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# GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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For North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts



JANUARY 31, 2020

## Preface

Although Districts across the State of North Carolina are different, with various staff make-up and individual District Boards of Supervisors, the same questions come up in how to operate to be legal and consistent. In the late 1980's to early 1990's, The State of North Carolina began a Cost Share Program, North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program (NCACSP) to address water quality issues in the agricultural community. Along with this new program, technical assistance funds became available to hire individuals to oversee the installation of Best Management Practices through contracts with landowners to protect water quality. Thus, district's staff increased from +/- 100 staff to +/- 250 staff. As years progressed additional programs became available such as the .0200 Animal Waste Regulations, Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP). Around 2019, with the reduction in staff for the Natural Resources Conservation Service and retirement of District Staff hired from late 1980's, there has been a rush of new employees working in Districts. With the departure of seasoned staff comes a need for Districts to have guidance for use in training new staff and for proper functioning of Districts.

In the Fall 2019 a committee was created to look at what guidance could be provided for the Districts to use. This committee first met at the 2019 Conservation Employee Training (CET) in Beaufort NC. This committee began to work on what is this document, "Managerial Guidance Document".

This committee consisted of the following individuals: Mamie Caison (Brunswick SWCD), Edward Davis (Columbus SWCD), Henry Faison (Sampson SWCD), Melanie Harris (Sampson SWCD), Dru Harrison (New Hanover SWCD), John Mayberry (Alexander SWCD), Melody Patterson (Davie SWCD), Angie Quinn (Duplin SWCD), Randy Willis (Catawba SWCD) and from the Division of Soil and Water Conservation, Cayle Aldridge (Western Regional Coordinator), Kristina Fischer (Eastern Regional Coordinator), Rick McSwain (Western Regional Coordinator) and David Williams (Deputy Director).

The following assisted by providing information to complete this document:

Gaston SWCD, Annabelle Thomas, Example Interlocal Agreement Between A District and Municipalities for Erosion Control.

Stokes SWCD, Janice Pack, Annual Plan of Work Template

New Hanover SWCD, Dru Harrison, Example Agreement Between a District and Municipalities

Lincoln SWCD, Patty Dellinger, Example Employee Evaluation Form

Alexandra Dinwiddie, District Fieldwork and Site Visit Safety

Caldwell SWCD, Pam Steuer, Example Long Range Plan

Swain SWCD, Creeden Kowal, Example Long Range Plan

**DIVISION OF SOIL WATER CONSERVATION  
FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS**

ACRONYM	TITLE
ACSP	Agriculture Cost Share Program
ACEP	Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
AgWRAP	Agriculture Water Resources Assistance Program
ATAC	Accelerated Technical Assistance for Conservation
ATF	Agriculture Task Force
BMP	Best Management Practice
BCAP	Biomass Crop Assistance Program
CAFO	Confined Animal Feeding Operation
CAT	Conservation Action Team
CCAP	Community Conservation Assistance Program
CCP	Certified Conservation Planner
CEE	Certified Environmental Educator
CES	Cooperative Extension Service
CET	Conservation Employee Training
CIG	Conservation Innovation Grant
CPGL	Conservation of Private Grazing Lands
CREP	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program
CSP	Conservation Stewardship Program
CTA	Conservation Technical Assistance
CWMTF	Clean Water Management Trust Fund
DEA	District Employees Association
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality
DRP	Disaster Recovery Program
DSWC	Division of Soil and Water Conservation
DWR	Division of Water Resources
ECP	Emergency Conservation Program
EEP	Ecosystem Enhancement Program
Efotg	Electronic Field Office Technical Guide
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentive Program
EWP	Emergency Watershed Protection
FLP	Food, Land, & People
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FOTG	Field Office Technical Guide
FPAC	Farm Production and Conservation
FPG	Forestry Practice Guidelines
FRPP	Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program - repealed in 2014 Farm Bill
FSA	Farm Service Agency
GLCI	Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative
HEL	Highly Erodible Land
IISS	Impaired and Impacted Stream Survey
JAA	Job Approval Authority
LGBFCA	Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act

**DIVISION OF SOIL WATER CONSERVATION  
FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS**

MOU	Memorandum of Understanding [Operational Agreement]
NACD	National Association of Conservation Districts
NCACSP	North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program
NCADFP	North Carolina Agriculture Development and Farmland Preservation
NCANAT	North Carolina Agricultural Nutrient Assessment Tool
NCASWCD	North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
NC CDEA	North Carolina Conservation District Employees Association
NCDA&CS	North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
NCFS	North Carolina Forest Service
NCFSWC	North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation
NLEW	Nutrient Loss Estimation Worksheet
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
PCEP	Professional Employees Conservation Program
PDEP	Professional District Employees Program
PLAT	Phosphorus Loss Assessment Tool
PLT	Project Learning Tree
RC&D	Resource Conservation and Development
RCW	Resource Conservation Workshop
RD	Rural Development
RUSLE	Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation
SCC	Sedimentation Control Commission
SECDEA	Southeast Conservation District Employees Association
SMZ	Streamside Management Zone
SWAPAH	Soil, Water, Air, Plants, Animals, Humans
SWCC	Soil & Water Conservation Commission
SWCD	Soil & Water Conservation District
TRC	Technical Review Committee
TSP	Technical Service Provider
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USLE	Universal Soil Loss Equation
WQF	Water Quality Foresters
WRP	Wetland Reserve Program - repealed in 2014 Farm Bill
WSS	Web Soil Survey
WUP	Waste Utilization Plan

# GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

## FOR N.C. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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# 1

## DISTRICT OPERATIONS

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## INTRODUCTION

District officials are responsible for formulating and administering district personnel policies. In many cases in NC, district employees are county employees, and must adhere to the county personnel policies that are in place. Although districts may have fewer employees and a less complicated organization structure than some of their larger contemporaries, they are accountable to the citizens of the district for natural resources conservation and the fullest possible use of their employees.

This reference book is not attempting to mandate state or district personnel policies but is meant to serve as a resource for district officials in managing their local program.

A brief review of management related topics is included below.

## WHO'S WHO

<https://ncaswcd.org/index.php/about/video-the-soil-water-conservation-partnership/>

Some of the core NC Conservation Partnership includes the following entities and organizations:

**Local Soil & Water Conservation Districts** are the center of the Conservation Partnership, covering every county in the state. We offer technical and financial assistance to the private landowner. The elected and appointed Board set priorities for the conservation programs and offer a variety of environmental education programs to all ages.

**North Carolina Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (NCASWCD)** is made up of the 492 local soil & water conservation district board supervisors from across the state. The NCASWCD focuses on the exchange of knowledge, promoting conservation standards, providing guidance on the state's policies, sponsoring education programs, and securing cooperation across the partnership and beyond.

**North Carolina District Employees Association (NC CDEA)** provides a vehicle for personal development of the partnership's employees. They host training events

to provide information and improve renewable natural resources, and work with groups in supporting locally led conservation efforts.

**North Carolina Soil & Water Conservation Commission (Commission)** provides oversight for the state funded programs.

**North Carolina Division of Soil & Water Conservation (Division)** is staff support to the Commission from the NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services. The Division offers voluntary nonpoint source pollution management programs including cost share funding for conservation practices and conservation easements; technical assistance in engineering, soils, conservation planning, nutrient and animal waste management; and environmental and conservation education.

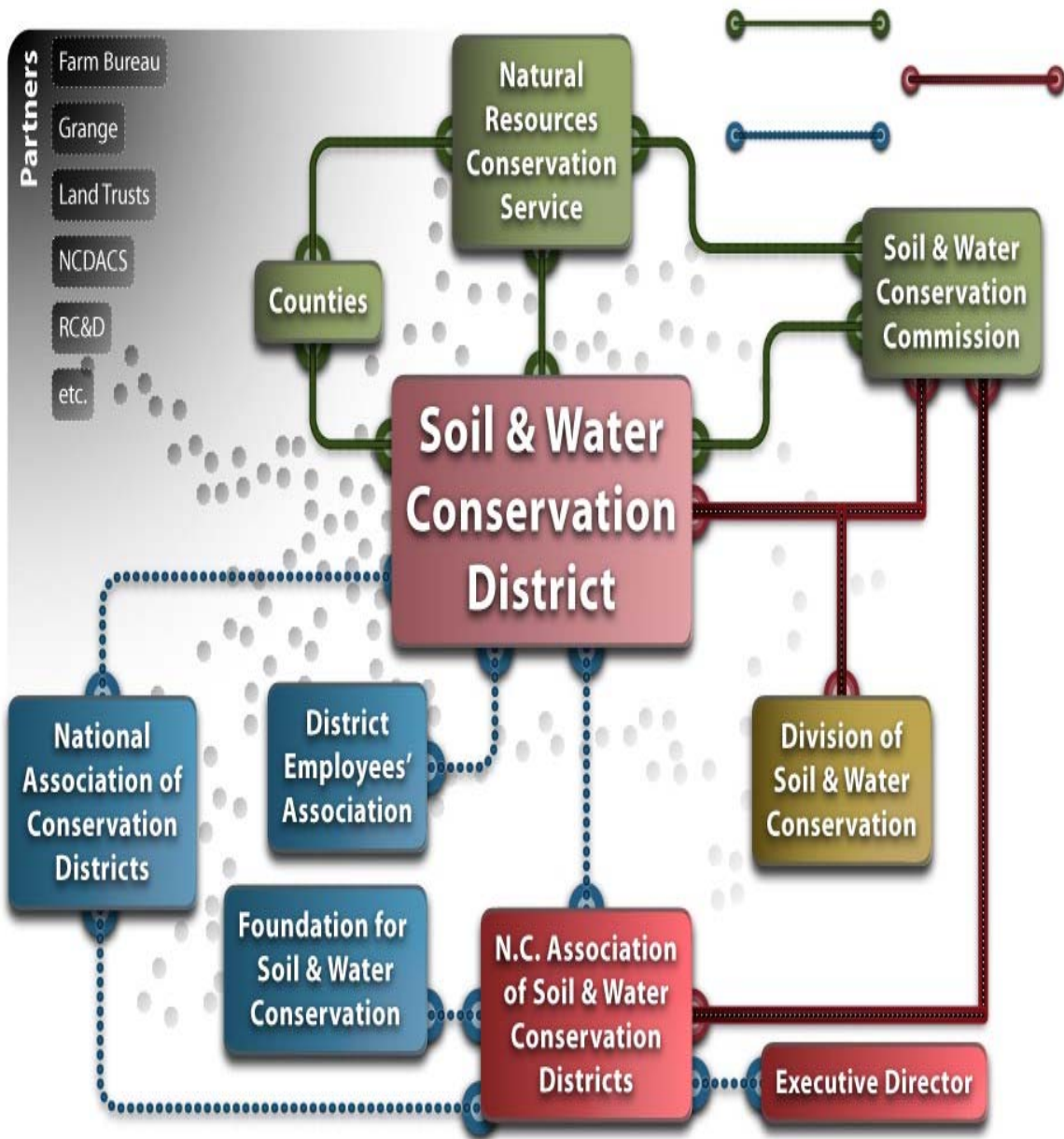
**North Carolina Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation (Foundation)** is a nonprofit group associated with NC districts. The Foundation funds projects addressing high priority natural resource and environmental issues while building conservation capacity.

**USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** is a federal agency providing technical and financial assistance to private landowners. NRCS works with the local district to deliver Farm Bill programs.

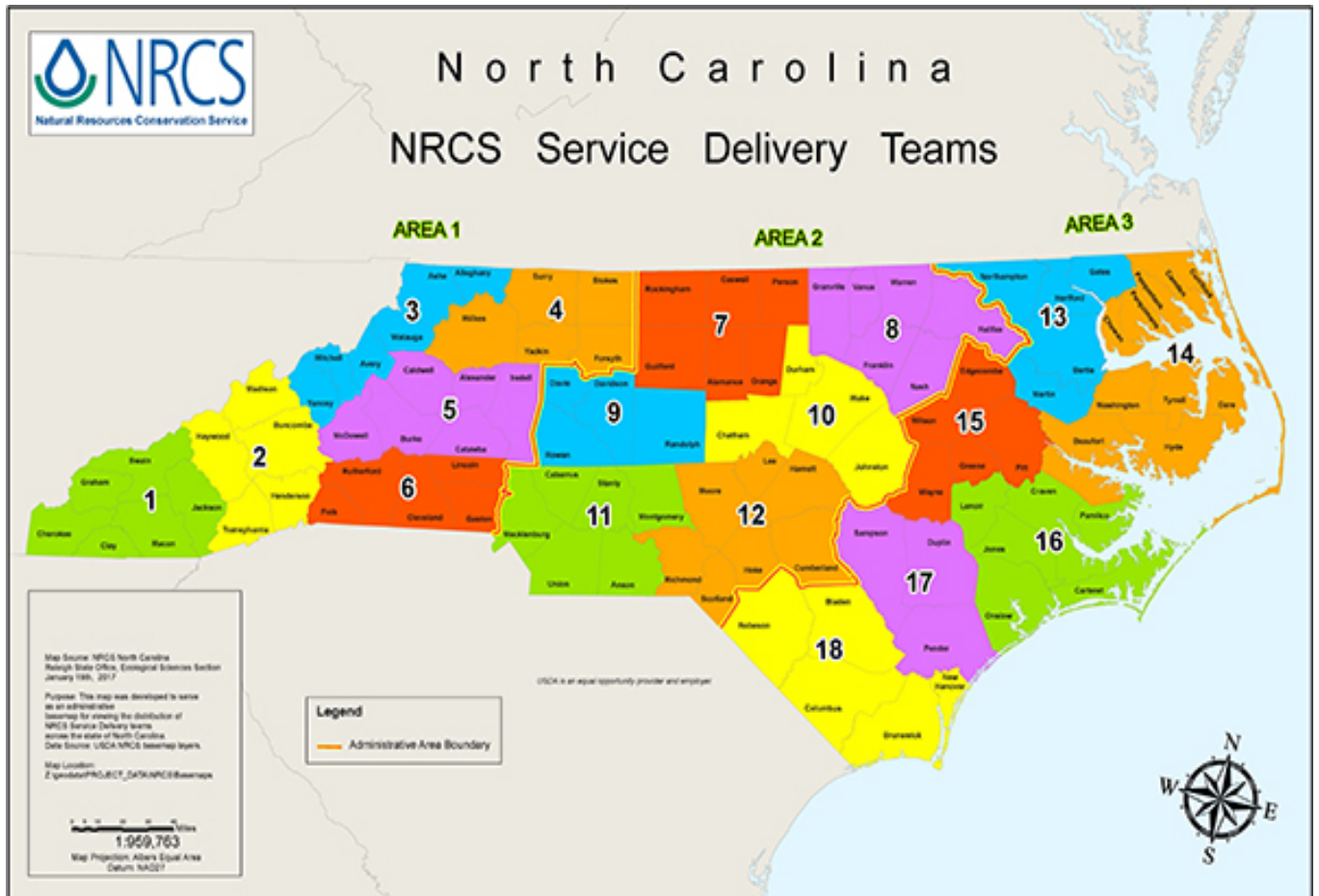


# EXHIBIT 1.1

## Flow Chart showing partners and their relation to Districts





# EXHIBIT 1.2 Natural Resources Conservation Service Teams





# EXHIBIT 1.3 MAP OF ASSOCIATION AREAS WITH REGIONAL COORDINATORS.

**Division of Soil & Water Conservation**  
Regional Coordinator Assignments & NCASWCD Areas



**Western Regional Coordinators**  
Rick McSwain (980) 429-3973  
Cayle Aldridge (828) 456-6341 (ext. 3248)

**Central Regional Coordinators**  
Ralston James (704) 880-0768  
Allie Dinwiddie (919) 707-3795


**DSWC Regions**

- Western
- Central
- Eastern






**Director, Vernon Cox (919) 707-3771**  
**Deputy Director, David Williams (919) 707-3772**

**Eastern Regional Coordinators**  
Kristina Fischer (910) 352-7771  
Eric Pare (252) 948-3899



**Education Program Coordinator (Statewide)**  
Sandra Weitzel (919) 971-4648

## **Board's Principal Responsibilities**

North Carolina's soil and water conservation districts are local governments, and district boards are public officials. By virtue of those two facts, conservation districts are legally and ethically responsible to administer their programs and deliver their services effectively, efficiently, and economically. Central to their ability to do so is the quality of their personnel management systems.

Across N.C. each District has a unique make up with personnel. Some Districts fall under County Government, others have their own policies for District Staff and still others have a combination of each.

Ultimately District boards are responsible and accountable to ensure employees are competent and productive. They are also legally liable to ensure employees are treated fairly and equitably. Therefore, it is vital that district boards take an active role to formulate and administer personnel management practices. An annual performance evaluation should be performed for each District Employee. This evaluation will be beneficial for the District Employee as well as the District for it points out areas of deficiency as well as praises the strengths. See Exhibit 1.9 - Example Employee Evaluation Form.

Those districts that are not under county policy must create and maintain their own personnel policy. This handbook attempts to help them do so.

## **Budgeting and Financial Management for Soil and Water Conservation Districts**

[http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/professional\\_development/management.html](http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/professional_development/management.html).

### **Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act (G.S. 159, Art. 3)**

Budgeting, Financial, Administration, Cash Management, Investments, Accounting / Reporting, Expenditure Control (Disbursements) and Auditing.

### **Budgeting**

Generally, all money taken in by a Soil and Water Conservation District must be included in a budget ordinance or a project ordinance before they can be expended.

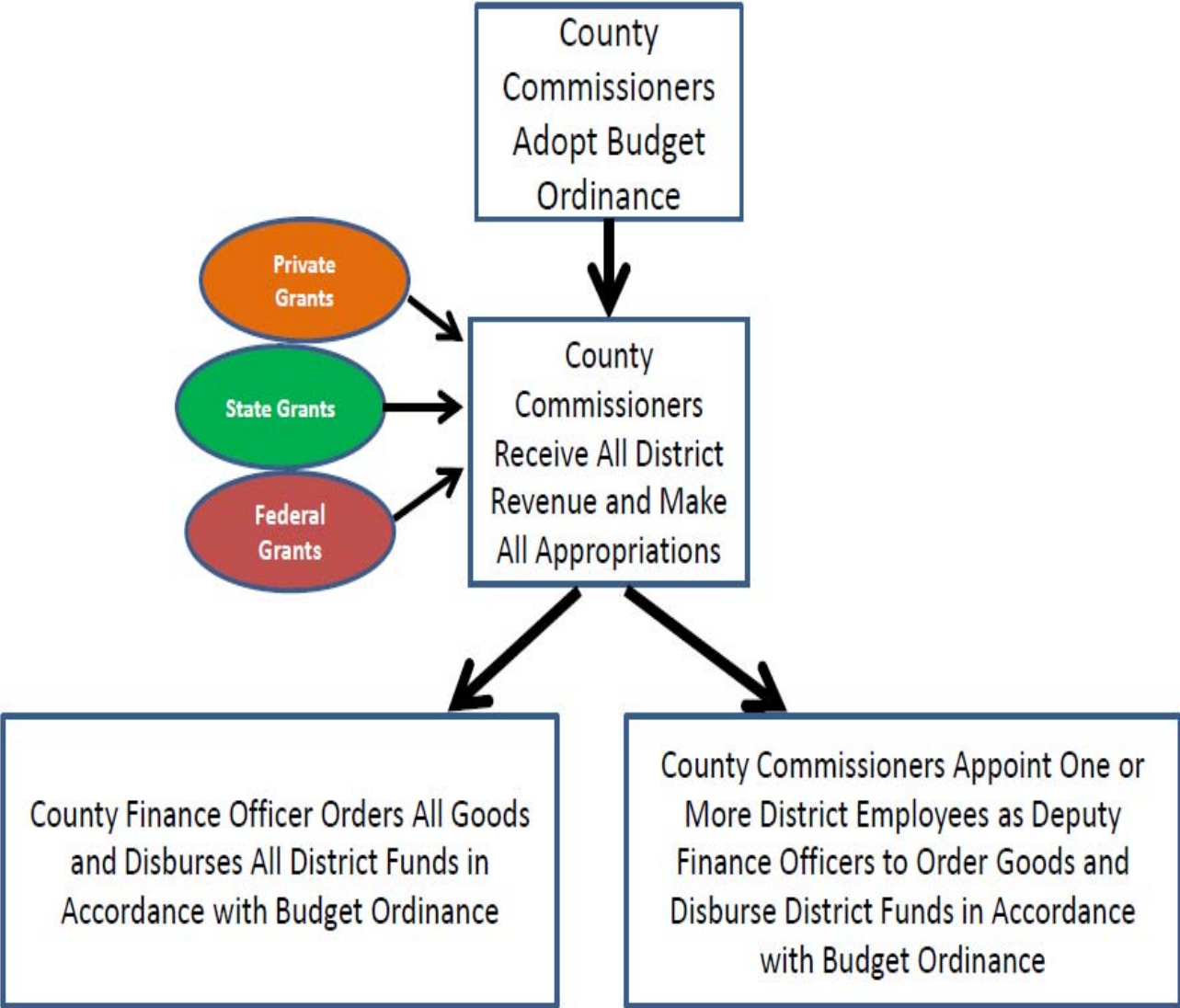
Who adopts the budget and who expends the money? The following are diagrams showing different options depending on how your district operates; either falling under county requirements (A), as a standalone district (B), or a hybrid between both (C). See Exhibits 1.4 – 1.6.

