



Proud to Serve

**Conservation District Board Members
Recruitment Reference Book**

**Serving America's
Conservation Districts**



1-10-2010



Conservation District Board Meeting
Redmond, Oregon

Agenda Item 1

1. Approval of Minutes

2. Public Comment

3. Board Business

4. Board Meeting Adjourns

5. Board Meeting Resumes

6. Board Meeting Adjourns

7. Board Meeting Resumes

8. Board Meeting Adjourns

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Conservation District Board Members Recruitment Reference Book

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The Need for Recruitment

Effective conservation district programs are built with outstanding, and qualified district board members. A district board whose members exhibit a diverse combination of skills will be better able to gain community support for district and local conservation efforts. A board's diversity should reflect, to the extent possible, the population that it serves. This reference book provides ideas and methods to recruit district board members that will improve the board's responsiveness to the community they serve.

Districts often have a difficult time replacing a district board member who leaves their elected or appointed position. Other districts might not think recruitment of district board members is a problem, but are willing to prepare themselves for the possibility. While the loss of a respected board member is difficult, the turnover of members can stimulate board activity. Regardless of your district's situation, this book provides a way for the district to decide what it needs in a new district board member(s), and how to develop a strategy to meet these needs through recruitment of new members.

Recruitment of district board members begins with the identification of qualities desired in current and prospective board members, and the definition of roles for all district board members. District boards then develop and use a variety of recruitment strategies to find citizens who have skills and interests compatible with the district. Once found, these citizens are integrated into district programs and activities as elected or appointed board members, associates, employees, and volunteers. This reference book has been developed with this in mind. By following the outline in this publication, you can help assure that new district board members not only are interested in conservation, but also have the precise skills that best suit your district's needs. Although the process takes time and energy commitment, a well developed recruitment plan will pay off huge dividends in the form of committed and responsible district board members.

The board should also review existing policies or election/appointment procedures to be certain that no barriers exist for qualified candidates to be elected/appointed to your conservation district board. Such barriers should be brought to the attention of the state conservation agency personnel. Stronger boards strive for diversity of age, ideas, and backgrounds to achieve successful program development.

Identifying Qualities and Qualifications of a District Board Member I

Good district board members will have a strong conservation ethic, skills and knowledge in conservation, as well as management skills and leadership abilities. Recruitment of potential board members begins with the identification of the qualities desired. District board members should be selected based on the identified qualities and qualifications and not on the criteria of "who's available that we know".

A partial listing of desirable qualities for district board members would include:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Open minded | Strong leadership skills | Innovative |
| Likable and kind | Professionalism | Understands conservation issues |
| Good speaking skills | Progressive | Always learning |
| Fundraising abilities | Personnel management | Legislative understanding skills |
| Leadership network in the community | | |

What additional qualities do you want your district's board members to have?

Each district board member is a spokesperson for the entire board, industry or profession, and has the ability to improve or damage its reputation. Beyond the desired qualities of a district board member, additional qualifications could include:

- ❖ District board members that can devote adequate time to the job. Some districts have a written policy dictating removal of a board member for a certain number of consecutive absences from board meetings.
- ❖ The board member should be in reasonably good health with mental and physical energy to serve in their board member capacity. Selection of district board members should not be seen as a tribute to someone in declining health.
- ❖ Effective communication skills and ability to get along well with other district board members, staff and assisting agency staff is important.
- ❖ A candidate should be able to tolerate positive and negative attention, as well as inevitable criticism of leadership. The individual's judgment and integrity is most important.
- ❖ Personal, business, and regional biases of candidates must be subordinated to the good of the district. District board members are expected to reflect feelings of their own constituencies, but must always put the interest of the district they serve, first.

II Identifying Qualities and Qualifications of a District Board Member

- ❖ The district board member's personal conduct must reflect favorably upon the conservation district. Individuals who are notorious for unorthodox behavior may prove to be more irritating or embarrassing to a district than amusing or helpful.
- ❖ A candidate's family and friends should be supportive rather than obstructive or resentful of the extra demands on their time.
- ❖ A candidate should be a proven performer, should have high integrity, and an understanding of the ethics of the community and the position they will hold. They should be knowledgeable, experienced, capable, and active.



Analyzing the Needs of Your District III

Before you begin to look for someone to serve as a district board member, your board should first identify what the needs of your district are for human resources. This is an opportunity for your board to diversify and expand the membership of the district and to find people that can help the district expand their program.

1. List major programs and activities of your district.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your district?

