, Minnesota is missing a great opportunity to transfer knowledge and experience to the next generation responsible for Minnesota's conservation.

While college graduates with conservation-related degrees are knowledgeable in technology, theory, and research methods, their practical, on-the-ground skills need development. Communicating with landowners and adjusting designs for field nuances are vital skills for the success of conservation projects and are best learned from seasoned professionals. In turn, apprentices bring knowledge of emerging technologies and other innovations to improve the quality and productivity of current conservation efforts. This allows for a cross-pollination of ideas and solutions for natural resource challenges.

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This program has benefits to both students and conservation districts. 100% of apprentices indicated the hands-on experience gained during the apprenticeship will enhance their future academic studies, and that they now have increased technical conservation skills and are more prepared for a future career in conservation.

98% of the Districts were satisfied with the work their apprentices completed, and 100% indicate they would participate in the program again. Managers also indicated that the work conducted by the apprentices increased the amount of conservation practices delivered by their districts during the program period.

III. PROGRESS SUMMARY AS OF: August 15, 2013

SERVICE WORK PERFORMED

A total of 100 apprentices were placed at SWCDs in 2011, 2012, and May/June of 2013. Additional apprentices were supported through the program due to lost time during the MN state government shutdown in 2011.

The diversity of project work done by 100 apprentices represented the variety of projects specific to each region and district participating in the program. Apprentices conducted water quality monitoring, installed conservation practices, conducted site inspections, recruited landowners for conservation programs, assisted landowners and SWCD staff with management plans, and much more.

Sample of work accomplished: In 2011 and 2012, 65 apprentices planted 33,339 trees, forbs, and grasses; took 5,219 samples to monitor water quality; provided environmental education to 1,498 people; restored 1,542 acres of habitat through invasive species removal; 555,979 square feet of rain garden planting and maintenance; 301,463 square feet of erosion control and shoreline restoration; 336 acres of native of seeding.

When asked how projects would have been completed without an apprentice, Corryn Trask of Lake of the Woods County SWCD stated, "Longer days and less sleep at night. Or we would have collected less data and probably wouldn't be as far along as we are".

98% of SWCDs were satisfied with their apprentice's performance on projects.¹

100% of SWCDs believed the apprentice applicants provided for initial review in the selection process met the needs outlined in their project proposal.¹

96% of SWCDs were satisfied with the skills and qualities of the apprentice placed at their site.¹

100% of SWCD partners believed they received adequate support from the Conservation Corps to mentor their apprentice and said they would partner with the Corps again.¹

"I was extremely pleased with our corpsmember. He has many talents, performed well and was up to any task. He fit in with the office personnel very well."

- Kerry Saxton, Wright County SWCD

"We are thankful to have been selected to host a CCM apprentice position and are very pleased at how it turned out. It is a moral boost to be able to mentor someone starting out in their career."

- Mark Schaetzke, Freeborn County SWCD

Site visits: Conservation Corps conducted site visits throughout July and August in 2011 and 2012, one site visit per placement site to ensure successful progress was made in the apprentice work plan. Conservation Corps staff met with the apprentice and SWCD supervisor, together and separately, to assess successes and challenges. Corps staff also visited a representative project in which the apprentice participated.

APPRENTICE DEMOGRAPHICS

Apprentices are currently pursuing degrees or recently completed degrees from the following colleges and universities in the following areas of study:

Schools represented: Saint Cloud State University, Saint Mary's, University of Winona, College of Saint Benedict-Saint John's University, University of Minnesota Twin Cities, University Wisconsin La Crosse, Gustavus Adolphus College, University of Minnesota Duluth, University of Minnesota Crookston, University of Minnesota Morris, South Dakota State University, University of St. Thomas, Augsburg College, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, Bemidji State University, Minnesota State University Moorhead, University of Wisconsin River Falls

Areas of study represented: Environmental Studies, Natural Resource Management, Environmental Science/Policy/Management, Conservation, Technical Communication, Biology, Environmental/Civil Engineering, Agricultural Economics, Electronic Publishing, Water Resources, Environmental Chemistry, Agronomy, and Geography