## **Bonding**

If Districts have adopted a budget, then a finance officer must be selected and bonded. This bond must be at least \$50,000.00 for the finance officer and anyone handling \$100.00 or more must be under a blanket bond.

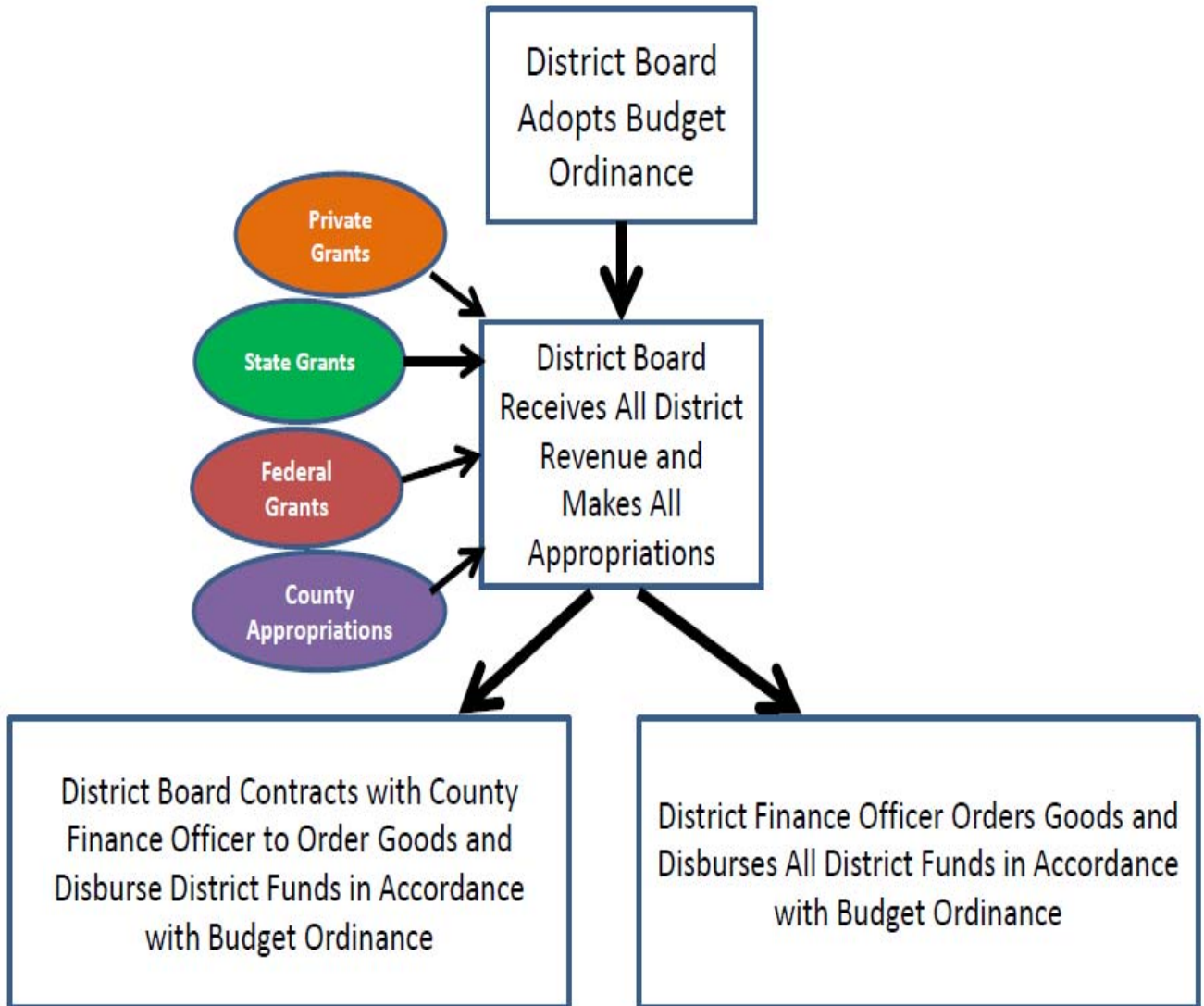
**EXHIBIT 1.4 BUDGET ADOPTED BY COUNTY**

# Budgeting Options: A



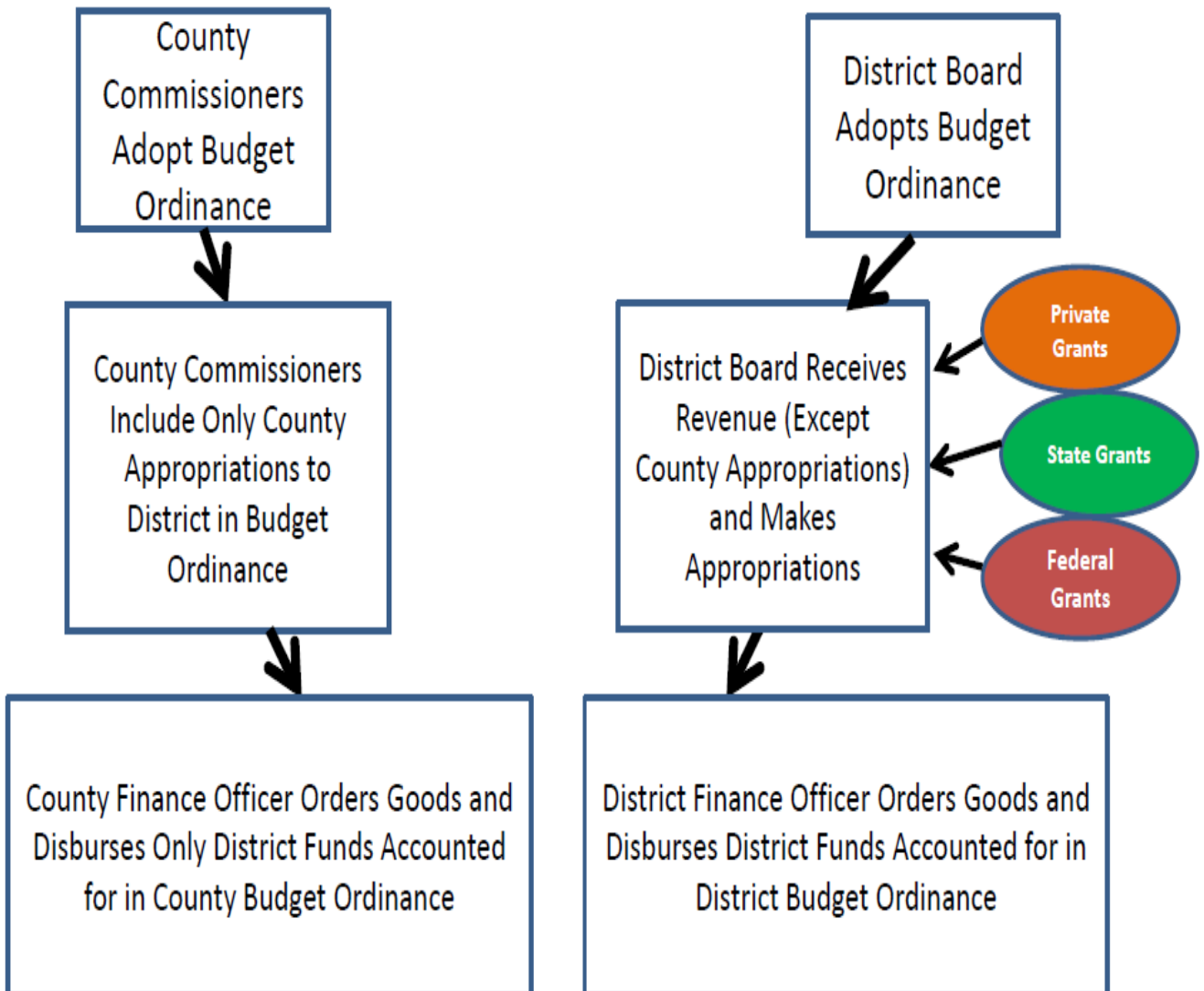
**EXHIBIT 1.5 BUDGET ADOPTED BY SWCD BOARD**

# Budgeting Options: B



# EXHIBIT 1.6 BUDGET HYBRID BETWEEN SWCD AND COUNTY

## Budgeting Options: C





## OPEN MEETINGS

[http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/professional\\_development/DistrictBoardTrainingLibrary.html](http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/professional_development/DistrictBoardTrainingLibrary.html)

Local soil & water conservation districts are considered public bodies and are subject to the NC Open Meetings Law. Open Meetings Law provides transparency in the way the government does business. When a quorum (typically three or more) of your board gathers to discuss district business it is considered a meeting and must be advertised to the public. Timeframe and meeting notice requirements are outlined in NC General Statute 143 Article 33 C. It should be noted that there are certain permissible items where a district board may enter “closed session” for discussion; the approved topics and process to enter closed session are outlined in the referenced General Statute.

## PUBLIC RECORDS

[http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/districts/quick\\_guidance.html](http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/districts/quick_guidance.html)

Public records include books, maps, photos, papers, cards, magnetic tapes, computer data and other documentary material made or received pursuant to law or ordinance in connection with the transaction of public business by any government agency, state or local, in NC.

District files are subject to the NC Public Records Law, NC General Statute 132-1, et seq. Records subject to disclosure may include (but are not limited to) meeting minutes, emails, and other correspondence. However, the NC Public Records Law provides exemptions to disclosure of trade secrets and other confidential information, such as social security numbers and other personal identifying information. In addition, federal files housed in districts may be protected by Section 1619 of the 2008 Farm Bill—codified under 7 U.S.C. 8791. Districts are encouraged to use filing systems where federal records are filed separately from district records to avoid confusion. Districts should review additional legal authority other than the NC Public Records Law to see if there are other protections that may apply to protect information collected from farm owners and operators.

The NC Public Records Law provides that districts are required to respond to public records requests “as promptly as possible.” Districts should consider adopting a

Public Records Request Policy. The county's public records policy may be a good starting point for districts organized under county departments. However, further review should be conducted to determine if the county's public records policy is appropriate or if revisions are needed. Any public records policy should conform with NC General Statute 132-6 regarding inspection and examination of records.

# 2

## DETERMINING WORKLOAD AND STAFFING NEEDS

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## **DETERMINING WORKLOAD AND STAFFING NEEDS**

Determining a district's workload needed to accomplish their objectives and responsibilities is the first step in establishing a sound personnel management system. The accurate determination of staffing needs is indispensable to a progressive district program.

An analysis of workload and staffing needs should be part of each district's annual work plan.

An analysis of workload and staffing needs should be a joint effort by the district board, district employees, agencies serving the district and others that might provide information.

To determine workload and staffing needs, the following steps are recommended:

1. Review district responsibilities
2. Determine the anticipated workload in terms of staff days required
3. Determine the number of staff days currently available
4. Compare the figures obtained in steps 2 and 3, to arrive at the number of staff days needed or in excess

## **WORKLOAD ANALYSIS**

All the current, anticipated, and projected activities of a district should be analyzed in terms of required staff days. Activities which should be covered, relating to program administration includes: personnel and financial management, public participation, information and education activities, and liaisons with local, state, and federal agencies. Activities relating to making surveys and inventories, and assistance with planning, installing and maintaining conservation measures, and best management practices, should also be covered. The analysis should be made first without regard to available work force. It should be based on what is needed and should reflect the total job to be accomplished by a district. Priorities can later be set to fit the district's yearly objectives to the realities of the staff and other resources that are available.

An example of a completed workload analysis is included; the blank worksheet can be used to list district activities and the staff days required to perform these activities.

## **DETERMINING STAFFING NEEDS**

After the workload analysis has been completed, the number of staff days available to the district should be determined. All sources should be listed including district employees, interns, district supervisors, volunteers, and others as appropriate.

By subtracting the number of staff days that are available from the number of staff days obtained from the workload analysis, the district can arrive at the number of staff days needed. This can be converted to the number of full-time positions needed by dividing the figures by 260 days. This calculation may also determine that current staffing is adequate.

An example of a completed staffing needs worksheet is included; the blank worksheet can be used to list staff days available.

## **WHAT THESE FIGURES PROVIDE**

The figures obtained by this process will indicate the number of staff days of full-time positions needed. It will not show the types of people to hire, such as engineers or soil conservationists, nor will it reveal whether the available staff is being used efficiently. These important determinations must be made by analysis of work reports, position descriptions, and workload needs. These figures provide staffing needs in general terms, a basis to discuss funding with county governing bodies and information for setting priorities and guiding work assignments. A compilation of staffing needs for the district is an excellent tool for districts when working with local government on supporting funding requests.

## **SETTING PRIORITIES**

The staffing needs worksheet may reveal that there is more work to be done than resources to do it. It is at this point that a district must set priorities. When completing a workload analysis, it is important for the district to consider state-imposed priorities and the impact of USDA activities on the district's programs. A properly completed workload analysis will help determine which areas of work to concentrate money and people. It can also help determine which areas of work should be discontinued.

A district may find it necessary to abandon projects or programs that are not productive, even though considerable investment has been made. If funds and personnel are limited, this is important for effective management. It should also be recognized that some activities that are considered important may never be accomplished. Decisions should be based on the public benefit gained for the cost. Resources should not be spread so thin that no area receives adequate attention.

# EXHIBIT 2.1 BLANK WORKLOAD ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

## WORKLOAD ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

		STAFF DAYS (260 staff days equal one work year)			
ACTIVITY		ADMINISTRATIVE	TECHNICAL	CLERICAL	EDUCATION
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Staff days needed (from TASKS)		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Difference (+ or -)		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## EXHIBIT 2.2 EXAMPLE WORKLOAD ANALYSIS WORKSHEET FOR ACTIVITIES

### WORKLOAD ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

		STAFF DAYS (260 staff days equal one work year)			
ACTIVITY		ADMINISTRATIVE	TECHNICAL	CLERICAL	EDUCATION
1	Supervise department personnel	58			
2	County liaison	60			
3	Prepare budget	30			
4	Minutes / meetings	12			
5	Grants	20			
6	Board meetings	30			
7	Training	60			
8	Advise and work with landowners		40		
9	Conservation plan TA		160		
10	Outreach	15	15		
11	Pursue continuing education	10	20		
12	Training		60		
13	Working with clients		40		
14	Installation / design practices		150		
15	District board duties			50	
16	Communication			15	
17	Outreach / social media			50	
18	Customer service			150	
19	Filing			40	
20	Gathers info / reports			20	
21	District contests				70
22	New education programs				40
23	Teacher communication				70
24	Supporting students				10
25	Prepare education materials				70
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>295</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>260</b>



# EXHIBIT 2.3 BLANK WORKLOAD ANALYSIS WORKSHEET FOR POSITIONS

## WORKLOAD ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

		STAFF DAYS (260 staff days equal one work year)			
POSITION		ADMINISTRATIVE	TECHNICAL	CLERICAL	EDUCATION
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Staff days needed (from TASKS)		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Difference (+ or -)		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

# EXHIBIT 2.4 EXAMPLE WORKLOAD ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

## FOR POSITIONS

### WORKLOAD ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

		STAFF DAYS (260 staff days equal one work year)			
POSITION		ADMINISTRATIVE	TECHNICAL	CLERICAL	EDUCATION
1	District Director	125	125		10
2	Natural Resources Conservationist	60	190		10
3	Administrative Specialist	100		130	30
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>285</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>50</b>
Staff days needed (from TASKS)		<b>295</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>260</b>
Difference (+ or -)		<b>-10</b>	<b>-170</b>	<b>-195</b>	<b>-210</b>

# 3

## RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

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## **Introduction**

Recruitment is the active search for the most qualified individual to fill specific job openings. These job openings could be to fill vacant positions, (retirement, resignations or dismissal) or for newly created positions due to increase in district duties. Before posting of positions, a thorough analysis should be completed to determine qualifications for all positions to be filled.

Once the District has decided to hire for a job and the qualifications have been completed, the next step is to identify sources of recruitment that can provide the best qualified individuals. It takes persistent effort to fill each position needed, and in order to find the best possible individual.

## **Coordination with Division of Soil and Water Conservation**

The Division of Soil and Water Conservation can aid with finding qualified individuals. Area Regional Coordinators can aid in job qualifications, writing job descriptions, advertising of job openings, creating a work load analysis for the District and even participating in candidate interviews. Specific specialized Division staff can provide input on basis qualifications for District positions. Each District should determine their situation and proceed accordingly.

## **Methods of Recruitment**

The list below can be used by Districts to recruit new employees depending on the needs of the District.

1. Agencies; Local, State and Federal  
NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency and others often receive resumes from those interested in Natural Resource related jobs. An inquiry with these state and federal offices could produce potential candidates. Other Soil and Water Conservation Districts could provide additional assistance if they have recently filled a vacant position.
2. Associations; Professional and Trade.  
A search of Professional and Employee Organizations can provide list of potential organizations that are related to the specific job description. The following is a small list of such groups;

- Agricultural and Applied Economics Association
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- National Association of State Conservation Associations
- Society of American Foresters
- Wildlife Society

### 3. Social Media

There are many types of social media that could be used to advertise job openings. The following are just a few to investigate:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Tumblr
- Twitter
- Snapchat

### 4. Colleagues

Individuals that work for other employers but in the same field as the vacant position can provide sources as well as specific names. They can share their recruiting experiences for similar positions.

### 5. Current Employees

Current employees can provide information about qualified individuals that they have acquaintances with.

### 6. District Cooperators

Potential candidates could come from information provided by the local District Cooperators.

### 7. University Contacts

These contacts could be at Local community colleges, Technical and 4-year universities. Writing directly to the schools that have appropriate Majors can be a very effective tool. Also, bulletins can be placed on boards and announcements made in classrooms.

### 8. Job services

Job service offices can be a great resource for locating candidates. This service is very helpful and inexpensive. Services provided include:

- Listing all state openings on public display

- Maintaining job announcements, job bulletins and applications readily available for access and use by interested job seekers.
- Screening and directly referring candidates for routine service and entry level clerical jobs they can fill locally

#### 9. Newspaper

Local newspapers are a popular and effective way to advertise positions.