Strengths

Weaknesses

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. What programs and activities would you like to do but because of the lack of resources (human and other) have been unable to accomplish?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Analyzing the Needs of Your District

4. Identify types of people that have knowledge, experience, or skills that can help you meet these accomplishments.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. List skills, abilities, knowledge, and experiences provided by each current board member.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. Who does your district serve? List your clients.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. What new types of board members could help diversify your board, accomplish your mission, and better serve your clients?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Board member recruitment of qualified, and talented individuals requires looking beyond just your current circle of friends, relatives, and business associates; and actively seeking ideas and prospects from local entities. A variety of different local organizations should be invited to recommend a candidate based on your district's needs. Your local board should develop a list of potential groups, organizations, and individuals to contact when recruiting a new member. **Some examples to consider include:**

- ❖ Conservation and environmental special interest groups
- ❖ People on boards of key organizations -- banks, charities
- ❖ Advertising agencies and marketing firms
- ❖ Teachers and college professors
- ❖ Researchers
- ❖ Accountants, bankers, and investment managers
- ❖ Writers
- ❖ Timber harvesting contractors and professional foresters
- ❖ Horticulturists, nursery operators and tree farmers
- ❖ Farmers and ranchers
- ❖ Hobby and part time farmers
- ❖ Former legislators and public board members
- ❖ Retired local, state, or federal employees
- ❖ Consumer activists
- ❖ Public relations professionals
- ❖ Geologists and engineers
- ❖ Professional fund-raisers
- ❖ Agronomists and soil scientists
- ❖ Urban interest representation

A recruitment prospectus (detailed in the next chapter) should be provided to each entity included on the list developed by your local board.



Recruitment Prospectus **III**

In order to get people interested in becoming involved with your district, they need to know what the district does and the programs and services it offers. One way to inform prospective members is to develop a recruitment prospectus which may include:

- ❖ Mission and vision statements
- ❖ Your district's primary goals and objectives
- ❖ Legal authority
- ❖ Major issues
- ❖ Major programs and activities
- ❖ Funding sources
- ❖ Expectations of district board members
- ❖ Benefits of being a district board member

A model recruitment prospectus and a standard form are included in this chapter.

**Becoming a District Board Member of _____
Conservation District** (name)

Concerned citizens in _____ County can help conserve natural resources by
(name)
serving on the _____ Conservation District Board. If the issues and programs
(name)
stated in this document interest you - please call _____ at _____.
(name) (number)

1. Mission: (insert your district's mission statement)

Vision: (insert your district's vision statement)

2. Goals and Objectives:

- ❖ Establish soil and water conservation policy for the district
- ❖ Assess resource needs
- ❖ Develop strategies to address these needs
- ❖ Provide quality conservation education to county school children
- ❖ Provide land users with technical assistance
- ❖ Develop programs to address local natural resource problems
- ❖ Serve as focal point for addressing natural resource issues and coordinating various programs to help solve identified concerns

3. Legal Authority:

_____(conservation district enabling law number) of the Code of
_____(state name) defines a conservation district as a
political subdivision of the _____ (state name).

4. Major Issues at this Time:

- ❖ Water resources/water quality
- ❖ Failing septic systems
- ❖ Erosion from cropland
- ❖ Erosion from construction sites
- ❖ Land users needing technical assistance

Model Recruitment Prospectus

5. Major Programs and Activities:

- ❖ Agricultural cost-share program
- ❖ Conservation equipment program
- ❖ Tree seedling sales
- ❖ Publish quarterly newsletter
- ❖ Approval of conservation plans
- ❖ Review of county planning proposals
- ❖ Educational programs for schools, youth, adult and civic groups
- ❖ Review erosion and sediment control plans

6. Funding Sources:

- ❖ Local governments (board of supervisors, city councils, county departments . . .)
- ❖ State government (department of conservation, conservation commission . . .)
- ❖ Grants (district funding raising activities)
- ❖ Federal grants, agreements . . .
- ❖ District educational seminars and programs

7. Expectations of Directors:

- ❖ Take advantage of training opportunities to develop abilities
- ❖ Attend board and committee meetings
- ❖ Participate in district programs and activities
- ❖ Serve as chair of one committee
- ❖ Be involved & responsible for district program direction
- ❖ Develop policies and programs
- ❖ Promote soil & water conservation in the community
- ❖ Help manage staff
- ❖ Represent district in public
- ❖ Help secure financial resources
- ❖ Promote district

8. Benefits of Being a Director:

- ❖ Representing local resource concerns
- ❖ Being a voice for the citizens of your county/city
- ❖ Self satisfaction of providing your time to improve the environment
- ❖ Being actively involved with assistance and educational programs for citizens
- ❖ Providing leadership in community resource conservation
- ❖ Development of leadership skills

Additional information is available by calling the district office at _____
or by contacting a current district board member. (number)

IIII Recruitment Prospectus

Model Recruitment Prospectus

Recruitment Prospectus

Mission:

Vision:

Goals & Objectives:

Legal Authority:

Major Issues:

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
-

Major Programs & Activities:

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
-

Funding Sources:

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
-

District Board Member Expectations:

Benefits of Being a District Board Member:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Job Description for District Board Members IV

In order to get people interested in becoming involved with your district, they need to know what is expected of them before they accept any responsibility. District board members are no different. The more information you can provide them about their roles and responsibilities, the more apt they are to meet the expectations you have set. Their job description should define responsibilities, duties and obligations of district board members.