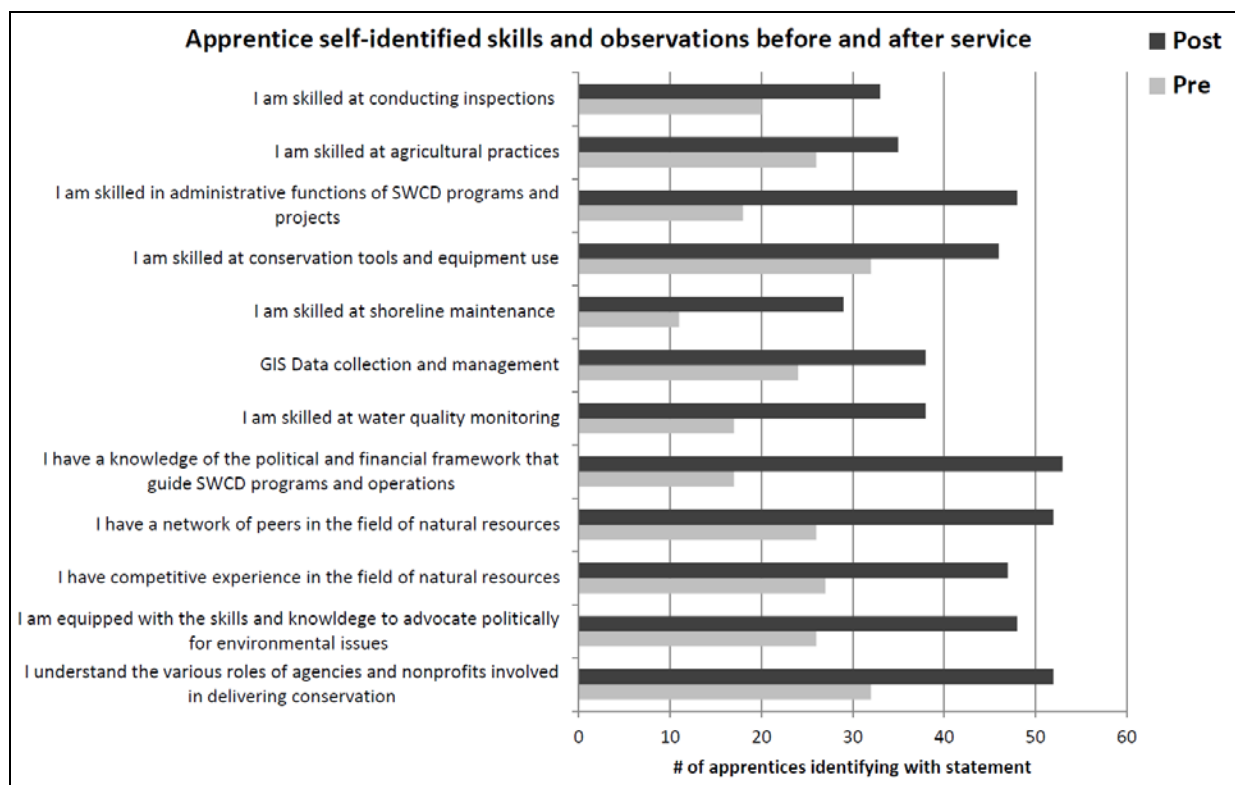
APPRENTICE GAINS

100% of apprentices believe this hands-on will enhance their future academic studies.²

100% of apprentices believe they now have increased technical conservation skills and are more prepared for a future career in conservation.²

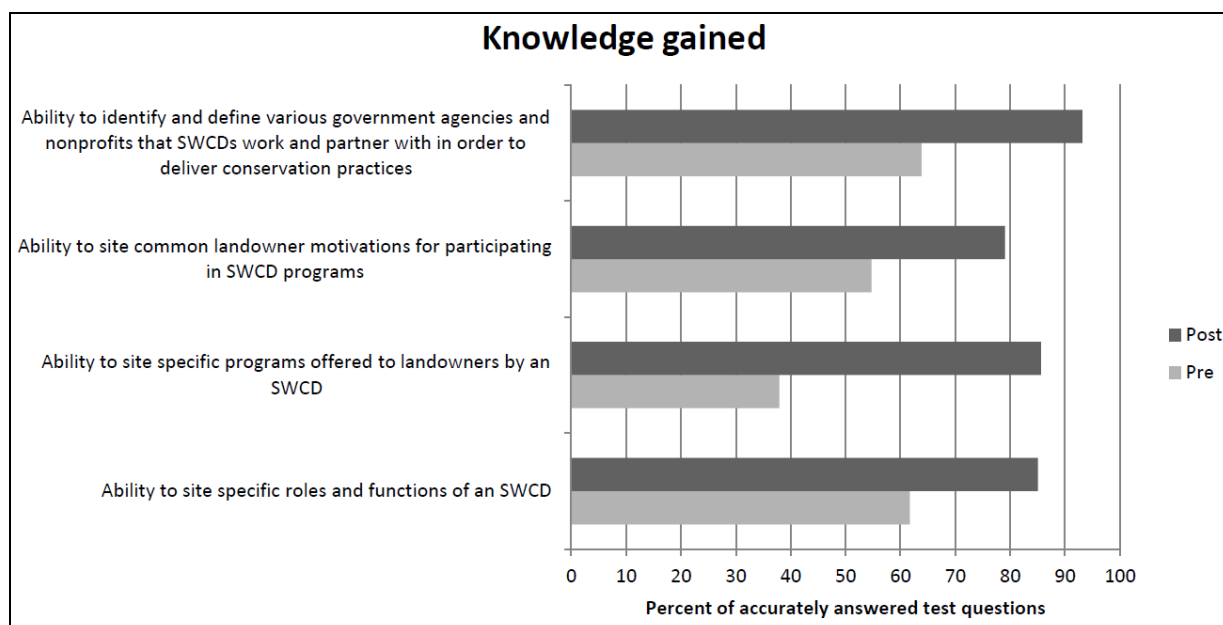
"Being in the Conservation Academy allowed me to put practices I only had known in theory into reality. Working with the Sherburne SWCD staff was the best technical and hands-on experience I could hope for. The knowledge and experience I have gained will greatly help my future career in conservation."

