



Conservation District Supervisors' Handbook

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This guide is designed as a quick reference to be used by conservation district Supervisors. It is intended to provide readily usable guidance in the roles and responsibilities of conservation district Supervisors, the scope and structure of the conservation district Program in Kentucky and the sources of additional information and assistance. The Kentucky Division of Conservation Field Representative assisting each district should be consulted regarding specific or complete information on each area described in this guide.

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations and Welcome! You have been appointed to the office of Supervisor of your conservation district Board. You have joined 847 men and women who have pledged themselves to leading their county's efforts in conserving and improving our soil, water and related natural resources.

To effectively carry out the duties of your office, you must have a clear understanding of your responsibilities. You must also be knowledgeable of the programs and services your conservation district offers and the cooperating agencies which assist districts in carrying out their programs. This understanding and knowledge will prepare you to address the challenging issues associated with the wise use and protection of the soil, water and related resources.

As an elected local official, you are charged with properly conducting the affairs of the local conservation district as set forth in Chapter 262 of the Kentucky Revised Statutes. If you do not have a copy of KRS Chapter 262, request one from your Division of Conservation field representative or your office staff.

By better understanding your responsibilities and by becoming involved, you can make an important difference in your community, state and nation.

HISTORY OF THE KENTUCKY CONSERVATION PROGRAM

In 1940, the Kentucky General Assembly passed enabling legislation, KRS Chapter 262, which allowed local farmers to petition and establish conservation districts. In 1941, Kentucky's first conservation district was organized in South Logan County. North Logan soon followed, making Logan the only Kentucky county with two conservation districts.

The remaining 119 conservation districts were formed on a county line basis, giving the state a total of 121 conservation districts. Henderson County was the final district organized. Thus, in 1954 conservation districts completely covered the state.

WHY ARE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS IMPORTANT TODAY?

Conservation districts were formed in the beginning to allow local citizens many opportunities to help guide and develop conservation programs in each county by working at the “grass roots” level, the most important vantage point for identifying problems, finding solutions and developing and implementing programs. Today, more so than half a century ago, conservation districts are a valuable resource to face the challenges posed by natural resource use and management.

KENTUCKY DIVISION OF CONSERVATION FIELD REPRESENTATIVES

A field representative of the Kentucky Division of Conservation serves as an advisor to your district board. They assist district boards and provide technical assistance and training of district supervisors in the planning, implementation and administration of programs. They can provide a wealth of ideas and experiences and serve as a link to other districts, the Division of Conservation and other cooperating agencies. Get to know and rely on your field representative.

Your Field Representative is:

PURPOSE OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS ACCORDING TO KENTUCKY REVISED STATUTES (KRS 262.020)

The purpose of a conservation district is to conserve and develop all renewable natural resources within the district. In so doing, the district is authorized to undertake, sponsor, or participate in projects, activities and programs which promote the conservation, development, maintenance, management, and wise use of the land, water, trees and other related, natural resources of the district.

Kentucky’s conservation districts are a subdivision of state government and have been organized for the special purpose to assist landowners and land users in:

- Solving soil and water resource problems.
- Setting priorities for conservation work to be accomplished.
- Coordinating the federal, state and local resources needed to accomplish this work.
- Providing leadership at the local level and means for interested local citizens to work together to achieve desired results.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT GOVERNING BODY

Each local conservation district is governed by a seven-member board of supervisors elected by the registered voters within that district. These supervisors serve terms of four years. Supervisor elections are held every two years, with three supervisors being elected one time and four the next. District supervisors cannot hold any other elective office and serve without pay. Supervisors may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties and may be paid a per diem for attending meetings or otherwise discharging the obligations of office.

DISTRICT SUPERVISOR QUALIFICATIONS

An individual who wishes to serve as a district supervisor must be a resident of the district and must file a nominating petition with the county clerk's office, in accordance with Kentucky election laws. The petition must be signed by twenty-five qualified resident voters. Any resident who meets the qualifications for district supervisor as set forth in KRS 262 is qualified to serve, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability.

The county clerk shall certify the nomination and election of supervisors to the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission. If the number of petitions filed with and certified by the county clerk is the same as the number of vacancies available, the commission declares the individuals elected as supervisors. If more petitions are filed than there are vacancies, the county clerk shall cause the names of all qualified nominees to be prepared for presentation to the voters at the next general election (KRS 262.220). If there are fewer petitions filed than there are vacancies, the county clerk will allow the election of a write-in candidate. Write-in candidates must file with the county clerk's office prior to the election in accordance with Kentucky election laws.

The commission has the authority, upon the filing of appropriate petitions, to appoint someone to fill out an unexpired term if a vacancy should occur on a board of supervisors. A supervisor's term of office begins on January 1 following his election or immediately if appointed to fill an unexpired term. Supervisors may serve a full four-year term as long as they remain a resident of the county or district. For more information on supervisor terms, nomination and election, vacancies, compensation and removal see KRS 262.240.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon taking the Oath of Office, conservation district supervisors assume their obligation to the citizens they represent of carrying out a sound natural resource management program in the local community.

You, as conservation district supervisors, are the key to a successful conservation district program. By planning, managing, and directing local conservation programs, you provide basic leadership for the execution of those programs. Goodwill and commitment on your part to effective land management programs are necessary to encourage successful natural resource conservation.

District Supervisors must have a strong and credible working relationship with local officials - fiscal court members, planning and zoning administrators, county judge-executives, mayors, city managers, city council members, as well as major farm organizations, FSA county committees, agricultural college extension offices, state and federal government representatives and leaders.

Listed below are some of the administrative, fiscal, functional, and educational responsibilities of a district supervisor:

I. Administrative Responsibilities

1. As a public official, you as a conservation district supervisor have many obligations. It is

imperative, if you cannot fulfill these obligations for health reasons, lack of time or other commitments, you should resign at once. Your position on the district board is very important and demands active participation.