Developing a job description also provides current board members an opportunity to evaluate their own commitments to the district. An example district board member job description follows.

IV Job Description for District Board Members

Example Job Description - Virginia

SWCD Director

General Function

A district director is a local board member, elected from a non-partisan slate in the general election process or appointed by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, to assess local conservation needs and to develop conservation programs to address these needs.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

- ❖ Attend monthly district meetings.
- ❖ Participate on district committees and in work groups.
- ❖ Be willing to represent the citizens of his/her county in regard to conservation issues.
- ❖ Be willing to stay informed and inform others about conservation issues.
- ❖ Be willing to work with a multitude of agencies and resolve problems through teamwork.
- ❖ Be well versed in the field of conservation and interested in local conservation issues.
- ❖ Be willing to learn.
- ❖ Be willing to participate in statewide meetings and workshops on conservation issues.
- ❖ Recognize natural resource management needs that can be met through district programs.
- ❖ Participate in district policy and program development.
 - a) Prepare strategic and annual plans of work.
 - b) Establish and implement district policies regarding natural resource conservation issues as well as personnel and office matters.
 - c) Develop and/or implement conservation programs (educational and/or technical) to meet the needs of the district.
- ❖ Provide financial direction.
 - a) Be responsible for the proper expenditure and management of public funds.
 - b) Review and approve annual budget and financial statement.
 - c) Approve monthly treasurer reports.
 - d) Maintain a working knowledge of the budgetary process and keep local board members informed about SWCD programs.
 - e) Assess funding needs and actively pursue funding from local and state sources.
- ❖ Participate in public and community relations activities/programs.
 - a) Maintain an active public information and educational program so that citizens and local board members will be informed about conservation issues and district programs.
 - b) Make presentations and provide testimony at public hearings about conservation issues.
- ❖ Participate in personnel management.
 - a) Provide guidance and direction to staff and maintain fair and equitable personnel policies.
 - b) Maintain an open working relationship between staff and board members.
 - c) Serve on personnel committee and participate in all aspects of personnel management to include hiring, personnel reviews, etc.

Example Job Description - Virginia, continued

Term of service

Three years, no limit on number of terms served. Directors receive no compensation; they are reimbursed for travel to meetings, registration, meals, and other associated expenses when conducting work of the district.

Qualifications

Understand need for conservation of soil, water, and other natural resources. Other qualifications that may be helpful are:

- ❖ Knowledge of agriculture and related fields
- ❖ Environmental awareness
- ❖ Background in local, state, and national legislative processes
- ❖ Skills in conduct of meetings and parliamentary procedure
- ❖ Technical background in environmental sciences, engineering

Commitment Required

Ten hours/month which includes:

- ❖ Meeting attendance: three hours
- ❖ Review of materials, reading and preparation: three hours
- ❖ Committee work: two hours
- ❖ Attending meetings related to local conservation issues: two hours

Training Requirements

- ❖ Be willing to learn district procedures
- ❖ Meet training criteria as set forth by the district - sample criteria might be:
 - a) Reviewing the working documents of the district
 - b) Meeting with representatives of cooperating agencies: Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Consolidated Farm Services Agency (CFSA); Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE); Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOP) etc. to further the understanding and cooperative relationships and programs.
- ❖ Attend one area meeting and one State meeting per year
- ❖ Participate in workshops and seminars related to soil and water conservation
- ❖ Keep informed on current natural resources/conservation issues
- ❖ Attend Director Orientation Workshop

Function of the SWCD

To take available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land users.



Recruitment Considerations **V**

Once potential board members are recruited, the district board should evaluate the nominees as recommendations for appointed positions, associate members, and those that are nominated for the election process.

This process is sensitive and frequently subjective. In order to treat all nominees fairly it is recommended that the board develop selection criteria. This criteria may be very specific or somewhat broad based. The important issue here is that all nominees are treated equally and that the board makes recommendations based upon their identified needs.

In general, **recruitment considerations** can be grouped into **four major categories**:

- ❖ Legal Policy
- ❖ Mission and program
- ❖ Participation and commitment
- ❖ Board improvement/district performance.

Following is a **sample selection criteria form** to assist districts with this process.

V Recruitment Considerations

Experience and Knowledge Ratings

- 1 = Needs Information
- 2 = Limited Experience & Knowledge
- 3 = Extensive Experience & Knowledge

Sample Selection Criteria Form

Candidates
Names:

Legal/Policy					
Reviewed conservation district law					
Reviewed & understands job description					
Aware of personnel policies					
Aware of board election/appointment procedures					
Conflicts of interest policy reviewed					
Geographic representation					
Demographic representation					
Mission & Goals					
Understands mission & goals					
Knowledge of district programs					
Knowledge of conservation issues					
Professional or technical expertise					
Participation & Commitment					
Time to attend district board meetings,					
Avail. for committee meetings, & dist. activities					
Commitment to district purposes					
Availability, enthusiasm, interest					
Other commitment considerations					
Board Improvement					
Strong leadership skills					
Good speaker/confident					
Experienced managing personnel					
Access to important resources					
Brings new skills/perspectives to the district					
Other criteria (defined by the board)					
Scores:					



Maintaining Prospective Board Members VI

As expressed earlier in this reference book, recruitment of district board members, associate members and volunteers is a continuous, ever-changing process. Ultimately, at any time, a district should have a choice among many from which to recruit new board members.

