

Virtual training site boosts access

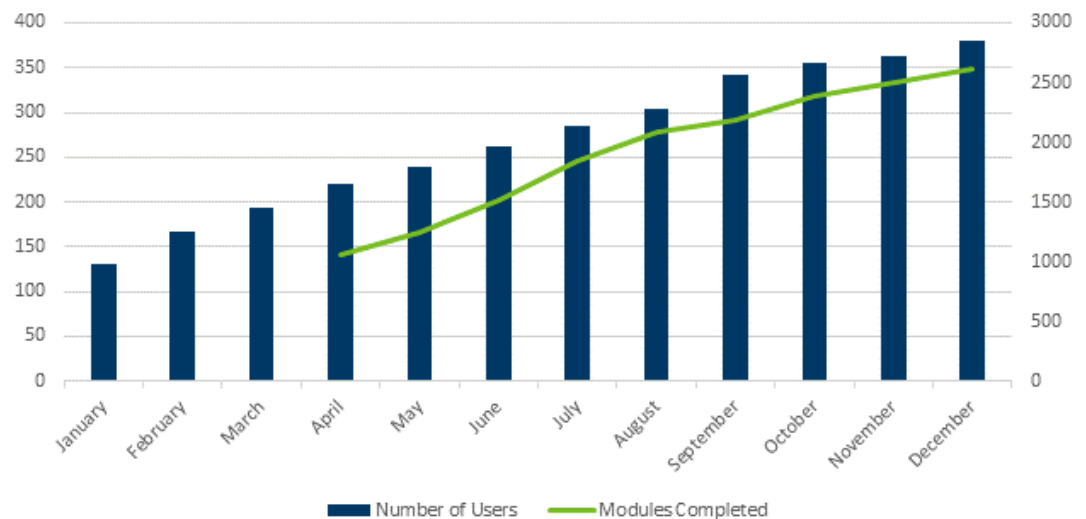
2021 Core Competency Module Use

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources' (BWSR) [MNC3 virtual training website](#) helped more than 370 people complete more than 2,300 training modules during its first year.

MNC3 launched in January 2021 as a platform for conservation professionals to access [Core Competency Trainings](#), a series of 19 free training modules designed to provide consistent foundational knowledge of conservation planning and water quality issues through a Minnesota-focused lens. Additional stand-alone trainings on topics such as agronomy, soil erosion and nutrient management were later added.

BWSR's Technical Training and Certification Program (TTCP) delivers the training. TTCP is a collaborative effort among BWSR, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees. Its mission is to develop and maintain a highly trained, technically skilled workforce of natural resource professionals capable of meeting Minnesota's conservation delivery needs.

"Conservation staff at the



local, state and federal levels all have access to the same basic training through MNC3, and I think that's fundamental to our shared work to implement soil and water conservation practices on the landscape," said BWSR TTCP Coordinator Jon Sellnow.

Sellnow said although local government staff is the primary audience, anyone with an interest can create an account and complete the trainings.

Over the past year, 67 people completed all 19 Core Competency Training modules. Core competency trainings are one option to fulfill continuing education

staff from a variety of backgrounds to have the same baseline knowledge of common practices and resource concerns."

Comments gathered in a survey of past participants included the following explanations of how the training would benefit them:

"I will use this almost every day in identifying, predicting and solving soil erosion," one respondent said.

"I will use this to better understand the landowners' descriptions of the problems they are experiencing," another respondent said.

New training modules about wind erosion prediction and erosion control practices are being developed. To access free training opportunities, create a free account on the [MNC3 website](#).

hours for [Conservation Planner Certification](#). Level III certified conservation planners complete roughly 250 hours of training, which enables them to write conservation plans, identify resource concerns and recommend options to landowners.

"The MNC3 site offers introductory trainings that are often used as a prerequisite for more advanced training," said Kelly Voigt, BWSR's Brainerd-based northern regional training conservationist. "It's beneficial for conservation