------ MASWCD 90th ANNUAL CONVENTION ------

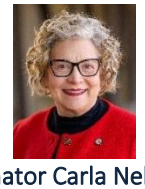
NOVEMBER 30 – DECEMBER 2, 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South - Bloomington, MN

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2026

11:30 am – 4 pm	Registration Open
3:00 – 4:30 pm **Pre-Conference Workshop** Great Lakes Commission des Grands Lacs The Ohio State University	**Conservation Workforce Development: Challenges, Opportunities, and Paths Forward** Minnesota's SWCDs are navigating rapid changes in staffing, skill needs, and service demands. Over the past two years, the Great Lakes Commission has partnered with researchers from The Ohio State University and conservation district associations in the eight Great Lakes states to conduct one of the most comprehensive assessments of the conservation workforce undertaken across these states. Learn the outcomes of this study and practical next steps toward strengthening statewide SWCD capacity in Minnesota. Nicole Zacharda, Program Manager, Great Lakes Commission Ramiro Berardo, Professor of Environmental Policy, The Ohio State University Sheila Vanney, MASWCD Assistant Director

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2026

7:00 – 8:15 am	Continental Breakfast (*see registration form – there is a fee for this event*)
7:00 am – 4:30 pm	Registration Open
8:00 am – 6:30 pm	**Photo Wall -** Snap a photo in front of the MASWCD Step n Repeat to commemorate our 90th annual convention and celebrate our collective conservation achievements. Green Lands Blue Waters *2026 Photo Wall Sponsor*
8 am - 12 pm and 1:15 - 4 pm	Exhibit Hall Open – Agency and Vendor Exhibits
8:30 – 9:00 am MNL Heal the Earth *2026 Business Meeting Sponsor*	**Business Meeting:** Presiding: Chuck Rau, MASWCD President (*information only – action taken Dec. 2*) • Introduction of Board of Directors, President's Report, Recognition of Staff, Committee Chairs • Introduction of Candidates for President and Vice-President – Jayne Hager Dee, Nominations Committee • Finance Committee Report – Jake Janski, MASWCD Sec./Treasurer, Northeast Area 3 Director • Resolution Committee Report; Introduction of 2026 MASWCD Resolutions – Jake Janski, MASWCD Resolution Committee Chair, Northeast Area 3 Director • Recognizing MASWCD's 90th – LeAnn Buck, MASWCD Executive Director
9:00 – 10:10 am	**Keynote – Clay Jenkinson** Historian and humanities scholar Clay Jenkinson will help us celebrate MASWCD's 90th Annual Convention through the lens of a well-known historical figure. Participants will get inspiration from leadership of the past, as we look to the future of building on our long legacy of conservation stewardship in Minnesota. 
10:10 – 10:30 am	Refreshment Break
10:30 – 11:15 am	**Plenary Session: 2027 Legislative Outlook; Panel Discussion with Retiring Legislative Leaders** Hear from a bipartisan panel of retiring legislative leaders as they reflect on their service in the legislature and the outcomes of the November elections. Panelists will also discuss the state's budget outlook and share advice for SWCDs going into the 2027 legislative session.  Moderator: Paul Marquart, Commissioner of Revenue  Senator Ann Rest  Senator Carla Nelson  Representative Paul Torkelson