2. Attend and participate in all board meetings and functions.
3. Cooperate with fellow board members in establishing district policies.
4. As a board member, review; recommend modifications; and/or approve conservation agreements, particularly the Cooperative Working Agreement between the USDA/NRCS, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the conservation district. Also, the Mutual Agreement between the USDA, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the conservation district, and know the relationship between the partners.
5. Take an active role in developing the district's annual plan of work and budgets.
6. Participate in identifying and assessing the district's conservation needs and setting priorities in the providing of technical assistance to landowners and operators in implementing natural resource conservation programs.
7. Participate in developing, publishing, and distributing Annual Reports at the end of each fiscal year.
8. Keep informed on legislation and policy of local, state, and federal government pertaining to conservation; maintain contacts with local, state, and federal officials; and keep them informed of landowners' viewpoints and concerns.
9. Participate in the planning and conducting of meetings for district landowners, land users and others on proposed laws and policies concerning conservation.
10. As a board member, review and enter into working agreements with other agencies as appropriate.
11. Participate in the formulation and management of conservation programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program of the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission and the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act.
12. Participate in and/or host local and area awards programs.
13. Cooperate with other board members in sponsoring watershed protection and flood prevention projects, and in reviewing the budgets of organized watershed conservancy districts.
14. Help the board maintain an active membership in national, state, area and regional organizations.
15. Encourage landowners and public entities to participate in district programs without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability.

16. Maintain close contact with the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and with the Division of Conservation field representative serving as advisor to your district.

17. Encourage the proper use and management of all district equipment, both in the office and in the field.

II. Fiscal Responsibilities

1. Cooperate with fellow board members in securing adequate operating funds for the district, such as county general funds or millage taxes, state Direct Aid contributions and grants, business donations and matching funds.

2. Cooperate with fellow board members in establishing business procedures, accounting, and financial management of the district's fiscal affairs, in accordance with state law.

3. Cooperate with fellow board members and the Division of Conservation field representatives in providing an Annual Financial Report of district accounts.

III. Functional Responsibilities

1. Attend and participate in the annual state meeting of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts.

2. Attend and participate in Area Meetings of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts.

3. Attend and participate in functions of committees interested in natural resource conservation.

4. Know your local business and agricultural leaders and seek their advice on district programs and needs.

5. Be acquainted with the farmers in your district and be aware of their concerns.

6. Try to have a diverse representation from all segments of society and all parts of the county on the board.

7. Cooperate with fellow board members in preparing and publishing informational articles, newsletters, guidebooks and other publications.

8. Know the functions of other agricultural agencies that operate in your district.

IV. Educational Responsibilities

1. Encourage and support the development of a strong education program in each county. For more detailed information on conservation education, See pages –15-16 of this handbook.

2. Keep the public informed about conservation programs, opportunities and concerns. For more detailed information on conservation information programs see pages –16-17 of this handbook.

DISTRICT OFFICERS

Each year, usually in January, the board should elect its officers: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary or Secretary-Treasurer. Each supervisor should be encouraged to rotate through the offices at least once.

DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings should be held monthly on the same day each month and should be held at specific times and places convenient to the public. This should be advertised in the local newspaper or posted in a public place to comply with the Open Meetings Law (KRS 61.800 – 61.850). If there is a special meeting needed or change of meeting date, this should be preceded by a notice to the public in the same fashion. The district must, by law, do this.

These meetings should be conducted in a business-like fashion. A well planned meeting should not last more than 1 ½ - 2 hours.

Board members should be notified of each meeting in advance to insure a quorum exists (a majority of the supervisors shall constitute a quorum, and the concurrence of a majority shall be necessary for a determination of the board (KRS 262.230).

A copy of the meeting agenda should be distributed to the supervisors and agency representatives prior to the meetings. Minutes of the previous meeting and a Treasurer's Report can be mailed at that time for reading and approval at the next meeting.

Public officials, agency representatives and groups should be encouraged to attend.

The key to a successful board of supervisors meeting is an active district chairman. It is the responsibility of the chairman to accept the leadership role by:

- motivating other board members in the discussion of issues and programs of the district;
- starting meetings promptly; and
- closing meetings after all business has been completed.

DISTRICT BOARD MEETING ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to Order: Call meeting to order at the scheduled time. Establish that a quorum (minimum of 4 supervisors) exists. If a quorum is not present, you may not vote on any issues, but you may discuss business. Briefly relate the general purpose of the meeting and refer to the agenda. Ask for additional agenda items from members. Make sure you have some one recording minutes and checking who is present and who is absent.

2. Minutes: read or discuss previous meeting minutes distributed prior to meeting date, correct if necessary and approve.

3. Treasurer's Report: read or discuss report for approval. Review bills for approval of payment.
4. Correspondence: review any correspondence received since the previous meeting.
5. Equipment Report: Review report and discuss equipment as needed.
6. Committee Activities: hear from any active committees having information to report. Appoint new committees and assignments, if needed.
7. Old or Unfinished Business: discuss unfinished business from previous meetings. Review/update current activities. Review long range and annual plan frequently.
8. New Business: present new business. Hear motions and resolutions. Schedule the date, time, plan and agenda for next meeting.
9. Report from District Employees.
10. Report from Division of Conservation.
11. Report from Natural Resources Conservation Service personnel and visitors.
12. Review annual plan of work for upcoming month/s.
13. Announcements and Adjourn: Adjourn meeting on time. Save socializing and visiting for after the meeting.

COMMON RULES FOR DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS

1. After the minutes are read, the Chairperson asks, "Are there any corrections or additions to the minutes?"

If there are no corrections, the Chairperson may say, "If not, they stand approved." However, a motion and second to accept may be called for.

