



Minnesota Working Lands Conservation Partnership Frequently Asked Questions

The Minnesota Working Lands Conservation Partnership is designed to improve profitability, productivity, and environmental outcomes for farmers and communities in three to five key watersheds.

What's the purpose of this initiative?

American agriculture faces increasing regulatory and environmental pressures. By working together, agricultural producers and their partners can develop: (1) the tools they need to understand the impacts of their operations on the broader watershed (including technologies, data, and best management practices), (2) mechanisms to foster collaboration across the supply chain to drive innovation and environmental outcomes, and (3) the information and technical support needed to adopt pragmatic approaches on working lands that reduce environmental impacts while improving productivity and profitability.

Why is this initiative being launched in Minnesota?

Individual farm operations alone cannot meet the challenge. This initiative seeks to harness the work of many to create meaningful results that can drive collective improvement. In Minnesota, farmers and others such as supply chain partners and the NGO community are approaching water quality challenges holistically and at the watershed level. Through this initiative, producers and landowners, along with supportive partners such as NGOs, researchers, supply chain businesses and food companies can work together to achieve water quality improvements which satisfy public expectations and create meaningful improvement.

What makes this initiative unique? Is this just another water/conservation related initiative?

This pilot is unique because it is a producer-led effort at the watershed scale. A key component of this initiative will be to shift towards collaborative partnerships along food value chains focusing on improving economic, community, and environmental outcomes. See Figure 1 for a graphic that describes the approach.

Who's leading this effort in Minnesota and why?

The AgriGrowth Council is leading the Minnesota pilot. AgriGrowth was chosen due to its strong Minnesota roots and ability to engage diverse stakeholders. Since 1968, AgriGrowth has worked as a non-profit to support and unite the members of Minnesota's food and agriculture system. The council is positioned to bring in a set of diverse partners as the pilot moves forward.

Who is AgriGrowth looking for guidance from in moving this initiative forward?

A Steering Committee has been formed to provide guidance for this initiative. The Steering Committee includes representatives of Minnesota’s agriculture community, conservation NGOs, the University of Minnesota, and food/agribusiness companies.

What are the next steps?

The first year will focus primarily on building support for the project, recruiting participants, establishing baselines, developing project plans, and fundraising for project activities in the following years.

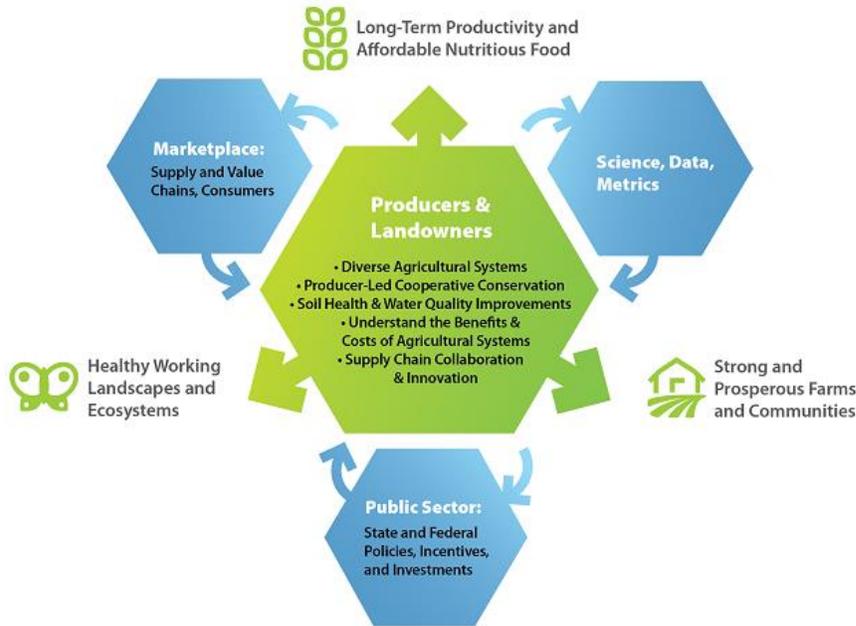


Figure 1: Working Lands Pilot Approach