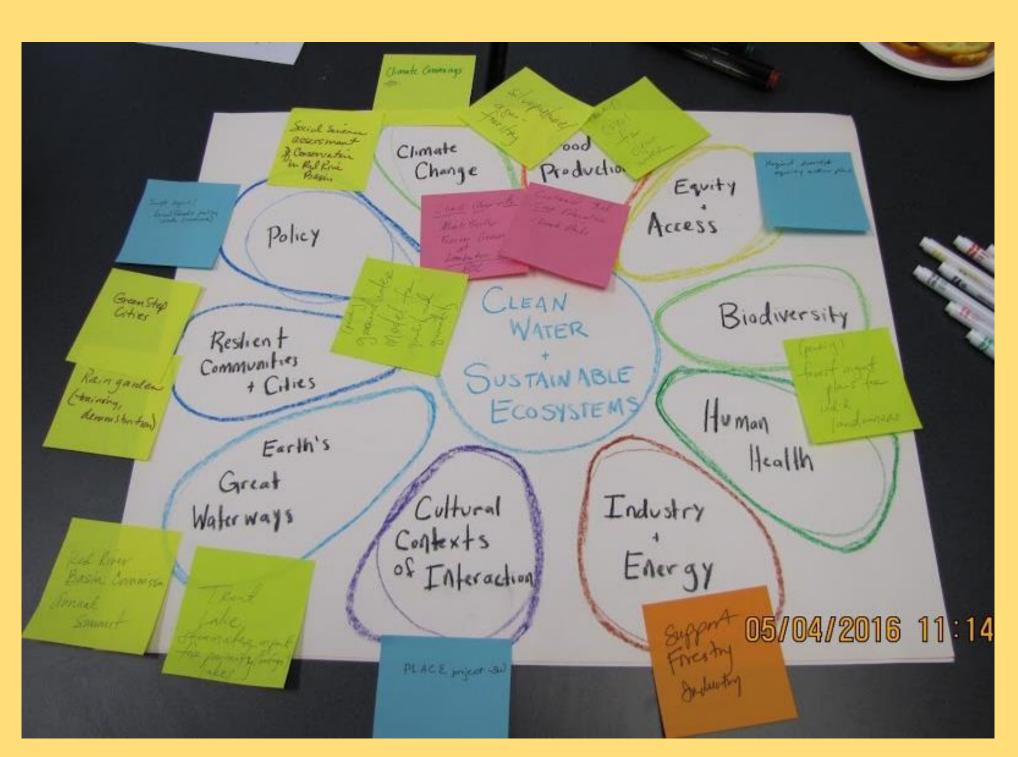
Building Capacity in Natural Resources Across RSDP

Linda Kingery, Northwest RSDP Executive Director Rose Clarke, Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa Caryn Mohr, RSDP Assistant Statewide Director

Presenting Issue

The University of Minnesota has identified five crossdisciplinary "Grand Challenges of a diverse and changing world" that the U of M is well-placed to impact.

On a regional scale, the need exists to empower communities of Greater Minnesota to develop local solutions to these Grand Challenges, specifically that of Clean Water and Sustainable Ecosystems.



RSDP projects mapped onto graphic of the Clean Water Grand Challenge and its contributing factors.

Extension's Programmatic Response

The University of Minnesota Extension Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships (RSDP) supports communitydriven sustainability projects in Greater Minnesota with seed funding and connection to University resources.

In 2015, RSDP identified the need for greater capacity within the Natural Resources focus area, and in 2016 hosted Rose Clarke, a Conservation Corps member, to support the regional citizen work groups and to frame work through the uniting vision of the Clean Water and Sustainable Ecosystem Grand Challenge.

The Corps member, through the cross-pollination of ideas and resources, knits connections across regions, shares learning, and with a multi-region perspective is able to leverage and build on local progress.



Target Audience

The Corps member supports the regional citizen-led boards and Natural Resources work groups, and project partners from the communities they serve. Each regional board defines local Natural Resources priorities to guide its work.

Why Extension?

UMN Extension RSDP's innovative initiatives are community defined and valued, citizen-led, University-engaged and collaborative.

"Survey responses from the Governor's Water Summit strongly identified Extension as a trusted source of information." – Theresa Spaeth, Executive Director, Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa

Behavior or Action Outcomes

As a result of this partnership with the Conservation Corps, RSDP has seen strengthening of the Natural Resources work group network and more intentional approaches to priority-setting and project recruitment. Improved communication allows experimentation and learning to happen at a rapid pace across regions as similar topics are addressed from varied points of view.

"(Rose's) deeper thinking and ideas about how we graphically document and continue to engage our networks of community and university partners will pay off for years to come." – Erin Meier, Southeast RSDP Executive Director

To bridge the distance between regions, work group members, staff, and partners are invited to view a series of 12 webinars organized by the Corps member. Each webinar features a University resource and a community partner.



Opening slide from a recent episode of the **RSDP** Connections Webinar series.

Find past episodes and more information at z.umn.edu/rsdpwebinar

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Attendee comments from post-webinar survey:

"It was good to hear from (the presenter)... Working (across the wide scope of) the University, we are not always aware of the work many of our colleagues are doing."

"(The webinars feature a) well-organized format and clear presentations."



Citizens, RSDP staff, and Conservation Corps member practicing a tactical mapping strategy for identifying natural resource project connections and effects.

Broader Impacts

Improved efficiency and clearer direction of the work groups will hopefully lead to a strategic increase in the number and effect of RSDP-supported community projects which address the Clean Water and Sustainable Ecosystems Grand Challenge.

In addition to the impacts within RSDP and in the communities they work with, this method of capacity-building serves as an innovative training approach, bringing young professionals like Rose into University, Extension, and Conservation networks. It is an invaluable opportunity for the Corps member to develop soft skills important for their future career.

Natural Resources	New or Strengthened Relationships	In Northeast, Design Thinking gave ideas for outreach to other of to connect, to find out what each other does, what we might do Northwest region used Design Thinking to articulate Problem Statement: "How can we better design and deliver conservation programs in the Red River Valley to get the right practices installed in the right places (as opposed to random acts of conservation) In Northwest, three communities had already used Design Thinking to develop play areas that connect kids with nature In Southwest, Design Thinking spurred discussion	e e together Connected with researcher from U of M CFANS (Mae Davenport) to research farmer and landowner attitudes on conservation, how decisions made - in order to improve program designs for and more effective communication on conservation opportunities with SWCD, NRCS staff in Red River basin	Completed interview diverse farmers and (men, women, ages, Fundraising to pay f researcher and stud NW MN Foundation
	Critique of Design Thinking Process	of how to connect newly expanded SW Partnership to the eregion		

Ripple Effect mapping of the RSDP Natural Resource focus area, facilitated by Scott Chazdon.

