

REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

Fiscal Year 2017 Projects

Sustainability focused and community driven

The University of Minnesota Extension **Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships (RSDP)** connect **Greater Minnesota** communities to **University of Minnesota (UMN)** resources through sustainability projects. RSDP brings together local talent and innovation with University knowledge and resources.

Projects are supported by **community-driven** boards in **five Regions** of Greater Minnesota as well as through a statewide office based on the Twin Cities campus. This list presents projects active during Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017), along with their **community and University partners**.

RSDP supports work in the following **four sustainability focus areas**. RSDP's energy programming is provided by the **Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs)**.



Agriculture and food systems



Clean Energy



Natural Resources



Tourism & Resilient Communities

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Regional Sustainable
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RSDP 2017 Statewide Portfolio At-A-Glance

127 Projects

364 Partners



17
City

14
County

14
State



Farming association +
+ bureau
+ bank = 11

10
Tribal

10 
Rural grocer

7 Farm 

7 Federal 

7 K12 

6 RDC 

5 Foundation 

Food shelf

5 Higher Ed (non-UMN) 

3 

112  UMN (non-RSDP)

61 Nonprofit 

75 Other Community 

Sustainability issues

- Water quality
- Soil health
- Solar
- Local foods
- Organic farming
- Season extension
- Supply chains

- Energy efficiency
- Parks/trails/agricultural planning
- Sustainable tourism development & economic impact
- Other projects in RSDP's 4 focus areas of sustainability

Note: Partners engaging in more than one RSDP project were counted each time they partnered with RSDP.



CENTRAL REGION

Executive Director: Molly Zins, zend0007@umn.edu

Learn more: rsdp.umn.edu/central

10 Plants That Changed Minnesota Teacher Workshops [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:  

UMN Landscape Arboretum, UMN CFANS, UMN Extension (Mary Meyer), MNHS Press, Northland Arboretum-Brainerd, RSDP (all Regions and Greg Schweser)

The University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum launched the “10 Plants that Changed Minnesota” public education campaign to build awareness of the crucial role plants played in the historic and economic factors that changed the course of our state. The project is expanding its reach through developing a series of teacher in-service trainings to be held across the state.

Big Trout Lake

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Biosystems Engineering, UMN Extension Water Resources, City of Manhattan Beach, Crow Wing County, Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District, MN DNR, Whitefish Area Property Owners Association
County State Aid HWY 66 runs adjacent to Big Trout Lake and has a curb and gutter with direct flow into the DNR designated Cisco refuge lake, causing a significant source of runoff into the lake. The project team assessed the current drainage, determined an alternative approach, and designed a proposal to alter current flow, reduce surface water runoff, nutrient inputs, and sedimentation which will provide important water quality and fisheries habitat benefits for Big Trout Lake.

Boys & Girls Club Community Garden [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:  

Boys and Girls Club of the Leech Lake Area, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Cass Lake Family Center, Leech Lake Department of Resource Management, Cass Lake Food Shelf, Leech Lake Commodity Program, Cass Lake Senior Center, Minnesota Chippewa Tribes SNAP-Ed program, City of Cass Lake, Cass Lake School District, UMN Master Gardeners, UMN Extension SNAP-Ed, UMN Nutrition Education

The Boys and Girls Club of the Leech Lake Area Community Garden is a hands-on classroom in healthy eating, Native American culture, traditional growing, gathering and harvesting practices.

Community Wind/Solar Hybrid

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Morris Economics of Renewable Energy Systems, Becker County, City of Audubon, City of Frazee, CERTs, Juhl Energy, Sustainable Energy Fund Program, community members

Community Wind/Solar Hybrid conducted a feasibility study for the development of a wind/solar hybrid project for the cities of Audubon and Frazee. The study analyzed community costs, benefits, and opportunities associated with the pilot project and provided a third-party review and appraisal of the risks and benefits to each community.

Conservation Corps serves Natural Resources Focus Area

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension, RSDP’s Rose Clarke and Natural Resource Work Groups, Conservation Corps of MN and IA
A Conservation Corps member is assisting RSDP staff in building capacity for its Natural Resources Focus Area. By attending meetings with the natural resources work groups, Corps member will be able to share projects, approaches, and insights across the program, and provide staffing assistance for specific regional projects. Special emphasis will be put on climate adaptation planning and projects. The emphasis on climate adaptation follows a series of convenings in 2015 hosted in partnership with Climate Generation.

Cows for Clean Water [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:  

Cass County Farm Bureau, Pine River Watershed Alliance, Whitefish Area Property Owners, Crow Wing River Basin Forage Council, Happy Dancing Turtle, Sustainable Farming Association, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, School District Food Service, Region Five Development Commission, Local grocers/resorts/restaurants

Cows for Clean Water is researching marketing strategies and business models that highlight the shared economic and environmental benefits of a standard of livestock production that builds soil health, improves farmer income, and protects water resources in Minnesota’s north central region.

Crosslake Community Teaching Garden

FOCUS AREAS:  

UMN Center for Changing Landscapes, UMN Extension Crow Wing Horticulture, Crosslake Army Corps of Engineers, Master Gardeners, Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway Association

Crosslake Community Teaching Gardens is a collection of educational garden areas accessed by pervious walkways. Solar energy will be used for some lighting, and rainwater collection tanks will be used for some watering. The gardens are designed to be representational gardens, providing a unique way to learn about local foods, natural forest foods, and environmental benefits of butterfly gardens.

Cultivating Solar Gardens

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Graduate Research Assistant, Brainerd Public Utilities, CERTs, City of Royalton, Creative Energy Services, Rural Renewable Energy Alliance, Youth Energy Summit, community members

The student research project is creating a framework for developing one or more Community Solar Gardens in the Central RSDP region. Bringing together all interested parties (utilities, rate payers, community advocates, and the solar industry) and current resources, the research will identify best practices for funding and implementing a Community Solar Garden. All research results and the framework will be broadly disseminated.

The Declining Resort Industry in Otter Tail County, MN: Economic Implications and Solutions

FOCUS AREAS:  

UMN Extension Community Economics, UMN Morris Center for Small Towns, UMN Morris Student Research Assistant, Otter Tail County, regional resorts and community members

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, resorts started popping up among Otter Tail County's wooded hills and 1,048 crystal clear lakes. Those early resorts are responsible for much of the county's early infrastructure and economic development. Today, tourism and hospitality remain Otter Tail County's second largest industry. However, resorts are disappearing. Since 1985, over 50% of Otter Tail County's resorts have closed. Given the cultural and economic significance of resorts in Otter Tail County, it is important to better understand the implications of their decline. The purpose of this project is to 1) better understand why resorts are closing, 2) examine the economic impact of the declining resort industry in Otter Tail County, and 3) identify strategies for curbing the decline of resorts and/or mediating the impact of their disappearance.

Orcharding in the North

FOCUS AREAS:  

UMN Extension Horticulture, UMN North Central Research and Outreach Center, Central Lakes College Staples Ag and Energy Center, Happy Dancing Turtle, Stimulating Economic Progress, Sustainable Farming Association of Central MN

The project generated and distributed new information crucial to successfully growing tree fruits in this northernmost climate of the U.S. The series of six public workshops are providing current experimental and experiential information for orcharding in USDA Zones 2b and 3. The information in these workshops was recorded and will be edited into an online handbook. New trials concerning two pressing issues in northern tree fruit production have also been established at CLC Staples Ag and Energy Center.

Pierz Eats Produce [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:  

UMN School of Public Health, UMN College of Design, UMN Extension SNAP-Ed, Pierz School District, Live Better Live Longer, Affiliated Foods Midwest, Catholic Health Initiatives, Gosch's grocery store, Morrison County Public Health, local produce growers, community members

The short shelf life of produce coupled with low demand make produce sales a challenge for many rural grocery stores. The Pierz Eats Produce project together with Pierz Foods in Morrison County, MN, is looking at the feasibility and impact of using produce education marketing to help increase produce consumption and improve consumer health.