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2026 (*continued*)	
11:30 am–1:30 pm	**MASWCD Awards Luncheon** (*see registration form – there is a fee for this event*) • Recognition of retiring and deceased SWCD supervisors and staff • MASWCD/MPCA Community Conservationist Award • MASWCD/DNR Outstanding Forest Steward Award • MASWCD/Pheasants Forever Wildlife Habitat Steward Award • DNR Ecological & Water Resources Appreciation Award • Minnesota Department of Health Drinking Water Protection Award • MASWCD Teacher Award • MASWCD Friend of Conservation Award • SWCD Administrator Award, presented by the BWSR • SWCD Field Staff Award, presented by NRCS • MASWCD Outstanding SWCD Supervisor Award
1:30 – 2:00 pm	Refreshment Break & Desserts
2:00 – 3:00 pm	**Breakout sessions round one** **One Watershed, One Plan: The Next Generation** After more than a decade of learning, building partnerships, and using goal-based targeting to focus conservation work where it can make the greatest difference, Minnesota is nearing completion of the transition to watershed-based planning and implementation. With the "next generation" of 1W1P plans coming online, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is looking ahead: **How can we build on what we've learned to get the measurable water quality results the public expects from Legacy Funding?** **Updates and Peer to Peer Guidance from MASWCD's Inaugural Advocacy Cohort** MASWCD's inaugural advocacy cohort kicked off this past March, and participants have since been working to become a strong network of effective SWCD advocates. Learn from SWCD members of the cohort tips for establishing relationships with legislators, building on those relationships to be a trusted resource, and playing an active role in advancing MASWCD's legislative priorities. **Discussion of 2026 Pending Resolutions – Round 1** Each year, MASWCD membership utilizes the resolutions process as a means for members to voice concerns or opinions to influence change within the organization. In this one-hour session, participate in discussion of the following resolutions pending before the members: Increase State Funding for **TSAs**; Continue State Funding for **Soil Health Technicians**; End SWCD Inspections of **Government Owned RIM Easements;** and **Align Prevailing Wage to Market Realities.**
2:00 – 4:30 pm	**Introduction to NASA Remote Sensing Tools and Observations for Minnesota Conservation Districts** This introductory, in-person training provides an overview of NASA Earth observation (EO) data products and web tools for supporting agriculture, forestry, and water management in Minnesota. The training will provide an overview of the fundamentals of remote sensing and the NASA data visualization platform Worldview. Demos and exercises will highlight how to use NASA EO data and tools for monitoring water quality and quantity variables, soil moisture, and vegetation health. No prior knowledge or experience is required to attend the training. Participants should plan to attend for the entire duration of the session and bring laptops to participate in hands-on exercises. *This training requires convention registration and completion of this google form.*
3:00 – 3:30 pm	Refreshment Break
3:30 – 4:30 pm	**Breakout sessions round two** **Impaired Waters for Practitioners** Hear from staff from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) about Minnesota's process for identifying and addressing impaired waters across the state. This presentation will share what the impaired waters list can tell you, what it cannot, and how to interpret the information the impaired waters list portrays in answering public questions. This presentation will also share progress districts and others have made in protecting and improving the water quality of our lakes, rivers, and streams.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2026 (*continued*)	
3:30 – 4:30 pm	**Breakout sessions round two** (*continued*) **What's New at Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** This session will cover multiple topics related to NRCS programs, practices standards, and technology. Find out the latest news and updates on NRCS programs and practices. Learn funding allocations and trends for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). **Discussion of 2026 Pending Resolutions – Round 2** In this one-hour session, participate in discussion of the following shoreline related resolutions pending before the membership: Update Public Shoreline **Guidance and Education**; Statewide **Training and Certification** for Shoreline Management; **Dedicated State Funding** for Local Shoreline Management Assistance; and Support **Rule and Process Improvements** for Public Waters Shoreline Mngt
4:30 – 6:30 pm	**Celebrating MASWCD's 90th Annual Convention - Networking Reception** The Nature Conservancy Come celebrate our 90th annual convention! Connect with friends and colleagues from across the state. Enjoy a cash bar, a generous appetizer buffet, and an anniversary cake as we celebrate this milestone together!