2. Amendments to a motion must be seconded just as a main motion to which it applies. Amendments should be voted on before action is taken on the main motion.
3. A motion should not be discussed until it has been seconded and restated by the chairperson.
4. Motions which introduce business when no other motions are pending are referred to "Main Motions" and must be seconded. When it is moved that the report of a nomination committee be accepted or that nominations cease or that the Secretary be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for those nominated, this is a main motion and as such requires a second. Main motions should be opened for discussion before putting to vote. A "call of question" is a demand that the motion be put to a vote.

5. Nominations made from the floor do not need to be seconded.
6. The chairperson cannot ignore a motion. He/she must “put” a motion to vote if it has been properly made and seconded.
7. The chairperson does not vote when the vote is by acclamation (except when there is a tie). He/she may always vote when the vote is taken by ballot or by roll call.
8. During the meeting, it is only after a member has addressed the presiding officer as “Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairperson” and has been “recognized” that the member is privileged to speak.
9. When a motion to adjourn is made and seconded, it must be put to a vote without discussion except when a supplementary motion is made to fix a time to adjourn.

For more information about any of these rules, please refer to Robert’s Rules of Order.

MINUTES

It is the responsibility of the district supervisor serving as secretary for the board to see that a complete and accurate set of minutes are kept of the board meetings. Your district’s administrative secretary may want to take the minutes for ease of transcription.

It is suggested that minutes, if possible, be kept in a minute book provided by the Soil and Water Commission. Minutes must be complete and accurate. All records should be made available, upon request, to the public. This availability can be by viewing or by requesting copies. The district may charge a reasonable fee for any copies made.

Minutes must contain:

1. Date, time and place of the meeting. Regular or special meetings, and if special, purpose of the meeting.
2. Names of supervisors present, presiding officer and if there was a quorum present as declared by the presiding officer.
3. Names of advisory personnel and visitors present.
4. Minutes must state that previous meeting minutes were read and approved. Corrections, if necessary, should be so stated.
5. A brief review of each item of correspondence and a record of action taken on correspondence.
6. Each item of old and new business brought before the board, a record of each motion made showing the exact wording of the motion and voting result.
7. Authorization for expenditure of funds. Expenditures should be itemized.

8. A brief account of reports by committees/personnel assisting districts.
9. Comments by visitors.
10. Time adjournment.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

If business of a non-public nature is needed, example: employee discussions, legal proceedings, etc., these may be done in an executive session during the regular meeting, however, the outcome, not specifics of that meeting must be made available to the public. Before a closed session may be held, notice should be given during the regular open meeting about the general nature of the business to be discussed in the closed session. The district should also give the reason for the closed session. Such a session may only be held after a motion is made and carried by a majority of those present in open session. In addition, no matters may be discussed other than those publicly announced and no final action may be taken. All closed sessions must be entered and conducted according to KRS 61.815.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

A special meeting may be held at any time by the presiding officer of the district or by a majority of the members of the governing body. Written notice of the meeting should be delivered or mailed to each member of the district and also given to each local newspaper, news service, radio or television station, or member of the public which has filed a written request with the district to be notified of special meetings. All district staff and members of cooperating agencies who generally attend meetings should also be notified. Notice should be given at least 24 hours in advance.

DISTRICT FINANCING

The amount of money required to operate each conservation district will vary depending on the type of program set forth in the annual plan of work.

KRS 262.200 provides a means for districts to finance their programs through fiscal courts.

The law reads as follows, “The board may request annual operating funds from the fiscal court. To support the request, the board shall present to the fiscal court a report of the previous year’s operation, a long range plan for natural resource development, and an annual plan of work. Should a fiscal court fail to approve a requested budget, it shall present a specific list of objections and suggested corrections to the board in writing and within a reasonable time. If a budget request is not approved, the board may submit a revised budget request. Funds for an approved budget shall be supplied either from general funds or from the levy of a millage tax on all real property within the boundaries of the county. The tax shall be collected in the same manner as other county taxes, and shall be credited to the board. The funds so collected shall be expended by the board for the employment of soil conservation aids and for other purposes directly associated with the program, including promotional activities, prize moneys, office equipment and supplies, and incidentals deemed necessary.”

In Kentucky there are four state funds available to conservation districts. Funds are available through direct aid, the Equipment and Infrastructure Revolving Loan Fund and the Kentucky State Soil Erosion Water Quality Cost Share Fund, all administered through the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and the 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Program.

District supervisors are finding that many of their activities can be co-sponsored by other organizations, institutions or groups. Other means of income are obtained through donations or contributions.

DISTRICT REPORTS

The annual budget, year end financial report and monthly treasurer's report are required of each conservation district in Kentucky. Monthly reports are required for each loan through the Equipment and Infrastructure Revolving Loan Fund. For districts receiving cost share funding and/or Direct Aid grant funding additional reports are required to show the status of these accounts and to account for the expenditure of these monies.

Careful preparation of an annual budget and wise use of public funds is critical to the operation of district programs. This budget and accounting process is essential for sound financial management and is required to justify the district's annual request to the commission for state appropriated funds. Annual budgets are to be prepared by the district board with assistance from the Division of Conservation field representative and sent to the Division of Conservation by April 1 (KRS 262.097).

A district's financial report is prepared by the Division of Conservation field representative annually after reviewing the district's financial records for the fiscal year (KRS 262.97). This is due to the Division of Conservation by September 1. In addition, an independent audit is required at least once every four years (KRS 262.280).

ANNUAL PLANNING

The very reason for the existence of conservation districts and the major responsibility of the boards of supervisors who serve as their leaders is to plan and implement a program which will result in the wise use and conservation of the natural resources within the district boundaries.