Solar Dehydrator

FOCUS AREAS:    

UMN Agricultural Health and Safety, UMN Carlson School of Management Research Assistant, UMN Extension Food Safety, Central MN Women Shine, Sustainable Farming Association, central MN farms and community members

The research is demonstrating the commercial feasibility of adding value to local produce through solar dehydration. The project pursues the need for using renewable and clean energy to create a sustainable income stream and jobs in Central Minnesota rural communities as well as making better use of produce which might otherwise be wasted. The demonstrations and data collection are being conducted at Azariah Acres Farm in Ramey, Snowy Pines Reforestation in Cushing, and Green Island orchards in Wadena.

Solar Schools [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: ☀

UMN School of Public Health, UMN College of Design, UMN Extension SNAP-Ed, Pierz School District, Live Better Live Longer, Affiliated Foods Midwest, Catholic Health Initiatives, Gosch's grocery store, Morrison County Public Health, local produce growers, community members

The short shelf life of produce coupled with low demand make produce sales a challenge for many rural grocery stores. The Pierz Eats Produce project together with Pierz Foods in Morrison County, MN, is looking at the feasibility and impact of using produce education marketing to help increase produce consumption and improve consumer health.

Tourism in County Level Planning & Zoning

FOCUS AREAS: 🏡

UMN Applied Economics Graduate Research Assistant, UMN Tourism Center, counties and community members in Central RSDP region

The planning and policy research is assessing if and how tourism is addressed in county-level policy documents (e.g., comprehensive plans) to inform future planning efforts. The graduate student researcher is collecting and analyzing documents and conducting interviews for approximately 15 counties with high tourism value in the Central RSDP region. A content analysis will identify if and how tourism and recreation is intentionally cited or "accommodated" in the planning document language (e.g., key words or phrases).

CENTRAL CERTS

AgInspire: Renewable Energy Education Kits

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Energy Efficiency: LowCost/No-Cost Upgrades; Behavior Change; Lighting Upgrades; Renewable Energy: Solar Electric; Passive Solar; Wind; Biomass/Biofuels

Central, Northwest and Southeast CERT Regions, MN – The Renewable Energy Education Kits project will be a collection of educational activity kits focused on wind, solar, biomass/fuel, and general energy concepts. These kits will be designed to maximize educational technology and interactivity during short 5-10 minute implementations that inspire and encourage further learning/engagement beyond the event experience. These kits will then be taken to a Central MN county fair during summer 2016 to be used along with our regular exhibit, the Ag Cab Lab.

Detroit Lakes Public Utilities: Community Solar Project

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Renewable Energy: Solar electric

Detroit Lakes, MN – Detroit Lakes Public Utilities (DLPU) will be installing a 20 kW community solar garden in 2016. There will be forty-eight 410-watt panels available for purchase. Customers of DLPU will pay an initial upfront cost and in turn the monthly kWh output of their panels will be credited to their electric bill. This project is the perfect opportunity for DLPU customers to engage in a local renewable energy project. DLPU has approximately 7,070 customers that will be eligible to participate in the program.

Lutheran Church of the Cross: 7.56 kW Ground-Mount PV System Project

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Renewable Energy: Solar Electric

Nisswa, MN – Lutheran Church of the Cross (LCC), Nisswa, Minnesota, will install a 7.56 kW ground-mounted photovoltaic system producing 9,615 kWhs annually to save 10% on its electric bill. Located on State Highway 371, the project will be a highly visible renewable energy demonstration project for the community, which uses the church as an outreach center, and thousands of seasonal visitors to the Brainerd Lakes area. The project was conceived of and led by LCC's Creation Care Team to meet the church's eco-spirituality mission to lead by example in pursuing justice and sustainability for creation through individual and community action, learning, and advocacy.

Paws and Claws Animal Shelter: 40 kW Solar Array

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Renewable Energy: Solar Electric

Hackensack, MN – Paws and Claws Animal Shelter, a 501 (C)(3) non-profit, has an investor willing to build a 40 kW solar array using the Third Party PPA financing model. Through this model, Paws and Claws will benefit from reduced cost power and, after five years, be able to purchase the solar system at a reduced cost. The funding requested will support technical assistance for the project and development of legal documents required to meet IRS regulations, including the development of a Power Purchase Agreement, Land Lease Agreement, Put and Call Agreement and other documents.

Pine Point Solar Thermal

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Energy Efficiency: Low-Cost/No-Cost Upgrades; Behavior Change; Renewable Energy: Solar Air Heat

Pine Point Village, White Earth Reservation, MN – This project will provide Pine Point Village residents access to cheap and reliable spacing heating through the long winter season. Currently, many homes in the village rely on electric heat, and do not have adequate

weatherization. Through partnerships with the Tribe, and other regional organizations, we will weatherize and install solar air systems on 20 homes. Installation of panels will be conducted by trained Tribal members and will include workshops to train additional installers. These installers will also be trained on weatherization practices, and will help form the core of the larger White Earth Renewables Project team.



NORTHEAST REGION

Executive Director: Okey Ukaga, ukaga001@umn.edu

Learn more: rsdp.umn.edu/northeast

10 Plants That Changed Minnesota Teacher Workshops [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:   

UMN Landscape Arboretum, UMN CFANS, UMN Extension (Mary Meyer), MNHS Press, Northland Arboretum-Brainerd, RSDP (all Regions and Greg Schweser)

The University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum launched the “10 Plants that Changed Minnesota” public education campaign to build awareness of the crucial role plants played in the historic and economic factors that changed the course of our state. The project is expanding its reach through developing a series of teacher in-service trainings to be held across the state.

Aitkin County Hydroponics

FOCUS AREAS: 

Aitkin County, Blandin Foundation, Aitkin County Growth, Inc, Aitkin County Economic Development, NERSDP

Conduct study to determine the feasibility of hydroponic business in Aitkin County.

Aquaponics

FOCUS AREAS: 

Pine Habilitation and Supported Employment (PHASE), Nemadji Community Resource Center (NCRC), NERSDP Partner to run an Aquaponics operation to develop sustainable work opportunities for PHASE participants while providing healthy food resources for Nemadji Community Resource Center Meals on Wheels and Senior Dining.

Conservation Corps serves Natural Resources Focus Area

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension, RSDP, Rose Clarke and Natural Resource Work Groups, Conservation Corps of MN and IA A Conservation Corps member is assisting RSDP staff in building capacity for its Natural Resources Focus Area. By attending meetings with the natural resources work groups, Corps member will be able to share projects, approaches, and insights across the program, and provide staffing assistance for specific regional projects. Special emphasis will be put on climate adaptation planning and projects. The emphasis on climate

adaptation follows a series of convenings in 2015 hosted in partnership with Climate Generation.

Deep Winter Greenhouse

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension, NERSDP, UMN College of Design, CFANS, Center for Sustainable building Research, Organic Consumers Association

Provide project support for construction expertise and outreach/education for participants in the RSDP DWG Campaign project. Host DWG open houses in Finland with project partner (Organic Consumers Association).

Gitchi-Gami State Trail

FOCUS AREAS:  

UMN Center for Transportation Studies, Gitchi-Gami Trail Association, Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, Spoke n Gear Bicycle shop, NERSDP and others

The Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC), in collaboration with the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association (GGTA), Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR), Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program (MLSCP), the University of Minnesota, and Sawtooth Mountain Clinic will conduct short-duration continuous monitoring to capture trail user counts along the 29 constructed miles of the Gitchi-Gami State Trail (GGST) during June, July, August, and September 2016.

Grand Portage Community Agriculture Strategic Planning Project

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension, NERSDP, Cook County, Grand Portage Construction/Land Development, Grand Portage Health Services, Grand Portage Health-SNAP-Ed Educator, Grand Portage Trust Lands

Create a five-year strategic plan for agricultural development that will lead to a sustainable local food system.

Groundwater Trainings evaluation [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

MN Department of Natural Resources, local Soil and Water Conservation District staff, UMN Department of Forest Resources

SERSDP, NERSDP, and NWRSDP supported a UMN researcher to evaluate the impact of trainings for local SWCD staff. The MN DNR workshops are designed to provide knowledge and confidence to SWCD staff to address groundwater quality and quantity issues with landowners and agricultural producers. The pre- and post-workshop evaluation design will also enable researchers to test indicators developed by UMN for the state's Clean Water Fund Tracking Framework.

Phenology for Schools

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension, Northern Community Blandin Foundation, MN DNR, NERSDP

Bring Phenology into the grade schools of northern Minnesota. We will teach them to be observers of their neighborhoods, school yard, and other natural areas they frequent. Students will then share their observations with others through the Phenology Show broadcast on Northern Community Radio.