- Marta Behling, Sherburne SWCD Apprentice



In addition to hands-on skills in conservation, the Corps and BWSR determined a core objective of the apprentice experience should be to demonstrate an increased understanding of how an SWCD works with landowners on the local level to deliver conservation practices through relationships with numerous government agencies and nonprofits.

In a knowledge survey administered to apprentices before and after their term of service, apprentices demonstrated the following knowledge increases attributed to their experience in the program.



APPRENTICE ACADEMY SERVICE LEARNING FORUM

A customized social networking platform, Ning.com, was utilized to foster an online community and enhance learning through monthly critical discussion. Below are the three forum topics discussed with several representative insights from apprentices.

Apprentices initial impressions of working in an SWCD

"I have not only had the opportunity to learn the daily operation of the SWCD office but also the overall picture. I was able to attend a board meeting in my county and it was really shocking to see how much effort is needed at every level to secure funding for projects. I didn't expect the level of coordination between local, state, and federal government agencies."

What is a Watershed District?

"WD's and SWCD's are really similar governmental units, with similar funding, similar leadership, similar staff sizes, and similar focuses. The big difference is the land and water systems that they cover--where SWCD boundaries are mainly political, WD's are entirely centered around the confluence of some watershed system, allowing themselves to more definitively focus on the tributaries and issues of their particular watershed. The two organizations would definitely work together on water quality issues, community outreach, and more generally getting money and time to go to where it's needed to both preemptively take care of issues in their district and remediate problems that have already gotten ugly."

What it means to be a successful SWCD

"A successful SWCD should be defined by the quantity of its projects as well as the quality, and by its reputation in the community. If the county and its residents have a good relationship with the SWCD and progress is being made to improve soil and water conditions than the SWCD is succeeding as far as I am concerned. Obviously, this is easier said than done. It takes a lot of communication, cooperation, and patience with other agencies for funding, and with landowners during the planning process, but after working here and reading about some of the other counties, SWCD's have succeeded at completing thousands of conservation projects over the years and continue to take on more."

2013 Apprentice first impressions

"The Cottonwood County SWCD is involved with the Greater Blue Earth River Watershed Board (GBERBA) as the Watonwan River Watershed is located in part of Cottonwood County. My advisor is the Administrative coordinator of GBERBA and it has been interesting to learn more about watersheds. So far other than learning about watersheds I have been planting trees for field windbreaks, farmstead windbreaks, and shelter belts. I have also been working on putting together an invasive species tour that is going to be held on July 31st. So far I have learned a lot and am excited to keep learning."

"I did not know much about SWCDs before I started this apprenticeship. I knew that they did water testing, soil testing, and tree planting. What I have learned about my SWCD site that I was not really expecting is that we have more involvement with land owners than I thought. I did not think that many people would see the value in things such as tree windbreaks and natural lakeshore restorations. I have been involved with working with farmers, land owners, and lakeshore property owners. We are working with farmers in grazing, irrigation, and planting windbreaks. I planted trees for a land owner's hunting property. I also helped with numerous natural lakeshore restorations that we just wrapped up yesterday. I was not expecting the amount of landowner involvement or the wide variety of work."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

In total, 100 students have participated in this program to date. Of the 65 participants from 2011 and 2012, 34 (52%) are currently employed or completing a degree in natural resource management or a related field. A survey of program alumni was conducted via email and telephone, and achieved a 57% response rate.



Nathan Dennis

2011 Apprentice Placement: Hubbard County SWCD

Currently Employed: DNR

“The Academy has taught me how to tweak and emphasize key subjects/job duties on my resume and give it a more professional appeal. I have been applying to several positions and continuously get good reviews from the agencies applied for. The Academy has made it all the easier and left me with some great contacts and references. I am currently working on a small DNR project in the Grand Rapids MN area.

I can honestly say that my time with the Academy landed me the position! I would urge any students thinking about pursuing the biology/conservation/soil fields to enroll in this program! It sets up a strong base to build on both personally and professionally.”



Robert Bauer

2011 Apprentice Placement: Crow Wing County SWCD

Currently Employed: Crow Wing County SWCD

“The Apprenticeship Academy increased my interest in public service and increased my understanding of how local governments accomplish conservation goals. I had previously not considered pursuing the Peace Corps program because I felt that an individual cannot make a profound change in a short period of time but I am considering that I may eventually apply to serve in the Peace Corps because I found that the

Apprenticeship helped the SWCD to be an effective change-maker by allowing full-time staff to focus on the overload of conservation work that they do. I also found that I enjoy the messy process of educating the public and helping people to accomplish their conservation goals and want to serve in that way professionally.”



Neva Widner

2011 Apprentice Placement: Carlton County SWCD

Currently Employed: Carlton County SWCD

“The Apprenticeship Academy provided me the opportunity to develop a set of professional skills and network to become competitive in my pursuit of acquiring a conservation position. As a direct result to my apprenticeship, I am now employed full time by my apprenticeship SWCD as a Water Resources Technician. I view the Apprenticeship Academy as a vital component to the long-term effectiveness of

Minnesota SWCD functionality, by providing the apprentice the means to transition the future conservationists from the classroom to the field and the SWCD the additional affordable staff support.”