#### 10. Radio

Local Radio stations can help you connect with individuals that may not Use local newspapers or other local news outlets.

#### 11. Transfers

Transfers should also be considered. Persons working for another District or other units of government may be looking to change their career or location. Communication to these individuals explaining the District and job opening are an effective tool.

#### 12. Veterans Recruitment Sources

Utilization of existing government and private websites such as;

- Military.com
- Hirevetsfirst.gov
- USDA jobs
- Turbo tap.org

Is a great resource for recruiting top veteran applicants.

#### 13. Volunteer Activities

Volunteering to speak at institutions, community organizations can be a useful tool by creating interest among people who may be interested in working for a Conservation District.

#### 14. County Human Resources Department (HR)

Contacting your local County HR Department can help promote and recruit possible candidates.

## Special Recruitment Situation

The following are a few of the federal laws that must be followed when considering Applicants to fill positions. Research should be completed to include all federal requirements. These may change over time so follow up must be done to include all requirements.

### **Aliens and Immigration:**

The Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended by IRCA and all subsequent amendments, prohibits employers from hiring undocumented immigrants. IRCA applies to all employers, including those that hire domestic help or farm laborers. Employers are required to verify that all employees hired after November 6, 1986, are legally entitled to work in the United States. The law also makes it illegal to discriminate in hiring and firing based on citizenship status or national origin.

### **Age Discrimination:**

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) prohibits private employers with 20 or more employees from discriminating against employees and applicants based on age (*29 USC 621 et seq.*). In 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the ADEA applies to all public employers, regardless of size (*Mount Lemmon Fire Dist. v. Guido*, 139 S. Ct. 22 (2018)).

The ADEA protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older. The laws of individual states or municipalities may set a lower age limit and cover smaller employers.

Under the ADEA, it is unlawful for an employer to:

- Refuse to hire, discharge, or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because of age.
- Limit, segregate, or classify employees in any way that deprives them of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affects employee status because of age
- Reduce the pay of any employee in order to comply with the ADEA.

### **Disabilities (ADA):**

Title I of the ADA prohibits employers from discriminating against a qualified individual on the basis of disability. It applies to private employers

with 15 or more employees, state and local governments, employment agencies, and labor organizations. The ADA requires employers to provide reasonable accommodation to a qualified individual with a disability, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business (*42 USC 12102 et seq.*).

### **Background Checks:**

Background checks are useful tools for employers in hiring and promoting the most qualified people. They can help identify and screen out those candidates who have given inaccurate information on employment applications or who might present a risk of violence or theft in the workplace. Employers conducting background checks are generally seeking information that will provide insight into an employee's general character and suitability for a particular position. The types of information that may be obtained through background checks include:

- Verification of Social Security number (SSN) and past addresses
- Criminal and civil records
- Driving records
- Credit history
- Verification of education and past employment
- Verification of professional licenses
- Reference checks
- Bankruptcy and workers' compensation records
- Military service records

### **Interviewing Applicants**

A face to face interview is an important part of hiring an individual. It is a time to gain knowledge, information and assess communication skills.

Interviewers should get all the information possible from the interviewee that will help to make a decision on recruitment. This is the opportunity to share information with the interviewee about the job description and the District that will help the interviewee to make a decision. Do not leave any false impressions on the duties of the job, pay, or advancements of the job.



## Conducting the Interview

The District should provide training to the ones doing the interview prior to the actual interview. The interviewer should be in control of the interview and in a position to make sure the interview is a success. Tips include:

- Encourage the applicant to talk. Ask questions that must have a follow up response. Ask a good lead-off question such as “tell me about your experience in the field of Natural Resources”.
- Do not ask questions that can be responded to by yes or no.
- Keep control of the interview by not asking a controversial question. Do not interrupt the person being interviewed. Avoid arguing or displaying authority. Do not put the applicant in a defensive mode.
- Avoid leading questions such as, “at your present job does it not require you to keep extensive notes?” instead ask what is required of you for keeping notes at your present job?
- Use of an interview evaluation form is needed to keep good written notes during the interview.
- Selection of only qualified candidates should be interviewed. If during the interview it is obvious that they are not qualified for the job, tell the person as diplomatically as possible. Be honest and do not lead the person on.
- Give the applicant the opportunity to ask the interviewers questions about the job, District and any other pertinent questions related to the job.
- Be objective in your evaluation.

## EXHIBIT 3.1 Guidance for Interviewing Question

### Illegal Interview Questions and EEO Guidelines:

Subject	Permitted	Not Permitted	Notes
Address	How long have you been at your current address? What is your current address? What was your previous address and how long did you live there?	Do you own your own home or rent? Who do you live with? How are you related to the people you live with?	
Age	For some roles age is a legal requirement (working in a bar) so it is acceptable to ask a candidate their age directly and ask for proof.	What year were you born? When did you graduate high school?	
Arrest Record	Usually only law enforcement agencies can ask and exclude based on their arrest record. For other businesses it is OK to ask if the arrest is directly related to the role they applied for and relatively recent, but you are walking a very thin line.	Avoid any questions relating to arrests if it is not directly related to the job or in states where it is illegal to ask (i.e., they have not been convicted yet so could be innocent).	See convictions below for arrests that have led to convictions. Also, rejecting applicants based on arrest record has been shown to impact some racial groups.
Availability	What days and shifts can you work? Are there shifts you cannot work? Are there any responsibilities you have that could make it difficult for you to travel for work? Do you have a reliable way of getting to work?	Directly asking about weekend work could be seen as a proxy question for religious observance. Also, questions about evening work or childcare arrangements can impact females who have childcare responsibilities. Asking if	Ask all candidates the same questions on this subject. Asking only women about evening work can be discriminatory as it ties into questions about family status.

they own a car could be seen as racially discriminatory unless it is a requirement of the job.

Citizenship or National Origin	Are you legally eligible to work in the United States? Can you show proof of citizenship/visa/alien registration if we decide to hire you? Are you known by any other names? Can you speak, read, and write English?	Are you a US citizen? Can you provide a birth certificate? What country are your parents from? What is your background? Where were you born? How did you learn Portuguese?	Asking about other languages is fine if it is a job requirement such as a translator or Spanish speaking phone operator.
Convictions	If the role the candidate applied for is security sensitive, then it should be fine to ask questions about convictions. Candidates dealing with large sums of money (cashier, treasurer, money transfer agent) or aligned roles where the candidate is working unsupervised such as janitor, custodian, or truck driver could all be considered security sensitive.	Don't ask questions about convictions for roles that are not security sensitive or ask about convictions that have no connection to the role. For example, asking a receptionist about speeding convictions.	Rejecting candidates purely on conviction record has been shown to disproportionately impact some racial groups. If this question is important then best to ask it later in the interview process so candidates can be excluded for legal reasons first.
Credit Inquiries	In general, do not ask questions about this unless you are sure it is permitted under the Fair Credit Reporting Act of 1970 and the Consumer Credit Reporting Reform Act of 1996.	Do you have a bank account? Do you own a home or rent? Have your wages ever been garnished? Were you ever declared bankrupt?	

Disabilities	Accurately describe the job then ask the candidate if they can perform all the functions.	Do you have a disability? Have you ever filed a worker's compensation claim? Have you ever suffered a workplace injury?	
Education	Do you have a high school diploma or equivalent? What university or college degrees do you have?	What year did you graduate high school?	
Emergency Contact Name	Only after employment is confirmed.	Do not ask this as part of any pre-employment interview questions as this could be seen as a question about national origin or sexual orientation.	
Employment	How long did you stay at your last role? What was start and finish titles? What is your current and expected salary?	When did you first start working? (age discrimination)	Some states prohibit questions about current salary.
Family Status	Do you have any commitments that might prevent you from working the assigned shifts?	Are you married? Are you single? Do you have any children?	Ask all candidates about outside commitments, not just women, or it will be seen as discriminatory.
Financial Status	Do you own a car? (only if a requirement of the job)	Do you own your own home? Do you own a car?	Due to the relationship between poverty and some minorities, questions on this subject can be very sensitive.
Height or Weight	Accurately describe the job then ask the candidate if they can perform all of the functions.	What is your height? How much do you weigh?	If you can definitively prove a specific height and/or weight is required for the job,

then it is fine to ask, but this is usually unlikely.

Marital Status	None	Are you married? Are you single? Do you have any children?	
Military Service	What experience and training did you receive while serving that would be beneficial to this job?	Direct questions about discharge or non-U.S. military service.	
Organizations	Are you a member of a professional organization?	Are you a member of the local country club? What sorority did you join?	Avoid all questions about non-professional organizations that could be seen as a proxy question about race, age, sex, etc.
Personal Information	Have you ever worked for us before under any other name? What are the names of your personal references?	Did you ever change your name through marriage or court application? What is your maiden name?	
Pregnancy	How long do you plan on staying with us? Do you have any leave planned?	Are you pregnant? Are you trying to have a family?	Even if a candidate is obviously pregnant, it is not acceptable to ask any questions about this subject. You can still describe the job and then ask if they can perform all functions.
Race or Color	Almost always not acceptable unless it is a bona fide occupational qualification.	All questions about color and race.	This is a hot topic question and best to get legal advice on if you are unsure.
Relatives	Do any of your relatives currently work for us or our competitors? Can you provide the names of your relatives who work for us?	What is the name of your relatives who work for our competitors?	This does become discriminatory if your company has issues hiring minorities as it could look like you have

a preference against hiring them.

Religion or Creed

None

What denomination are you? Who is your pastor?

Sex, Orientation, or Gender Identity

None

None

## EXHIBIT 3.2 SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Listed below are a few sample interview questions. You do not have to use all the following questions during the interview. Pick the questions that are related to the specific job qualifications. Each candidate for the particular position must be ask the same questions.

1. What is your education and work experience that you have had and how does it relate to this position?
2. Have you had any experience working for Boards?
3. Will overnight travel and working on weekends be a problem?
4. Have you had a job that required you to work with individuals that were upset or angry? How do you handle such situations?
5. Have you had a job that had multiple operations and you had to decide which operation to do first? What is your procedure for setting priorities if you had multiple operations?
6. What have you done in your career that you are most proud of?
7. Do you have experience with working around agricultural or natural resource operations?
8. Do you have experience with dealing with keeping records with budgets? If so, give an example.
9. Would you consider yourself a self-motivated person? Why?
10. How do you feel about supervising others? Have you had experience related to supervising others?
11. How familiar are you with Soil and Water Conservation Districts and their programs?
12. Have you had experience talking before groups? Adults? Children?
13. Have you had experience writing reports?
14. Why do you want this job?
15. What is your long- range career goals?
16. Why do you feel you are qualified for this position?
17. Tell us about your previous or current jobs. Describe the level of responsibilities, duties, etc.
18. Is there anything you would like to tell us that may help us decide if you are qualified for this position?
19. If you were selected for the job, how soon could you start?
20. Do you have any questions for us about the job or Districts?

21. Rate yourself from 1-10 on the following traits/skills with 10 being highest. Feel free to make any comments:

Self-Rating:

Leadership -

Ambition -

Attention to detail –

Writing technical papers & reports -

Motivating others –

Patience –

Meeting deadlines -

Organization management –

Time management –

Initiative -

Decision-making –

Verbal presentations –

HR -

Conflict resolution -

Teaching others –

Integrity -

Multi-tasking-

Professionalism –

22. Describe your training and/or experience with:

- a. Natural resource conservation
- b. Environmental education
- c. Regulations and permitting
- d. Agricultural BMPs
- e. Non-ag BMPs (stormwater)
- f. Conducting meetings, Robert's Rules of Order, taking minutes
- g. Marketing or promoting a program
- h. Developing a business plan for a program

Other questions could be developed that relate more closely to the job description. They could be more specific related to technical, educational, clerical or management. Questions should be formatted to keep the applicant engaged in conversation. Also, a project presentation could be required during the interview process. Example would be a power-point or oral presentation. Keep good notes about reactions to each applicant after each interview. Interview personnel should send out questions to be asked during the interview prior to the actual face-to-face meeting.

## **Types of Employment**

There are different types of employment that a District can consist of. The following are some classifications and their definitions that Districts can use. They can be modified as needed based on the needs of the District.



**PERMANENT FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE:**

An employee hired to have a minimum of 40 hours per week that has completed the required probationary period. An employee in this status will be entitled to all fringe benefits.

**PERMANENT PART-TIME EMPLOYEE:**

An employee hired to have less than 40 hours per week on a regular and recurring schedule and has completed the required probationary period. An employee in this position may be entitled to all fringe benefits on a pro-rated basis.

**TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE:**

An employee hired for a limited duration. Serves on a probationary period. This position is paid on an hourly wage for the hours worked and does not receive fringe benefits.

## **Probationary Period**

During the interview process it is difficult to determine if the individual is without question the person for the job. Even with testing procedures during the process. To determine if this person is a right fit for the job is to have a process for a trial period. This trial period can consist of varying time frames but should not be less than 90 days.

During the trial period the employee should be closely observed while on the job to determine if expectations are being met. During this period the supervisor should consult with the employee regarding their performance on the job. It should be made clear to the employee that this is a test period to determine if they are compatible with the job. Districts are encouraged to have an evaluation 30 days before the probationary periods ends.

## **Orientation**

Once an employee has been hired, they should be introduced to the new position and to the District. Proper orientation can prevent confusion, misunderstandings and possible dissatisfaction later.

Clarity and completeness of the orientation is very important. This orientation should be completed the first day on the job. The following are suggestions of things that should be covered during the orientation:

- Introduce the employee to their supervisor or supervisors and go over the terms of employment.
- Discuss the hours of work including lunch and other breaks.
- Go over the pay, probationary period, holidays, performance evaluations, benefits and provide the employee with a signed copy of benefits.
- Go over the mission and goals along with the working relationship between the District, County Government, and other partners with the Soil and Water Conservation District.
- Complete all forms (W-4, emergency information, insurance etc.).
- Talk about what is expected related to safety on the job and what safety equipment is required.
- Provide a copy of the job description, personnel policy, keys, annual plan of work, long range plan and any other documents that the employee may need to review.
- Give the employee an opportunity to ask questions during the orientation process.
- Some information may need to be sent prior to the orientation to give the employee ample time to review prior to the orientation process.

## EXHIBIT 3.3 CHECKLIST FOR HIRING EMPLOYEES

### EVALUATE NEEDS OF THE DISTRICT

### COMPLETED

1. Develop and/or revise the job description
2. Establish minimum qualifications
3. Develop salary, budget and expenses to support the position
4. Communicate with the County HR

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Prepare job announcement
  - a. Set appointment deadline
  - b. Contact the groups such as the NC Association Of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, District Employee Association, News Papers as needed
2. Advertise vacant position
  - a. Use list of colleges, schools etc.
  - b. Use the list of state job services
  - c. Put advertisements in the newspaper and other Outlets
  - d. Direct mailings to individuals who have resumes On file
  - e. Professional organizations
  - f. Provide information to the National Association Of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
  - g. Provide information to Social Media Outlets
  - h. Provide information to the Division of Soil and Water Conservation and the District List serve

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### PRE-INTERVIEW

1. Select an interview committee
2. Review the needs of the District
3. Review the Job Description

**Completed**

- 4. Screen applications to select finalists based on minimum qualifications \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Schedule final oral interviews with selected Finalists (45 minutes) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Send out "Confirmation to Interview" letters \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Send out denial letters to non-finalists \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Prepare interview questions and score-sheet \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Develop interview format \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Interview, including follow up and/or second Interview \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Get responses to applications \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Review the County HR Department Policy If the District follows the County Policies \_\_\_\_\_

## EXHIBIT 3.4      SAMPLE RESPONSE LETTER

October 10, 2020

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your interest in the Conservation Planning Specialist position with the Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District.

I have enclosed the job announcement for this position that gives a description of the job and an outline of the qualifications that are required for the position. If you continue to have interest in this position, we would like to receive your resume.

Please contact me by calling me at (999) 222-3333 if you have further questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Jim Through, Chairman

Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District

Enclosure

## EXHIBIT 3.5 SAMPLE CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE LETTER

November 9, 2020

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_.

I am pleased that you are willing to accept the position of Administrative Specialist with the Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District.

Your appointment is effective November 23, 2020 at a rate of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per hour. Your position will serve a probationary period of 6 months. Upon completing a satisfactory performance, the probationary period will end on May 23, 2021.

John Hero, the District Director, will complete the necessary documents that affect your appointment and will discuss with you the benefits available and any concerns you may have regarding your employment with the district.

We look forward to having you on board as a staff member with the Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District.

Sincerely,

Jim Through, Chairman

Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District

## EXHIBIT 3.6 SAMPLE REJECTION LETTER

November 9, 2020

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_.

On behalf of the interview team, I would like to thank you for your interest and for taking time to interview for the Natural Resource Conservationist position with the Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District. While your qualifications and experience were judged favorably relative to the requirements of the position, the interview team has nevertheless recommended the appointment of another applicant who we believe will best meet the needs of this position.

This has been a very difficult decision for the team with so many well-qualified applicants from which to choose. We hope you will not be discouraged from considering other district job opportunities.

Your interest in employment with the Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District is well appreciated. We will keep your application on file in the event of a similar job opening.

Sincerely,

Jim Through, Chairman

Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District

## EXHIBIT 3.7 EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

\_\_\_\_\_ Soil and Water Conservation District

### APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

(Equal Employment Opportunity Employer)

#### GENERAL

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

DATE AVAILABLE FOR EMPLOYMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you employed now?  YES  NO

May we contact your present employer?  YES  NO

If YES: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you prevented from lawfully becoming employed in this country because of  
Visa or Immigration status?  YES  NO

Type of position you are seeking: \_\_\_\_\_

Wages Desired: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a valid driver's license?  YES  NO

License No. \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Can you perform the essential functions of the job(s) for which you are applying?

YES  NO



## EXHIBIT 3.7 EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

Have you pled guilty or been convicted of a felony? (Please note that a “YES” answer will not automatically bar you from consideration for employment.)

YES  NO

If YES, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

This employer is an equal employment opportunity employer. All applicants will be considered without regard to age, color, national origin, religion, gender, or other protected status in accordance with applicable federal and state equal employment opportunity laws.

### EDUCATION

	ELEMENTARY	HIGH	COLLEGE	GRADUATE SCHOOL
NAME:				
YEARS				
COMPLETED:	4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
COURSE OF				
STUDY:				

### SPECIAL SKILLS, QUALIFICATIONS, AND CONSIDERATIONS

Summarize special skills and qualifications, volunteer activities, military experience, employment or other activities related to the job you are seeking:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## EXHIBIT 3.7 EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

### REFERENCES

List 3 non-relatives familiar with your qualifications and actual work history and ability.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Occupation / Relationship</u>	<u>Years Known</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____

### EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Start with your present or last job. List your last 3 jobs in order. Do not omit any job.

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Employed from: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(month/year) (month/year)

Address: Telephone No.: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

What did you like most about your job? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What did you like least about your job? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Employed from: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(month/year) (month/year)

Address: Telephone No.: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

## EXHIBIT 3.7 EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

What did you like most about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What did you like least about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Employed from: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

(month/year) (month/year)

Address: Telephone No.: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

What did you like most about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What did you like least about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## EXHIBIT 3.7 EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

**PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING THIS APPLICATION. ONLY THOSE APPLICATIONS THAT ARE SIGNED AND DATED ARE CONSIDERED VALID. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS STATEMENT, PLEASE ASK THEM BEFORE SIGNING.**

I certify all answers and statements I have made on this application (and resume or other supplementary materials) are true and complete without omissions. I understand that any false information will be grounds for refusal to hire or for immediate discharge if I am employed.  YES  NO

I authorize any of the persons or organizations named in this application to give you complete information and records regarding my employment, quality of work performance, interaction with co-workers, education, character, and qualifications.  YES  NO

I will be responsible for familiarizing myself with all rules and regulations of the employer as they presently exist or are later modified. I recognize my employment can be terminated, at the discretion of the \_\_\_\_\_ or at my option, without notice, at any time, except as specifically set forth in writing in a current individual employment agreement signed by \_\_\_\_\_.  YES  NO

I also understand that no representative of \_\_\_\_\_ has any authority to enter into any employment agreement for any specified period of time, or to assure me of any future position, benefits, or terms and conditions of employment, except as specifically stated in a current individual written agreement signed by \_\_\_\_\_.  YES  NO

I have read, understand, and agree with the above.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant

Date

This application is valid for only ninety (90) days from the date I signed. If I want to be considered for job openings more than ninety (90) days from date signed, I will submit a new application.