Sustainable Development Research Opportunity Program (SDROP)

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Duluth CLA's Center for Sustainable Community Development, UMN Duluth Office of Sustainability, NERSDP, and numerous local groups and UMN Duluth students

SDROP provides UMD students an opportunity to work closely with a variety of NE MN communities on various sustainable development projects. Students gain the valuable research and project design and implementation experiences that only "real-life" community projects can provide, and community partners benefit from community service provided by quality students.

We Make a Bridge

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension, Cloquet Forestry Center, NERSDP, Fond du Lac

Conduct engineering for "Otter Creek Crossing" part of a multi-phase, educational trail connecting the Cloquet Forestry center and Fond du Lac.

NORTHEAST CERTS

City of Biwabik: City Hall LED Retrofit

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: 

Energy Efficiency: Lighting Upgrades

Biwabik, MN – This project will be a lighting retrofit for the City Hall offices. City Hall is the heart of the Biwabik community and many community members and citizens from surrounding communities visit the building and would be able to observe the results of the project. The key goals of the project are to replace older inefficient T-12 fluorescent lighting fixtures in the City Hall building with modern efficient LED lighting fixtures. This project will save electric energy and costs to the city as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Cook County Local Energy Project: Energy Skills Share

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: 

Energy Efficiency: Behavior change; Building Envelope; Lighting Upgrades Renewable Energy: Solar thermal hot water; Solar electric

Cook County, MN – Energy Skills Share is a series of events that emphasize sustainability energy practices. This collaboration is between Cook County Local Energy Project (CCLEP) and North House Folk School (NHFS). The project will expand upon NHFS's Makin' It Through Winter Series to include energy-related curriculum created by CCLEP. Through film, renewable solar system demonstration, hands-on energy efficiency skills, and story-telling, Energy Skills Share will engage the local community and visiting public with fun, informative evening sessions.

Ecolibrium 3: Giving Comfort at Home

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: 

Energy Efficiency: Low-Cost/No-Cost Upgrades; Behavior Change; Building Envelope; Lighting Upgrades

Duluth, MN – Giving Comfort At Home (GC@H) is a volunteer-driven program under the supervision of qualified Ecolibrium3 staff serving income-eligible, elderly, disabled and/or veteran homeowners who have the need for home energy improvements/repairs, but may not qualify for weatherization assistance or low-interest loans. The secondary application of this program will be as a training opportunity for income-advantaged homeowners so they can complete work on their own homes, thereby extending energy efficiency knowledge and application beyond this program. This supervised training will occur as part of volunteer time by these homeowners on a GC@H home.

Friends of the Finland Community: LED Upgrades at the Clair Nelson Center

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Energy Efficiency: Lighting Upgrades

Finland, MN – This project will replace 10 outdoor metal halide light fixtures with LED fixtures resulting in safer, more energy efficient and cost effective lighting for the Clair Nelson Finland Community Center. Everything we do here has a community aspect. The Center is a high traffic facility used by a diverse array of people from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Keeping the Clair Nelson Center running is one of the biggest things the Friends of the Finland Community does and any way to reduce the cost of operating the Center will stretch their limited budget and allow for more focus on offering programs and services.

Minnesota Discovery Center: Educational Solar PV Project

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Renewable Energy: Solar Electric

Chisholm, MN – Minnesota Discovery Center seeks to install a solar photovoltaic array in a highly visible area for educational purposes. A nearby museum display will include interpretive information for visitors to learn about solar energy and relate this on-site installation with its real-world impacts.

Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light, Arrowhead Regional Network (MNIPL ARN): Youth Be the Spark in NE MN Faith Communities

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Energy Efficiency: Low-Cost/No-Cost Upgrades; Behavior Change; Renewable Energy

Duluth, MN – The project will engage youth from communities of faith in the Duluth area in developing their commitment, knowledge and skills to lead in energy reduction at home and in their faith communities. Youth will participate in a day-long outdoor experiential leadership development workshop, hands-on service learning with MNIPLARN volunteers and Ecolibrium3, and sustained mentorship to support youth in mobilizing their faith communities to take individual and collective action to reduce their carbon footprint through energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Orr Recreation and Resource Center: Orr Center LED Exit, Emergency, and Security Lighting Project

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Energy Efficiency: Lighting Upgrades

Orr, MN – The ORR Center’s goal is to be self-sustainable, and to promote energy efficiency and current technologies. The installation of four new wood burning boilers is currently under way to provide heat and hot water in the building. Installation of solar panels is planned for the future to provide electrical power. The key goal of the LED lighting project is to provide more efficient and economical lighting.



NORTHWEST REGION

Executive Director: Linda Kingery, kinge002@umn.edu

Learn more: rsdp.umn.edu/northwest

10 Plants That Changed Minnesota Teacher Workshops [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:  

UMN Landscape Arboretum, UMN CFANS, UMN Extension (Mary Meyer), MNHS Press, Northland Arboretum-Brainerd, RSDP (all Regions and Greg Schweser)

The University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum launched the “10 Plants that Changed Minnesota” public education campaign to build awareness of the crucial role plants played in the historic and economic factors that changed the course of our state. The project is expanding its reach through developing a series of teacher in-service trainings to be held across the state.

Backyard Orchard Toolkit

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension: Noelle Harden, Randy Nelson, Rosie Gonzales; RSDP’s Linda Kingery, The Longspur Prairie Fund, Peter Schultz, Ugly Food of the North, Megan Myrdahl

The Backyard Orchard Project addresses the reintegration of traditional yard farming practices into living, community settings. Partners will develop the Backyard Orchard “tool kit” for food advocates, property owners, educators, and community members.

Community Gardens Training and OVOC

FOCUS AREAS: 

UM Extension SNAP Ed Educators, Noelle Harden, Sara VanOffelen, Ben Anderson, Anna Peterson, IonE Mini-grant, RSDP’s Linda Kingery, Local Public Health, community gardens and 25 OVOC projects

The purpose of this project is to support food skills and gardening efforts across northwest Minnesota through two community garden workshops and a regional marketing campaign for communities participating in the One Vegetable, One Community program.

Conservation Corps serves Natural Resources Focus Area

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension, RSDP Rose Clarke and Natural Resource Work Groups, Conservation Corps of MN and IA
A Conservation Corps member is assisting RSDP staff in building capacity for its Natural Resources Focus Area. By

attending meetings with the natural resources work groups, Corps member will be able to share projects, approaches, and insights across the program, and provide staffing assistance for specific regional projects.

DWG Construction Oversight

FOCUS AREAS:  

UMN College of Design’s Dan Handeen, RSDP’s Greg Schweser, Linda Kingery, Bemidji Community Food Shelf Farm’s Hannah Klemm, Candy Barlow, Jack Judkins, Mary Mic

Provide project support, construction expertise, and outreach/education for participants in the RSDP DWG Campaign. Host a DWG open house at Bemidji Community Food Shelf Farm’s newly constructed DWG.

Gary Pines [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:  

UMN College of Design Center for Sustainable Building Research’s Virajita Singh, Maxwell Dickson, City of Gary’s Karie Kirschbaum, Brian Chisholm

Create a master plan for the Gary Pines, a 160-acre forest along Hwy 32 at Gary, MN. The plan includes developing trails, vegetation to draw wildlife, and nature play for children. The result will be an additional recreational and picnic area for people using the Agassiz Recreational Trail (ART) or living in the Gary community.

Groundwater Trainings evaluation [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

MN Department of Natural Resources, local Soil and Water Conservation District staff, UMN Department of Forest Resources

SERSDP, NERSDP, and NWRSDP supported a UMN researcher to evaluate the impact of trainings for local SWCD staff. The MN DNR workshops are designed to provide knowledge and confidence to SWCD staff to address groundwater quality and quantity issues with landowners and agricultural producers. The pre- and post-workshop evaluation design will also enable researchers to test indicators developed by UMN for the state’s Clean Water Fund Tracking Framework.