Kirsten Kieta

2011 Apprentice Placement: Renville County SWCD

Currently Employed: USGS

"I had previously planned to go to school for environmental policy, leaving the science part of my degree in the past. After the Apprenticeship Academy and subsequent work at USGS I have the intention of going back to school for natural resources/water management with a stress on the 'hard' science. Rather than be a creator of policy I now hope to impact how policy is created by doing

meaningful scientific investigations relating to wetlands/grasslands which I was first introduced to at the Renville County SWCD."



Kiel Tschumperlin

2011 Apprentice Placement: Martin County SWCD

Currently Employed: Heron Lake Watershed District

"[The Academy] provided me with experience I needed to acquire the job that I now have. Without experience working at the Martin SWCD, I would not have gotten this job. My interviewers later told me that my experience at the SWCD and being familiar with some of the nuances of government made me better qualified on top of my agricultural background for the Watershed Coordinator position I now hold at the

Heron Lake Watershed District."



Matias Valero

2011 & 2012 Apprentice Placement: South St. Louis County SWCD

Currently Employed: South St. Louis County SWCD/TSA

"My experience in my Apprenticeship has both inspired and educated me in the field of conservation, and has led directly to my first 'big' job working with the TSA engineering staff to help the Soil and Water districts across the North Shore. I've learned more through the Apprenticeship than I probably did in my four years of class at the U. Thank you."



Mitchell Ness

2011 Apprentice Placement: Yellow Medicine SWCD

Currently Employed: NRCS

"[The Academy] has impacted my professional pursuits by gaining me the valuable work experience needed for me to be hired by a federal agency in conservation."



Frances Gerde

2011 Apprentice Placement: Sherburne County SWCD

Currently Employed: Sherburne County SWCD

"The Conservation Apprenticeship Academy has meant more to me than I thought it would. It has been the best work experience I have ever had. I feel much more confident about my future career opportunities and I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the program."

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

RESULT/ACTIVITY 1: develop academy structure, recruit participating SWCDs, and develop 30 employment agreements

Description: The intent is to create a solid foundation for running an apprentice program for multiple years. Result one is administratively focused as the details of the employment arrangements are critical for all parties—MCC, SWCDs, and the prospective apprentice.

MCC will contact SWCDs about interest in the program and solicit some notion of the quality of the experience they can provide the apprentices. The same needs are there for finding the students at institutions. We need to develop contacts at schools, evaluating the programs in which the candidates are enrolled so they have the background necessary to take advantage of the placement, and create selection criteria. The screening and selecting of individuals for the program will be carried out by MCC as well.

MCC staff will administer the AmeriCorps enrollment requirements etc. for those selected. For example, an initial training session is necessary prior to placement to orient the participants similar to other MCC corps members. BWSR will seek a contracting party to assist in providing additional training beyond core MCC training.

Summary Budget Information for Result/Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget:	\$60,718
Amount Spent:	\$60,803
Balance:	\$(85)

Deliverable/Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. executed contract between BWSR and MCC	August 30, 2010	\$ 2,000
2. employment agreement format and program documentation describing schedule and duties; employment agreements and mgmt	October 15, 2010	\$30,000
3. list of interested SWCDs (incl. primary mentor)	November 30, 2010	\$ 3,000
4. year two employment agreements & mgmt	May 1, 2012	\$23,718
5. year two interested SWCDs list	November 30, 2011	\$ 2,000

Result Completion Date: June 1, 2012

Result Status as of June 1, 2011: Deliverables 1, 2, and 3 all accomplished. Year one participants have employment agreements mentioned in deliverable 4.

Result Status as of October 30, 2011: Unchanged. Year two activities for deliverables 3, 4, and 5 commencing before year end.

Result Status as of November 30, 2012: Deliverables 1-5 all accomplished.

Final Report Summary as of June 30, 2013: Deliverables 1-5 all accomplished.

RESULT/ACTIVITY 2: Recruit, select, and train academy participants; and repeat for year two

Description: BWSR and MCC will approach University of Minnesota, MnSCU, and other local university environmental programs for assistance in recruiting candidates. MCC will work to match potential participants with willing SWCDs and Technical Service Areas (TSA – a joint powers entity of SWCDs). Both the SWCD and the apprentices will be provided training to clarify expectations and requirements for the successful participation in the program. MCC will serve as the employer of record and handle all payroll and personnel related issues (e.g. AmeriCorps credits) until conclusion of summer employment.

Summary Budget Information for Result/Activity 2:

ENRTF Budget:	\$307,282
Amount Spent:	\$306,233
Balance:	\$ 1,049

Deliverable/Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. recruiting time and materials for use at educational institutions	October 15, 2010	\$ 5,000
2. match candidates with interested SWCDs	January 31, 2010	\$ 3,000
3. employ 30 apprentices in year one	October 15, 2011	\$ 93,888
4. close out year one and evaluate	December 31, 2011	\$ 0
5. employ 35 apprentices in year two	October 15, 2012	\$166,958
6. close out and evaluate	November 30, 2012	\$ 3,000
7. employ 35 apprentices May and June of year 3	June 30, 2013	\$35,436

Result Completion Date: June 30, 2013

Result Status as of June 1, 2011: Deliverable 1, 2, and 3 are all accomplished. Evaluation forms for tasks are completed.