## EXHIBIT 3.7 EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

**Please read carefully, initial each paragraph, and sign below.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I certify I have answered the above questions truthfully and have not withheld any initial information relative to my application. I understand any falsification, misrepresentation, or omission, as well as any misleading statements or omissions of the application information, attachments, and supporting documents generally will result in denial of employment or immediate termination, if discovered after hire.

\_\_\_\_\_ I authorize [district name] to thoroughly investigate my references, work record, initial education and other matters related to my suitability for employment, and further authorize the references I have listed to disclose to the district any and all letters, reports, and other information related to my work records, without giving me prior notice of such disclosure. In addition, I release [district name], my former employers, and all other persons, corporations, partnerships, and associations from any and all claims, demands or liabilities arising out of or in any way related to such investigation or disclosure.

\_\_\_\_\_ I authorize [district name] to investigate whether I have a criminal record of convictions, and, if so, the nature of such convictions and all the surrounding circumstances of the conviction. [District name] has advised me any criminal background check will focus on convictions, and that a criminal record will not necessarily disqualify me from employment.

\_\_\_\_\_ If hired, I recognize the rules and policies of [district name]. I understand my employment and compensation can be terminated at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice, at the option of [district name] or myself. I understand the [Official's Title] of the district is the only person who will ever have the authority to create any other terms of employment and/or to enter into any employment contract, and all such contracts must be in writing and signed by both parties. However, I also understand unless otherwise stated in an

## EXHIBIT 3.7 EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

employment contract, the district may change, withdraw and interpret other policies [including wages, hours and working conditions] as it deems appropriate.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand and acknowledge I may be required to submit to a physical examination, including drug test. Additionally, I hereby authorize the release of the results of such an examination to [district name] for their use to evaluate my suitability for employment. Further, I release the examining facility and [district name] from any and all liability, and from any damage that may result from the release of such information.

---

Signature

---

Date

## EXHIBIT 3.7 EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

**THE FOLLOWING DISCLOSURES ARE REQUIRED UNDER THE FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT AND/OR STATE LAW. READ THEM CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING THE CONSENT BELOW.**

THIS IS TO ADVISE YOU THAT:

- If you are selected as a finalist for a position with \_\_\_\_\_, an investigation of your criminal convictions will be conducted. (NOTE: Applicants will not automatically be excluded from consideration, if previously convicted of a crime. We will evaluate the applicant's suitability for employment based on the totality of circumstances, such as the nature of the crime; recentness; type of position sought; etc.)
- If you are selected as a finalist for a position with \_\_\_\_\_ that requires a commercial driving license, an investigation of your driving record will also be conducted.
- Personal information that you provide to \_\_\_\_\_, including the information requested below, may be used to obtain these reports from one or more consumer credit agency [agencies that regularly provide these reports for a fee.]

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last

First

Middle

Alias/Maiden Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ SOCIAL SECURITY #: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License #: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE OF ISSUE: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

List all states you have lived in since age 18: \_\_\_\_\_

## EXHIBIT 3.7 EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

For each state please list the city and county where you lived, by state:

---

### Agreement and Consent

I authorize \_\_\_\_\_ to inquire concerning my criminal conviction history and driving record through a consumer reporting agency. I understand below that I am agreeing that \_\_\_\_\_ may use information that I provide to obtain these reports.

---

Signature

Date



## EXHIBIT 3.7 EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

### Applicant Authorization for Reference Checks

I hereby authorize my past employers to release information to the \_\_\_\_\_ Soil and Water Conservation District regarding my employment. This release of information covers my employment record in general, including information on the following:

1. Dates of employment.
2. Position(s) held.
3. The quality and quantity of my work.
4. My attendance habits [excluding workers' compensation, pregnancy, disability, FMLA, and other protected absences].
5. My relationship with co-workers, supervisors, and managers.
6. My attitude toward work [cooperative? positive? etc.].
7. Reason for leaving and eligibility for rehire. [Would the employer rehire if they Had to do it all over again?]
8. Strengths and limitations.
9. Willingness to comply with policies and standards.
10. Whether I had outbursts of temper; threatened or provoked fights with or assaulted others; harassed co-workers or customers; or engaged in any other hostile, violent, or disruptive behavior.
11. Other relevant information regarding my performance, skills, abilities, work Habits, suitability for employment sought, etc.

**EXHIBIT 3.7 EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION**

**I agree all former employers who provide such information are indemnified and released from liability arising from such disclosures. I also understand if I do not sign this authorization, my application will be disallowed.**

---

Print Name

---

Signature

---

Date

## EXHIBIT 3.8 EXAMPLE INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed By: \_\_\_\_\_

### Scoring

Candidate evaluation forms are to be completed by the interviewer to rank the candidate's overall qualifications for the position. Under each heading the interviewer should give the candidate a numerical rating and write specific job-related comments in the space provided. The numerical rating system is based on the following:

5 – Exceptional 4 – Above Average 3 – Average 2 – Satisfactory  
1 – Unsatisfactory

**Educational Background – Does the candidate have the appropriate educational qualifications or training for this position?**

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

**Prior Work Experience – Has the candidate acquired necessary skills or qualifications through past work experiences?**

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

**Technical Qualifications/Experience – Does the candidate have the technical skills necessary for this position?**

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

## **EXHIBIT 3.8 EXAMPLE INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM**

**Administrative and budgetary experience: financial planning, staff supervision, management of resources – Does the candidate demonstrate the knowledge of these areas necessary for this position?**

**Rating: 1 2 3 4 5**

**Comments:**

**Leadership Ability – Did the candidate demonstrate the leadership skills necessary for this position?**

**Rating: 1 2 3 4 5**

**Comments:**

**Customer Service Skills – Did the candidate demonstrate the knowledge and skills to create a positive customer experience/interaction necessary for this position?**

**Rating: 1 2 3 4 5**

**Comments:**

**Communication Skills – How were the candidate’s communication skills during the interview?**

**Rating: 1 2 3 4 5**

**Comments:**

**Candidate Enthusiasm – How much interest did the candidate show in the position?**

**Rating: 1 2 3 4 5**

**Comments:**

## **EXHIBIT 3.8 EXAMPLE INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM**

**Overall Impression and Recommendation – Final comments and recommendations for proceeding with this candidate.**

**Rating: 1 2 3 4 5**

**Comments:**

# 4

## QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

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## **Introduction**

Establishing qualification standards that are realistic and valid is the first step in securing a productive employee.

Qualification standards include the skills, knowledge, abilities and experience required for the positions needed in a SWCD District. They are based upon the goals and objectives of the District Board.

## **Guidelines for creating qualification standards.**

The following are a few suggestions for creating qualification standards.

1. They should be based on the requirements for the position acquired through the workload and staffing analysis.
2. Race, sex, religion and age should not be included.
3. Knowledge, skills, abilities, education, driver's license and physical condition are major areas that can be set for reasonable objectivity. Other areas such as personality, judgement and attitude should be considered when creating qualification standards for they are important to the success of the position.
4. Only the qualifications necessary to fulfill the job requirements should be considered.
5. Standards should be created to help exclude those applicants that are not qualified for the position and to help those individuals qualified stand out.
6. Describe the duties and responsibilities not the procedures required for the position. It is not necessary to explain the step-by-step procedures to perform the duties of the position.
7. Do not exaggerate or minimize the work setting of the position. Be very clear and specific of the working environment so that there are no surprises or misunderstandings.

If recruitment efforts fail to find the person suitable for the position, reviewing these qualification standards may need to be revisited. It may be necessary to waive a requirement or provide training to acquire the person needed to fill a position. But lowering a qualification for a position should be avoided. Standards

should never be compromised in order to hire a friend or an associate, or for any reason that is not job related.

## **Example Qualification Standards for:**

### **District Director:**

The title district director includes all district positions that provide the day-to-day coordination and direction of the activities of the district. Other titles used for this position are Department Head, District Administrator, Supervisory Soil Conservationist and Environmental Specialist.

**Description of Work.** The position of District Director requires a strong managerial or administrative background along with working knowledge of the technical requirements related to soil and water conservation. Strong administrative background is a must to support the technical duties.

#### **Knowledge Required**

1. Knowledge of the roles of a soil and water conservation district, Natural Resources Conservation Service, County Government and other Conservation Agencies related to state, federal and local programs.
2. Knowledge of local, state and federal programs and laws that impact soil and water conservation.
3. Knowledge of practices and basic financial management techniques.
4. Knowledge of economic and social structure within the district.
5. Working knowledge of interdisciplinary techniques, principles used when working with issues related to soil and water conservation
6. Knowledge of procedures to acquire funding from state, federal and local funding sources.

#### **Abilities Required**

1. Ability to plan and organize work
2. Ability to lead in group discussion
3. Ability to effectively communicate with various state, federal and local agencies at various levels.
4. Ability to effectively supervise



5. Ability to manage financial operations within the district
6. Ability to initiate new endeavors
7. Ability to perform without day-to-day supervision
8. Ability to motivate individuals or groups
9. Ability to plan and organize work
10. Ability to set and achieve goals.

The knowledge requirements mentioned above can be obtained through experience or formal education. Due to the wide variety of programs and people that the district deals with day-to-day, it is highly recommended that the person for this position should have a formal education minimum of a four-year degree in a related field. A variety of courses of study leading to a bachelor's or higher degree will satisfy the required knowledge and abilities listed. A list of courses includes but are not limited to, political science, regional planning, agricultural field, economics, public administration, sociology, landscape architecture, natural resource management and business administration. Technical courses of study such as biology, soil science, engineering, forestry and soil conservation should be considered as qualifying.

### **Conservation Planning Specialist:**

The title conservation planning specialist includes all district positions that provide conservation planning of natural resources and have acquired the Certification of Conservation Planner. Other titles used for this position are Resource Conservationist, Watershed Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservationist, Natural Resources Administrator and Watershed Coordinator.

**Description of work.** Conservation Planning Specialist must have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of natural resource sciences such that they can best meet present and future public needs by studying the interrelationships of the ecosystem within and around the agricultural community. This position develops environmental management plans to enhance and conserve natural resources including wildlife, soils, water, plants and air. Specific duties include:

1. Write conservation plans to manage specific ecosystems including water control, erosion control, improvement of water quality, maintain plant viability, manage livestock, maintain productive forestland and enhance

or maintain wildlife habitat while following local, state or federal laws and regulations.

2. Work with engineers, applicants, county, state or federal agencies as necessary to complete a viable plan for protecting natural resources.
3. Assist with design and construction of conservation best management practices to protect water quality such as terraces, waterways, waste storage structures, grade stabilization structures, ford and culvert stream crossings for livestock, water control structures and other water quality protection devices.
4. Assist with design and construction of conservation best management practices to enhance water quantity. Including well construction, irrigation conversion and pond construction.
5. Maintain a high level of Job Approval Authority for Best Management Practices used within the geographical area of the Soil and Water Conservation District.
6. Conduct onsite inspections after completion of construction to determine degree of compliance with written plans.

Conservation Planning Specialist should also be able to communicate effectively with the public and clientele. Duties include:

1. Maintain good working relationships with all the partnerships related to district programs and accomplishments including those related to landowners and users of agricultural lands.
2. Ability to supervise other technical staff as needed.
3. Oversee cost share programs provided by state, federal partnerships.
4. Maintain positive and clear communication with district officials, district manager, construction site supervisors and other partnership officials.
5. Able to complete accurate and detailed inspection reports, program reports and other necessary correspondence.
6. Work with citizens, civic groups, government officials, developers, engineers and school students and other school officials.
7. Conduct training workshops, give presentations and provide technical information to other coworkers and other districts as needed.

**Basic Requirements.** Applicants should demonstrate successful completion of one of the following points:

1. Four or more years of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's degree with a major study in environmental science, agronomy, natural resource conservation or other related field with a minor or option in communication or education. The applicant should have a minimum of 3 years of professional and technical experience as an inspector of best management practices on agricultural land. Acquired Certified Conservation Planner.
2. Course work in an accredited university or college with major study in environmental planning, agronomy or other natural resource field with minor course of study in communications or education which included at least 30 semester hours, or the equivalent in subjects as specified under point 1. Plus, enough additional education or experience to total four years of education or four years of combined education and experience. Able to acquire Certified Conservation Planner status within 3 years of hiring.

### **Conservation Planning Skills**

1. Working knowledge of soil and water conservation principles and of successful soil erosion control and water quality improvement methods.
2. Knowledge of planning principles and techniques, current trends, laws, policies and programs concerning agriculture.
3. Familiarity with local, state and federal regulations, legislation and structure.
4. General knowledge of construction techniques.
5. Understanding of soil types, topography, aerial photos, ecosystems and major ecotypes.
6. Familiarity with best management practices as defined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Division of Soil and Water Conservation. Knowledge of when to use them for the prevention of water degradation, soil erosion and when water quantity is an issue.

### **Communication Skills**

1. Able to work closely with the public
2. Able to work closely with landowners and land users.

3. Expert communication and presentation skills to assist with environmental planning meetings for city, county or other agencies.
4. Able to work closely with government officials.
5. Ability to communicate technical matters clearly and effectively both orally and in written reports with engineers, contractors, developers and other government officials.

## **District Engineer:**

**Description of Work.** Perform technical work in research, development, test, design, or other engineering functions. Their work is allied to one of the branches of engineering such as civil, electrical, agricultural or mechanical. Typical duties include testing engineering materials and equipment; performing calculations, setting up and operating laboratory equipment and instruments, preparing technical reports, plans, specifications and estimates.

**Basic Requirements.** Applicants must be Certified Professional Engineer. Have experience or education enough to develop skill in making measurements, using test instruments, computing, reading engineering drawings, or specifications, or other engineering work. Engineers should be able to apply in increasing measure, practical knowledge, skills and abilities such as

1. Ability to read in interpret engineering and architectural plans and specifications.
2. Knowledge of testing procedures and techniques in the applicable specialization
3. Knowledge of safety practices.
4. Ability to work effectively in stressful situations.
5. Knowledge and ability to use engineering formulas and measurement systems in the specialty field.
6. Knowledge of engineering instruments, equipment, and systems appropriate to the specialization and including in some instances, calibration skills.
7. Ability to prepare analytical reports.
8. Able to communicate effectively with technicians, mechanics, other engineers and public officials.

**Evaluation of education experience.** Evaluation of education and experience logically includes the degree and scope of the candidates' knowledge, skills, and abilities which can be brought to bear upon duties of the position to be filled or in the area of specialization of the positions.

## **Natural Resources Conservationist:**

**Description of Work.** Natural Resources Conservationists perform professional and scientific work to best meet present and future landowner and land user needs by managing their natural resources. Other titles used for this position in NC are Soil and Water Conservationist, District Resource Specialist, Ag. Cost Share Specialist and District Resources Conservationist. Natural Resources Conservationist perform the following types of professional work:

1. Manage broad soil and water conservation programs from state and federal agencies.
2. Advise and work with landowners and land users to develop conservation plans for agricultural operations.
3. Advise and work with landowners in urban settings to protect water quality and prevent or reduce excessive water runoff.
4. Advise and work with officials for a soil and water conservation district to develop a comprehensive soil and water conservation program which serves several communities.
5. Advise and work with government agencies or private groups to develop broad plans and recommendations for the orderly development of local natural resources.

**Basic Requirements.** Applicants for positions at all levels should show successful completion of 1 or 2 below:

1. Four years of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's degree or higher. With a major study in soil conservation or one of the closely related natural resource or agricultural areas, such as agronomy, forestry, wildlife biology, or regional planning. The study should include the equivalent of 30 semester hours in natural resources

- or agricultural areas including the equivalent of a three-semester course in soils.
2. The equivalent of at least 30 semester hours of course work in one or more of the fields listed above in point 1, including the equivalent of a three-semester hour course in soils, plus additional education or experience which, when combined with the 30 semester hours of course work will total four years of education. The quality of such education or experience should have been enough to give the applicant professional knowledge equivalent to that acquired through the successful completion of four years of study described in point 1.

### **Personal abilities and characteristics**

Natural Resources Conservationist should be able to demonstrate abilities in personal communication and leadership. The following are some of the abilities and personal characteristics most important in this position.

1. Planning ability
2. Leadership ability
3. Managerial ability
4. Supervisory ability
5. Ability to persuade or motivate groups
6. Coordinating ability
7. Initiative and resourcefulness
8. Public speaking and public relations abilities
9. Adaptability
10. Ability to work with others in a team approach
11. Ability to work with groups such as civic and school age children

### **Soil Conservation Technician:**

**Description of Work.** Soil Conservation Technicians apply knowledge of natural resource methods, techniques, practices and agricultural land use. Other titles given in NC for this position include District Technician, Soil and Water Quality Technician and Soil Technician.

They perform work such as the following:

1. Give advice to farmers on the installation and maintenance of best management practices like terraces, drainage systems, waste storage structures, stream crossings for livestock, livestock exclusion, forage management and waterways.
2. Collect planning data for use in conservation planning
3. Perform follow-up visits with landowners and land users to further advise or assist on the installation or maintenance of conservation practices. To perform checkout notes along with other documentation of completion of work.
4. Provide information on waste management and record keeping, soil and water conservation practices, benefits and activities to local individuals, groups or media.

**Basic Requirements.** Applicants must have had basic experience or education with farming operations, equipment and terminology which will allow development of skill in laying out conservation practices and dealing with farmers gathering farm resource data.

The following is a list of experiences that should have been acquired,

1. Irrigation systems
2. Forestry
3. Livestock
4. Surveying
5. Engineering
6. Plant pest control
7. Construction inspection and supervision
8. Forage crops
9. Row crops and cover crops
10. Knowledge of pesticide use
11. Knowledge of herbicide use
12. Knowledge of farm equipment
13. Basic understanding of agricultural land use

**Guide for Evaluation of Applicants.** Applicants for beginning level positions must have the ability to use basic high school level mathematics, ability to read plans and able to learn soil conservation duties.

A higher-level Soil Conservation Technician needs to know and be able to possess and apply knowledge, skills and abilities such as:

1. Installation and maintenance of best management practices
2. Operation of equipment used to install best management practices
3. Able to select technical guidelines and reference materials.
4. Able to work closely with landowners and contractors
5. Know the concept of agricultural practices and ability to gather data for planning
6. Knowledge of surveying and use of surveying equipment.
7. Basic soils information
8. Able to interpret topographic maps and aerial photographs.

### **Education and experiences.**

Consider the amount of knowledge, skill and abilities useful in this position. Such knowledge, abilities and skills may have been acquired through educational courses, internships or on the job training.

### **Education Coordinator:**

**Description of work.** Educational Coordinator position is to research and develop efficient ways to communicate with potential participants in Districts educational programs. Create effective teaching materials, props and visuals as needed for district lessons, exhibits and workshops. Help plan and host district field days and conservation awards banquet. Play a major role in developing and implementing area Envirothon's. Lead and manage district volunteer programs involving all facets of volunteer recruitment and recognition.