Growing Together Internships [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension's Noelle Harden, Nikki Johnson, Randy Nelson, Immigrant Development Center, FARRMS, Growing Together's Verna Kragnes

Immigrant Development Center, in partnership with FARRMS*, Medina, North Dakota State University and University of Minnesota Extension will increase the number and sustainability of Red River Valley's emerging farm enterprises through internship opportunities, education and mentoring. A four-stage farmer-training model will include experience working in a Growing Together community garden as a beginning step for those who may have little experience in (northern) agriculture.

Healthy Habits Community Garden [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

UM Extension Shirley Nordrum, Master Gardeners, RSDPs Linda Kingery, Molly Zins, Boys and Girls Club of Leech Lake, Cass Lake Food Shelf

The Health Habits/Community Garden project is an initiative of the Boys and Girls Club of the Leech Lake Area (BGCLLA) geared towards teaching youth about the benefits of healthy habits such as eating smart, forming positive relationships, and being physically active. With a specific focus on the Native American Culture and historical traditional growing, gathering and harvesting practices, club members learn the important lesson of community and self-sustain abilities.

Mayor's Monarch Pledge [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:  

UMN Extension's Karl Foord and Margo Bowerman, City of Bemidji Parks Department, Marcia Larson, Bemidji State University Sustainability Office, Erika Bailey Johnson

Establish two Monarch demonstration gardens, one at a Bemidji-area primary or secondary school and another on City of Bemidji property. The creation of these demonstration gardens will provide a hands-on learning experience, with students and community members involved throughout the process. Finally, we plan to organize a small Monarch Festival.

Nature Play Meets Accessible Play at EHES

FOCUS AREAS:  

UMN College of Design (Virajita Singh, Alex Thill), IonE (Jonee Brigham), Ellen Hopkins Elementary School, River Keepers

Ellen Hopkins Elementary School wishes to enhance nature play on its campus, and specifically focus on accessibility for those with physical disabilities. The

project also engages artists and watershed education. This builds on NWRSDP's portfolio of design projects.

Riverland Tourism Conference

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension Ryan Pesch, UMN Crookston Center for Rural Entrepreneurial Studies, Rachel Lundbaum, Riverland Tourism Association

The Riverland Tourism Association recognizes that the tourism industry is not well understood, or may not be seen as a tool for economic development tool here in NW Minnesota. The Riverland Tourism Association is hoping to reverse that thinking by hosting an annual Tourism Conference in the northwest region.

SFA Sustainable Sheep Community

FOCUS AREAS:   

UMN Extension (Wayne Martin), RSDP's Constance Carlson, Margo Bowerman, Sustainable Farming Association (Alethea Kenney)

The Sustainable Sheep Community Project revitalizes the sheep industry in northern Minnesota with a focus on sustainability, local meat, and fiber production. The Sustainable Sheep Community Project puts jobs back into the community, supports local businesses related to meat and fiber, educates consumers and youth, and supports local, sustainable fiber/textile production. Two events per year support this endeavor, the Small Scale Sustainable Sheep Farming event (February) and the Fosston Fiber Festival (October).

SNAP Ed Community Partnership [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension Neil Linscheid, Sara VanOffelen, Darlene Collins, Noelle Harden, Nikki Johnson, Kelsie Tucholke, RSDP's Linda Kingery.

NWRSDP was awarded SNAP Ed Community Partnership Grant to conduct social network analysis, support 12 pilot projects engaging communities in health eating and active living, and provide training for community gardens and One Vegetable One Community promotions.

Spindle-pruning Apple Trees in High Tunnel [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

UM Crookston Rick Abrahamson, UMN Extension's Terry Nennich (retired), Chuck and Barbara Schulstad

The purpose is to pursue and evaluate a new pruning technique to dramatically increase yield, quality and profitability of growing apples in high tunnels. Apple varieties used are Zestar!™ and Honeycrisp. Research will be shared through field days and Extension fact sheets.

Sponsorships and Scholarships

FOCUS AREAS: 

Supported by NWRSDP

NWRSDP sponsored a series of promotional events with the Park Rapids Farmers Market, supported scholarship for small business owner to attend mushroom course, and supported participation of Red Lake Nation in the iCorps Diversity and Inclusion Designathon.

Western Minnesota Science Clubs

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension's Margo Bowerman, Western Minnesota Science Fair

The Western Minnesota Regional Science Fair is an opportunity for youth in grades 6 – 12 to delve deep into the science or engineering process. Science Fair topics cover a wide range of topics, many of which are applicable to the sustainability focus areas identified by RSDP. Science clubs at six schools will increase participation in the science fair.

NORTHWEST CERTS

Headwaters Regional Development Council (HRDC): Northwest Clean Energy Financing-Beltrami County

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: 

Energy Efficiency: Low-Cost/No-Cost Upgrades; Behavior Change; Building Envelope; Lighting Upgrades;
Renewable Energy: Solar Air Heat; Solar Thermal Hot Water; Solar Electric

Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, and Mahnomen counties, MN – The HRDC's region faces many challenges. It is one of the most poverty stricken areas of the state and also one of the coldest. Utility bills in the winter can put families as well as businesses and organizations into a very tough spot when money is already tight. Energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy installations are often not initiated due to high up-front costs. We will address this barrier in a two-pronged approach, conducting education and outreach on financing opportunities individually targeted to: 1) governments, schools, tribes, businesses, and non-profits; and 2) our low-income population.

Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians: Red Lake Charter School / Business Incubator

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: 

Energy Efficiency: Low-cost/ no-cost upgrades; Building Envelope; Lighting Upgrades; Renewable Energy: TBD by audit and planning process

Red Lake Reservation, MN – Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, its Red Lake Entrepreneur Program (RLEP) and emerging Charter School will work with a professional, certified commercial energy auditor to conduct either a Level II or Level III energy audit of the RL Humanities Center to repurpose and upgrade the building as a business incubator and school. The project will educate the community and other RL business and government entities through a highly visible project on the value and opportunity in energy efficiency and renewable energy for the Red Lake Reservation.

Voyageurs Expeditionary School: Keep the Lights Out, Energy Reduction

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: 

Energy Efficiency; Lighting upgrades

Bemidji, MN – Voyageurs Expeditionary School will install light sensors in each classroom to reduce electrical energy use. They plan to have the students calculate the current energy consumption and predict future usage. The school will evaluate the reduction in energy consumption with installing motion sensor light switches.

White Earth Land Recovery Project: White Earth Community Solar Install

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: 

Energy Efficiency: Behavior change; Renewable Energy: Solar air heat

White Earth Reservation, MN – White Earth Reservation has huge un-actualized potential for renewable energy. Not only is the reservation solar- and wind-rich, but the tribe has had training programs in renewables. It is a goal of the White Earth Land Recovery Project to further actualize some of this potential by installing solar heaters in community homes and sharing the knowledge as an active community education program through its radio station KKWE, Nijjii Broadcasting. Project will improve the livelihoods and quality of life for tribal families on the White Earth Reservation with the installation of efficient solar air heating systems on homes.



SOUTHEAST REGION

Executive Director: Erin Meier, tegtm003@umn.edu

Learn more: rsdp.umn.edu/southeast

10 Plants That Changed Minnesota Teacher Workshops [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Landscape Arboretum, UMN CFANS, UMN Extension (Mary Meyer), MNHS Press, Northland Arboretum-Brainerd, RSDP (all Regions and Greg Schweser)

The University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum launched the “10 Plants that Changed Minnesota” public education campaign to build awareness of the crucial role plants played in the historic and economic factors that changed the course of our state. The project is expanding its reach through developing a series of teacher in-service trainings to be held across the state.

Bed & Breakfast statewide impact study [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Tourism Center

MN Bed and Breakfast Association

SERSDP is providing partial funding for this study characterizing the scope of economic and community-level impacts of B&Bs across the state.

Conservation Corps Natural Resources

Focus Area support

FOCUS AREAS: 

RSDP Natural Resources work group members and project partners, UMN RSDPs, UMN Crookston Extension Office

All RSDPs are supporting Rose Clarke, Conservation Corps member, to develop RSDP’s Natural Resources priorities and work groups, internal University connections and agency- and community-based project partners. Ms. Clarke is reviewing past project materials, making personal contacts, designing/hosting webinars and highlighting resources and opportunities via e-newsletters.