Hints to keep potential board members active:

- ❖ Ask them to participate fully on committees and task forces
- ❖ Have them be responsible for some aspect of a district activity or program
- ❖ Match the assignments with their personal interests
- ❖ Instill within them a feeling of belonging and being an integral part of the district
- ❖ Ask for their opinions and input on issues
- ❖ Keep them informed of programs, activities and issues

New board members need specific information to help them get "oriented" quickly. Providing new members with essential background information on the roles and functions of the board or committee is an important but frequently neglected task in developing boards and committees. **Information for new members** might include at least the following items:

- ❖ History of the district
- ❖ Bylaws
- ❖ Articles of incorporation
- ❖ Overview of programs and services
- ❖ Project briefings
- ❖ Relationship to other community organizations or government agencies
- ❖ Description of funding sources
- ❖ Relevant legal and policy documents
- ❖ Recent budgets, fiscal documents, and financial statements
- ❖ Organizational chart with staff names
- ❖ Background information on program executive and staff members
- ❖ Info. on board/committee members (e.g. names, addresses, phone no's., background)
- ❖ Statements of mission, goals, objectives for the board/committee
- ❖ Location of meetings
- ❖ Structure of meetings
- ❖ Meeting norms, expectations for behavior
- ❖ Minutes of recent meetings
- ❖ Review of major accomplishments of the board or committee
- ❖ Tours of relevant facilities
- ❖ Introductions to key individuals or systems
- ❖ Community profile (background statistics on community including demographics, needs of service population, incidence of problems, availability of resources, etc.)
- ❖ Natural resource inventory for the district
- ❖ Annual and long range plans
- ❖ Calendar of events
- ❖ Acronyms/glossary of terms
- ❖ Other:



Recruitment Strategies and Materials VIII

Now that you have identified your district's needs, the qualities of a good district board member, and have developed a recruitment prospective and job description, it is time to develop your recruitment strategy. The strategies your district uses will vary depending on the circumstances of recruitment. Whether your district has a resignation/retirement, or an election, the following materials may be helpful in your recruiting efforts.

The following strategies are only a beginning for what your district can develop. There are advantages and disadvantages for each. Choose the ones that best suit your needs. Ongoing recruitment using a variety of strategies normally produces a greater number of potential nominees who represent more diverse skills, interests and backgrounds.

Sample Strategies:

Assemble a Board Development Team: An important first strategy would be to form a board development team charged with responsibility to examine board member needs including recruitment, orientation, and development of board members. The board's goals should be pursued as a part of a coordinated approach to finding potential board members. A board development team has a much expanded role as compared to a nominating committee.

Develop a Referral Network: Rather than relying on personal contacts provided only by a board development team and other board members, districts need to build a third-party referral system for both recruitment and funding sources. Long term relationships should be established with corporations, small businesses, banks, schools, religious, and service organizations. These relationships can yield valuable contacts for potential board members that have qualifications needed on your district board.

District Board Members Information Form: A nomination form can be used to collect information on potential candidates. Information can be compared to qualifications the district board has identified to fill needs on their board. An example information form is included on pages 25 and 26, as well as a self nomination form on page 27 that potential board members can use to evaluate their own qualifications.

Letter to Organizations: Direct correspondence to community organizations about potential nominees for district board member positions is an effective way to attract qualified individuals. The letter should include qualifications the board is looking for in potential nominees. An example letter is shown on page 28 in this reference guide.

Public Service Announcements: Radio and television stations run free public service announcements for community organizations. For a wide distribution announcement of a board member vacancy this strategy can be effective. Contact your community media for this service. Example public service announcements are presented on pages 29-31.

News Releases: Another method of reaching a wide audience regarding a district board member vacancy is through news releases in the newspaper, radio, or television. Sample news releases are included in this reference book on pages 32-35.

Newspaper Advertisements: Well written and attractive newspaper advertisements in community newspapers can create interest in a district board member position. Emphasize that only a few positions are available in your state that have local influence on natural resource program activities and needs, and input to state and federal agencies. Example newspaper advertisements are on pages 36-39.

District Recruitment Brochure: An effective way of informing potential candidates about district programs and activities, and about the powers and authorities of a district board member is through a well developed, clearly written information brochure. Create interest throughout the community by distributing the information brochure throughout the community in businesses, to organizations of all types, and through clients that have received district coordinated services. Examples of recruitment brochures are on pages 40-43.

Recommendations From Staff and Cooperating Agencies: Staff that have provided direct services to clients are a source of ideas for potential candidates that have qualifications being sought by a district board. Staff also have contacts throughout the community that may be different from the current board members' contacts.