**Basic Requirements.** Experience or education enabling the applicant to be:

1. Able to effectively communicate with all age groups – children to adult
2. Able to create and set-up a working filing system to effectively manage education files.
3. Knowledgeable of soil and water conservation partnership and related watershed, environmental, private and governmental organizations.
4. Knowledgeable of commonly used acronyms in conservation programs and government.



5. Able to interpret county natural resource maps and soil surveys.
6. Knowledgeable of best management practices in agriculture, sediment and erosion control, and stormwater management.
7. Skilled in soil sampling, completing forms, and read and understand the soil test results.
8. Knowledgeable in the grant writing process.

**Criteria Used in Rating Experience.** The quality of the pertinent experience and training will be evaluated in terms of the following factors that are appropriate to the positions to be filled.

1. Effective at research and development of efficient ways to communicate with potential participants in the districts educational programs and setting up communication systems such as e-mail, mailing labels, telephone tree and social media.
2. Ability to develop promotional materials that meet local schools needs while meeting the districts goals and objectives.
3. Ability to create lesson plans that meet schools and the district goals and objectives.
4. Effective at leading and managing district volunteer programs involving all facets of volunteer recruitment and recognition, event promotion, data entry, reporting of results, ordering and distributing volunteer supplies.
5. Effective at leading a school or organization in a long-term environmental service-learning project that is student centered, student owned, and student directed.
6. Ability to develop and initiate educational programs or workshops from conceptual inception to on the ground delivery.

### **Administrative Specialist:**

**Description of Work.** Administrative Specialist performs or supervises the performance of a variety of tasks, including compiling district meeting packets for district board meetings. Including agendas, minutes of previous meetings. Maintains records and files, makes travel arrangements for supervisors and staff. Assembling and distributing incoming mail and preparing replies. Assembling and

distributing information, performing miscellaneous office management and clerical duties. Performs outreach via social media, news articles and creates newsletters. Maintains local, state and federal filing systems including publications and reports. Gathers and compiles detailed information to prepare a variety of complex and specialized reports.

**Basic Requirements.** Applicants should show responsible experience in word processing and general clerical work. Experience should have consisted of work which demonstrated possession of ability to perform Administrative work above the trainee level, including answering telephone calls, receiving visitors, composing correspondence, obtaining and presenting information, routing incoming correspondence based on subject matter, reviewing outgoing correspondence for grammar, spelling and format.

The applicant's record should show experience of such quality and kind as to demonstrate successful application of progressively broader knowledge, judgment and high skills commensurate with the level of position for which the applicant is being considered. In addition, all applicants should demonstrate possession of certain traits essential to the performance of administrative duties. These are:

1. Getting along with others
2. Work independently
3. Loyal, high integrity and discretion
4. Willing to accept responsibilities
5. Good judgement, initiative and resourcefulness
6. Neatness, good grooming personal dignity.

**Evaluation of Applicants.** In evaluating applicants' qualifications for administrative positions, consider three principal requirements which form the basis for any appraisal, retain or ranking. These are:

1. The nature and scope of administrative and other experience
2. Relative proficiency as an administrative trait.
3. Personal qualities necessary for successful performance of administrative work.

# EXHIBIT 4.1 CHECKLIST FOR DEVELOPING QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

ITEMS	COMPLETED
1. Determine if qualification standards already exist	_____
2. Secure a copy of position description	_____
3. If no position description exists, list the items or duties that should be accomplished by the position.	_____
4. List the knowledge that the applicants must have for consideration. Relate this to education and experience	_____
5. List the skills necessary to perform the duties of the position. Skills are normally associated with developed proficiency or dexterity in some art, craft, or trade or the operation of a machine.	_____
6. List the abilities necessary to perform in the job, such as the ability to speak before groups.	_____
7. List the conditions for employment such as residence in the District, successful completion of a medical examination, possession of a valid driver’s license, etc.	_____
8. Check to ensure that all qualifications are based on merit principles.	_____
9. Review the above listed items to ensure all items are job related and are neither less nor more restrictive than necessary.	_____
10. Compare qualification standards that are developed with positions in the state or local units of governments.	_____
11. Review with the Division of Soil and Water Conservation, Natural Resources Conservation Service and others who will work with the person selected.	_____

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## **Introduction**

It is very important to communicate the responsibilities and duties of a position to the individual that is in the role of the district position for it to function as needed. Creating standards for the performance of the duties and evaluating the performance are inseparable from developing the job duties. Chapter 5 discusses writing position descriptions, development of the performance objectives and evaluation of the employee performance.

## **Written position descriptions**

Communicating the duties, responsibilities and performance standards of a position to the person who occupies the position can be best done by a written job description. Verbal instructions cannot provide the mutual understanding that is provided by a written description of the duties and performance requirements.

## **Uses of position descriptions**

Written position descriptions help in personnel management in many ways, including:

1. Determining skills, knowledge and abilities necessary to perform the job.
2. Recruiting
3. Establishing consistent and equitable salaries.
4. Increasing communication between employees and their supervisors.
5. Setting performance standards.
6. Making staffing decisions.
7. Increasing productivity.

## **Statement of Adequacy**

Position descriptions vary among local, state and federal agencies. There are no standard formats, but a position description is adequate if it clearly states the principle job duties, responsibilities and supervisory relationships of the position. Job descriptions do not take the place of required skills, knowledge and abilities necessary for establishing qualification standards. Qualifications should be established but they should not be included in position descriptions. A suggested format for writing position descriptions is included as **Exhibit 5.2**.

## Steps for writing position descriptions

The following should help in writing brief, and accurate job descriptions. These will not cover all aspects of writing job descriptions but should help the writer in reducing the amount of time and paperwork involved.

Listed are five major don'ts in writing position descriptions:

**Don't describe the person filling the position.** When writing the position description, describe the position or the task to be done.

**Don't describe procedures.** You should not detail the step-by-step procedures in performing the duties of a position.

**Don't describe minor details.** Too much detail makes a job appear to be loaded with low level duties. All positions have major and minor task. All engineers do some detailing, all supervisors do some work of the employees that they supervise. A major duty is defined as; successful accomplishment of which contributes significantly to the achievement of the job and its goals.

**Don't use technical terminology.** Do use lay terms.

**Don't write too much.** By following the previous don'ts, this should not be a problem. The position descriptions will be the desired length if only the major duties of the position are written and described.

## Getting Started

In describing the duties of a position, look at the position title or main mission. All mission verbs are action verbs, and it is best to begin each duty with an action verb. See **Exhibit 5.3** of this chapter for a list of “action” verbs.

As an example of what is meant by cutting excess words, one could describe a duty by saying: “it is the responsibility of the incumbent in this position to see that all engineering drawings are filed. “

Naturally, since this description covers this position only, we know that duties of this position are all responsibilities of the position. We can skip those comments. We can also delete the reference to the incumbent, since we are writing about the position and not the person. It's much easier, as well as more understandable,

to simply say: “Files engineering drawings” or “maintains files of engineering drawings.”

It may be creative to write regarding a duty:

“This office is unique in that it requires the incumbent herein to maintain its very responsible records according to standards described by the Broad River Conservation District. “

Creative narrative is not the goal. Stick to job duties. The writer could have said:

“Maintain records according to district requirements.” This does not mean that positions should be “played down” by over-summarizing or using small words. Just be concise.

### **Keeping position descriptions current**

Position descriptions should be kept up to date to ensure productivity and to maintain communications between employees and supervisors. Position descriptions should be dynamic and reflect changes in duties and responsibilities. A joint review by the employee and the supervisor should be made annually, or more often if necessary, to discuss changes in duties and responsibilities. An appropriate time for this review is in conjunction with the performance review.

### **Sample position descriptions**

**Exhibits 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9 and 5.10** are sample position descriptions for District Director, Conservation Planning Specialist, Administrative Specialist, District Engineer, Natural Resource Conservationist and Education Coordinator. These sample position descriptions and list of duties should be used only as a guide. Every district position should have a position description and corresponding performance requirements that are developed expressly for the position. A checklist for developing a position description is included as **Exhibit 5.1**.

### **Performance Evaluation**

Each district employee has a right to know what is expected of them in relation to their job and how well they are performing. A performance evaluation based on objective criteria, will help achieve the greatest performance from an employee.



The evaluation of the performance of an employee can be very rewarding and enjoyable but also very trying. Evaluating an employee is a very important job of a supervisor. See **Exhibit 5.11** for an example employee evaluation form.

## **Benefits**

The following benefits can be gained from a formal performance evaluation process.

1. Individual performance will improve.
2. Good work that the employee has accomplished will be recognized.
3. The relationship between supervisor and employee will improve.
4. Supervisors and employees will be more aware of the requirements of the job and needed job duty changes.
5. Changes in personnel actions, such as promotions, pay increases, removals, and rehires, will be based on sound, objective criteria and will have documentation.
6. Employees will be made aware of their supervisor's judgement of their job performance.
7. Needs for job training will be identified.

## **Performance Standards**

The standards by which an employee must perform each duty should be communicated to the employee in terms of quantity and quality. Any evaluation of performance should in turn be based on these objectives, job related criteria. Objectivity is the basic and most essential element in setting these standards.

## **Importance of objectivity**

Subjective measurements that tell what a person is or knows should not take the place of objective measurements that tell what a person does. There could be problems if there is an over emphasizing objective or measurable elements. If an effort is made to quantify all elements of performance, there is a danger of developing a cookbook approach to evaluation so that it ends up being little more than a checklist. Human elements are important in performing a job well, but these are not always measurable. Performance rather than personality should be evaluated. Subjective elements, when evaluated, should be based on objective observations. If initiative is an important evaluation factor, examples should be

given of required areas where initiative is expected. The evaluation of this factor should then be based on how well the employee performs these specific requirements.

## **Setting Objective Performance Standards**

Each duty that is developed for a position should have a corresponding standard by which it should be performed. This standard should be stated in terms of quantity and quality. Example:

**Duty.** Types correspondence, conservation plans, newspaper copy, district newsletters, and other material necessary for the operation of the office.

**Performance Standard.** There should be no typographical errors. Our final copies should be grammatically correct. All typing is to be completed by a specified deadline.

The following should be considered in setting performance standards.

1. Standard should be mutually agreed upon by supervisor and employee. It is essential that employees know and understand the performance standards against which they will be measured.
2. Standards should be realistic and achievable.
3. Standards should be set slightly above the average. They should be achievable but set to make the employee strain a little.
4. Standard should be flexible. It should be possible to amend the standard if unforeseen circumstances arise that make the standard unachievable.

## **Formal performance review**

Most supervisors are aware of the quality of an employee's performance, but this awareness is not enough. There should be a time when supervisor and employee get together for the specific purpose of reviewing performance. This periodic formal review is essential in maintaining a high standard of employee performance.

Although evaluation of an employee's performance is a continuing process, a formal discussion with the employee should take place at least once a year. The evaluation should be a culmination of numerous informal observations, checks and discussions made throughout the year. The formal discussion with the

employee should take place just prior to, and be the basis for, decisions made regarding merit salary increases.

A formal review of an employee's performance should also take place at the end of any probationary period of employment. An employee performance evaluation is included in this chapter as **Exhibit 5.11**

## **Who Should Perform the Evaluation?**

An employee's performance should be evaluated by the person who is most familiar with the employee's work, and who was involved in setting their performance standards. In most cases this is the employee's immediate supervisor. The primary responsibility for the performance evaluation is the District Director or District Board of Supervisors. The evaluation of the performance of a District Director should be the responsibility of the Chair of the District Board or a designee.

## **Steps in the Formal Evaluation Process**

**Prepare for the discussion** - Effective evaluations don't just happen, they are planned. Facts must be gathered, review of the job description and performance standards, and decide what must be accomplished.

**Pick a good time and place** - Hold the discussion where it will not be interrupted. Allow plenty of time for the discussion. Pick the time that is best for both parties.

**Open the discussion in a friendly and permissive manner** - Tailor the approach to everyone. Let the discussion develop naturally.

**Explain the purpose of the evaluation** - Once the evaluation has been opened on a positive, friendly note, clearly state the purpose of the evaluation.

**Ask the employee to review their responsibilities** - Sometimes the clarity is lacking concerning some aspects of a job. Ask the employee to give a general review of their major assignments. Ask which assignment they consider the most important, which efforts have produced successes, and where problems have appeared. Encourage the employee to talk and do not interrupt unnecessarily.

**Discuss each job duty** - review the performance of each job duty with the employee and let them know how well they have performed each duty.

**Jointly develop next year's performance standards** - discuss with the employee ways in which performance can be improved. Discuss areas where additional training is needed.

## **Guidelines for Evaluating Employee Job Performance**

A supervisor may find the following suggestions helpful in evaluating an employee's performance.

**Do not rely on gimmicks.** Even the best performance evaluation form will not relieve the supervisor of the responsibility of making decisions about an employee's competence. The best way to judge competence is to work with the employee day by day, to make observations during moments of routine, and stress, in a variety of assignments.

**Admonish when necessary.** Tell an employee when they have done well and when they have not. They will not resent correction handled in a natural manner. However, it is hard for both supervisor and the employee if this is lumped all together in a single, grueling session held once or twice a year.

**Be self-critical.** Before an employee is admonished for inadequate work, ask yourself, "has leadership contributed to this deficiency in any way?" "Was too much expected?" "Did the employee understand the duty?" "Did the employee have proper training to do the job?" "Is the criticism fair, or is it influenced by bias?" Objectivity enables discussion of the employee's mistakes to be constructive. Willingness of the supervisor to accept accountability for mistakes will make the employee more willing to shoulder responsibility.

**Make sure the employee has the same understanding of the job that the supervisor has.** Employees job performance cannot be judged fairly if they have not fully understood the duties of the position. Let the employee do some of the talking. It may be found that the employee was not aware of responsibility for certain job duties for which the supervisor is claiming neglect.

**Get down to cases.** Vague generalities don't work. Be specific. Explain in precise language where the employee is falling short, and what can be done to correct mistakes. Make sure the employee understands precisely what standards are expected to be met.

**Criticize the work, not the person.** Avoid being personal when discussing an employee's job performance. There are certain exceptions to this advice, e.g. If the attitude of the employee is affecting their job competence.

**Don't laugh it off.** Some supervisors try to hide criticism behind humor. This is a mistake. If confrontation is necessary to improve performance and competence than the seriousness must be conveyed as well. An employee's competence at the job is very serious both to the employee and to the supervisor. Supervisors who confront with constructive criticism will often earn the respect of their employees.

**Comment on improvements.** If an employee corrects a shortcoming that has been criticized, comment on the improvement. This will encourage the employee to continue in excellence and improve their response to future corrections.

**Don't be a debater.** The supervisor is the final judge of an employee's job performance. This doesn't mean to cut off all discussion. Let the employee state a point of view, and if correct, say so. Don't permit the discussion to turn into an argument.

**Don't compare.** Comparisons are odious. This is especially true in discussing job performance. An employee may be willing to accept criticism of the deficiencies, but they may be resentful if another individual is pointed out as an example to be followed.

**Emphasize strong points.** The skillful leader plays up the strength of subordinates. It's better for a worker to develop special talents and skills than to spend the entire time trying to correct weaknesses. Point out an employee's deficiencies and help try to minimize them but keep things in balance. If concentration is entirely on the negative, little will be accomplished in developing the positive. A checklist for performance evaluation is included in this chapter as **Exhibit 5.11**.

## Analyzing Poor Performance

Many supervisors have had to face the problem of an employee performing at an unacceptable level. Such a situation is the true test of a good supervisor because the way in which the problem is handled may very well affect the life of the employee. The causes of poor performance are too numerous to detail, but they can be grouped into three categories: the employee, the supervisor, or the situation. Determining the exact cause of poor performance and taking appropriate action are very important in maintaining the efficiency of district operations. The following is a very general discussion of the causes of poor performance.

**The employee.** Outside forces, such as financial pressures, family or health problems can be responsible for poor performance. The cause should be determined, and professional help sought, if necessary. Perhaps the employee is careless or negligent. Perhaps the job itself is beyond the current capabilities of the employee. In such a case, additional training may be the answer.

**The supervisor.** Has the supervisor upheld their responsibility to the employee? Did the supervisor adequately determine training needs? Has the supervisor maintained their periodic check of the employee's performance and suggested improvements? Have the requirements of the position been adequately explained to the employee?

**The situation.** Do conditions exist on the job that preclude acceptable performance or are beyond the control of the employee? Were standards set too high? Does the job hold a challenge for the employee?

Regardless of the cause for poor performance, the reason should be determined, and appropriate action taken.

## EXHIBIT 5.1 CHECKLIST FOR DEVELOPING A POSITION DESCRIPTION

ITEM	COMPLETED
1. Assign responsibility for writing the position description to the district personnel manager or personnel committee.	_____
2. State title and purpose of the position	_____
3. State duties of position by listing each major duty and its performance requirements	_____
4. State who will provide supervision for the position. Remember to use position titles and not specific names.	_____
5. State how employee will be evaluated and by whom.	_____
6. Provide copies to the District Board for approval.	_____
7. Provide a copy to the state conservation agency and or grant funding source for review and comment.	_____

## **EXHIBIT 5.2**

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION FORMAT**

<b>TITLE</b>	The title should be based on the function of the position, i.e., an employee who is assigned all the manager responsibilities of the district and some secretarial and or technical responsibility should be called the District Director.
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	The introduction section should reflect broad general functional areas of the position for the district, i.e., management, secretarial, technician.
<b>DUTIES &amp; RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	The Section should layout, in broad terms, the duties and responsibilities of the position. The tasks should be unique to this position and should not reflect detailed action.
<b>Supervision</b>	This statement describes who supervises the responsibilities of this position, if any.
<b>Performance Review</b>	This section states who does the performance evaluation of this position, what is evaluated, and when.
<b>Education/ Experience:</b>	List required education/experience needed for the position.
<b>Special Requirements:</b>	List any specific licenses, certificates or other requirements for the position advertised.



## EXHIBIT 5.3 ACTION VERBS

administers	manages
answers	operates
applies	orders
approves	organizes
assurers	oversees
attends	plans
calculates	posts
checks	prepares
classifies	presents
computes	provides
coordinates	schedules
directs	selects
educates	serves
ensures	studies
files	supervises
instructs	totals
leads	transmits
maintains	types

## **EXHIBIT 5.4      POSITION DESCRIPTION EXAMPLE- DISTRICT DIRECTOR**

**TITLE:**                      **DISTRICT DIRECTOR**

**INTRODUCTION:**      This position is that of a District Director responsible for performing the day to day coordination and direction of the Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District.

- DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:**
1. In cooperation with various federal, state and local agencies assess the need for conservation work within the district and develop actions and programs to meet needs.
  2. Prepares a draft annual plan of work and a proposed budget for review by the district board.
  3. Identifies sources and recommends actions to the board to secure operating funds for the district.
  4. Identifies sources and recommends actions to the board to secure the needed personnel for district operations.
  5. Maintains a cooperative relationship with all natural resource agencies operating within the district.
  6. Supervises and directs the work of district personnel.
  7. Initiates and directs a public information program through individual Contacts, tours, newspaper, radio, TV, district newsletter, public appearances and civic groups, public schools, youth groups and other avenues.
  8. Responsible for the proper maintenance and use of all District equipment and facilities.
  9. Coordinates request for district assistance with NRCS and other appropriate natural resource agencies.
  10. Keeps abreast of all federal, state and local laws that affect the conservation work within the district.
  11. Prepares and administers budget, reports and audits.
  12. Keeps district board informed of actions taken, trends in conservation work that appear to be developing, and issues in which the district may have an interest or wish to become involved.
  13. Compiles background information to facilitate the decision making and policy setting function of the district.