Result Status as of October 30, 2011: Deliverable 3 disrupted by government shutdown and suspension of state grant for approximately three weeks. MCC kept program going for a short time before exhausting their available grant in-eligible dollars. (No reimbursement is being sought for funds spent during the shutdown.) Some apprentices were able to extend their employment deeper into the summer. Evaluation results summarized previously in Section II of this document.

Result Status as of November 30, 2012: Deliverable 1-6 all accomplished.

Final Report Summary as of June 30, 2013: All deliverables met. 35 apprentices also started in 2013 as part of the amended work order. The state government shutdown in 2011 caused a disruption in the program and resulted in a remaining financial balance to support additional apprentices in the 2013 summer season. This money went towards the apprentices who began in May and June of 2013.

V. TOTAL ENRTF PROJECT BUDGET:

Personnel: \$ 5,000

Contracts : \$ 363,000

Staff Salaries: \$ 76,490

Apprentice Stipends: \$ 249,355

Apprentice Orientation and Training: \$ 14,311

Apprentice Recruitment: \$ 6,002

Travel: \$ 15,878 (within contract; state employee travel will be in-kind)

Equal Balance: \$964

TOTAL ENRTF PROJECT BUDGET: \$368,000

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500: NA

VI. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners: MCC via contract, MN Association of SWCDs, individuals SWCDs, University and State College systems

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: Effort provides immediate technical assistance to accelerate conservation delivery utilizing typical funding sources such as RIM, WRP, CRP, EQIP, flood recovery, cost-share, and the constitutional funds for habitat and clean water. In the long-term we expect the participants will enlighten the each other—the interns gain experience, the SWCDs gain emerging technologies. Our hope is that, following the completion of LCCMR participation, that the program can ultimately utilize the new Clean Water Fund as it is not a program which previously existed and is therefore not supplanting of existing efforts.

C. Other Funds Proposed to be Spent during the Project Period: In-kind staff hours of the SWCDs and BWSR staff will be the largest direct money. (Indirect funds described in “Project Impact” are very large but more realistically associated with the design and construction of projects more so than the apprentices.)

D. Spending History: There have not been previous LCMR or LCCMR appropriations

VII. DISSEMINATION: The MCC will be the primary disseminator and provide a link on their website (www.conservationcorps.org) describing the program. BWSR and MASWCD will also offer a brief description of the program and a link to the MCC site. MASWCD has already been spreading this idea nationally through the National Association of Conservation Districts.

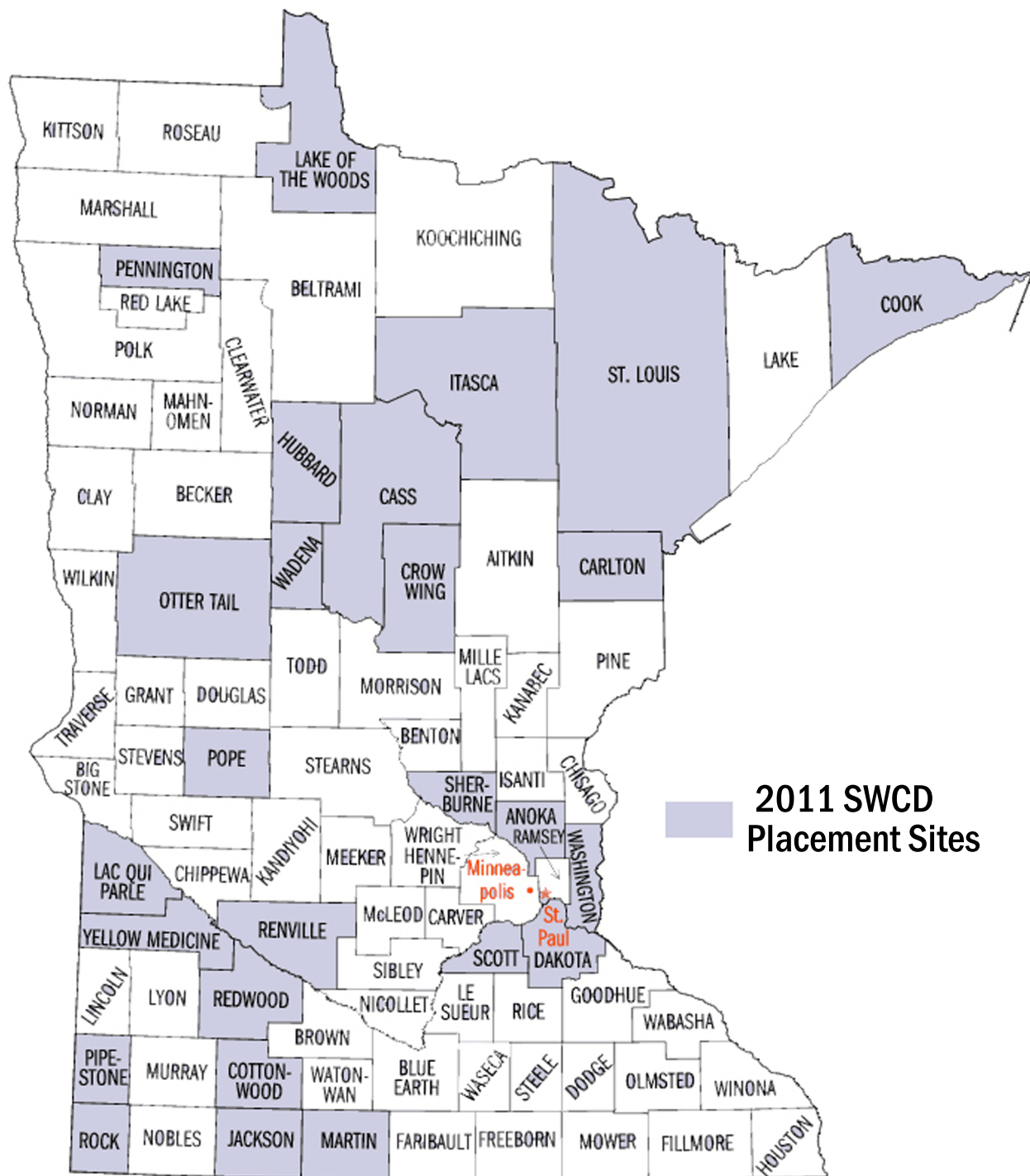
October 30, 2011 update: Survey results are being tabulated and distributed in a progress report format to the participants. MCC appeared at BWSR Academy in October to meet with SWCDs, relay results, and generate interest for next year. Len Price will be presenting first year summary to full BWSR Board this winter. Marketing materials are being updated for use in recruiting at Universities this fall.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Periodic work program progress reports will be submitted not later than June 1, 2011, October 30, 2011, June 1, 2012, and November 30, 2012. A final work program report and associated products **cannot** be submitted between June 30 and August 1, 2011 as requested by the LCCMR due to the need for the summer internships to run into September. Final end date is therefore June 30, 2013.