It is essential that conservation district officials be familiar with the natural resource problems of their respective districts in order to complete the duties assigned to them by Kentucky statutes.

Likewise, specific roles are defined in the 1996 Farm Bill that delivers conservation programs through an effort called “locally led conservation.” Through this effort conservation districts provide the leadership and work together with other local stakeholders in assessing natural resources conditions and needs, setting goals and prioritizing, identifying programs, developing proposals and recommendations, implementing solutions and measuring successes. Before any annual planning can be successful, districts must have completed a current long range plan for management of natural resources of the district. It is of utmost importance that district boards are composed of individuals who are willing and able to evaluate and prioritize resource problems and take the appropriate steps to solve them.

The development of a long range plan or strategy allows a district to identify, prioritize and stay focused on those things that can be achieved within the next year and to make certain it fits into the overall or long term direction of the district’s program. This part then becomes the annual plan of work. A budget sufficient to carry out the annual plan of work should be developed in conjunction with this same planning session.

The annual plan of work and the district budget are directly connected. The budgeting process and securing of funds can only follow the completion of the annual plan of work. Reversing these procedures will not result in a successful effort.

The process of preparing the long range plan and annual plan of work is an excellent opportunity for the board to involve other agencies, groups and individuals with an interest or responsibility in natural resource management. This spirit of cooperation can result in the development of a dynamic conservation program which will be a credit to everyone.

The planning meeting is also an excellent time to appoint committee members who have specific areas of interest and responsibilities in implementing the annual plan of work. If they will serve, individuals outside district boards also should be considered for committee membership.

The annual plan of work should be reviewed and kept current. It can be amended as new programs, activities or problems develop.

The guidelines established by the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission states that the district’s annual plan of work and budget be completed and sent to the Division of Conservation by April 1 (KRS 262.097).

DISTRICT COMMITTEES

Conservation districts have found district committees to be an effective tool to expedite the district’s ability to deliver effective programs and to more efficiently utilize the district board of supervisors’ and employees’ time.

How are district committees formed? Committees are appointed by the chairman of the board of supervisors. Usually, the committees consist of 2-4 supervisors, 1 or more district employees and as many volunteer, advisors and technical support members needed, including persons from other local agencies. The chairman appoints the committee chairman when formulating the committees.

When should district committees be formed? Most districts design the majority of the district

committees as they plan their annual plan of work and budget for the upcoming fiscal year (usually February or March).

The committee appointments are usually for one fiscal year and are formulated to administer regular, ongoing monthly activities of the board (e.g. budget and finance committees), administer singular annual events (e.g. field days, awards programs, scholarships, or contests) or complete special projects (e.g. revise long range plans or track legislative issues).

What are the most common committees named and their function?

Program Planning and District Operation Committee: Initial development of the annual plan of work. Includes agency personnel, special interest groups and other individuals in the planning process. Performs work analysis for agency personnel.

Finance and Budget Committee: Prepares the annual budget, arranges for the funding of district programs, reviews equipment needs for the district, monitors income and expenditures to ensure sufficient operating funds.

Education and Public Information Committee: Promotes district programs and services available to the community:

1. Publishes district newsletter.
2. Sponsors soil stewardship program.
3. Promotes and sponsors Jim Claypool Art and Conservation Writing Contest.
4. Prepares and releases information to the news media.
5. Promotes conservation education programs in schools.
6. Prepares and furnishes displays and materials for local events such as county fairs, farm-city events, etc.
7. Other activities as assigned by the chairman and planned by the board.

Legislative Committee: Promotes KACD and NACD legislative packages regarding natural resource conservation. They may work at the county and city levels of government with planning and zoning issues and contractor regulations for site work development and construction. They should actively pursue the involvement of local officials in activities of the district.

Land Use Committee: Promotes the conservation practices associated with the wise use of all land. Promotes best management practices for agriculture, construction, silviculture and water quality.

Youth (Junior Board): Organizes and promotes junior boards and/or youth groups to address natural resource conservation concerns, assist the Conservation district with major programs and develop youth leadership. For detailed information on youth boards see pages 15 and 16 of this handbook.

Any other committees: Where the board identifies a need. These may include watersheds, soil stewardship, soil judging, farm-city field days, awards, etc. The chairman should appoint committees and committee chairs and identify the duties and responsibilities of each committee.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Conservation districts have recognized for many years that a strong conservation education program in our schools is essential. Most school systems are eager to cooperate with districts and much progress can be made with this team effort.

It is recommended that each conservation district appoint an Education Committee. A spokesperson for that committee should visit the superintendent of all school systems (public and private schools) within the district for the purpose of telling what assistance is available. They should also ask if there are any special projects, problems or needs that are conservation related and in which the district could be of assistance.

A partial listing of successful conservation activities that some districts are involved in are:

1. Teacher in-service training day.
2. Teacher appreciation dinner or luncheon.
3. Jim Claypool Art and Conservation Writing contest.
4. Provide technical support and sponsor outdoor classrooms at schools.
5. Sponsor environmental education days.
6. Sponsor and assist land judging teams.
7. Provide conservation and environmental educational materials (books, videos, computer software).
8. Distribute tree seedlings and/or tree bags.
9. Conservation education displays.
10. Sponsor students to forestry, 4-H or conservation camps.
11. Sponsor scholarships for students studying the environment or agriculture in college.
12. Sponsor Soil and Water Stewardship Week.
13. Sponsor water watch groups and or other environmental education groups.
14. Support and sponsor teacher environmental workshops.
15. Help with Arbor Day and Earth Day activities.
16. Promote and sponsor recycling, composting and cleanup programs.
17. Provide grants for developing outdoor classrooms.
18. Provide assistance in planning, securing information and a list of supplies available to satisfy their needs.