14. Coordinates district involvement and assistance in a variety of programs and activities with Natural Resources Conservation Service, North Carolina Division of Soil and Water Conservation and others.
15. Assures compliance with Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.
16. Acts as Liaison between County Government and District Board.
17. Administers and applies for grants.
18. All duties and actions taken by the incumbent of this position while on official duty will be performed in a safe and healthful manner and will be of a nature to reflect favorably on the Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District.

**SUPERVISION:** This position works independently of direct day-to-day supervision. Policy and program direction are received from the district board.

**PERFORMANCE REVIEW:** Your performance of each duty in this position will be evaluated against the requirements developed for your position. A formal review will be completed by the district board on a yearly basis during the month of July and will be discussed with you. Your performance rating is an overall evaluation of your performance in the judgment of your supervisor. It will be the basis for any merit pay increases granted by the district board.

**EDUCATION/ EXPERIENCE:** Minimum 4-year degree in a related field. Bachelor's or higher degree will satisfy the required knowledge and abilities. A list of courses includes but not limited to include: political science, regional planning, agricultural field, economics, public administration, sociology, landscape architecture, natural resource management and business administration. Technical courses of study include: Biology, soil science, engineering, forestry and soil conservation.

## **EXHIBIT 5.5      Position Description Example- Conservation Planning Specialist**

**TITLE:** Conservation Planning Specialist

**INTRODUCTION:** This position develops environmental management plans to enhance and conserve natural resources including wildlife, soils, water, plants and air.

**DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Provides technical assistance to cooperators.
2. Writes conservation plans to manage ecosystems.
3. Provides technical information for district policy.
4. Assists with design and construction of best management practices.
5. Conducts onsite inspections after completion of construction to determine degree of compliance with written plans.
6. Oversees cost share programs.
7. Supervises other technical staff.
8. Prepares and presents conservation programs to schools, churches, civic groups, government officials developers and engineers.
9. All duties and actions taken by the incumbent of this position while on official duty will be performed in a safe and healthful manner and will be of a nature to reflect favorably on the Broad River Conservation District.

**SUPERVISION:** This position is under the daily supervision of the District Director. This position provides daily technical supervision of subordinate technical staff.

**PERFORMANCE REVIEW:** Your performance of each duty in this position will be evaluated against the requirements developed for your position. A formal review will be completed by your supervisor on a yearly basis during the month of July and

will be discussed with you. Your performance rating is an overall evaluation of your performance in the judgment of your supervisor. It will be the basis for any merit pay increases granted by the district board.

**EDUCATION/  
EXPERIENCE**

Four or more years of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's degree with a major study in environmental science, agronomy, natural resource conservation or another related field with a minor or option in communication or education.

**SPECIAL  
REQUIREMENTS:**

Must be a Certified Conservation Planner or able to acquire within 3 years of hire.

## **EXHIBIT 5.6            Position Description Example-District Engineer**

**TITLE:**                            District Engineer

**INTRODUCTION:**            This Position performs technical work in research, development, test design or other engineering functions

**DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Interprets engineering and architectural plans and specifications.
2. Provides technical and engineering assistance to cooperators.
3. Provides technical information for district policy.
4. Develops and maintains resource inventories.
5. Assist with report writing and conservation plan development.
6. Maintains personal contact with district cooperators.
7. Performs technical work in research, development, tests, designs and approves installation of practices.
8. Uses engineering formulas and measurement systems In the field.
9. Communicates effectively with technicians, mechanics, contractors and district cooperators.
10. All duties and actions taken by the incumbent of this position while on official duty will be performed in a safe and healthful manner and will be of a nature to reflect favorably on the Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District.

**SUPERVISION:**            This position is under the daily supervision of the District Director. This position provides daily technical supervision of subordinate technical staff.

**PERFORMANCE:**            Your performance of each duty in this position will be  
**REVIEW:**                            evaluated against the requirements developed for your position. A formal review will be completed by your

Supervisor on a yearly basis during the month of July and will be discussed with you. Your performance rating is an overall evaluation of your performance in the judgement of your supervisor. It will be the basis for any merit pay increase granted by the District Board.

**EDUCATION/  
EXPERIENCE:**

Education and experience includes the degree and scope of the candidates' knowledge, skills and abilities which can be brought to bear upon duties of the position.

**SPECIAL  
REQUIREMENTS:**

Applicants must be a Certified Professional Engineer.

## **EXHIBIT 5.7**

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION EXAMPLE- NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATIONIST**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

This position performs professional and scientific work to best meet present and future landowners and land users' needs by managing their natural resources.

### **DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Works and advises landowners to develop soil and water conservation plans for landowners and land users.
2. Works and advises landowners to assist with drainage issues, soil testing and other natural resource concerns.
3. Works and advises officials of a soil and water conservation district to develop a comprehensive soil and water conservation program which serves several communities.
4. Works and advises government agencies or private groups to develop broad plans and recommendations for the development of local natural resources.
5. Manages soil and water conservation programs.
6. Works with educational programs performed by the soil and water district.
7. Communicates effectively with technicians, contractors and land users.
8. All duties and actions taken by the incumbent of this position while on official duty will be performed in a safe and healthful manner and will be of a nature to reflect favorably on the Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District.

### **SUPERVISION:**

This position is under the daily supervision of the District Director. This position provides daily technical supervision of subordinate technical staff.



**PERFORMANCE  
REVIEW:**

Your performance of each duty in this position will be evaluated against the requirements required developed for your position. A formal review will be completed by your supervisor on a yearly basis during the month of July. And will be discussed with you. Your performance rating is an overall evaluation of your performance in the judgement of your supervisor. It will be the basis for any merit pay increase granted by the district board.

**EDUCATION/  
EXPERIENCE:**

Four years of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's degree or higher. With a major study in soil conservation or one of the closely related Natural resources or agricultural areas such as agronomy, forestry, wildlife biology, or regional planning.

## **EXHIBIT 5.8**

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION EXAMPLE- SOIL CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN**

### **TITLE:**

Soil Conservation Technician

### **INTRODUCTION:**

This position performs technical work to apply knowledge of natural resource methods, techniques and practices to agricultural land uses.

### **DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Gives advice to farmers on installation and maintenance of best management practices.
2. Collects planning data for use in conservation planning.
3. Performs follow-up visits with landowners and land users to further advise or assist in the installation or maintenance of conservation practices.
4. Maintains check out notes along with other documentation of completion of work.
5. Provides guidance on waste management and record keeping meeting state and federal requirements.
6. Works closely with landowners and land users to manage stormwater.
7. Provides technical assistance in taking soil samples and assists with soil test result interpretations.

### **SUPERVISION:**

This position is under the daily supervision of the District Director.

### **PERFORMANCE REVIEW:**

Your performance of each duty in this position will be evaluated against the requirements developed for your position. A formal review will be completed by your supervisor on a yearly basis during the month of July and will be discussed with you. Your performance rating is an overall evaluation of your performance in the judgement of your supervisor. It will be the basis for any merit pay increase granted by the district board.

**EDUCATION/  
EXPERIENCE:**

Applicants must have basic experience or education with farming operations, equipment and terminology that allow development of skill in installing best management practices.

## EXHIBIT 5.9

## POSITION DESCRIPTION EXAMPLE- ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST

**TITLE:**

Administrative Specialist

**INTRODUCTION:**

This position performs or supervises miscellaneous office management and clerical duties.

**DUTIES &  
RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Compiles District meeting packets for district board meetings.
2. Maintains records and files.
3. Makes traveling arrangements for supervisors and staff.
4. Assembling and distributing information.
5. Performs outreach on social media, develops news articles and writes newsletters.
6. Maintains local, state and federal filing systems including publications and reports.
7. Gathers and compiles detailed information to prepare a variety of complex and specialized reports.

**SUPERVISION:**

This position is under the daily supervision of the District Director.

**PERFORMANCE  
REVIEW:**

Your performance of each duty will be evaluated against the requirements developed for your position. A formal Review will be completed by your supervisor on a yearly basis during the month of July. And will be discussed with you. Your performance rating is an overall evaluation of your performance in the judgement of your supervisor. It will be the basis for any merit pay increase granted by the district board.

**EDUCATION/  
EXPERIENCE:**

Education or experience required that show ability to use word processing and general clerical work with administrative work above trainee level.

## **EXHIBIT 5.10**

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION EXAMPLE- EDUCATION COORDINATOR**

**TITLE:**

Education Coordinator

**INTRODUCTION:**

This position is to research and develop efficient ways to communicate with participants and potential participants in district educational programs.

**DUTIES &  
RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Creates effective teaching materials, props and visual aids.
2. Visits school classrooms to deliver conservation Messages.
3. Helps plan and host district field days and conservation awards banquets.
4. Plays a major role in developing and implementing area Envirothon's.
5. Coordinates local education contests.
6. Leads and manages district volunteer programs involving all facets of volunteer recruitment and recognition.

**SUPERVISION:**

This position is under the daily supervision of the District Director.

**PERFORMANCE  
REVIEW:**

Your performance of each duty will be evaluated against the requirements developed for your position. A formal Review will be completed by your supervisor on a yearly basis during the month of July. And will be discussed with you. Your performance rating is an overall evaluation of your performance in the judgement of your supervisor. It will be the basis for any merit pay increase granted by the district board.

**EDUCATION/  
EXPERIENCE:**

Experience or education enabling the applicant to be able to create and set up a working filing system to

effectively manage education files and to interpret county natural resource maps and soil surveys. Abilities to create lesson plans that meet schools needs while meeting the districts goals and objectives.

**SPECIAL**  
**REQUIREMENTS:**


Must be a Certified N.C. Environmental Educator or able to acquire within 3 years of hire.

## **EXHIBIT 5.11 CHECKLIST FOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS**

### **ITEM**

1. Develop objective performance standards in quantitative and qualitative terms. These standards should measure what the person does not know, not what they are, or know.
2. Each duty in the job description should have a corresponding performance standard.
3. Standards should be reviewed and agreed to by both the employee and the employer.
4. Establish when the performance reviews are to take place.
5. Evaluation must be performed by those most familiar with the employees' work. Whether it be the District Director, District Supervisor, County Manager, or a combination of the above.
6. Performing the evaluation:
  - a. Prepare for discussion review of job description, performance standards, and gather facts.
  - b. Arrange a time and place for the evaluation.
  - c. Open discussion in a friendly, comfortable atmosphere.
  - d. Clearly state the purpose of the meeting.
  - e. Ask the employee to discuss their responsibilities.
  - f. Discuss each job duty in detail, given necessary praise and admonition.
  - g. Developed jointly, the next performance standards.
  - h. Developed jointly, plans for improvement.
  - i. Document the results of the evaluation and place a copy in the employee's file.
  - j. Follow Human Resources Policy if applicable.
  - k. Opportunity for self-evaluation.

# EXHIBIT 5.12 EXAMPLE EMPLOYEE EVALUATION FORM

	<b>COUNTY OF LINCOLN</b>		
<b>PERFORMANCE EVALUATION RECORD</b>			
DATE:	[Redacted]		
EMPLOYEE NAME	[Redacted]	SS # XXX-XX-	[Redacted]
POSITION TITLE	[Redacted]		
GRADE/PAY RATE	[Redacted]	PROBATIONARY STATUS	[Redacted]
		REGULAR STATUS	[Redacted]
DEPT. NAME	[Redacted]		
EVALUATOR'S NAME	[Redacted]	TITLE	[Redacted]
EVALUATOR'S NAME	[Redacted]	TITLE	[Redacted]

The Performance Evaluation System was adopted by the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners on  
December 18, 1989 and became effective January 1, 1990.  
This instrument is a tool for the performance evaluation of all regular County employees.

LIST ANY DOCUMENTATION ATTACHED TO THIS EVALUATION. ALL DOCUMENTATION MUST BE SIGNED AND DATED.

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]



## PERFORMANCE FACTORS

**Superior**  
**Above Expected**  
**Expected**  
**Needs Improvement**  
**Unacceptable**  
**Not Applicable**

1	<b>QUALITY.</b> Level of excellence attained in meeting unit standards					
	- Accuracy and thoroughness, obtaining the right results					
	- Exercises judgement, decision-making					
	- Support of unit activities, goals					
	- Supports implementation of new activities, changes, ideas					
	- Communications, orally and/or in writing					
2	<b>QUANTITY.</b> Amount of work compared with usual job requirements					
	- Completion of work on time, meets deadlines					
	- Completes assignments and attains goals					
	- Rate of productivity					
	- Stays on schedule					
3	<b>WORK HABITS:</b> Adherence to standards, judgement, dependability, persistency, planning and organizing work, general habits as they affect the day to day work.					
	- Works with minimal supervision					
	- Willingness to perform assigned duties					
	- Proper notification for absences, personal needs					
	- Safety, accidents, citations					
	- Adherence to orders, directives, procedures					
	- Care and maintenance of equipment, work areas					
	- Dependability, reliability					
4	<b>ATTENDANCE:</b> Presence on the job and its effect on unit performance					
	- Record of paid and unpaid leaves					
	- Promptness					
5	<b>WORK INTEREST.</b> Attitude, offering of ideas, personal development, new work receptivity					
	- Knowledge level for job					
	- Degree of interest and enthusiasm, morale					
	- Satisfaction with job					
6	<b>RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE:</b> Ability to relate to subordinates, peers, supervisors and citizens					
	- Tactfulness, understanding and sensitivity to fellow workers and public					
	- Reception of advice and criticism from peers and supervisors					
	- Demonstrates or exhibits loyalty to unit, County					
	- Cooperativeness					
	- Complaints and response to complaints					
7	<b>PROMOTABILITY.</b> Exhibited ability to progress and assume greater responsibilities					
	- Receptive to training on the job and specialized training					
	- Capability for performing other, more complex tasks					
	- Interest in advancement					
	- Frequency of assignment to more difficult work					
	- Shows initiative in problem solving					

**INCIDENTS AND COMMENTS**

INCIDENTS AND COMMENTS	DATE OBS.	DATE DISVD.
<p>1 - QUALITY. Level of excellence attained in meeting unit standards</p>		
<p>2 - QUANTITY. Amount of work compared with usual job requirements</p>		
<p>3 - WORK HABITS: Adherence to standards, judgement, dependability, persistency, planning and organizing work, general habits as they affect the day to day work.</p>		
<p>4 - ATTENDANCE: Presence on the job and its effect on unit performance</p>		
<p>5 - WORK INTEREST. Attitude, offering of ideas, personal development, new work receptivity</p>		
<p>6 - RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE: Ability to relate to subordinates, peers, supervisors and citizens</p>		
<p>7 - PROMOTABILITY. Exhibited ability to progress and assume greater responsibilities</p>		

OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_

- OVERALL SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE - Employee always exceeds established performance standards; self-motivated and creative; team oriented; works cooperatively with the public and co-workers; presents a positive image of the County; excellent working knowledge of regulations regarding County government; organized and thorough researching and analyzing situations and recommending the best solution; sets and accomplishes goals well beyond what is expected of classification; seeks employment growth and development through training and educational opportunities and is dedicated to the County and its operations. All ratings should be at "Above Expected" or "Superior" level with the majority being "Superior"
- OVERALL ABOVE EXPECTED PERFORMANCE - Employee usually and considerably exceeds established performance requirements or performs unusual or special assignments at a level that is expected of higher classifications. Supervision rarely required even for non-routine tasks. All dimensions should be rated at the "Expected" level with the majority as "Above Expected".
- OVERALL EXPECTED PERFORMANCE - Employee usually performs well within the range of expected performance. Little supervision is required in the completion of routine assignments. There can be no more than 4 factors needing improvement.
- OVERALL PERFORMANCE NEEDS IMPROVEMENT - Employee performs below the expected level a significant part of the time or meets minimal performance requirements. Closer supervision is required, more than for other employees in the same classification performing similar work. An employee whose overall performance rating falls in the "Needs Improvement" area will be placed on an Improvement Program. Without improvement, actions may be taken against the employee.
- OVERALL UNACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE - Employee rarely, if ever, performs at the expected level; excessive supervision is required. An overall rating of Unacceptable requires placement on 90-day notice with demotion or termination resulting unless performance improves.

Explanation (must be completed) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that I have had an opportunity to discuss this evaluation with my supervisor. I understand that signing this form does not necessarily imply agreement and that I may add any comments. I understand that this evaluation may be used as a basis for making salary adjustments but that no particular adjustment is implied by my overall performance rating.

Employee Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

This evaluation is based on my observation, knowledge of employee's performance and review of applicable information.

Evaluator's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I have reviewed this evaluation and agree with the ratings \_\_\_\_\_ Attached comments yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

Dept. Manager Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Processed by- \_\_\_\_\_  
Human Resource Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by- \_\_\_\_\_  
County Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approval  Disapproval

# 6

## Memorandum of Agreements (MOA)

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## INTRODUCTION

Memorandums of Understanding are authorized by members of the conservation partnership and any partnering entities to define the working relationship between entities. A key MOAs is the one that exists between the district, the county, the Division, and NRCS. Districts should maintain copies of MOAs on file and be familiar with the components of the MOA. See **Exhibit 6.1** for an example of an agreement between partnerships for how the District operates day to day.

Memorandums also can be created between Counties, cities and municipalities for services provided by Districts such as enforcement of Sediment and Erosion Control. See **Exhibit 6.2** for an example.

Memorandums can be written to explain the working relationship between County Government and Soil and Water Conservation Districts. See **Exhibit 6.3** for such an agreement.

# EXHIBIT 6.1 EXAMPLE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN DISTRICT AND PARTNERSHIPS

## MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE

United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

AND THE

North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services – Division of Soil and Water Conservation

AND THE

[INSERT NAME] Soil and Water Conservation District

AND [INSERT NAME] County, North Carolina

[Note: Other stakeholders and signatories may be added, as appropriate].

### I. PURPOSE

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is entered into between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (hereafter referred to as NRCS), the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services – Division of Soil and Water Conservation (hereafter referred to as the Division), the [INSERT NAME] Conservation District (hereafter referred to as the District), and the County of [INSERT NAME], North Carolina (hereafter referred to as the County) [Note: Include additional stakeholders, as appropriate]

The NRCS and [INSERT NAME] Conservation District (referred to jointly as the Parties) have common objectives of delivering technical and financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, forest stewards, and other entities to voluntarily protect, restore, and enhance the productivity of American agricultural lands. The Parties recognize the importance of natural resources, the wise use and management of these natural resources, and, as appropriate, the protection and/or development of these natural resources. This agreement is made and entered into with the objectives of:

- Continuing to support the delivery of excellent and innovative customer service;
- Strengthening and modernizing conservation delivery to optimize efficiency and effectiveness;
- Broadening our outreach to existing and new customers and partners;
- Supporting science-based decision making as close to the resource issue/opportunity as possible;
- Encouraging a voluntary approach as the primary means of accomplishing conservation goals; and
- Using sound approaches to strengthen each Party and its role in the delivery of soil, water, and related natural resource conservation across the nation.

## **II. AUTHORITIES, STATUTES, LAWS**

NRCS is authorized to cooperate and furnish assistance to the parties in the conservation of natural resources as referenced in the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, 16 U.S.C. 590; The Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, Public Law 103-354; and Secretary's Memorandum No. 1010-1, Reorganization of the Department of Agriculture, dated October 20, 1994.

The Division is authorized to enter into this agreement by the North Carolina General Statutes §139-4 and §106840 - §106-844.

The District authority is defined in Soil Conservation Districts Law, General Statutes of North Carolina §139-1 - §139-47.

The County is authorized to enter into this agreement by North Carolina General Statute §153A-11 and §160A-461 - §160A-464

## **III. BACKGROUND**

The NRCS and [INSERT NAME] Conservation District share a rich history of collaborating to deliver comprehensive technical and financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, forest stewards, and other entities to voluntarily protect, restore, and enhance natural resources.