IX. RESEARCH PROJECTS: NA

¹ Number of SWCD partners: 60	Number of surveys returned: 53	Response rate: 88%
² Number of apprentices: 65	Number of surveys returned: 54	Response rate: 83%

Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2010 Projects - Summary and a Budget page for each partner (if applicable)									
Project Title: Minnesota Conservation Program Apprenticeship Academy									
Project Manager Name: Jenny Gieseke									
Trust Fund Appropriation: \$ 368,000									
2010 Trust Fund Budget	Result 1 Budget 4/22/13	Amount Spent (6/30/13)	Balance (6/30/13)	Result 2 Budget 4/22/13	Amount Spent (6/30/13)	Balance (6/30/13)	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE	
BUDGET ITEM									
BWSR									
PERSONNEL: wages and benefits Angie Becker-Kudelka training coordinator @ 0.05 FTE (non-general fund employee)	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ -	
Contracts - MINNESOTA CONSERVATION CORPS									
Professional/technical									
Program Manager @ 80% FTE, Recruiter @ 6% FTE, Administration	\$ 51,612	\$ 51,697	\$ (85)	\$ 24,879	\$ 24,793	\$ 86	\$ 76,491	\$ 1	
30 SWCD Apprentices for 540 hours per year for two years		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 250,317	\$ 249,355	\$ 962	\$ 250,317	\$ 962	
Other direct operating costs			\$ -			\$ -	\$ -		
Apprentice orientation and training, sub-contract tech train		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,311	\$ 14,311	\$ -	\$ 14,311	\$ -	
Apprentice recruitment/advertising expense, background checks		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,002	\$ 6,002	\$ -	\$ 6,002	\$ -	
Travel expenses in Minnesota (Mileage for 1 staff vehicle @ \$.50 per mile)	\$ 4,106	\$ 4,106	\$ -	\$ 11,773	\$ 11,772	\$ 1	\$ 15,879	\$ 1	
COLUMN TOTAL	\$60,718	\$60,803	-\$85	\$307,282	\$306,233	\$1,049	\$368,000	\$964	



Conservation Apprenticeship Academy



SWCD Regions and Project Types

Northwest Region

Beltrami: water quality, landowner outreach
 Lake of the Woods: water quality, education outreach
 Marshall: weed management program
 Pennington: tree planting/matting, water quality

Northeast Region

Cook: streambank, water quality, erosion control
 Itasca: water quality
 North St. Louis - wetlands, invasives, tree planting
 South St. Louis: erosion control, stormwater, stream bank

Central Region

Cass Lake: lake shore buffer installation
 Crow Wing: shoreline, stormwater mgmt
 Douglas: water quality, shoreland buffers
 East Otter Tail: tree planting & native grass
 Hubbard: surface and groundwater quality
 Mille Lacs: invasives, groundwater
 Pope: invasives, education programs
 Stevens: tree planting, raingarden, education
 Traverse: weed control and maintenance
 Wadena: tree planting & native grass

Greater Metro Region

Anoka: water quality
 Carver: water quality, streambank
 Dakota: water quality, rain gardens
 Ramsey: water quality
 Scott: shoreland, water quality, staking
 Sherburne: water quality, native habitat
 Washington: landowner outreach, data entry
 Wright: wetland, water quality, GIS

Southwest Region

Cottonwood: Fish Lake drainage project
 Lac Qui Parle: floodplain well-pits, tree-planting
 Martin: stormwater, native species
 Redwood: conservation programs
 Renville: wetland and feedlot programs