For specific details on individual conservation education activities, see the education section of the Conservation District Office Manual.

CONSERVATION INFORMATION PROGRAMS

The success of a conservation district depends on keeping the public informed about conservation programs, opportunities and concerns. The conservation districts need to gain the public's attention, support and create a positive awareness.

An effective information program will utilize all methods of communications available in the area. Examples are local newspapers, district or co-agency newsletters, brochures, radio, television, tours, demonstrations and displays set up at fairs, banks, stores, shopping malls, and schools.

The district should appoint a board member to visit and develop a working relationship with the

local news media. A visit will give you first-hand information about their news policy, deadlines, type of pictures that can be used, and a contact person. Once contact is established, the district should keep information flowing constantly. Don't be discouraged if all the material is not used or some is rejected.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT YOUTH BOARDS

Conservation district youth boards or junior boards provide the conservation districts an excellent opportunity to involve local youth in local natural resources issues, promote conservation projects in the community and develop youth leadership. This involvement usually fosters future interest and potential district supervisors.

How can a board of supervisors establish and maintain a junior board?

- Assign a minimum of one supervisor and/or district employee to act as the junior board advisor.
- Identify a local youth group with adult supervision (e.g. FFA, 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, high school club) that has an interest in conservation and other board of supervisors programs.
- Promote and sponsor junior board activities.
- Provide supervision of Junior Board activities and funds received and expended.

The junior board should:

- Establish by-laws governing the junior board.
- Prepare and submit an annual plan of work to the board of supervisors for approval.
- Record minutes of meetings.
- Maintain financial records and reports for all funds received and expended. Submit annual report to the board of supervisors.
- Assist the board of supervisors with major program activities such as field days, awards programs, tree seedling programs, community projects, etc.

The junior board may undertake projects that promote conservation within the community. They may obtain funds through the conservation district board of supervisors, community fund raisers as approved by the board of supervisors, and donations. It is the responsibility of the junior board to expend funds only for projects approved by the board of supervisors and to properly account for all funds received and expended for program activities. Projects and projected receipts and expenditures should be outlined in the annual junior board plan of work.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Soil and Water Conservation Commission was created by the 1946 General Assembly (KRS 146.080-146.110) for the purpose of administering the organization of conservation districts in Kentucky and to assist them in carrying out their functions in accordance with the conservation district law.

The commission consists of nine members, each representing one of the nine conservation areas of the state. The commission is nonpartisan since no more than five members can be of the same political party serving the commission at any one time. The commissioner must be a conservation district supervisor and is appointed to a term of office of four years. The

conservation districts in each of the nine conservation areas nominate two supervisors to be considered for appointment as commissioner. From the list of two supervisors recommended to the secretary of the Energy and Environment Cabinet, one is appointed to serve as commissioner with the approval of the governor. The secretary of the Energy and Environment Cabinet, the Commissioner of Agriculture, the director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, the director of Vocational Education and the state conservationist of the Natural Resources Conservation Service serve as ex-officio members to the commission.

The Division of Conservation provides staff support to the commission with the division director serving as executive administrative officer. The division field staff serves as district advisors and provides the necessary link between the commission, the Division of Conservation and each conservation district.

In carrying out its purpose, the Soil and Water Conservation Commission has the authority to take any action it may consider necessary or proper to assist conservation districts in carrying out their functions, powers, duties, responsibilities and programs in accordance with Kentucky Revised Statutes Chapter 262.

In meeting its responsibilities, the commission may furnish financial aid to districts and perform such services for districts as possible upon request. The commission has the authority to formulate and adopt such policy, rules and regulations as necessary to perform these duties.

DIVISION OF CONSERVATION

The Division of Conservation was created by the 1946 General Assembly as a Division of the Department for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, now the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet. The Division was originally established as the Division of Soil and Water Resources. In 1966 the General Assembly changed the name to the Division of Soil and Water Conservation and 1972 the name changed to the Division of Conservation.

The Division consists of the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, a Director and such employees as deemed necessary by the Commission to carry out its policies and functions.

The Division of Conservation is charged by law (KRS 146.080-146.110) with providing assistance to Kentucky's 121 conservation districts to develop, administer and implement sound conservation programs across Kentucky. These responsibilities shall be carried out through the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and Kentucky's 121 conservation districts.

In addition, the Division of Conservation is charged by law (KRS 224.71-100 to 224.71-140, the Agriculture Water Quality Act, which created the Agriculture Water Quality Authority) with the administrative responsibilities of the Agriculture Water Quality Authority.

These responsibilities include:

- Assuring that technical assistance is made available to assist persons engaged in agricultural operations with implementation of the statewide plan requirements.
- Making available cost share dollars through the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program to assist persons engaged in agricultural operations with the implementation of their plans as resources become available.
- Serving as staff to the Agriculture Water Quality Authority.
- Coordinating the corrective measures process as pollution problems are identified at the local level.
- Developing and coordinating information and education and training programs to address identified educational needs relating to the process of protecting Kentucky's water supplies.

In carrying out its purpose, there are several programs administered by the Division of Conservation that provide financial, administrative, educational, promotional and technical assistance to Kentucky's 121 conservation districts.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Division of Conservation administers four specific programs that provide financial assistance to the conservation districts. They are as follows:

Direct Aid

Direct financial aid is provided to conservation districts in the amount of \$1,150,000.00 annually. These funds have traditionally been used to pay district personnel, office operations and funding for programs. These funds are available to districts through direct base level appropriations to each and every district in the state. Additional direct aid funds are available by request through the Direct Aid Grant Program.

Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program

This program was established to help producers engaged in agricultural or silvicultural operations better address nonpoint source pollution problems. The best management practices approved for cost share reduce the loss of topsoil and reduce sediment, animal waste nutrients and other nonpoint source pollutants going into Kentucky's streams, rivers, lakes and groundwater supplies.