The Soil Conservation Service was established in 1935 (renamed NRCS in 1994 to reflect its broader conservation mission). NRCS is committed to "helping people help the land." It provides assistance and resources for conservation practices that improve water and air quality, prevent erosion, restore wetlands, and enhance wildlife. NRCS's approach to mission delivery and customer service is deeply rooted in the notion that locally-led, voluntary efforts yield the most effective and productive outcomes. Locally-led conservation is the principle that farmers, ranchers, and forest stewards know their lands better than anyone else based on their personal knowledge and experience with those lands. As such, they are best positioned to make optimal decisions for the benefit of their operations, its natural resource conditions, and their communities.

The first Conservation District, Brown Creek Soil and Water Conservation District in Anson County, North Carolina, was established in 1937 to provide local leadership in natural resources management. Conservation Districts serve as the link between federal and state agency resources with the local farmers, ranchers, and forest stewards. They are responsible for promoting and carrying out their conservation programs by assisting communities and its members develop, apply, and maintain appropriate conservation practices and resource management systems. They are authorized to provide broad area planning and implementation assistance to units of government. They are a focal point for coordinating and delivering technical assistance and funding to their respective communities.

## **IV. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFIT**

In conjunction with the NRCS, the [INSERT NAME] Conservation District coordinates and implements locally led conservation plans because of their connections to Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments; private resources; and the public. The Parties agree to facilitate cooperation, collaboration, and agreement between agencies, landowners, and other stakeholders; develop comprehensive conservation plans; and bring those plans to the attention of landowners and others within the district.

In addition, the Parties recognize the importance of working together to broaden strategic assessment and planning authority under the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 for the conservation, protection, and enhancement of soil, water, and related natural resources. The Parties further recognize

that natural resources are finite and under increasing pressure from a variety of impacts. Soil, water, air, plants, animals, and energy are all addressed under the programs, initiatives, and partnership efforts of the Parties.

In order to deliver the necessary technical and financial assistance to enable locally-led, voluntary conservation, the Parties agree to adhere to the principles, roles, and responsibilities outlined in this Section of the MOA. This MOA does not affect or modify existing regulations or agency responsibilities and authorities. Moreover, this MOA does not commit either part to activities beyond the scope of their respective mission and statutory authorities.

#### A. Locally-Led, Voluntary Conservation

The Parties agree that locally-led, voluntary conservation must be driven by natural resource conservation needs, rather than by programs. Its primary focus is to identify natural resource concerns, along with related economic and social concerns. Locally-led conservation consists of a series of activities and phases that involve community stakeholders in natural resource planning, implementation of solutions, and evaluation of results:

The District will:

Assist NRCS and the North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) in promoting federal, state, and local conservation programs by participating in outreach and community education activities.

- Advocate for a strong natural resource conservation program by keeping appropriate boards, landowners, legislators, county commissioners, and other key stakeholders apprised of conservation activities within the district.
- Assemble and chair the local working group, as chartered under the State Technical Committee and authorized by 7 CFR 610, Part C, to encourage stakeholder participation to assist the District to assess and prioritize conservation needs.
  - o Encourage diverse participation in local working groups through community outreach and education, to include stakeholders from historically underserved communities.
  - o Open and advertise local working group meetings to the public.
  - o Develop the agenda and associated materials/information for local working groups.
  - o Develop and file local working group meeting records within 30 calendar days of the meetings at the local NRCS office.
  - o Adhere to local working group responsibilities and standard operating procedures, as documented in NRCS and SWCC policy (Title 440, Conservation Programs Manual).
- Develop the conservation needs assessment through broad-based community participation and in accordance with NRCS and SWCC policy and procedures. This will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the district's natural resource base and be the basis for making decisions about local priorities or policies in all local conservation programs.
- Recommend local natural resource priorities and criteria for NRCS and SWCC conservation activities and programs based on the conservation needs assessment and public input.



- Develop a District Long-Range Plan every three (3) years and an Annual Plan of Work each year. These documents must incorporate local and community inputs.
- Identify NRCS, SWCC, and other program resources, develop and implement conservation plans and natural resource systems, and evaluate/measure the technical and community impacts of solutions.
- Review and sign to acknowledge all conservation plans within the District.
- Update NRCS on activities of local and state advisory committees and community groups attended by District board members and staff.
- Cooperate and collaborate across Districts, as appropriate.

NRCS will:

- Support outreach activities and ensure the District is kept informed of NRCS activities and programs on at least a monthly basis. This includes bringing technical and financial assistance opportunities (including matching fund strategies) to the attention of the District.
- Work cooperatively to solicit and leverage community recommendations to inform priorities that guide the delivery of NRCS conservation programs.
  - o Designate a representative to participate in District meetings and events, including local working group meetings.
  - o Develop and transmit written notifications to the local working group members as to the decisions made in response to their recommendations within 90 days.
- Respond to requests from the District for technical guidance and assistance.
- Partner with local and Tribal agricultural, conservation, agency, and community groups where possible, further District natural resource conservation goals and objectives.
- Provide an annual summary of NRCS accomplishments to the District.
- Present all conservation plans within the District to the District Board of Supervisors for signed acknowledgement.

#### B. Adherence to Technical Standards

The Parties agree to the use of science-based decision-making to address local natural resource issues. Implementation of sound conservation plans and practices will strengthen each party, as well as their roles in the delivery of soil and water conservation.

The District will:

- Adhere to Federal, State, Local, and Tribal laws and regulations.
- Adopt NRCS and SWCC policies and procedures, including the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), and other science-based technical standards.
- Leverage and promote use of USDA and SWCC technologies and applications, as appropriate.
- Encourage and support acquisition of conservation practice job approval authority for its personnel based on employee knowledge, skill and ability level, and within applicable laws and guidelines.

- Participate in local, state, and national opportunities for policy, program, and project development.
- Develop a plan for training its employees and encourage them to attend available training sessions to maintain their knowledge, skills, and abilities related to conservation planning and practice Inventory & Evaluation, design, layout, checkout, and certification. NRCS will:
  - Develop, update, and disseminate technical standards, policies, and procedures.
  - Seek input and comment from communities on natural resource conservation policies and issues.
  - Inform the District and communities when pending statutes, laws, regulations, policies, or procedures may have a significant impact on the community.
  - Develop and provide access to USDA technologies and applications to facilitate shared standards, as appropriate.
  - Evaluate non-NRCS employees and assign USDA/NRCS job approval authority in accordance with NRCS policy and consistent with State laws.
  - Provide USDA/NRCS engineering job approval, as based on job class and in accordance with NRCS policy and Federal, State, and local laws, regulations and codes.
  - Create and promote opportunities for the District board members and staff to participate in policy, program, and project development.
  - Provide technical or other training for conservation partnership employees in conjunction with its own training, or as separate events. Training must be consistent with and support of mission objectives of NRCS and the District. As such, the principle emphasis will be on the delivery of field-based conservation technical assistance.

### C. Data and Information Sharing

Any information furnished to NRCS under this agreement is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552). Cooperators providing technical or financial assistance under USDA programs may have access to information that must not be subsequently disclosed and may only be used for the purpose of providing that assistance.

See Appendix A, “ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR PROTECTION OF PRIVACY OF PERSONAL AND GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION RELATING TO NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE PROGRAMS.” The signatory agrees to abide by these requirements as a condition of receiving access to such information.

## V. PERSONNEL AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT

The parties recognize that natural resources conservation programs are delivered through an intergovernmental system, in which federal, state, and local governments work together.

The parties will work together to provide staffing and fiscal resources commensurate with workload, priorities, allocated funding, and expertise necessary to deliver a balanced and diversified conservation delivery framework. Staffing will be a mix of employees provided by federal, state, county, and district resources. There are certain authorities delegated to specific staff as follows:

The Department Head Will:

The parties jointly agree that the [Click here to enter text.],(Suggest Position Only, Not Persons Name) Position Title,] will serve as the [Click here to enter text.] Soil and Water Conservation District Department Head. The Department Head will represent the District and its employees at county meetings, conferences, and appropriate functions.

#### Personnel Management

The management of personnel will be as follows:

- a) Hiring and dismissal of district employees will be in accordance with county personnel policies or district policy when employees are not employed by the county.
- b) The management of NRCS personnel is the responsibility of NRCS.
- c) Hiring, supervision, development, evaluation, and dismissal of county employees will be done in accordance with applicable law and county personnel policies.
- d) The management of county employees is the responsibility of the [Click here to enter text.] District Board of Supervisors. In the interest of facilitating these responsibilities, the Supervisory Soil Conservationist (SSC) is delegated the authority for:
  - 1) Technical supervision a. The Supervisory Soil Conservationist is assigned the role of Technical Supervisor for USDA Certified Planner Designation (CPD) and Job Approval Authority (JAA). As a condition of assigning USDA/NRCS CPD and JAA or for ecological sciences and engineering practices to District employees, NRCS must periodically review the technical work of these employees to assure adherence to planning and design standards and policy. NRCS Area Office personnel will also periodically review the technical work of both NRCS and District employees in the office with USDA/NRCS JAA.
  - 2) Assist in delivery of employee technical training and development.
- e) The Department Head will make recommendations to the [ Click here to enter text.] District Board of Supervisors regarding the following in accordance with county government policy:
  - 1) Recruitment and hiring of district employees.
  - 2) Employee performance evaluation, including awards, disciplinary actions, and separation.
  - 3) Leave coordination and approval.
  - 4) Certification of Time and Attendance Reports.
  - 5) Determination and approval of training requiring expenditure of district funds.
  - 6) For counties with technicians cost shared through the state's cost share programs, responsibility for documenting 1040 hours for each funded position spent per year on non-point source pollution control issues by office staff.

In the event that a county employee feels aggrieved, their recourse is according to county government personnel policy. The parties agree to work cooperatively to resolve employee grievances.

## Fiscal Management

The parties will work together to maximize available resources and actively seek funding to accomplish natural resource priorities and programs.

Each party is responsible for its own fiscal resources to include equipment, supplies, and accounts.

The Department Head and District Administrative Assistant will actively assist the district with the following:

- 1) Development of operating budgets.
- 2) Tracking of expenditures for maintaining funding accountability.
- 3) Making recommendations regarding expenditure of funds and purchases.

## VI. GENERAL PROVISIONS

### A. Period of Performance

This MOA takes effect upon the signature of the Parties and shall remain in effect until mutually modified or terminated.

### B. Amendments

This MOA may be extended or amended upon written request of either Party and the subsequent written concurrence of the other. Either of the parties may terminate this MOA with a 60-day written notice to the other.

This state-level MOA may be supplemented by a local-level MOA, if desired and mutually agreed to by the parties. The local-level MOA reflects locally developed detailed working arrangements, to include NRCS's and Conservation District's Annual Workplan and/or Plan of Operations. These may include, but are not limited to, documenting specific objectives or goals, action items, provision for documentation of accomplishments, schedule of planned events, and assignment of responsibilities.

### C. Transfer of Funding or Non-Monetary Resources

This MOA is established to document the collaborative relationship between the Parties. Nothing in this MOA shall require either Party to obligate or transfer funding, or anything of value. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Office spaces and equipment/supplies
- Vehicles and associated expenses (e.g., fuel, maintenance)
- Computers, software, and technical equipment

The transfer of funding or other resources of value among the Parties offices requires execution of a separate agreement. The appropriate instruments include:

- Cooperative Agreement (2 CFR 200.24), which allows federal agencies to transfer a thing of value to the State, local or Tribal government, or other recipient to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by law of the United States.

- Contribution Agreement (7 CFR 6962a), which is a unique statutory authority allowing NRCS to enter into an agreement with a non-federal entity that shares a mutual purpose in carrying out NRCS programs. All parties must contribute resources to the accomplishment of these objectives.
- Reimbursable Agreement (31 USC 686; PL 90-577), which allows federal agencies to provide specialized or technical services to State and local governments.

D. Other

- This MOA is not intended to, and does not create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity, by any party against the agencies, officers, or any person or organization that is party to this agreement.

All activities and programs conducted under this MOA shall be in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions contained in Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (Public Law 100-250); and other nondiscrimination statutes; namely, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. Also, they will be in accordance with regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7 CFR Part 15, subpart A), which provide that no person in the United State shall on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of an applicant or recipient receiving federal financial assistance from the Department of Agriculture or any Agency thereof.

All activities conducted under this MOA shall be in compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-690, Title V, Subtitle D).

**VII. SIGNATURES**

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

**[INSERT NAME] Soil and Water Conservation District**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Insert Name, Title]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Insert Name, Title]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Insert Date]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Insert Date]

**NCEM - NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation**

**[INSERT NAME] County, NC**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Insert Name, Title]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Insert Name, Title]

# EXHIBIT 6.2 EXAMPLE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN A DISTRICT AND MUNICIPALITIES FOR EROSION CONTROL

NORTH CAROLINA  
GASTON COUNTY

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR  
ENFORCEMENT SERVICES OF  
GASTON COUNTY SOIL EROSION  
AND SEDIMENT CONTROL  
ORDINANCE

This Agreement made and entered into on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2003, by and between **GASTON COUNTY** a corporate and political body and a subdivision of the State of North Carolina, hereafter referred to as "County", and the \_\_\_\_\_, a municipal corporation having a charter granted by the State of North Carolina, hereinafter referred to as "Municipality".

## WITNESSETH:

**WHEREAS**, Article 20 of Chapter 160A of the North Carolina General Statutes authorizes the contractual Exercise by one unit of local government for one or more other units of any administrative or governmental power, function, public enterprise, write, privilege, or immunity of local government; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Municipality has requested that the County provide enforcement services within the corporate boundaries of the Municipality for Gaston County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance; and,

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to N. C. General Statute Chapter 160A, Article 20 upon official request of the governing body of any municipality within the County, the Gaston County Board of Commissioners may by agreement exercise enforcement powers within said municipality and upon such direction may do so until such time as the Municipality governing body officially withdraws its request; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Gaston County Board of Commissioners upon approval of a resolution, and with written notice, may withdraw the offering of the service to the Municipality.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, it is agreed by the parties hereto that the County through the Gaston County Department of Natural Resources will provide enforcement services for Gaston

County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance in the corporate limits of the Municipality on the terms and conditions set forth below:

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this Agreement is to set forth the terms and conditions for the Municipality to contract with the County for enforcement services for Gaston County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance inside its corporate limits and to confer to the County the necessary geographical and subject matter jurisdiction to carry out the intent of this Agreement.
  
2. **Term.** The term of this Agreement is April 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004. This Agreement shall automatically renew each year hereafter for successive one-year terms unless terminated as provided herein.
  
3. **Responsibilities.**
  - A. **Municipality.** The Municipality agrees to:
    - (1.) Allow the County to retain any fees or fines collected in accordance with the law;
    - (2.) Defend all claims against it and its employees for incidents that occur prior to the date of this Agreement and indemnify and hold the County harmless from any judgements against it and said employees. The County agrees to defend all claims against the Municipality arising out of like incidents that occur from and after the date of this Agreement, and further agrees to indemnify and hold the Municipality harmless from any judgments against the Municipality resulting therefrom, unless the County is not at fault.
  
  - B. **County.** The County through the County Department of Natural Resources agrees to:
    - (1) Provide enforcement services for Gaston County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance;
    - (2) Seek civil and criminal enforcement of law when necessary in the County's discretion;
  
4. **Geographic and Subject Matter Jurisdiction.** To the fullest extent permitted by the laws of the State of North Carolina and the United States, the Municipality hereby grants to the County the authority to enforce the Gaston County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance as it now exists or as it may hereinafter be adopted within the Municipality's incorporated area, and the County accepts the authority herein granted and agrees fully and faithfully to perform the duties and

responsibilities implied by the acceptance of this grant subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

- 5. **Amendment.** This Agreement may only be amended in writing upon the signature of both parties. No oral agreements or resolutions shall have any effect.
  
- 6. **Entire Agreement.** This Agreement is the only agreement between the parties and contains all the terms agreed upon and replaces any previous agreements regarding the subject matter. This Agreement has no effect upon enforcement of codes or ordinances not specifically mentioned. If any part of this Agreement is held invalid such decision shall not render the document invalid.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be executed in duplicate for themselves for their duly authorized officers of the day and year first above written.

**GASTON COUNTY**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
County Manager

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk to the Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Attorney

(NAME OF MUNICIPALITY)

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk



# EXHIBIT 6.3 EXAMPLE AGREEMENT BETWEEN A DISTRICT AND MUNICIPALITIES

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

### BETWEEN THE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF NEW HANOVER COUNTY AND \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY

**WHEREAS**, the County of \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter "the County") is a body politic and corporate; and

**WHEREAS**, the \_\_\_\_\_ Soil and Water Conservation District (hereinafter "the District") is an independent governmental unit established pursuant to Article 1 of the North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 139; and

**WHEREAS**, the District and County desire that the daily operations of Soil and Water be handled by the County with Soil and Water employees becoming County employees; and

**WHEREAS**, the County has Budget, Finance, Human Resources, and Legal (including procurement, payroll, grant, and contract) ordinances, policies, procedures and practices that apply automatically to employees of New Hanover County government, its agencies, and departments; and

**THEREFORE**, the District and the County mutually agree as follows:

Section 1: Effective March 2, 2015, Soil and Water will become a County Department. The two District employees will become County employees.

Section 2: The District Board will continue to function in accordance with General Statute requirements. The Department Head shall report to the County Manager or his designee for daily operations and to the District Board for any specific duties set forth in General Statute Chapter 139.

Section 3: The County's policies including but not limited to Budget, Finance, Human Resources, and Legal policies will govern the daily operations of the Department's operation. The Department will be considered part of the County's governmental structure and will operate as such. The Agriculture Cost Share and the Community Conservation Assistance Program will be handled by and through the District.

Section 4: The District Board shall recommend to the County Manager for his approval a candidate for Soil and Water Department Head, utilizing the County Human Resources Department and County personnel policies, practice, and procedures. Personnel actions, including but not limited to the promotion, compensation, discipline, and termination of the Department Head, shall be made by the County Manager or his designee after consultation with the District Board.

Section 5: Any land held in the District's name on March 1, 2015 will remain in the District's name. Land purchased March 2, 2015 and later will become County property. If the District and the County terminate this Memorandum of Agreement, all land purchased during the existence of the agreement will be conveyed to the District.

I  
Section 6: This Memorandum of Understanding will be effective when signed by all parties involved. It will continue automatically in force from year to year until modified or terminated by written mutual agreement of the parties hereto, or upon ninety (90) days written notice by either party.

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_, NORTH CAROLINA

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, Chairman  
\_\_\_\_\_ Soil and Water Conservation District

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, County Manager  
\_\_\_\_\_ County

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved as to form/County Attorney

## Technical Oversight

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## **Introduction**

Technical oversight of District Employees varies according to the technical abilities of the employee. In some cases, district employees are supervised by a District Director, while others are supervised by other departments within the county government such as Storm Water Departments or Cooperative Extension Service. Once a decision has been reached as to who has oversight, it must be clearly understood by all employees and agency personnel who will be working together. This is accomplished by a Memorandum of Understanding. See Exhibit 6.1

Each District should encourage their staff to get all the training they can to better serve District clients. An example training plan template has been developed by the N.C. Conservation District Employee Association to assist District Staff in training needs. See Exhibit 7.1

The N.C. Conservation District Employee Association also created a guidance for District Employees to use to determine what training is needed based upon the amount of time an employee has been employed with a district. See Exhibits 7.2 – 7.6

# EXHIBIT 7.1 TRAINING PLAN TEMPLATE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Direct Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Years of Service with the District: (Circle Appropriate Time)

Six Months    One Year    Two Years    Three to Five Years    Five Years+

Job Approval Achieved in the last 12 Months:

	<u>FOTG Code</u>	<u>BMP</u>	<u>Class</u>
1.			
2.			
3.			