Recruitment at Annual/Special Meetings: A pool of potential candidates exists in those individuals interested enough in the conservation district program to attend the annual meeting, special meetings or recognition events. Keeping an attendance list at events will provide names and addresses of people attending your events. This strategy is most appropriately used in conjunction with other strategies listed.

Job Description & Recruitment Prospectus Distribution: A wide distribution of the district board member recruitment prospectus and job description can attract qualified candidates to your district board. This strategy provides the most complete set of information to a prospective board member about the expectations of serving on a conservation district board. Personal contact is the best method of distributing this type of information.

Personal Contacts: A personal contact to a variety of community and organization leaders by district board members can be an effective method to create a pool of candidates different than that of a current circle of friends and relatives. Every effort should be made to personally contact a myriad of organizations about the district's activities. Besides recruitment, this strategy may provide leads for joint projects and funding opportunities between your district and the other organizations.

Sample District Board Member Information Form

Potential District Board Member Information Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Resident of the (county/city) of: _____

.....

1. Explain your interest in soil and water conservation and becoming a district board member.

2. Briefly describe what contributions and skills you will bring to the district.

VIII Recruitment Strategies and Materials

Sample District Board Member Information Form - continued

3. How much time are you able or willing to commit to district activities?

4. Nature of nominee's work/professional/educational background.

5. List other organizations, clubs and affiliations: (include dates of offices held and honors received.)

6. Please provide a brief biography of yourself.

VIII Recruitment Strategies and Materials

Sample Recruitment Letter To Local Organizations

Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear _____,

The _____ Natural Resource Conservation District is seeking nominations to fill an unexpired district board member position. We are in search of someone who is interested in conserving our natural resources and has time to commit to the community.

The district is responsible for developing programs and policies to address local conservation issues. Directors provide leadership toward the resolution of conservation problems and represent the citizens of _____ county on conservation issues.

If you know someone who may be interested and qualified to serve as a district board member, please have them complete the attached nomination form or call the district office at _____ or myself at _____ for more information.

As always, your support of our activities is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Chair's name

Sample Public Service Announcement #1

_____ Natural Resource Conservation District

(insert address)

Public Service Announcement #1

Length: 30 seconds

For broadcast at will

Natural Resource Conservation District Board Member

Contact: _____

(insert name & phone #)

AUDIO

You may think
that soil and water conservation
affects only farmers, or ranchers,
but: (State's) soil and water quality
affects the water you drink and
the food you eat.
If you're concerned about these issues,
and want to have a voice in decisions affecting
(state's) environment,
think about becoming a board member
of the (name) Natural Resource Conservation District.
The (name) Natural Resource Conservation District
includes the county(ies) of (name(s)).
As a board member you would help set
conservation priorities and policy for your county.
Contact the district today at (phone #).

VIII Recruitment Strategies and Materials

Sample Public Service Announcement #2

_____ Natural Resource Conservation District

(insert address)

Public Service Announcement #2

Length: 30 seconds

For broadcast at will

Natural Resource Conservation District Board Member

Contact: _____

(insert name & phone #)

AUDIO

You don't have to choose
between prosperous farms
and a healthy environment
-- you can have both.

If you want to help your county
maintain its farmland
while protecting the environment,
you should consider becoming
a board member
of the (name) Natural Resource Conservation District.

As a board member, you would help
make important decisions
about conservation in your county.

Get involved . . . help make (state)
a better place for you and your children.

For more information,
contact the (name) Natural Resource Conservation District
soon at (phone #).

Sample Public Service Announcement #3

_____ Natural Resource Conservation District

(insert address)

Public Service Announcement #3

Length: 15 seconds

For broadcast at will

Natural Resource Conservation District Board Member

Contact: _____

(insert name & phone #)

AUDIO

If you want a voice
in conservation decisions
in your county,
think about becoming a board member
for the (name) Natural Resource Conservation District.
Contact the district office at (phone #) soon.
Isn't it time you gave back to the community?

VIII Recruitment Strategies and Materials

Sample District Board Member Election News Release #1

NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: _____ (date)

For further information contact: _____ (name & phone #)

Conservation district filings open until _____ (date)

Concerned about the water quality in _____ (name) County? "You can make a difference by filing before (date) to run as a board member for the (name) Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD) in the (date) election", (chair's name), chair of the local conservation district, announced recently.

"Board members have a direct say in how we deal with many important natural resource issues: water quality, forestry, agricultural best management practices, and soil erosion" (chair's name) said. "Running for a district board member position is an excellent way to make an impact on our natural resources," (chair's name) said.

Conservation districts are political subdivisions of (state) that manage and direct conservation programs. The (name) NRCD is governed by a (number) member board, which oversees a staff of (number). Board members represent the counties of (list counties). Staff work directly with land owners to put conservation practices on the land. Board members are elected in the general election in November.