Groundwater Trainings evaluation [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

MN Department of Natural Resources, local Soil and Water Conservation District staff, UMN Department of Forest Resources

SERSDP, NERSDP, and NWRSDP supported a UMN researcher to evaluate the impact of trainings for local SWCD staff. The MN DNR workshops are designed to

provide knowledge and confidence to SWCD staff to address groundwater quality and quantity issues with landowners and agricultural producers. The pre- and post-workshop evaluation design will also enable researchers to test indicators developed by UMN for the state’s Clean Water Fund Tracking Framework.

Henderson Classic Car Roll In survey

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension, UMN Tourism Center, Henderson Classic Car Roll In Committee

The Henderson Classic Car Roll In is a weekly event aimed at automobile enthusiasts who park their cars and socialize on the historic Main Street of Henderson. This event has been growing in attendance by not only car owners, but Henderson citizens, motorcyclists and regional visitors. Attendance ranges from 250 to over 400 cars per week with 1,000 to 2,000 people attending. To help the coordinating committee better understand how to keep this event successful, meet budget needs and build community support, Extension and the UMN Tourism Center, with funding help from SERSDP, surveyed participants and Main Street business owners to characterize the Roll In’s economic impact.

Lake Pepin Interpretive Center outreach video [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

Lake City – Area Arts, Chamber of Commerce, Destination Lake City- Lake Pepin Interpretive Center Committee, Economic Development Authority, Historical Society, Tourism Bureau, UMN School of Journalism and Mass Communication

The Mississippi River is internationally recognized as a geological, environmental and historic icon of the U.S. Lake Pepin is the largest and most scenic “lake” along its length. The Lake Pepin Interpretive Center seeks to be a multi-use facility offering educational opportunities, art installations and events that focus on Lake Pepin’s past, present and future. SERSDP is assisting in its development with the creation of a promotional/educational video.

Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance outreach video

FOCUS AREAS:    

Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance
UMN Communication Studies, School of Music, and
Institute on the Environment (IonE), along with Atomic K
Studios and volunteer musicians and singers

Broad public support is required to pursue large-scale
habitat and water quality restoration projects at the
head of Lake Pepin. The Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance
approached SERSDP to help create an outreach video
highlighting the destructive impacts of sedimentation
occurring primarily under the surface of the water. Dr.
Mark Pedelty, Professor of Communication Studies,
shepherded many resources for this project leveraging
SERSDP's support. These included the talents of Atomic K
Studios who in turn received rights from Big John Games
to use and manipulate animation created for Bass Pro's
"The Strike" game. Dr. Pedelty also wrote and performed
the theme song with other artists who donated their
talents.

Library Collection on Sustainable Development

FOCUS AREAS:    

Southeastern Libraries Cooperating (SELCO)
A public library collection of SERSDP project reports and
sustainable development materials is in the process of
moving from the SE Library System to UMN Libraries.
Stay tuned!

Scholarships – Human Capital Fund [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:    

SERSDP provides scholarships of up to \$200 for
Southeast residents to attend conferences and
workshops. In FY17, SERSDP supported these events:

- MN Climate Adaptation Forum
- Rural Arts & Culture Summit

SE MN Wastewater Initiative educational videos

FOCUS AREAS:    

Cannon River Watershed Partnership, UMN School of
Journalism and Mass Communication
The SE MN Wastewater Initiative (SMWI) of the Cannon
River Watershed Partnership works with small
communities in an 11-county area of SE MN to help
upgrade wastewater treatment systems by providing
education and technical assistance. Many very small
communities do not have municipal treatment for their
wastewater and need to upgrade their systems. Since
2002, SMWI has helped 22 small communities upgrade
sewer systems, eliminating 317,290 gallons of untreated
sewage per day from entering the lakes, streams and
rivers. This project involves creating video clips to
complement SMWI's *Small Community Wastewater
Solutions* book. The video clips are interviews with

community leaders from previous community projects to
help those in communities just starting the process
understand the range of options and learn from the
experiences and successes of others.

SE RSDP Focus Area Coordinator

FOCUS AREAS:    

SE RSDP work group members and project partners,
UMN Extension Health and Nutrition
Susan Draves, Regional SNAP-Ed Coordinator, is working
with SERSDP one day per week to develop and
coordinate focus area work groups and drive our
Diversity Action Plan and Civil Rights training.

Sponsorships and Collaborations [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:    

SERSDP provides sponsorship support to a limited
number of events in which SERSDP is involved and
engages in organizational collaborations that require
additional staff and board member time. Often these
collaborations develop new partners and lead to formal
projects. SERSDP's collaborations included:

- **FEAST Local Food Network** - SERSDP sponsored the
third-annual FEAST Local Food Festival and Trade
Show held in December 2016 at the Rochester Civic
Center. SERSDP is a member of the FEAST Local Food
Network, which grew out of a collective impact
process hosted by the Southern Minnesota Initiative
Foundation and Renewing the Countryside. FEAST
Local Food Network was awarded the 2016
Environmental Initiative Award in the Food
Stewardship Category.
- **Green Driver Training for Rochester City Lines** – Co-
sponsored costs of University of Vermont Extension
training and analyzing impact.
- **Rural Arts & Culture Summit** – Co-sponsoring “Local
Flavors” evening reception for this June 2017 event
held at U of M, Morris.
- **SE MN Together** – SERSDP was a core committee
member and co-sponsor of this Southern Minnesota
Initiative Foundation funded project to host
convenings that encourages regional collaboration
around issues of workforce development. SERSDP
was lead coordinator in bringing two communities
(Goodview and Oronoco) expertise via "community
economic design team" visits. The events helped
communities by engaging outside expertise that may
not be easily or normally accessible. SERSDP is now
hosting and coordinating a Phase 2 of SE MN
Together to continue regional collaboration around
economic and community development.
- **SNAP-Ed** - Chef Jorge honorarium for SE MN cooking
classes

State Park use by Latino Residents study [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

Centro Campesino, Latino Economic Development Center, Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio, Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research (HACER), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources-Parks and Trails, UMN Center for Urban and Regional Affairs-Community Assistantship Program, UMN Extension, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, UMN Tourism Center

A mixed-methods research project with objectives to (1) understand the motivations, constraints, experiences, values and needs Latinos have in visiting state parks, and (2) review state park policies and programs to better understand current practices in state parks and to provide necessary background information that will deepen understanding of what study participants say during focus groups and interviews. Project findings will inform a wide range of actions: outreach campaigns, in-park programming design, collaborative planning processes, and the provision of amenities that may encourage Latino populations to visit state parks by meeting their needs.

Straight River Phosphorous study [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

Steele County Environmental Services, MN Pollution Control Agency, UMN Department of Bioproducts and Biosystems Engineering

SERSDP is providing funding to engage UMN research faculty, staff and graduate-level assistance to help address a data gap with regard to nonpoint sources of phosphorus loading to the upper Straight River so that pollutant reduction actions can be most effective. By identifying and targeting contributing sources activities can be prioritized and measured.

Tourism Center Collaborative Staffing

FOCUS AREAS: 

SE RSDP Tourism work group members and project partners, UMN Tourism Center

All RSDPs are supporting Tammy Koerte, Tourism Center Extension Educator, for one day per week for two years to help coordinate Tourism and Resilient Communities work groups in all regions; build relationships among regional work groups and key partners; advance a future vision for the focus area; and connect strategic partners, resources, and opportunities across Minnesota.

SOUTHEAST CERTS

AgInspire: RenewableEnergyEducationKits

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: 

Energy Efficiency: Low-Cost/No-Cost Upgrades; Behavior Change; Lighting Upgrades; Renewable Energy: Solar Electric; Passive Solar; Wind; Biomass/Biofuels
Southeast, Central, and Northwest CERT Regions, MN – The Renewable Energy Education Kits project will be a collection of educational activity kits focused on wind, solar, biomass/fuel, and general energy concepts. These kits will be designed to maximize educational technology and interactivity during short 5-10 minute implementations that inspire and encourage further learning/engagement beyond the event experience. These kits will then be taken to a Southeast Minnesota county fair during summer 2016 to be used along with the regular exhibit, the Ag Cab Lab.

City of Red Wing: Partners In Energy (PIE) – Green Wing Energy Action Plan

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: 

Energy Efficiency: Behavior Change; Renewable Energy and Additional Technologies will be highlighted
Red Wing, MN - The goal of "Green Wing Action Plan" is to increase the adoption of energy efficiency and/or renewable energy activity by 10% of Red Wing residential households and small to midsized commercial businesses. In addition, the Partners In Energy (PIE) team is working with congregations to get them involved in environmental stewardship.