Nonpoint Source Pollution Program

Section 319 of the Clean Water Act is the Nonpoint Source Pollution Program. The section of the act that the districts are presently involved with is nonpoint pollutants or pollution from land-disturbing activities associated with agriculture and construction. Funding, which can be used for up to 60 percent of a project's total cost, is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Equipment Revolving Loan Program

This program was established by the 1948 General Assembly to provide loans to Kentucky's conservation districts for heavy and specialized conservation equipment. The equipment is used for the application of conservation and best management practices throughout the state. Loans are made by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, through the Division of Conservation, to the district. The districts, through loan-lease agreements with local contractors or farmers, insure that this equipment is made available to do conservation work. Loans are paid-off within a specific period of time, usually 36 or 48 months. Also, several conservation

districts purchase and manage specific pieces of equipment, making it available to individuals through rental agreements at the county level.

FIELD SERVICES

Field services are provided to your local conservation district by one of nine field representatives. The Division's Field Representatives serve as advisors to your conservation district board. They are there to assist you in the administration and operation of the district's programs such as annual and long range planning; budgets; financial reports; education (outdoor classrooms, field days, tours, in-service); public relations; equipment loans; watershed conservancy districts; agricultural districts; state cost share; direct aid; Agriculture Water Quality Act; and others. Field representatives also assist in the training of supervisors and district employees. The field representative acts as a liaison, relaying information and concerns from your district to the Division of Conservation, Soil and Water Commission, Kentucky Association of Conservation District Directors, and from these groups back to your district.

Since 1972, the Division of Conservation has been a participant in the National Cooperative Soil Survey Program. This program is a nationwide partnership of federal, regional, state and local agencies and institutions that work together to investigate, inventory, classify, and interpret soils as well as publish, deliver and promote the use of soil information.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is responsible for the leadership of the Soil Survey Program in Kentucky with assistance provided by the Division of Conservation, the University of Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, and the National Forest Service which oversees federal holdings within the Daniel Boone National Forest.

Soil Scientists from each of the cooperating agencies map, classify and interpret soils so that every county in the Commonwealth can have a published soil survey. The survey serves as a valuable tool in planning to Kentucky's farmers, landowners and users as well as a foundation for decisions made by conservationists, foresters, engineers, biologists, realtors, developers and home buyers.

With today's ecosystem-based approach of managing our natural resources, having reliable and timely soil information is a must if sound decisions are to be made. The Division's Soil Scientist staff, along with the other soil survey program cooperators, are currently updating older soil surveys as well as creating computerized soil surveys. By using computer technology, we will be able to deliver soil information more quickly, accurately, and to a more diverse group of soil information users.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT PROGRAM

The Division of Conservation administers the Agricultural District Program as passed by the 1982 General Assembly in the Agricultural District and Conservation Act. KRS 262.850. It is the purpose of this law to provide a means by which agricultural land may be protected and enhanced as a viable segment of the state's economy and as an important resource and prevent its conversion to non-agricultural uses.

The law authorizes Kentucky's 121 local conservation districts to assume the administrative

responsibilities of the program locally and the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission to provide statewide administration of the Agricultural District Program.

To create an agricultural district, a landowner or landowners of 250 contiguous acres must file a petition with the local conservation district board of supervisors in the county where the property is located. Upon receipt of said petition the local board of supervisors will notify the fiscal court and any local or regional planning and zoning for comments and within 60 days make a recommendation to approve, approve with amendments, or deny the petition to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission. The commission, based on local recommendations and their review of the petition, must also make its decision to certify or deny the petition within 60 days of the local recommendation and petition.

Once approved, an agricultural district is established for 5 years with a review to be made by the local conservation district board of supervisors at the end of the 5-year period and every 5 years thereafter. Each landowner must agree to remain in the district before recertification. Any member of an agricultural district may withdraw from the district upon notifying the local conservation district board of supervisors in writing.

Again, the agricultural district law is aimed at protecting our best agricultural land for food and fiber production and preventing its conversion to non-agricultural uses.

WATERSHED CONSERVANCY DISTRICTS

Watershed conservancy districts are formed under KRS 262.700 and, like conservation districts, are also a subdivision of state government. Watershed conservancy district boundaries will vary according to the project and the problems that need to be addressed. Some may consist of an entire watershed while others may only encompass a particular flood plain area.

Watershed conservancy districts are formed for the purpose of developing and executing plans and programs relating to any phase of conservation of water; water usage; flood prevention; flood control; erosion prevention; and control of erosion, floodwater and sediment damages.

Watershed conservancy districts are formed through a lengthy process of hearings and referendum. Only the directly benefited landowners within the proposed boundaries are allowed to vote for the formation of such districts. After passage of the referendum a board of directors is elected from these eligible landowners. This board is responsible for the administration of the conservancy district and serves a four-year term. Included in the administration is the construction and maintenance of any works of improvements, possible purchases of lands and easements, and the placing of a millage tax upon the benefited landowners.

The board of directors will also develop an annual and long range plan of work and an annual budget based upon the availability of funds. These are submitted to the conservation district board or in some conservancy districts, a joint board of several conservation districts, for their annual approval. The board is also responsible for having an annual CPA audit performed, publish a summary of the report in a newspaper in the area and forward a copy of the newspaper to the State Auditor of Public Accounts. KRS 262.763.

As previously mentioned, the formation of a watershed conservancy district is a lengthy process with forms, certifications, landowner list, etc. being necessary. Any conservation district

desiring to form a conservancy district should work closely with their respective field representative in order to properly present this concept to the public and throughout the entire formation process.

