



MASWCD Accomplishments 2009

POLICY FORUM - MASWCD provides a forum for SWCDs to present policy initiatives for the membership. The Association's resolution process offers SWCD supervisors and staff the opportunity to discuss conservation policy at the local, Area and state level. *In 2009, twenty-three resolutions were submitted and voted on by the membership to address SWCD funding, governance and conservation program enhancements. This process not only sets grass-roots policy for the organization, it also serves as an educational and communication tool for the membership to share issues and ideas with their peers.*

POLITICAL NETWORK - MASWCD spent significant time during the 2009 legislative session lobbying key legislators for SWCD conservation policy and funding. Through the efforts of the Association's legislative committee, MASWCD legislative affairs specialist, and the MASWCD Board of Directors and staff, MASWCD continues to help districts inform their legislators about the important and growing role of SWCDs. *Association efforts were instrumental in the legislature's appropriation of dedicated Clean Water Funds for technical assistance and project dollars for SWCDs and other local government units; these funds were made available after the passage of the Constitutional Amendment by Minnesota voters.* In addition, several MASWCD Area Directors provided opportunities for SWCDs to meet legislators during Area meetings.

PARTNERSHIP NETWORK - MASWCD staff and board members worked diligently to enhance dialogue between MASWCD, Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD). MASWCD also participated in: Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Rule Advisory Committee meetings; signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Board of Water and Soil Resources and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service related to the RIM Reserve/Wetland Reserve Program partnership; follow-up with various state and federal agency partners on resolutions that were approved at the 2008 annual meeting, and convention planning with West Central Area 2 SWCDs. MASWCD also continued a partnership from 2008, working with the Science Museum of Minnesota and SWCDs to offer hands-on groundwater education sessions at schools throughout the state.

TRAINING/INFORMATION AND EDUCATION - During 2009, MASWCD provided training opportunities to SWCD staff and board members to learn about new issues, exchange ideas, and invest in the future. In February, the *Legislative Briefing & Day at the Capitol* provided 130 SWCD board members and employees with information and facilitated discussions on funding and policy issues, and a coordinated way to meet with legislators. In July, the *Supervisor Orientation Course* was a forum for newly elected board members to learn the basics of serving on an SWCD board. MASWCD once again implemented a successful *MASWCD Leadership Institute*; funds from NRCS helped defray the costs for SWCD staff, SWCD supervisors, and BWSR and NRCS staff to participate in the most recent cohort, which graduated in August, 2009. The December *annual convention* also provided information on emerging issues, recognition of conservation efforts, and the opportunity for SWCD supervisors to cast their votes on business items.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH DISTRICTS & PARTNERS - In 2009 the MASWCD web site continued to provide SWCDs and partners with timely and relevant information. Along with the monthly e-mail newsletter "Bits of Tidbits," legislative updates, and regular mailings, MASWCD is keeping its members throughout the state informed of SWCD activities.