

Tech Talks augment training

Tech Talks, a new Technical Training and Certification Program (TTCP) series focused on engineering and ecological science, has expanded the training opportunities available to Minnesota conservation workers seeking job approval authority.

The TTCP is a collaborative effort among state and federal partners. They include the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) and the Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees (MACDE).

TTCP’s mission: Maintain a highly trained, technically skilled workforce of natural resource professionals capable of meeting Minnesota’s conservation delivery needs. The program strives to streamline and coordinate training, and to increase opportunities to obtain job approval authority for conservation practices. Job approval authority is a quality assurance process that equips conservation professionals with the skills they need to plan, design and install effective conservation practices.

TTCP staff launched Tech Talks in April to address the need for shorter trainings.

The abbreviated, online series is presented live at 1 p.m. on Mondays, with trainings running between 60 and 90 minutes. Find options for joining via phone or WebEx [here](#). Topics presented to date include cover crops, forestry resource concerns, engineering field tools and critical area planting.

Tech Talks’ online format allows conservation professionals to interact with trainers, just as they would in field trainings. But it cuts travel and related expenses. Trainees can join from their home or office.

All Tech Talks are recorded and available to watch via BWSR’s [Online Learning Portal](#).

“The Tech Talks are an excellent opportunity to fine-tune the broad range of skills necessary to deliver conservation to landowners and producers,” said Chris Nelson, engineering technician for the Southeast SWCD Technical Support Joint Powers Board. “These sessions provide a chance to ask questions or pick up the quick tips and refreshers on a weekly basis without the time commitment of traveling to a training session for the day.”

Input from conservation professionals across Minnesota drives Tech Talk topics.

Conservation staff members who create Individual Development Plans (IDPs) through the TTCP can share their training requests, creating a more well-rounded picture of statewide needs. TTCP staff is always looking for new topics for Tech Talks, and invite trainees to suggest specific topics for future trainings.

“This method of distributing knowledge will prove to be an invaluable resource as a virtual mentoring system in that it connects employees with expert skills on a statewide basis,” Nelson said.

Find Tech Talks details [here](#) on BWSR’s website.



Cover crops were an early topic for the new Tech Talks online training series. A 2016 field day in Eyota showcased cereal rye interseeded into corn. **Photo Credit:** BWSR

June Tech Talks Schedule	
June 1	Pasture Condition Scoresheet
June 8	Nutrient Management Part 3
June 15	Introduction to HEC-HMS
June 22	Evaluating Seed Mixes
June 29	Introduction to HydroCAD