In past years the Non-point Pollution Control Program, a federal assistance program, was very helpful in the construction of many watershed conservancy district projects across the state. These included both floodwater retarding impoundments as well as chemical improvement for water disposal. However, due to recent cut backs in federal programs, monies are no longer available as in years passed. Occasionally emergency funds are available, but only on a limited basis.

NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION PROGRAM

Under Section 319 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-500) federal grants are made available to conservation districts on a 60/40% cost share basis, with the district furnishing the 40%. These monies may be used to hire water quality specialists for technical assistance and also to install demonstration best management practices that enhance water quality.

Also through the use of these funds several best management practice manuals have been produced dealing with agriculture, silviculture, and construction activities. These manuals are available to conservation districts through your field representatives at no charge. Also see: Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act on pages 43-45.

KENTUCKY AGRICULTURE WATER QUALITY ACT

The Act: An Act relating to agriculture water quality, created new sections of KRS Chapter 224.71-100 through 224.71-140; created the Agriculture Water Quality Authority to evaluate, develop and improve best management practices, establish water quality plans, and promote soil and water conservation activities; requires agriculture operations to follow a statewide agriculture water quality plan; clarifies where best management practices and conservation plans may be obtained; requires the Authority to establish procedures for modifying statewide or regional agriculture water quality plans; allows persons engaged in agriculture operations to seek modifications of the plans; requires the Cabinet to notify and take follow-up actions against, if necessary, persons engaged in agricultural operations causing water pollution.

Goals: The goal of the Act is to protect surface and groundwater through development and support of agriculture water quality plans. These plans will establish guidance to producers on protecting the water resources of Kentucky. It will provide solutions to these issues by educating agriculture producers and by strengthening their access to technical and financial assistance to implement best management practices contained in these plans.

Background: The Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act was passed by the 1994 General Assembly and the Agriculture Water Quality Authority was created and administratively attached to the cabinet. A multi-disciplinary peer group of 15 was appointed by Governor Brereton Jones and sworn in December 14, 1994.

What it means: The authority is to establish statewide and regional agriculture water quality plans and otherwise promote soil and water conservation activities that protect the waters of the commonwealth from the adverse impact of agriculture operations. The Kentucky Agriculture

Water Quality Plan was developed and approved October 23, 1996 by the Division of Water. It must be implemented within 5 years. The Soil and Water Conservation Commission, the Division of Conservation and Kentucky's 121 conservation districts have been assigned major roles in the implementation of this historic legislation. The Commonwealth of Kentucky, through the conservation districts shall assure that technical assistance is made available to assist persons engaged in agriculture operations with the implementation of the statewide plan requirements. It also recognized the public benefit of providing the financial resources necessary to protect ground water and surface water. It may make available cost share dollars, through the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program to assist persons engaged in agriculture operations with the implementation of their plans as resources become available. Other responsibilities include serving as staff to the authority and coordinating information, education and training programs to address identified educational needs relating to the process of protecting Kentucky's water supplies.

Impacts: Through the implementation of the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act, agriculture producers will be able to better address nonpoint source pollution problems on a farm-by-farm basis across the commonwealth. It will institutionalize Kentucky's Nonpoint Source Pollution Program in agriculture and silviculture areas. It will also protect agriculture producers who are actively following an approved water quality plan and allows them the opportunity to implement corrective measures before punitive actions can be taken against them.

ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO DISTRICTS

The Kentucky Conservation Partnership jointly provides leadership to Kentucky on conservation issues. The Division of Conservation, the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Soil and Water Conservation Commission are equal members in a conservation partnership providing leadership and promoting harmony in the wise use of Kentucky's natural resources through 121 conservation districts.

The key to the success of the district program is cooperation. Many agencies, groups, organizations and individuals cooperate and give assistance in planning and carrying out the district program.

The following is a list of some of these agencies and organizations along with the assistance they can provide districts. This list is by no means complete. Depending on each district's problems, issues, concerns and interests, you may work with some of these more than others or discover other agencies, groups and organizations which can assist in solving a resource management problem.

Federal Agencies

1. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has a Cooperative Working Agreement and a Mutual Agreement with the state of Kentucky and each conservation district.

Under the umbrella leadership of the conservation district, NRCS assists in the identification of local natural resource concerns, assessment of their condition, the setting of goals and the identification of programs and other resources to meet the identified needs.

NRCS also assists in the development of proposals and recommendations to address local

concerns, provides technical assistance in implementation and assists the district in measuring and evaluating their success.

2. Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) under which farmers sign contracts to take environmentally fragile land out of production for 10 years. Participants receive an annual rental payment for the land under contract and cost share funds for applying conservation practices on the land. FSA provides cost-share funds to landowners under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) to restore farmland severely damaged by a natural disaster.

FSA county committees cooperate with conservation districts along with NRCS in the local implementation of the EQIP. Also, FSA farm loans are provided to improve the environmental soundness of the farm.

3. Rural Economic & Community Development (RECD) provides loan assistance to local sponsoring agencies in authorized areas where acceleration of a program of resource conservation, development, and utilization will increase economic opportunities for local people. There is no population requirement for this program.

Rural Economic & Community Development also provides Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants to enable farmers, public or private nonprofit organizations, and units of state and local governments to build, buy or repair farm labor housing in either dormitory or multi-family apartment style.

4. U.S. Army Corp of Engineers carries out flood control studies and improvements of major rivers and streams.

State Agencies

1. Ky. Division of Abandoned Lands is responsible for administering the state Abandoned Mined Lands Program (AML) established to correct inadequately reclaimed mine lands.

2. Ky. Division of Conservation is charged with assisting districts in planning and carrying out an effective conservation program, providing districts with administrative, financial and educational assistance, assisting conservation districts in the organization and administration of watershed conservancy districts and the administration of the agricultural district law.