Jefferson Center for New Democratic Process: Sustain Winona Energy Awareness and Conservation "Next Step Partners: Engaging our Communities on Energy"

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: 

Energy Efficiency: Behavior Change

Winona, MN - Next Step Partners is a nascent energy efficiency planning and action effort covering all of Winona County, led by a great group of community leaders. Partners will use contests, educational events and public discussions to build awareness of the importance of energy conservation, followed by energy audits and low cost efficiency installations at thirty low or fixed income households to demonstrate the path forward.

Lake Crystal Municipal Utility: Beat the Peak Program

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Energy Efficiency: Behavior change

Lake Crystal, MN – Lake Crystal Municipal Utilities' (LCMU) voluntary "Beat the Peak" program is designed to help customers become more energy aware and lower their power bills by using energy more efficiently and reducing the energy consumed during peak usage periods. When LCMU identifies a "peak," participants will be asked to turnoff unnecessary lights and appliances and delay use of major appliances. Additionally, participants will be entered into an energy savings competition and receive free enrollment in LCMU's load-management program, a home energy audit from a member of LCMU's staff, and a credit on their monthly utility bill.

Ney Nature Center: Harnessing the Power of the Sun

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Energy Efficiency: Behavior change; Renewable Energy: Solar electric

Henderson, MN –The Ney Nature Center will be installing a solar array, interactive monitoring system, and interpretive display to demonstrate and interpret this technology while using the electricity produced within day-to-day operations. This solar array system will bring the issues of our dependence on fossil fuels and provide insight to alternative energy to the attention of park visitors, program participants, and the local community.

Region Nine Development Commission: Community Solar Garden Workshops

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Renewable Energy: Solar Electric

Southeast, Southwest, and West Central CERT Regions, MN – This project is to develop and conduct three community solar garden-focused workshops in Region Nine (9 counties surrounding Mankato). The primary objectives of the workshop are to educate potential solar garden subscribers and help them make an informed decision about participating as a community solar garden subscriber. A secondary objective of the workshops is to educate potential landowners interested in serving as host sites about solar garden land leases.

Rochester Earth Fest: 2017 Expo

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Energy Efficiency: Renewable Energy and Additional Technologies will be highlighted

Rochester, MN –The 2017 Earth Fest Expo will be held at the Mayo Civic Center. Earth Fest volunteers worked with Rochester Mayor Brede to develop the "100% Renewable Energy by 2031"proclamation and this will be the theme of the event, promoted through speakers, vendors, resources, and classes.

St. Dominic Parish: Communicating our Progress on Energy Savings Project

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Energy Efficiency: Low Cost/No-Cost Upgrades; Behavior Change; Building Envelope; Lighting Upgrades; change from steam to hot water boiler

Northfield, MN – Students will inventory all the appliances and electronic equipment in every room of St. Dominic School, test how much energy they use, and find the most energy-wasting equipment – the energy hogs. Students will label the energy uses and present their inventory and alternatives at an energy fair where other students, parents, and parishioners are invited. Inventory will include the new LED lighting and boiler.



SOUTHWEST REGION

Executive Director: David Fluegel, fluegel@umn.edu

Learn more: rsdp.umn.edu/southwest

10 Plants That Changed Minnesota Teacher Workshops [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:   

UMN Landscape Arboretum, UMN CFANS, UMN Extension (Mary Meyer), MNHS Press, Northland Arboretum-Brainerd, RSDP (all Regions and Greg Schweser)

The University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum launched the “10 Plants that Changed Minnesota” public education campaign to build awareness of the crucial role plants played in the historic and economic factors that changed the course of our state. The project is expanding its reach through developing a series of teacher in-service trainings to be held across the state.

Buy Fresh Buy Local

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Morris Healthy Eating, Land Stewardship Project
This is an ongoing partnership project that features a chapter of the Buy Fresh Buy Local national organization called “Pride of the Prairie.” The chapter has published a semi-annual regional local foods guide and website featuring growers along with educational content about purchasing local foods, including the geographies of West Central and Southwest Minnesota. The cost of the publication is shared by Buy Fresh Buy Local grower members and community and University partners. Pride of the Prairie member growers adhere to a set of Production Practices that are highlighted in all promotional materials. The SWRSDP Sustainable Agriculture/Food Systems Work Group provides leadership and administrative support.

Connecting Students and Communities

FOCUS AREAS:    

UMN Center for Small Towns, SWRSDP, Central RSDP
This ongoing program was co-developed and operated jointly by the Center for Small Towns and the SW RSDP and features an application process for local units of government, schools, non-profits, and community organizations to receive support for projects by UMN Morris students. In operation since 2005, Central RSDP joined in the project in spring 2015.

Conservation Corps serves Natural Resources Focus Area

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension, RSDP’s Rose Clarke and Natural Resource Work Groups, Conservation Corps of MN and IA
A Conservation Corps member is assisting RSDP staff in building capacity for its Natural Resources Focus Area. By attending meetings with the natural resources work groups, Corps member will be able to share projects, approaches, and insights across the program, and provide staffing assistance for specific regional projects. This is year two of this arrangement and includes developing and hosting a series of monthly webinars that feature UMN resource staff and community partners.

Fairmont Market Square [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Center for Sustainable Building Research, Fairmont 1590 group, Fairmont Farmers Market, Fairmont Public Schools, Rural Advantage, Youth Groups, Community Education, Private Business, Downtown Association
The goal of the project is to facilitate a process for engaging community members in visioning exercises to develop a design for a community “social and market destination” that supports locally grown foods; increases consumption of local foods purchased at the Fairmont Farmer’s Market; supports sales of locally grown food and products; increases awareness of our agricultural heritage; supports local recreational resources; creates a hip, fun environment to energize citizens; and utilizes progressive social marketing techniques to reach larger and “new” audiences.

Five County Local Food Study

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Extension, Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (UMVRDC), Countryside Public Health-Statewide Health Improvement Program
A team of UMVRDC, Countryside Public Health-SHIP, UMN Extension and SWRSDP staff will co-design a process that brings people together to determine the current local food situation and identify steps to improve the local food system. This project will include research completed by Extension Community Economics staff and a UMN Morris student to help show capacity and identify gaps. The final report will outline the current local foods

situation and the potential market for area producers. The 5-county UMRDC region includes Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift, and Yellow Medicine counties.

Master Plan for Conservation and Recreation – MN River Valley

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Morris Center for Small Towns, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Redwood County, Renville County

This is a unique collaboration between MDNR and Redwood and Renville Counties. Students will be hired to complete GIS mapping of the area and also to conduct a field study of flora and fauna with information used in developing the Master Plan.

Milan Housing Assessment and Planning [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:   

UMN Center for Urban and Rural Affairs Community Assistantship Program, RSDP Mary J. Page Community-University Partnership Fund, Ryan Rural Development, Milan City Council, Swift County Housing Authority
This project will examine housing issues for the City of Milan. A Humphrey School grad student will provide most of the data gathering and compilation and supported by Mary Page Funds. Bob Ryan is hired to provide administrative oversight and local community support/integration for graduate student hired to complete Housing Study in the blended cultures in Milan Minnesota.

Olivia Community Garden

FOCUS AREAS: 

RSDP Mary J. Page Community-University Partnership Fund, UMN Center for Urban and Regional Affairs Community Assistantship Program, United Farm Credit Services–Olivia, Kandiyohi-Renville County SHIP, Renville and Redwood County 4-H, Renville County Hospital
The United FCS Olivia has donated three acres of tillable acreage alongside their new building location to create a produce garden. This garden is being designed and managed by a board of directors represented by many area organizations that will focus on benefiting the regional community by creating jobs and providing fresh, healthy foods. Through the RSDP Mary J. Page Community-University Partnership Fund, a UMN graduate student will assist with completing a business plan and non-profit corporation documents.

Scholarships/ Sponsorships

FOCUS AREAS:    

Residents of Southwest Minnesota, Event hosts
An ongoing project with an annual account set up to offer scholarships for Southwest residents to attend conferences and workshops (e.g., Symposium on Small Towns, Rural Arts and Culture Summit, Food Access Summit, Climate Adaptation Conference). The same account provides sponsorship funds for events (e.g., Symposium on Small Towns, Rural Arts and Culture Summit).