The district board meets monthly to discuss the business of the district, including best management practice funding for land owners, district conservation priorities, personnel issues and coordination with state and federal agencies and other local units of government. In addition, board members are community leaders in resource management, providing guidance and information to their friends and neighbors.

Board members are not paid, but may receive compensation for expenses related to attending meetings and other activities of the board. For further information, contact the (name) Natural Resource Conservation District at (phone #).



Sample District Board Member Election News Release #2

NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: _____ (date)

For further information contact: _____ (name & phone #)

**Natural Resource Conservation District Directors
will be Chosen in November Election**

Choosing a candidate this _____ (date) election for director of the _____
(name) Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD) could affect things like the quality of
the water you drink, the amount of pollution in the lakes you use, and whether that wetland
area in the park, where the ducks used to live, will be restored.

Because districts are local units of government entrusted with managing and directing
conservation activities, board members have a great deal of influence on conservation
decisions in their communities. The _____ (name) NRCD Board oversees the
district's efforts and provides guidance for future natural resource planning in the counties of
_____ (list counties).

Elected (or appointed) board members serve three-year terms. The following people have
filed to run for the position of natural resource conservation district board member. (list names)

The _____ (name) NRCD Board meets every _____ (day of month)
to discuss district business. They serve as non paid elected officials that are reimbursed for
expenses relating to district activities. For more information about the district board position
you may call _____ (phone #).



VIII Recruitment Strategies and Materials

Sample District Board Member Election News Release #3

NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: _____ (date)

For further information contact: _____ (name & phone #)

Natural Resource Conservation District Board Members Help Conserve Our Area's Soil and Water Resources

It may be your child's teacher, a relative, your best friend, or the lady at the grocery store. It may even be your next door neighbor. Who are these people? They are natural resource conservation district board members.

What is a district board member? Anyone who has an awareness of local conservation issues and chooses to serve. They're local citizens, an official, elected or appointed, to help develop management strategies regarding local conservation issues.

And, while district board members are elected or appointed to three-year terms in general county elections, you can also volunteer to serve as an associate member (no election required).

Payment for these positions doesn't come in monetary form, but in the satisfaction of knowing that you are among many others helping your county conserve its natural resources for future generations, your children and grand children.

What are the responsibilities of a district board member? To be an effective district board member requires more than just attending a meeting. Board members are encouraged to serve on various committees within the state and/or district. Part of their role is to educate the public about soil and water conservation. They may help in the development of tours, newsletters, displays, and such. The ways in which district board members can contribute are endless.

In addition, they work closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Consolidated Farm Services Agency (CFSA), and state conservation agency, just to name a few.

MORE

Sample District Board Member Election News Release #3 continued

There is a popular misconception that local conservation districts and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are one and the same. This is untrue. While the two often work together within the same office, the district administers programs such as _____, while the NRCS provides the technical assistance and guidance to complete best management practices.

So look around you. The conservation practice in the field near you may belong to a district board member or cooperator. District board members practice what they preach, and usually have farms and/or land to prove it, plus the satisfaction that they are helping to make changes for the good of all the citizens of the _____ Conservation District.

If you are interested in becoming a board member or an associate member or would like more information, call the _____ Conservation District at _____ .
(phone #)



VIII Recruitment Strategies and Materials

Sample Recruitment Classified Ad

Classified Ad

The _____ Natural Resource Conservation District will be accepting nominations for a vacant district board member position. Board members are public officials responsible for developing programs to address local natural resource concerns. Interested persons may submit a resume or letter of recommendation to: _____ (address). For more information please call _____ (phone #).

Sample Newspaper or Newsletter Advertisement - Washington

Conservation District

Appointed District Supervisor Opportunity

- ▶ Represent landowners and the general public while directing natural resource conservation programs
- ▶ Carry out natural resource protection responsibilities according to the Washington Conservation District Law, RCW Title 89
- ▶ Identify local conservation needs, set goals and implement plans to protect soils, water, wildlife and other renewable natural resources

If being one of five local, volunteer decision-makers who are part of a grass-roots delivery system for providing technical assistance to landowners and land users to help protect local renewable natural resources in our county interests you, then apply to be considered for appointment to the board of supervisors of our local conservation district.

Eligibility

- ▶ Anyone who is interested in natural resource protection issues; and
- ▶ who occupies land within the conservation district boundary or is in possession of any lands lying within the district, whether as owner, lessee, renter or tenant; and
- ▶ who is a qualified county elector.

Conservation Districts

- ▶ Districts are subdivisions of state government that are directed by boards of five volunteer supervisors, three of whom are elected and two who are appointed. Supervisors serve three-year terms. Supervisors direct paid staff to provide technical assistance to landowners and are partnered with the federal Soil Conservation Service for additional assistance.

Applications

- ▶ Applications for appointed, volunteer supervisor positions are available from the conservation district office and from the Washington Conservation Commission office in Olympia, (360) 459-6224. Completed applications may be mailed to the local conservation district or to the Conservation Commission, P.O. Box 47721, Olympia WA 98504-4421.