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2026	
7:00 – 8:15 am	Continental Breakfast (*see registration form – there is a fee for this event*)
7:30 am - noon	Registration Open
8:00 am – noon	**Photo Wall -** Snap a photo in front of the MASWCD Step n Repeat to commemorate our 90th annual convention and celebrate our collective conservation achievements. Green Lands Blue Waters *2026 Photo Wall Sponsor*
8:00 am – noon	Exhibit Hall Open – Agency and Vendor Exhibits
8:30 – noon MNL Heal the Earth *2026 Business Meeting Sponsor*	**Business Meeting – budget, resolutions, policy updates** You will hear from MASWCD leaders, partners and policy makers on topics ranging from district conservation programs, policies, resource concerns and funding priorities. There will also be discussions and member adoption of our 2026 grassroots policy positions. • Presiding: Chuck Rau, MASWCD President • Approval of 2026 Standing Rules and 2025 Meeting Minutes • Nominating Committee; Elections: Jayne Hager Dee, Nominations Committee Member • Finance Committee: Action on Proposed FY 2027 Budget – Jake Janski, MASWCD Sec./Treasurer, Northeast Area 3 Director • Resolutions Committee: Action on Resolutions – Jake Janski, MASWCD Resolution Committee Chair, Northeast Area 3 Director • Legislative Committee Report – Darren Newville, MASWCD Legislative Committee Chair • Minnesota BWSR Report: John Jaschke, Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources Executive Director • Minnesota NRCS Report: Troy Daniell, Natural Resource Conservation Service State Conservationist • Minnesota MDA Report: Thom Peterson, Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner • Minnesota DNR Report: Sarah Strommen, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Commissioner • Minnesota Clean Water Council Report: Jen Kader, Clean Water Council Administrator • New Business; Recognition of Outgoing MASWCD Board Members LeAnn Buck, MASWCD Exec. Dir.
8:30 am – 12:00 pm NASA	**Water Quality to Vegetation Health: Implementing NASA Earth Observations into Conservation Workflows** This hands-on, in-person training will provide an overview of NASA Earth observation data access and download through AppEEARS. Participants will also explore data products through web-based tools for water management. Hands-on exercises and demos will outline workflow options for integrating analysis-ready data products for vegetation and water management within GIS software. Participants should have either attended the first session: Introduction to NASA Remote Sensing Tools and Observations for Minnesota Conservation Districts or have prior experience working with GIS software. Participants should plan to attend the entire session and bring laptops to participate in provided hands-on exercises. *This training requires convention registration and completion of this google form.*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2026 (*continued*)	
8:30 – 10:00 am	**Employee Sessions round one** **Collaborative Conservation in Action** This session will highlight a successful, partnership-driven approach to delivering small wetlands conservation on private lands. Through strong coordination among federal, state, local, and nonprofit partners—and most importantly, engaged landowners, this effort demonstrates how collaborative conservation can achieve meaningful, on-the-ground results and water storage metrics. Speakers will include staff from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and SWCDs. **Enhancing Communication Skills for Navigating Disagreements with Collaboration Expert Nan Gesche** (*This session is repeated from 10:30 to noon*) Whether we're working with landowners or team members, differing perspectives and competing priorities can quickly turn conversations into frustration. What if the key to making progress isn't having a better argument, but having a better conversation? In this engaging and interactive 90-minute session, we will explore how mindset, assumptions, and communication influence the way we navigate disagreements. Through practical tools, real-world examples, and interactive activities, participants will learn how to: • Recognize how our assumptions and perceptions can create barriers to productive conversations. • Ask thoughtful questions to better understand differing perspectives, concerns, and priorities. • Listen to understand rather than simply prepare a response. • Navigate disagreements respectfully and find opportunities to move forward, even when agreement isn't possible.
9:00 – 10:00 am Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program *2026 program sponsor*	**Special Program 1 for Outstanding Conservationist Award Recipients– The Bee Squad** The Bee Squad supports honeybee and native bee research, provides mentoring for beekeepers, and accurate, science-based outreach on actions to help pollinators. Meet a U of MN Bee Squad Pollinator Ambassador and learn five actions to help protect these incredible pollinators and the places they call home. Enjoy a honey tasting and come away with a new appreciation of our state's pollinators and pollinator habitats. Program is suitable for all ages.
10:00 – 10:30 am	Refreshment Break
10:30 – noon	**Employee Sessions round two** **Risk Management Aspects of Human Resources – Onboarding and Offboarding** Staff turnover is something all SWCD offices face. Whether bringing on a new employee or overseeing the departure of one, there are aspects of human resources management that require legal compliance. Staff from Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) will share information and guidance related to the policies and procedures SWCDs need to follow for onboarding and offboarding employees. **Enhancing Communication Skills for Navigating Disagreements with Collaboration Expert Nan Gesche** (*this session is repeated - see description above for 8:30–10am session*)
10:30 – 11:30 am moore engineering, inc. *2026 program sponsor*	**Special Program 2 for Outstanding Conservationist Award Recipients – The Raptor Center** THE RAPTOR CENTER UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA Experience the true beauty of an eagle and several raptors from just a few feet away! As top-of-the-food-chain predators, raptors are our lens into the health of our shared environment. Surveilling and aiding in raptor health alerts us to what's happening down the rest of the food chain. Gain a deeper understanding of their incredible abilities, life cycles, and connections to humans throughout history and across cultures. Program is suitable for all ages.
12:15 – 2:15 pm The Farmer	**Outstanding Conservationist Luncheon and Awards Ceremony** *(see registration form - here is a fee for this event)* *supported by The Farmer magazine, Kevin Schulz, Editor* • Presentation of SWCD of the Year Award • Slide Show of Minnesota's Outstanding Conservationists • Outstanding Conservationist Award - Area Finalists & State Winner • Safe travels!