Sustainable Agriculture, Dean Current [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:  

UMN Center for Integrated Natural Resource and Agricultural Management (CINRAM), SWRSDP Natural Resources Work Group

This project involves case study research to document cases of farmers that are implementing sustainable agriculture practices and make that information available to other farmers in a variety of formats. The information will be stored in a searchable database. Formats would include electronic (web based), paper copies, and potentially an app that would allow other farmers and others to locate and visit farms willing to receive visitors and show and discuss their practices.

SOUTHWEST CERTS

City of Hutchinson: Minnesota ENERGY STAR Challenge Implementation

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: 

Energy Efficiency: Low-Cost/No-Cost Upgrades; Behavior Change; Building Envelope; Lighting Upgrades, ENERGY STAR certification

Hutchinson, MN – The City of Hutchinson has been accepted as a Minnesota ENERGY STAR® Challenge Community Partner to gain support leading community outreach regarding energy conservation and cost saving efforts in the city. The Challenge requests a matching cash contribution of the services offered to the community to offset some of the direct costs of the program. A seed grant will allow the City to provide this cash match, lessening financial burdens on the City and partners and ensuring program success.

City of Morris: Morris Model Clean Energy Hub

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Energy Efficiency: Low-Cost/No-Cost Upgrades; Behavior Change; Building Envelope; Lighting Upgrades; HVAC Upgrades/Replacement; Renewable Energy: Solar thermal hot water; solar electric; Additional Technologies: Geothermal

Morris, MN – The City of Morris, University of Minnesota Morris, and Eutectics will implement the Morris Model Clean Energy Hub. The Hub creates a community-based public-private partnership in order to build clean energy financing solutions for all economic sectors within a region, including small and medium enterprises (commercial and not-for-profit), large commercial and industrial customers, public buildings, and single-family and multifamily residents. The Hub leverages public and private financing tools to create streamlined access for businesses, property owners, and residents to technical expertise, qualified contractors, and the financing tools to implement clean energy projects.

City of Slayton: City Entrance Sign Solar Panels

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Energy Efficiency: Lighting upgrades; Renewable Energy: Solar electric; Other technologies: Energy Storage
Slayton, MN – The city of Slayton is installing three new entrance signs. These signs will be backlit with LED lights behind the lettering. We will be installing three 280 watt capacity solar panels to power these signs so they are off the grid.

City of Trimont: Community Building Heating and Cooling, LED Street Lights

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Energy Efficiency: Building envelope; Lighting Upgrades
Trimont, MN – The Trimont Community Building is approximately 25 years old and the heating and cooling system is original to the building. The building is home to the city hall office, council meeting room, police office and a public works shop. The meeting room is frequently used by community groups and others for meetings and gatherings. The city will purchase and install a new system that will save a substantial amount of energy and city funds. In addition, the City of Trimont has 21 gooseneck street lights on Main Street and plans to purchase and install LED heads for existing poles to provide a safe, efficient, and cost effective source of lighting for our residents and for visitors to Trimont.

Pomme De Terre Foods Inc: Energy Efficiency Project

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Energy Efficiency: Behavior Change; Building Envelope; Commercial Energy Efficiency measures
Morris, MN – Pomme De Terre Foods Inc (PDT) is seeking to improve energy efficiency standards and operations for its facility located in Morris, MN. As the local purveyor of healthy and local foods, PDT believes that improving energy efficiency at the store front will be an excellent public example of how energy efficiency initiatives can have a direct impact on the public perception of energy usage and conservation practices.

Region Nine Development Commission: Community Solar Garden Workshop

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Renewable Energy: Solar Electric

West Central, Southeast and Southwest CERT Regions, MN – This project is to develop and conduct three community solar garden-focused workshops in Region Nine (9 counties surrounding Mankato). The primary objectives of the workshop are to educate potential solar garden subscribers and help them make an informed decision about participating as a community solar garden subscriber. A secondary objective of the workshops is to educate potential landowners interested in serving as host sites about solar garden land leases.

Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership (SWMHP): Community Solar Gardens in SW Minnesota

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Energy Efficiency: Behavior change; Renewable Energy: Solar electric

Slayton, MN – SWMHP will work with rural communities, small municipal utilities, and cooperative power companies in the Southwest Minnesota region to: a) evaluate whether community solar is a viable option and how it can be implemented as an energy alternative for a community that supports affordable housing development; and b) either create an implementation strategy to move forward in a community (which could be replicated) or develop a synopsis of barriers and challenges currently preventing communities from moving in this direction.

Willmar Community Theatre: Upgrading Building Lighting

ENERGY FOCUS AREAS: ☀

Energy Efficiency: Lighting Upgrades

Willmar, MN – The Willmar Community Theatre, known as “The Barn Theatre,” is replacing antiquated incandescent and T12 linear florescent lighting fixtures (66 total fixtures) with modern LEDs equipped with dimming and occupancy sensing controls. These fixtures are in areas of high visibility and frequent use, including

the main entrance, the lobby, the ticket box office, and administrative offices. As a community theatre, thousands of patrons visit The Barn Theatre’s building each year as this effort will ensure that their lighting practices demonstrate their desire to be efficient and responsible. In addition, The Barn Theatre hopes others, after seeing and experiencing the change in the building, will in turn make similar investments to their buildings.



STATEWIDE PROJECTS

Statewide Director: Kathy Draeger, draeg001@umn.edu

Learn more: rsdp.umn.edu

Building Supply Chain Networks to Increase Access to Markets for UMN Specialty Crops [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:

Green Lands Blue Waters, Grow North

RSDP is leading a new collaboration among a cross-disciplinary team of UMN researchers, farmers, culinary professionals, food processors, and food/ag businesses to build supply chains to increase access to UMN new or improved specialty crops. Over the course of this grant, RSDP will develop internal and external supply chain resources, host cross-disciplinary networking events for UMN researchers, host statewide supply chain convenings and evaluate the resources and value of the events.

Connecting Small and Medium-Sized Farms to Existing Wholesale Markets through Backhauling from Rural Grocery Stores [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:

UMN Applied Economics, UMN Extension, USDA-AFRI funded

This project develops and pilots the feasibility of a new model for small and medium-sized crop producers to access wholesale markets. The Farm to Rural Grocery to Wholesale (F2G2W) model leverages the existing network of rural grocery stores and their wholesale suppliers to “backhaul” locally grown produce on emptied wholesale trucks for redistribution through wholesale markets. The long-term goal of the project is for small and medium-sized farms to increase their viability, competitiveness, and sustainability through access to profitable wholesale markets via the existing network of rural grocery stores and wholesale suppliers. Research objectives include determining economic, logistic, and regulatory feasibility of the F2G2W model and piloting it with one crop during the project period. Extension objectives are to translate, train, convene, and disseminate findings based on research results to producers and grocers. The F2G2W model would provide small and medium-sized farms new access to wholesale markets. Once tested, it has the potential for replication in rural areas throughout the country.

Deep Winter Greenhouse Technology: Demonstration and training for winter specialty crop production [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS:

DWG producers Carol Ford (RSDP staff) and Sue Wika, UMN College of Design Researcher Dan Handeen, Organic Consumers Association, Bemidji Community Food Shelf, Central Lakes College, Alternative Roots Farm, Lake City Catholic Worker Farm

RSDP statewide staff Greg Schweser and Carol Ford will coordinate and conduct workshops at each of the five DWG prototype sites to train new, existing, and prospective DWG producers. Project also includes two workshops each at the White Earth Land Recover Project and the Hmong American Farmers Association, both of which have interest in DWG technology. As part of the project, Carol Ford is creating a production manual that will both serve as a teaching guide at the workshops and a downloadable production guide that will be available online. Sue Wika is partnering with the RSDP to deliver workshops in the northern sites.

Increasing Healthful Food Choice and Strengthening Rural Grocery Stores through Nutritional Education and Labeling

FOCUS AREAS:

UMN Extension, Gosch’s grocery store, Kansas State University Rural Grocery Initiative, USDA-AFRI funded RSDP’s role is to use local foods as a means to improve the nutritional environment of the rural grocery store. Research will look at increased local foods sales through “rural” groceries as a strategy for improving the nutritional value of food environment in rural areas. Overall, the project seeks to enhance the rural grocery food nutritional environment, provide an index that allows customers to see a nutritional value number, and support consumers’ decision making to choose healthy options.