VIII Recruitment Strategies and Materials

Sample Newspaper or Newsletter Advertisement - Minnesota #1

NOTE TO DISTRICTS: Use this ad slick with our local newspaper for your own election advertising. Filler number 1 may be substituted for last paragraph of ad copy.

Clean Water and Protected Soils

**Are the goals of your local
Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)**

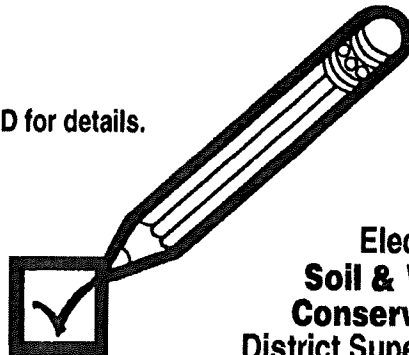
Your board of district supervisors have been elected to represent your interests on use and protection of land and water resources in this county.

and local cost-share programs for conservation practices addressing county resource needs

District supervisors prepare operating budgets and annual work plans, and oversee state

You can become part of this local conservation team. Filing for district supervisor is open until September 4.

Call your SWCD for details.



**Elect Your
Soil & Water
Conservation
District Supervisor**

You can ensure the county's resources are well protected. Vote for your SWCD supervisors on November 4.

Vote for resource protection. . . . Vote for your Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor.

Sample Newspaper or Newsletter Advertisement - Minnesota #2

Water

There's More Than Meets The Eye

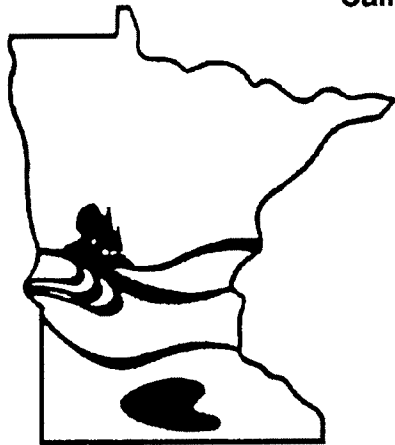
Most of our drinking water comes from underground aquifers, deep within the earth. Right now it's still clean enough to drink. But what about the future?

Help protect groundwater and other natural resources by becoming a supervisor for your local soil and water conservation district (SWCD).

Supervisors are elected officials who make important decisions about how water and soil are managed in their county.

Make sure that water out of sight isn't out of mind. File for district supervisor at your SWCD office until Sept. 7th. and get your name on the ballot.

Call your SWCD for details.



Printer: Please set local SWCD name, address and phone number.

VIII Recruitment Strategies and Materials

Sample Recruitment Brochure - Iowa

ELECT



**to become a soil and water
conservation district commissioner**

Become a Commissioner. Here's How!

If you're qualified to vote in a general election, you're eligible to be a candidate for election to the board of the county soil and water conservation districts.

Each district is governed by five commissioners who are elected at general elections on a nonpartisan basis for staggered six-year terms. Only one commissioner may reside in any single township.

You'll need a nominating petition from the County Auditor, to be signed by at least 25 eligible voters, and then filed with the Auditor no later than the 69th day before the general election. You'll also file an affidavit stating your name, residence and an assurance that you are an eligible candidate. No political party is designated.

If elected, you will take an oath of office the first business day in January following the election, and begin your six-year term.

Call or visit your local district office for more information about becoming a commissioner.

Help Direct Local Programs

A commissioner is a volunteer conservation promoter in the community, helping direct such activities as field days, educational meetings and materials, contests, awards programs, and publicity.

As a commissioner, you'll help decide the direction of soil and water conservation programs in the county, and will have the opportunity to influence state and national conservation programs.

Your involvement will include activities such as soil loss complaints, establishing acceptable soil loss limits, publishing an annual report, approving soil conservation plans, and assisting in the management of district funds and personnel.

You will be reimbursed for expenses, and be protected from personal liability. Among other things, you'll be expected to take part in regular monthly meetings, become knowledgeable of the soil and water conservation laws and programs, develop and carry out soil and water resource conservation plans, and help direct financial incentives programs.

Sample Recruitment Brochure - Iowa - continued

Work with Many Groups and Agencies

Soil and water conservation districts work closely with a number of local, state, and federal agencies, as well as with local groups and organizations. In particular, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation and the USDA Soil Conservation Service have close ties. The Division assists districts with administration of state and local programs, including financial incentive programs, and assigns state technical and secretarial people to Districts. The SCS works through Districts, providing technical soil conservationists as well as office space for the local District.

Districts work closely with other entities including the Iowa Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners, USDA Consolidated Farm Services Agency, USDA Farmers Home Administration, State Natural Resource Conservation Committee, Iowa Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, county conservation boards, county boards of supervisors, drainage districts and levee districts.

District commissioners also personally call on many service organizations, Businesses, farmer groups, media, and other local individuals and groups to help promote soil and water conservation.

