

Sand County Foundation Conservation Brief

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Leadership for Midwestern Watersheds connects a network of conservation professionals



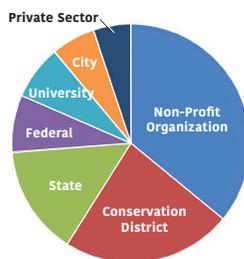
Sand County Foundation's one-of-a-kind networking forum promotes collaboration to scale-up watershed project success as we strive to achieve water quality goals.

Reducing agriculture's contribution to the Gulf of Mexico's hypoxic (low-oxygen) zone has proven to be a daunting environmental challenge. Sand County Foundation recognized that scaling up water quality improvements requires collaboration among leaders of individual watershed projects. We formed Leadership for Midwestern Watersheds (LMW) to foster regional cooperation needed to achieve our national water quality goals. This annual networking event encourages watershed leaders to share their knowledge and experiences to accelerate measurable water quality improvement outcomes in watersheds across the Midwest.

Annual Meeting Series

Annual LMW meetings build new connections and explore key agricultural conservation issues with formal presentations and facilitated discussions. Since 2011, Sand County Foundation has hosted 12 meetings focusing on regional concerns such as farmer engagement, project financing, monitoring and evaluation, soil health, agricultural economics, and behavioral science. Our targeted audience includes national, state, and local conservation and agriculture focused agencies, national and local non-profit organizations, and most importantly, those who directly lead watershed projects on the ground.

Attendees by Sector



Attendees by State



Characteristics of approximately 300 attendees of LMW meetings from 2017 to 2020.

Locations of LMW meetings*



Developing a Community of Practice

In 2020 we completed a detailed survey of Midwestern watershed leaders to assess their project and professional development needs. We are working with partners to develop a web platform and digital forum for user-led information exchange and updates of emerging tools, practices, and funding opportunities. Our goal is to actively engage hundreds of watershed leaders through ongoing digital dialogue, in addition to convening annual in-person meetings.



“By far the best conference I’ve been to. Nothing else has come close.”



“I learned a ton and met a lot of great folks.”



“Great combination of four states working on similar issues with common themes. Will definitely be coming back!”



Join the Network!

Whether you lead a specific watershed project, provide services used by such projects, or work in the Midwest agricultural sector, we welcome your participation. To be notified about future LMW events and services, or to join our new online digital forum, contact Craig Ficenec at cficenec@sandcountyfoundation.org

To learn more please contact:

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For more information visit:

Sand County Foundation
www.sandcountyfoundation.org/LMW

Project partners and sponsors:



Sand County Foundation inspires and enables a growing number of private landowners to ethically manage natural resources in their care, so future generations have clean and abundant water, healthy soil to support agriculture and forestry, plentiful habitat for wildlife and opportunities for outdoor recreation. www.sandcountyfoundation.org