New Regionally-Adapted Heirloom Dry Beans for Organic Production [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Department of Horticulture (Tom Michaels), UMN Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics (Craig Sheaffer, Kathy Draeger), Minnesota Department of Agriculture Minnesota Crop Research Grant, Sustainable Farming Association

Dry, edible beans are a nutritious and versatile food contributing to healthy diets that fight obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. During a recent USDA project, UMN researchers initiated plant breeding activities targeting selection of heirloom-type beans that are particularly well-adapted to organic production systems in Minnesota and that exhibit the unique seed characteristics associated with high demand and consumption. This project will 1) finalize those breeding activities by completing selections based on multi-location testing under organic conditions, 2) purify and stabilize the seedlots, 3) eliminate seed-borne diseases, and 4) initiate stock seed production. The project also involves authoring production guides for dry bean growers; promotional guides for CSAs and retailers describing nutritional characteristics, cooking qualities, and uses of these new varieties; and continuing engagement with restaurateurs and institutional chefs.

Principles for Transitioning to Organic Farming: e-Learning Materials and Decision Case Studies for Educators [NEW]

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN CFANS, USDA, Oregon State University

The overview of this project is to develop a suite of e-learning modules, materials and resources to assist and educate grain, forage and horticultural producers as they make the decision to transition to organic production or continue the process of transitioning to organic production. The project is also intended to educate undergraduate students on organic production and transitioning. The materials will be used by a variety of collaborators including University instructors, Extension educators and regional organizations to educate transitioning farmers, undergraduate students, and others interested in transitioning. The Principles for Transitioning project is based at the University of Minnesota and is funded by a grant from the Organic Transitions Program, part of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Grant number 2013-51106-21005

Retail Produce Handling Education for Rural Grocers and Specialty Crop Farmers

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Department of Horticulture (Cindy Tong); Renewing the Countryside; Bergen's Prairie Market, KC's Market, Kiester Market, Pierz Foods, and TJ's Country Corner grocery stores

Rural grocery stores often have difficulty selling enough produce to maintain profitability and continually supply healthy produce for their customers. If product turnover is slow, a store will purchase fruits and vegetables less frequently from local farmers and distributors, resulting in lower product quality, limited options for consumers, and lower profits for farmers. By providing busy rural grocers with simple-to-use produce storage guides and on-site training, produce handlers will gain the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain produce displays for maximum quality, freshness, and appearance. This project proposes to develop and deliver on-site workshops on proper produce handling in rural grocery stores for rural grocery store operators and local specialty crop farmers. With an increase in skills, knowledge, and confidence, rural grocers will increase their ability to sell locally grown and distributor-provided fruits and vegetables, thereby strengthening rural economies and increasing healthy options for their neighbors and customers.

Rural Grocery Serendipity Grant

FOCUS AREAS: 

UMN Office of the Vice President for Research Serendipity Grant Program

RSDP's 2015 Rural Grocery Survey was the first statewide survey of rural grocers in Minnesota. This grant provides the opportunity for University and community experts to purposefully collaborate and create momentum around rural grocery issues using survey results. Materials will be created and tailored to different stakeholders such as rural grocers, Extension personnel, policy decision makers, technical assistance providers, and others.

Statewide Deep Winter Greenhouse Campaign

FOCUS AREAS:  

U of MN Center for Sustainable Building Research (Dan Handeen), UMN Institute on the Environment (IonE), United FCS, AgStar Financial Services, AgCountry Farm Credit Services, AgriBank, UMN Extension, MnDRIVE RSDP is collaborating with producers and organizations throughout Minnesota to build five Deep Winter Greenhouses (DWGs) – one in each RSDP region. The campaign is made possible by support from the UMN Institute on the Environment and a consortium of farm lending banks, including AgCountry Farm Credit Services, AgriBank, AgStar Financial Services, and United

FCS. In exchange for technical assistance and funding, partners agree to participate in University research and outreach events for a period of three years. Each DWG will be built according to a prototype design developed by the UMN Center for Sustainable Building Research. An advisory committee made of representatives selected by RSDP with expertise in agricultural production, energy efficiency, clean energy, and community development will select one applicant from each RSDP region. Committee members include a representative from each of RSDP's five regions as well as three members representing UMN Extension and United FCS. For updates on the DWG campaign, visit RSDP's DWG resource page: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/rsdp/statewide/deep-winter-greenhouse/>.

STATEWIDE CERTS

Advantages of Wood Heat for Poultry Production in a Cold Climate

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Minnesota Department of Agriculture via the Viking Corp Research project assistance and outreach for a pilot (field test) of a wood chip-fired forced air furnace to heat a two-story chicken barn and offset propane use.

CERTs Core Funding

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Legislative appropriation via the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources. Additional core partners include: Southwest Regional Development Commission, Great Plains Institute, The Minnesota Project

To advance CERTs' mission to connect individuals and communities with the resources they need to identify and implement community-scale energy efficiency and renewable energy projects across the State of Minnesota.

Clean Energy Project Builder

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Through the Grow Solar Partnership CERTs is working to update the Clean Energy Project Builder to have a greater focus on solar and add a community-solar directory component. Explore the database at: cleanenergyprojectbuilder.org.

Community Solar Gardens Research/Materials/Outreach

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

CERTs has created resources to help interested parties (from residents to local units of government) learn the basics about community solar gardens, get subscriber resources, see currently available programs, and get

answers to frequently asked questions. Learn more at: SolarGardens.MnCERTs.org

GreenStep Cities

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and McKnight Foundation via Great Plains Institute. Additional core partners include: League of Minnesota Cities, Izaak Walton League (Minnesota), Minnesota Main Street Program

To support GreenStep Cities programmatic development and to conduct direct outreach to and recruitment of cities in Greater Minnesota in support of cities participating in GreenStep.

Grow Solar

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

US Department of Energy via Midwest Renewable Energy Association

Leverage local partnerships and regional/national expertise to support development of model solar finance programs through a statewide technical assistance grant program. Includes elements of programming described below.

Local Government Energy Efficiency Financing, Guaranteed Energy Savings Program (GESF)

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

U.S. Department of Energy via Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources

To conduct education and outreach to local units of government about both a) energy benchmarking tools and benefits and b) energy efficiency savings programs, financial tools, and incentives.

MN Solar Pathways

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

US Department of Energy via the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources

Collaborate to find least-risk, best-value strategies to support the realization of Minnesota's 10% by 2030 solar electricity goal and set the stage for further solar deployment.

Maximizing Rural Electric Cooperative Farm Energy Efficiency Programming

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources

Research to develop a customized incentive structure specific to farms for McLeod Cooperative Power Agency's Conservation Improvement Program.

Property Accessed Clean Energy (PACE)

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Saint Paul Port Authority

CERTs staff work across the state giving presentations and educational information about PACE to county commissioners and local municipal leaders, with the goal of activating a joint powers agreement to make PACE financing available in their jurisdiction so that businesses can use it for energy efficiency and/or renewable energy projects.

Renewable Energy Development Assistance

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

U.S. Department of Agriculture

CERTs is working with Minnesota farmers and rural small businesses to identify opportunities for energy efficiency in order to maximize the potential benefit of any renewable energy systems. Working statewide, the project will help prioritize renewable energy options that align with the farm or business operations and connect potential projects with resources and tools – like USDA REAP funding – to move forward on project implementation with a focus on solar (photovoltaic and thermal), biomass, and small wind.

Scaling up Clean Energy Deployment across Minnesota

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

McKnight Foundation

To scale up clean energy project deployment across Minnesota by developing community capacity to implement projects, cultivating innovative community connections, and expanding the use of CERTs as a technical assistance and resource hub.

Solar Thermal Outreach Coordination

FOCUS AREAS: ☀️

Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources

In the hopes of spurring Minnesota's fledgling solar thermal industry into greater adoption, CERTs staff are working statewide to create strategic partnerships, remove barriers to broader adoption, and highlight the results of ongoing data monitoring efforts.