Help Administer Conservation Programs

Soil and water conservation districts are legal subdivisions of state government. Commissioners are responsible for carrying out state laws and programs within district boundaries. These include:

- sediment control law
- conservation cost-sharing
- conservation revolving loan funds
- water quality protection projects
- resource enhancement and protection

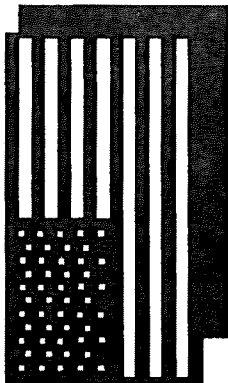
Districts also play a key role in carrying out federal programs such as the Food Security Act. They have involvement in the Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Compliance, and other areas. They also serve as local sponsors for watershed projects, resource conservation and development areas, and soil surveys.

Equal Opportunity for All

Districts offer services without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, marital status, or handicap. Studies have clearly shown that where minorities and/or women are represented on boards in proportion to their presence in the area, program participation by these groups increased. In keeping with this, district boards are seeking equal representation among these groups.

Soil and water conservation district commissioners may come from all walks of life. Districts actively encourage anyone interested in protecting our natural resources to seek the office of commissioner.

Sample Recruitment Brochure - South Dakota



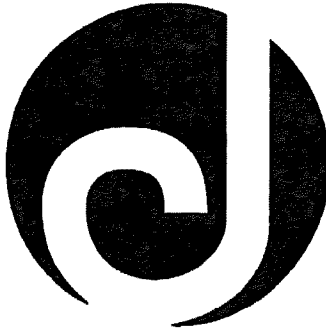
**Conservation Districts:
Democracy in Action!**

- ② Districts are legal subdivisions of state government, organized by vote of the people within the district. They are similar to other local units of government such as the school board or county government.
- ② Each district is managed by a board of five elected supervisors. The board consists of three rural landowners/occupiers, one urban resident and one taxpayer.
- ② Districts cannot levy taxes, but can request support from the county and the state.
- ② South Dakota law generally does not require landowners to apply conservation practices. Conservation districts must develop ways to convince land owners to properly manage their land, and to convince the public of the need for its support.

Thank you for your interest in your conservation district. Your willingness to give time and energy to support its goals by serving as district supervisor are important and greatly appreciated.

- The Conservation District Board
- The SD Division of Conservation
- The SD Association of Conservation Districts

**So,
You want to be a
Conservation
District Supervisor**



This is what is involved . . .

For more information call your local resource conservation district.

Sample Recruitment Brochure - South Dakota - continued

There are Several Good Reasons for Becoming Involved

Your interest in serving as a district supervisor indicates you believe conservation districts play an important role in protecting South Dakota's natural resources for today's concerns and tomorrow's uses. You may also want to become involved because:

- ☉ The tax base should be protected.
- ☉ Natural resource conservation should be a citizen responsibility.

Conservation Boards Perform Various Duties

Although conservation districts are often associated with tree planting efforts; the districts are also involved with other projects such as water quality, groundwater protection, wildlife habitat, erosion control, rural development and urban activities.

District supervisors assess natural resource problems within the district, set priorities for land treatment and develop long term solutions. These responsibilities are met by:

- ☉ Carrying out effective public information programs.



- ☉ Developing and using a long-range program and an annual work plan to fully assess resource problems and carry out needed solutions.
- ☉ Supporting special activities such as awards programs or tours.
- ☉ Supporting state and national associations solutions of districts.
- ☉ Cooperating with local units of government, including neighboring districts.
- ☉ Scheduling and holding regular meetings.
- ☉ Arranging for sufficient staff to make possible the needed accomplishments.
- ☉ Preparing annual financial statements and progress reports.
- ☉ Conducting elections according to law.

Working with Others

Districts work cooperatively on the local, state and federal level.

- ☉ The districts' most important customer is the individual resident seeking information or assistance.

- ☉ Districts also work with community and private organizations.
- ☉ Of particular importance is the work districts do with local groups, such as churches, schools, cities and counties. The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides assistance to districts through the Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Conservation and Stabilization Service, and the Extension Service. The relationship with the NRCS is particularly close, since the agency has always provided personnel to work directly with the districts.
- ☉ The districts cooperate with the other federal agencies, including the Farmers Home Administration, Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency and others.
- ☉ Districts work with the Divisions of Conservation and Forestry (SD Dept. of Agriculture), Dept. of Game, Fish and Parks, Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources and others.

What makes a good district supervisor?

- Supervisors should be enthusiastic, instill trust and be leaders among their neighbors.
- Supervisors should be aware of the different resource conservation needs within the district and actively seek input for solutions.
- Supervisors should promote the ethic of good resource stewardship among all residents and encourage producers to be active cooperators within the district.
- To effectively govern their districts, supervisors need to be familiar with state laws which affect districts, with functions of the State Conservation Commission, and with resources available from the State.
- Supervisors should serve as examples of conservation management by practicing applicable conservation methods.

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