Yellow Medicine: conservation easement

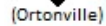
Southeast Region

Fillmore: water quality
 Freeborn: watershed, surveys, maps



MASWCD





Conservation Apprenticeship Academy



Supplemental Materials

- 2011 Shureburne SWCD Article
- 2011 Pine Journal Article <http://www.pinejournal.com/event/article/id/24048/group/News/>
- 2013 Canby News Article http://images.burrellesluce.com/image/15220/15220_1994
- Conservation Corps Website Information <http://conservationcorps.org/apprentice-academy/>
- 2013 BWSR Snapshots Newsletter Article

Summer Interns Head to SWCD Offices

Submitted by: [DeAnna Doran](#)

Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are providing summer jobs to 30 university students this summer in the first round of apprentices funded by the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). The students are employed by the Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa but report daily to their Districts for a wide variety of work designed to expose them to the realities of a career in soil and water conservation.

The program idea was launched overlooking a conservation practice in rural Pope County when (now retired) Pope SWCD technician Kim Kreuger mentioned he was about to retire. His comment started a discussion that noted the need for new talent to learn from experienced technicians about those things not found in textbooks. There is no financial cost to a district for the extra set of hands in the office and field. The value the district and other partners including NRCS and BWSR provide to the interns is experience.

Funding from the LCCMR is already in hand for the summer of 2012. Two additional years are anticipated for the summers of '13 and '14 due to a surprise addition of the program to the recommended projects list after the start of the 2011 legislative session.

Participating students will be tracked in the coming years to measure whether the experience leads to

more graduates pursuing work with SWCDs.

Sherburne SWCD is excited about this opportunity for our SWCD staff to serve as mentors for individuals interested in careers related to natural resources and conservation. The following SWCD's along with Sherburne are hosting an apprentice through this partnership:

Anoka, Carlton, Cass, Cook, Cottonwood/Jackson, Crow Wing, Dakota, Hubbard, Itasca, Lac Qui Parle, Lake of the Woods, Martin, East Otter Tail, West Otter Tail, Pennington, Pipestone, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Scott, South St. Louis, Wadena, Washington, and Yellow Medicine.

Meet our Intern!

My name is Frances Gerde and I am originally from Bloomington, MN. I graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP), Stevens Point, WI with a Bachelor of Science degree; majoring in Water Resources. I am a hard working individual who is a quick learner and loves being outdoors. I am concerned with preserving the native species that we are losing because of invasive species. I maintained an on campus job working at the UWSP herbarium, mounting plant specimens from all over Wisconsin for educational usage and I stayed involved with campus organizations that related to my major. I have always held an interest in preserving our natural resources and my areas of interest are plant restoration and

invasive species. I have worked with terrestrial plants for the past three summers at several parks around the metro area in Minneapolis. I also volunteered in an aquatic biomonitoring entomology lab on campus to gain experience with the insect side of invasive species in the Wisconsin water systems. I would like to gain more experience with habitat restoration and invasive species control techniques and prevention. I feel this internship will help me attain those goals!





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Summer intern serves with the Carlton County SWCD

Neva Winder is serving as a conservation apprentice for the Carlton County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) this summer. She recently graduated from the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University with a Bachelor of Arts degree, double majoring in biology and environmental studies.

Neva Winder is serving as a conservation apprentice for the Carlton County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) this summer. She recently graduated from the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University with a Bachelor of Arts degree, double majoring in biology and environmental studies.

Winder's apprenticeship in Carlton County is a part of a new program of Conservation Corps Minnesota: The Conservation Apprenticeship Academy. Last year Conservation Corps Minnesota received Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources funding to launch this program, combined with AmeriCorps scholarship funding for apprentices.

From May through August, Winder and 29 other Conservation Corps apprentices will serve in Minnesota SWCDs throughout Minnesota. Corps members are mentored by natural resource professionals and learn hands-on skills in managing soil and water resources and assisting landowners with conservation-related activities.

"The program is a win/win," said Brad Matlack, manager at the Carlton SWCD. "The SWCD gives Neva some hands-on, real time experience in management of natural resources at the local government level, and Neva gives the SWCD her time for the busy summer months of field work along with her skills in GIS data management. We have a lot of projects in various stages so Neva will get exposure to many aspects of the work that happens at the SWCD."

Specifically, Winder will work in the field with SWCD staff assisting them in water monitoring, topographic surveys, tree plantings and grazing practice certifications. Along with this field work she will develop GIS data layers for the Nemadji and Kettle river watersheds. This data will be incorporated into projects as they move along.

"I look forward to an educational and experience-packed summer here at the Carlton County SWCD!" Winder said.

Tags:[carlton county](#), [news](#), [outdoors](#)

<http://www.pinejournal.com/event/article/id/24048/group/News/>

[http://images.burrellesluce.com/
image/15220/15220_1994](http://images.burrellesluce.com/image/15220/15220_1994)

Summer intern Patrick Burkowski joins Yellow Medicine SWCD



Patrick Bukowski

The Yellow Medicine Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is providing a summer job to Patrick Bukowski in the third round of apprentices funded by the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). Patrick is employed by the Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa but reports daily to the Yellow Medicine SWCD for a wide variety of work designed to expose him to the realities of a career in soil and water conservation.