3. Ky. Division of Forestry is responsible for the protection of our woodland resources, including fire protection and prevention. The division assists conservation districts by providing tree seedlings to woodland owners and providing staff for timber stand improvement and woodland management planning with landowners.

4. Ky. Division of Water is responsible for the protection of the waters of the commonwealth. The division has worked closely with the commission and conservation districts in the development and implementation of the state's Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program as it relates to agriculture and construction. As water quantity and quality issues strengthen and with the passage of the Ky. Agriculture Water Quality Act, the Commission and conservation districts will become more involved with the Division of Water.

5. Ky. Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources provides to cooperators free fish for

stocking ponds and lakes, works and consults with districts in regard to small watershed projects, and protects fish and wildlife resources.

6. U.K. Cooperative Extension Service and Ky. State Cooperative Extension Programs are primarily responsible for agricultural research and education. Their research work and informational programs are important in getting conservation farming methods implemented. The 4-H program offers conservation districts many opportunities to promote conservation projects and activities with local youth. The Agricultural Extension Agent can be an important local resource person to your district board.

7. Ky. Department of Health assists cooperators with sanitation problems, especially where recreation enterprises are involved.

8. Agriculture Education develops conservation work with voyage teachers. Cooperation with FFA locally and statewide, especially in land judging.

9. Ky. Department of Education Assists with conservation education, for example: conservation workshops in state universities and colleges.

10. Ky. Department of Agriculture works with districts in many ways, such as the Ky. Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom; Division of Pesticides; applicator's certification; chemical collection; dead animal disposal and chemical container disposal programs.

LOCAL AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

Fiscal courts, planning and zoning commissions, area development districts, Farm Bureau, garden clubs, sportsman clubs, Rural Electric Cooperative, local municipal government, civic clubs, churches, contractors businessmen and many more can give assistance to districts in carrying out conservation projects, financial, and education programs relating to conservation.

The conservation district board of supervisors depends on several government agencies to help it achieve its annual conservation goals and its long term resource objectives. Occasionally, more than one agency may be interested in one of the district's objectives. Often a discussion of common goals with these agency representatives will help initiate or increase district assistance.

KENTUCKY ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

The Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts is a private, non-profit corporation made up of the governing bodies of Kentucky's 121 conservation district board of supervisors, or 847 Supervisors. It is also composed of some 30 watershed conservancy district's board of directors, or between 150 and 200 directors. Watershed conservancy districts are equal in status with conservation districts and have the same voting rights in the state association which is one vote per district at the annual convention's business session. Conservancy district directors are eligible as director and/or officers of the association.

The governing body of the state association is the board of directors made up of the president, immediate past president of the association, and one director from each of the 9 Soil and Water Conservation Commission areas of the state. In addition, each area has an alternate who serves

in the absence of the director.

The director and alternate serve 2-year terms. Directors and alternates in Areas 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 are elected in odd numbered years and in Areas 2, 4, 6, and 8 in even numbered years. The director is elected by supervisors in the respective area at a meeting called by the director prior to the association's annual convention. The elected directors and alternate director take office at the close of the last session of the state association's annual convention and are limited to 3 consecutive 2-year terms in office.

The president, vice-president and secretary/treasurer are elected by the supervisors at their annual convention for a 2-year term and can be re-elected for another 2-year term for a maximum of 4 years in succession.

The state association's only source of income is through the collection of dues from each conservation district plus a small amount raised through some promotional projects.

Use of these funds is for promotional educational material, travel of the board of directors to official meetings, committee expenses and other official business of the association. Stationery, envelopes and postage is another large item in the association's budget.

The purpose of the association is to assist local conservation districts with developing and implementing conservation programs. The association sponsors and participates in a number of statewide projects and activities.

Among them are:

1. The association represents districts on a state level.
2. It works with the General Assembly on conservation legislation.
3. The association sponsors the annual soil stewardship week.
4. It has worked for many years in getting environmental education incorporated into the schools of Kentucky.
5. Along with the Ky. Farm Bureau and the Department of Education, it sponsors the annual essay and poster contests.
6. It co-sponsors FFA and 4-H soil judging.
7. It encourages local districts to continually broaden their programs to provide more services for more people.
8. It acts as a liaison between the local conservation district and the National Association of Conservation Districts that represents you on a national level.
9. It sends representatives to the national convention and other meetings, not only to let our views and programs be known, but also to learn what other states and conservation districts are thinking and doing.

10. Sponsors Congressional Breakfast to inform members of Congress of conservation issues and concerns.

Watershed conservancy districts and conservation districts have some common interests that are unique to them, and the association is your spokesman or organization to represent these interests at the state and national level.

The Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts is already widely known and respected and able to fill this need.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

The National Association of Conservation Districts is a nationwide organization bonding together the more than 3,000 conservation districts. NACD is a non-profit organization governed by its member conservation districts and state association of conservation districts.

The national association has but one aim, to see an effective conservation program applied to the land of the United States. Its primary concern is the conservation and development of America's land and water resources through local self-government and to enable conservation districts to pool their resources to accomplish collectively what they cannot accomplish individually.

The national association serves districts in many ways. First, it is the organization whereby districts can speak with a national voice and act with national strength on all matters affecting them. Second, it pools district experience, develops national policies on a continuing basis and maintains relationships with other organizations and agencies.

Direct services are provided to districts by the national association through its Service Department at League City, Texas. Some of these services consist of printing of district newsletters, plaques, pins, stewardship material, signs and other promotional material. In addition, a weekly newsletter (Tuesday Letter) is prepared and mailed to Supervisors and other interested individuals.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or disability and provides on request, reasonable accommodations including auxiliary aids and service necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity in all services, programs and activities. Printed with state funds on recycled paper.