Patrick was born and raised in the Clarkfield area. He went to Yellow Medicine East High School where he graduated in 2012. He currently is studying ag business at South Dakota

State University in Brookings, SD. After school, he plans to come back and live in the area and hopefully get a well-paying job.

The program idea was launched overlooking a conservation practice in rural Pope County when (now retired) Pope SWCD technician, Kim Kreuger, mentioned he was about to retire. His comment started a discussion that noted the need for new talent to learn from experienced technicians about those things not found in textbooks. There is no financial cost to the SWCD for the extra set of hands in the office and field. The value the SWCD and other partners, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Board of Water and Soil Resources, provide to the interns is experience.

This is a great opportunity for corps members to get hands-on experience with the field operations and strategic planning efforts through the diverse expertise of SWCDs. This chance to apply what is learned in the classroom to the real world is a powerful way to prepare the future conservation workforce.





From novice to professional:

Conservation Corps apprenticeship leads to career position



Widner takes water quality samples during her summer apprenticeship at Carlton SWCD.

The summer of 2011 was one that Neva Widner will never forget.

As a conservation apprentice at the Carlton County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Widner performed water quality monitoring and surveyed wetlands, streams and runoff on farms. One of her biggest challenges occurred when a torrential rainstorm in the Nemadji Watershed required immediate response.

"The rain event really tested my monitoring skills," Widner said. "Within a matter of hours, 5.5 inches of rain fell, and rivers were the highest recorded in the 37 years of historical flow records. I could truly take inventory of my knowledge and skills."

Her apprentice experience at Carlton SWCD directly led to her to a full-time job as a Water Resources Technician in 2012.

As the most experienced conservation leaders are nearing retirement age and walking out the door with the knowledge and experience they've built over decades, university graduates are subsequently walking in the door, knowledgeable in theory, research methods and emerging technologies, but lacking practical on-the-job skills important for success. The Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy allows youth and mentors to

work side by side to build a solid foundation for the future management of the state's natural resources.

Applications for 2013 Conservation Apprentice Academy are being accepted now through March 29. Apprentices will be placed with SWCDs to conduct water quality monitoring, install conservation practices, conduct site inspections, recruit landowners for conservation projects, assist landowners and SWCD staff with management plans, and much more.

Applicants must be ages 18-25 and be available to work full-time from May 20 – August 23. Statewide positions are available. Detailed program information can be found at the [Conservation Corps website](#).

Reflecting on her apprenticeship, Widner said, "The Apprenticeship Academy provided me the opportunity to develop a set of professional skills and network to become competitive in my pursuit of acquiring a conservation position. I view the Apprenticeship Academy as a vital component to the long-term effectiveness of Minnesota SWCD functionality, by providing the apprentice the means to transition from the classroom to the field, and the SWCD the additional affordable staff support."

Widner's experience with the Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy will come full circle in the summer of 2013 – she will host an apprentice at the Carlton SWCD, passing her knowledge and expertise to the next generation of student conservationists.

The Board of Water and Soil Resources manages the Minnesota Conservation Apprentice Academy project with funds appropriated through the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. The Conservation Corps serves as the employer and uses these funds to match apprentices with mentor SWCDs, provide a monthly apprentice stipend, check in with mentors and apprentices throughout the summer, and track long-term results.



<http://conservationcorps.org/apprentice-academy/>

AmeriCorps: Conservation Apprenticeship Academy



Spend your summer serving alongside a natural resource professional in a Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation District. Learn hands-on skills in managing soil and water resources while earning a stipend and making progress to receiving an AmeriCorps education award.

Gain valuable experience in . . .

- Soil and water conservation skills: water-quality monitoring, assessments, field surveys, best practices in land and water management.
- Landowner and community engagement: assist landowners with developing soil and water management plans; lead educational activities on water resources.
- Personal development: First Aid/CPR training,

communication, teamwork, safety and risk management.

AmeriCorps members receive . . .

A living stipend twice per month, health insurance, student loan forbearance during the member's term, a post-service AmeriCorps education award, protective equipment and a uniform. 15-20% of the service term is dedicated to technical and personal-skill training.

Read about Neva, who landed a job in a SWCD after her apprenticeship.

Qualifications

- 18-25 years old.
- Positive attitude and strong commitment to service and community work.
- Willingness to work independently and on a team.
- Ability to communicate effectively with staff, community members and landowners.



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Conservation Corps Website Information

Ability to work outdoors in adverse conditions and lift 50 pounds.

- Valid driver's license.
- Pass criminal, NSOPR and driver history record checks.

Additional preferred qualifications

Training or experience in natural resource management, agriculture, GIS/GPS and MS Office.

This program is available to all, without regard to race, color, national origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, political affiliation or religion. The Conservation Corps engages AmeriCorps members, ages 18-25, as defined under the American Conservation and Youth Service Corps Act, a subtitle of the National and Community Service Act of 1990. Reasonable accommodations provided upon request.

Applications are no longer being accepted for the 2013 service term.

[Sign up to receive email notification of all Corps Opportunities.](#)

The Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund has appropriated funds, as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), to train and mentor future conservation professionals by providing apprenticeship service opportunities to Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Up to 35 corpsmembers (apprentices) are eligible to be placed in Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Technical Service Areas throughout the state.