Most popular land use assistance requested for the District in order of importance with #I being most important.

Example: Pasture Management

- I.
- II.
- III.

Training required as a first step to obtain Job Approval Authority (JAA) for the above noted land use assistance requested and Circle Class Desired. Refer to the link below for the Professional Conservation Employees Program (PCEP) for suggested tiered timeline.

[http://www.ncagr.gov/swc/professional\\_development/documents/finaltechnicaltrainingplanteplate07\\_13\\_11.pdf](http://www.ncagr.gov/swc/professional_development/documents/finaltechnicaltrainingplanteplate07_13_11.pdf)

## Engineered BMP Practices

	<u>FOTG Code</u>	<u>BMP</u>	<u>Design Class Desired</u>	<u>Construction Class Desired</u>
Example:	578	Ford Stream Crossing	I, II, (III), IV, V	I, II, III, (IV), V

- I. a.
- b.
- c.

II. a.

b.

c.

III a.

b.

c.

**Ecological BMP Practices**

	<u>FOTG Code</u>	<u>BMP</u>	<u>Class Desired</u>
Example:	342	Critical Area Planting	I, II, (III)

I. a.

b.

c.

II. a.

b.

c.

III. a.

b.

c.

List other specialized training requested;

Example: Reading Truss Plans; Surveying; Cultural Resources Training, etc.

1.

2.

3.

## EXHIBIT 7.2 PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATION EMPLOYEE PROGRAM (PCEP) TECHNICAL TRAINING PLAN

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
<b>Position:</b>	<b>Work Unit:</b>
<b>Period:</b>	
<b>Supervisor:</b>	
<b>List here the employee's technical/admin resource advisors &amp; mentors:</b>	

### **Background**

North Carolina's conservation partnership has a strong heritage of providing quality assistance to these states land owners and citizens. Because of this, conservation districts have earned a high level of trust with land owners and this trust is the backbone of an effective delivery system that is envied by other agencies and organizations. To a large degree, the future of conservation districts is directly tied to continued quality assistance provided through employees.

In order to enhance the professionalism and accountability of the conservation partnerships employees, a committee was formed to develop a training guide to be used across the state. The committee consist of district supervisors, as well as employees from soil and water conservation districts, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service . The vision of this committee is to have a statewide training template To guide the training and development of employees within the conservation partnership. The committee identified four employee job areas for focus; managerial, administrative, technical and educational. Training plans within each of these focal areas will consist of two tiers to guide the training process. Tier 1 is geared toward partnership employees with zero to two years experience and Tier 2 for those with two to five years experience. The committee realizes that each employee's training plan should be tailored to meet the specific employees and or counties needs but many of the items listed are applicable to all employees.

The concept of a statewide training tool has evolved into the Professional Conservation Employees Program (PCEP). The PCEP has been introduced at various meetings across the state during the past 12 months and the committee has now completed the first of four training plan templates (technical). The conservation partnership will ensure it's future success by being

proactive and supporting the employee development. Below is the PCEP training plan for employees with technical responsibilities.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP**

Review the following NRCS publications;

- “Challenging Careers in the Natural Resources Conservation Service”
- “In Partnership With People in a Healthy Land” (to learn about NRCS and its mission)
- “Helping You Help Your Land” (to understand conservation from the landowner's perspective)

Review the questions and answers in “The Guidebook on the Law and Practice of Soil and Water Conservation In North Carolina” (Edited by Milton S. Heath , junior -2004) to learn about Conservation Districts and the Conservation Partnership in North Carolina.

Read the article “Son of the Soil” in the magazine “Wildlife in North Carolina” (January 2002) To learn about Hugh Hammond Bennett and his legacy of soil conservation.

Meet with one or more District supervisors to find out what their interest is in conservation and what they feel are the most critical conservation issues that need to be addressed in the County.

Attend a District Board meeting. Local Work Group meeting or other meeting where strategic planning is discussed to gain a better understanding of the District's conservation objectives and workload priorities.

Attend a Area District Issues Meeting and/or an Area Spring or Fall Meeting to gain a better understanding of the issues affecting the partnership across the Area.

Develop an organizational chart to get a clear understanding of how NRCS, SWCD's, and the Division of Soil and Water Conservation are set up. Review the chart with your supervisor and the District Conservationist.

Put together a list of partner agencies and organizations in the work unit and introduce yourself to each one.

Work on developing and updated community map for used by the office staff.

## **GETTING TO KNOW THE WORK UNIT**

Identify the important agricultural land uses in the Work Unit and take photographs that illustrate how the farming operations associated with those land uses affect soil and water resources.



Identify the grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees that are typically found on farmland in the Work Unit.

Review the soil survey information for the Work Unit and compile the soils information for three conservation plans. Use the information to identify soil conditions in the field.

Locate specific tracts of land on a topographic map , an aerial photograph, an a soils map.

Become familiar with all of the different conservation programs that are used in the Work Unit and review Participant contracts to identify the most commonly planned practices for each Program.

Accompany other members of the staff on planning and follow up with visits with farmers and record the notes of those visits.

Work with the District Conservationist, District Staff and others as needed in developing conservation plans in different parts of the county. This includes pulling topographic Maps and aerial photos, taking notes while meeting with the landowner, photographing the resource concerns, and completing other task associated with data collection during the planning process.

### **ENHANCING TECHNICAL SKILLS**

Gain an understanding of the Commission Rules and Job Approval Authority Chart and become familiar with the Field Office Technical Guide And what can be found in different sections.

Recognize the components of a conservation plan and be able to explain the relationship between the contents of a particular plan and what can be found on site.

Gather data in the field, calculate soil loss, and identify alternatives for reducing soil loss on three sites in the field.

Gain experience in setting up and using a surveying instrument on three sites, using a rod on three sites, and recording the survey notes for three sites.

Assist other members of staff in checking out completed practices and documenting the “As Builts”.

Take before an after photographs of sites in the field to document the condition of the site prior to treatment and the improvement of the site after treatment.

Interview a Landowner who has been successful in implementing conservation practices and prepare a narrative which highlights the land owners accomplishments (make the narrative available for inclusions in a news article, newsletter, PowerPoint, or other presentation).

Work with the District Conservationist, district staff or others as needed in evaluating resource concerns and the conservation treatments that are needed in fields, that are being considered for cost-sharing through a Conservation Program, and assist in ranking the applications for that Program.

Assist in the installation of specific practices that are under construction as part of a Program contract.

Gain exposure to NRCS and other available software used in conservation planning.

Attend appropriate technical training classes that will help you in learning your position, And prepare for and attend “Basics of Conservation Planning.”

Work towards gaining Job Approval Authority for the six most commonly applied cost-shared practices in the County as identified by the District Supervisors, and report the progress you are making in gaining JAA at each District Board Meeting.

### **OPPORTUNITIES TO DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP**

Participate fully in overseeing the installation of a comprehensive best management practice or project . Document installation of the project by taking pictures of each phase as it is installed. Prepare a document with photographs and narrative.

Use comprehensive projects to help train other employees who have never worked on these types of projects.

After a project is complete, visit all of the sites in the field where the remaining practices in the landowner’s contract are to be installed. Document the landowner’s progress in completing the practices, and review with the landowner the schedule for installation of each practice to ensure that the practice installation remains on schedule.

### **SUGGESTED TRAINING TIERED TIMELINE (as applicable):**

#### **Six months:**

History of Soil and Water Conservation Districts  
Knowledge of General Statutes: (GS139; administrative rules)  
Excellent customer service skills  
NCASWCD Strategic Plan  
Districts Annual Plan  
County Policy's

#### **One Year**

Familiarity with County Maps; Aerial photographs  
Topographical Maps

RUSLE & RUSLE2

PLAT

Proficient with County soil survey/soils

NLEW

Cultural Resources Training

State Cost-Share Program Policies (NCACSP & CCAP) , planning and field assessment

State easement program policy's (CREP , ADFP/farmland preservation), planning and field assessment

### **Two Year**

Proficient in survey and note keeping

Job Approval on two non-engineering and two engineering agricultural BMP'S

Job Approval for two non agricultural BMP's

GIS/GPS field use

Drainage Erosion Inventory and Evaluation

Public Presentations

Proficient use of computers

Conservation Field Assessment in Planning (not just Toolkit or NCACSP)

Basic Conservation Planning

Nutrient Management Training

Waste Utilization Planning including development of waste utilization plan

Pond Construction Preliminary Assessment

Technical Specialists Designation for animal waste management (SWC Commission)

### **Three-Five Years**

How to diversify a locally lead District Program

How to create/cultivate relationships with local and state officials

Grant Writing

Watershed & Buffer Rules

Ag Cost Share Job Approval for 5-10 additional engineering NCACSP BMP'S

CCAP job approval on the main BMP's used in that County optional

Environmental Educational Programs

Knowledge of Federal Cost Share Programs

Job Approval on all non-engineering BMP's used in your county

Conservation Marketing Skills

## EXHIBIT 7.3 PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATION EMPLOYEE PROGRAM (PCEP) ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING PLAN

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
<b>Position:</b>	<b>Work Unit:</b>
<b>Period:</b>	
<b>Supervisor:</b>	
<b>List here the Employee's Technical/Admin Resource &amp; Mentors:</b>	

### BACKGROUND (purpose of plan)

North Carolina's conservation partnership has a strong heritage of providing quality assistance to the state's landowners and citizens. Because of this, conservation districts have earned a high level of trust with landowners, and this trust is the backbone of an effective delivery system that is envied by other agencies and organizations. To a large degree, the future of conservation districts is directly tied to continued quality assistance provided through all employees.

In order to enhance the professionalism and accountability of the conservation partnerships employees, a committee was formed to develop a training guide to be used across the state. The committee consists of District Supervisors, as well as employees from Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The vision of this committee is to have a statewide training template to guide the training and development of employees within the conservation partnership. The committee identified four employee job areas for focus: managerial, administrative, technical and educational.

Training plans for administrative professional employees will consist of three tiers to guide the training process. Tier 1 is geared toward partnership employees with up to 1-year experience; Tier 2 for those with 2 years of experience; and Tier 3 for those with 5 years of experience. The committee realizes that each employee's training plan should be tailored to meet the specific employee's and/or District's needs, but many of the items listed are applicable to all

The concept of a state-wide training tool has evolved into the Professional Conservation Employee Program (PCEP). The (PCEP) has been introduced at various meetings across the state during the past 12 months, and the committee has now completed the first of four training plan

templates (technical). The conservation partnership will ensure its future success by being proactive and supporting employee development. Below is the PCEP training plan for employees with administrative responsibilities.

### **UNDERSTANDING THE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP**

Review the following NRCS publications:

- “Challenging Careers in the Natural Resources Conservation Service”
- “In Partnership with People in a Healthy Land” (to learn about NRCS and its mission)
- “Helping you Help Your Land “ (to understand conservation from the landowner's perspective)

Review the questions and answers in “The Guidebook on the Law and Practice of Soil and Water Conservation in North Carolina” (Edited by Milton S. Heath, Jr.-2004) to learn about Conservation Districts and the Conservation Partnership in North Carolina.

View all four modules of the CD “The North Carolina Conservation Partnership” presented by the North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. (September 2011)

Read the article “Son of the Soil” in the magazine “Wildlife in North Carolina” (January 2002) to learn about Hugh Hammond Bennett and his legacy of soil conservation.

Meet with one or more District Supervisors to find out what their interest is in conservation and what they feel are the most critical conservation issues that need to be addressed in the county.

Attend a District Board Meeting, Local Work Group Meeting, or other meeting where strategic planning is discussed to gain a better understanding of the District’s conservation objectives and workload priorities.

Attend an Area District Issues Meeting, Area Spring and/or a Fall Meeting to gain a better understanding of the issues affecting partnerships across the Area.

Review organizational charts for the local District, County, Division of Soil and Water Conservation and Natural Resources Conservation Service. Discuss these charts with your supervisor.

Review a list of District partner agencies and organizations and become familiar to each one.

### **COMMIT TO THE STANDARDS OF INTEGRITY ADOPTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS (LAAP).**

## **SKILL LEVELS**

Skill set needed after one year of service:

- Proficient in standard office etiquette
- Good oral and written communication skills with concentration on correct grammar and punctuation
- Proofreading skills
- Good telephone skills
- Excellent customer service skills with emphasis on professionalism
- General computer skills (PowerPoint, Excel, Word, Outlook)
- Proficient organizational skills
- Working knowledge of board meetings and minute taking
- General accounting skills
- Knowledge of all programs offered by District, including technical and educational
- Maintain appointment calendar and designated meetings calendar
- Basic Training Course for Soil and Water Conservation Supervisors, UNC-CH Institute of Government
- Good listening skills
- District filing protocol
- Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Proficient in time management skills
- Secure/establish trust and confidence by co-workers and Board of Supervisors to execute duties as an administrative professional
- Ability to properly notice meeting and to adhere to open meetings law (e. g. Executive session; post emergency meetings)
- Ability to follow Robert's Rule of Order
- Demonstrate effective meeting skills (e.g. ability to run an effective meeting)

Skill set needed after two years of service:

- Proficient computer skills
- Proficient in business etiquette
- Working technical knowledge of programs offered through District
- Working knowledge of district's budget and physical management procedures (e.g. Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act)
- State Public Records Laws and Freedom of Information Act and other privacy policies
- Knowledge of soil and water conservation partnership and related watershed, environmental, private and nongovernmental organizations
- Working knowledge of commonly used acronyms
- Proficient in preparing business reports (e.g. Annual Reports), Correspondence, and memoranda

- Working knowledge of all forms used by District
- Knowledge of all federal, state and local government leaders, officials and related organizational structure
- Provision in preparing meeting agendas, minutes and supervisor forms
- Familiarity with counting natural resource maps and soil surveys
- Proficient in county, state, and federal policies and procedures
- Proficient in record retention in accordance with district's document retention schedule
- Effective interpersonal skills
- Proficient in environmental education and community outreach
- Positive assertiveness
- Creating rapport (using personal power to influence, not control)
- Workplace ethics
- Project management
- Proficient in teamwork skills
- Proficient in consensus decision-making
- Awareness of office politics-aiming for positive results from fair practices
- Managing upward-succeeding with one's supervisor (skills in give and take)

**Skill set needed after five years of service:**

- Proficient knowledge of budget, finance and statewide contracts
- Working knowledge of how to prepare news articles /press releases/newsletters (public relations)
- Event planning (special events)
- Ability to develop/implement project tracking system
- Participate in budget analysis and cost savings planning
- Proficient in grant writing skills
- Proficient in developing/using District Plan of Work
- Knowledge of taxes and insurance (e.g. general liability insurance; bonding of staff/district supervisors; holding of property) as required by district (e.g. stand-alone district)
- Effective office management
- Advanced communication skills
- Group facilitation skills
- Presentation skills
- Strategic planning skills
- Environmental Education Certification (for District education coordinators)
- Working knowledge of payroll withholding regulations (if necessary, for District)
- Knowledge of how to prepare and participate in a financial audit (if necessary, for district)

# Exhibit 7.4 IAAP STANDARDS OF INTEGRITY

## Standards of integrity

(International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP))

**Preamble.** IAAP members, chapters, divisions, affiliates, International Board and Headquarters Staff will exhibit the highest standards of integrity through core values; ethical representation; and, transparent demonstration of financial stewardship.

Members around the world will focus their skills, energy and commitment to excellence in support of IAAP by conducting business responsibly and in a manner that reflects favorably to the Association.

These standards will also encompass full support for the Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Statement and the IAAP Code of Conduct, with keen awareness of compliance with the law and always working from a position of trust.

### IAAP Core Values \*:

**Integrity - We demonstrate this cornerstone of our profession through honesty, accountability and high ethical standards.** We will conduct our professional activities in a manner that will reflect well upon the profession.

**Respect - We create respect within our profession an association through listening, understanding and acknowledging member feedback.** We will encourage the diversity of views, with compassion and respect for the rights of others to hold values, attitudes, and opinions that may differ from our own.

**Adaptability - We ensure the success of our association by embracing positive change and by nurturing diversity, creativity and visionary thinking.** We will encourage others to operate outside of their comfort zones, facing ambiguity with a spirit of innovation and forward thinking.

**Communication - We cultivate and maintain excellence by remaining approachable at all levels, communicating openly and building strong relationships.** It is readily accepted that information given and assessed must be based on truth, fairness and accountability. We will obey the law, performed in good faith, and seek fair outcomes.

**Commitment - We are steadfast in our goals to develop learning opportunities for career minded administrative professionals and to strengthen efficiency and effectiveness.** IAAP has a responsibility to the people it serves and shall not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate in any form of discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, language, disability or socioeconomic status.



**\*The IAAP Core Values noted in bold type are those approved by the International Board of Directors on November 1, 2008.2**

## **Ethical Business Conduct for IAAP Members**

### **Trust**

IAAP members shall:

- Maintain truthfulness and honesty, not compromising either of these for advancement, honor or personal gain.
- Encourage open communication, creativity and dedication.
- Live and work by the highest ideals by establishing, practicing and promoting professional standards.
- Share knowledge.
- Be loyal to your employer and to the ideals of confidentiality, respecting and protecting privileged information.
- Stimulate and maintain an environment of transparency.

### **Behavior**

IAAP members shall:

- Establish procedures that promote ethical behavior and hold employees, members and others accountable for their conduct.
- Recognize our behaviors and how we affect those around us.
- Respect each other, other leaders and our members through our actions and the quality of our work.
- Zealously guard against conflict of interest or its appearance.
- Ensure that others receive credit for their work and contributions.
- Take responsibility for our own errors.
- Exemplify loyalty and conscientiousness.
- Maintain dignity and poise under all circumstances.

**Ethical Business Conduct of Those Who Represent and Govern IAAP.** The International Board of Directors, Executive Director and Headquarters Staff shall act in the best interest of the association and not in their own interest or in that of another organization; And act as reasonable and prudent. They shall maintain the confidentiality of information entrusted to them from whatever source, except when disclosure is authorized or legally mandated. They shall not use confidential information for personal benefit or to benefit persons or entities outside the Association. Any known or potential conflicts of interest shall be openly communicated before considering any business transactions on behalf of IAAP.

# **EXHIBIT 7.5 PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATION EMPLOYEE PROGRAM (PCEP) EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS TRAINING PLAN**

Training plans for professional education employees will consist of three tiers to guide the training process. Tier 1 is geared toward partnership employees with up to 1 year of experience; Tier 2 for those with two years of experience; Tier 3 for those with 5 years of experience or more. The committee realizes that each employee's training plan should be tailored to meet the specific employee's and/or District's needs, especially those District Educators who wear multiple hats.

## **SKILL LEVELS**

### **TIER 1 - Skill set needed after one year of service:**

#### **Organizational Skills**

- Create and set-up a working Filing System to effectively manage education files (electronic & hard copy).
- Create and set-up a working Scheduling Calendar to track education outreach, workshops, grant deadlines, meetings, professional development trainings, etc.
- Develop a working Education Progress Spreadsheet to track and report deliverables meeting District goals and objectives (# presentations conducted, # students taught, # educators trained & # learner's educators will reach in 1 year, # students/teachers/schools entering Poster Contest, # citizens provided information, # students/teachers/schools competing in Envirothon, # educational materials distributed, etc.)
- Establish a plan & policies\* to maximize 40 work hours/week and to strengthen proficiency in time management skills.
- (*See Administrative and Technical plans for other organizational skills*)

#### **Communication Skills**

- Research and develop efficient way to communicate with potential participants in District's education programs and set-up communications system (i.e. email lists, mailing labels, telephone tree, social media, etc.)
- Learn to use computer software and clip art to create effective flyers to promote District's educational and volunteer programs and to provide certificates to District award winners and to educators and volunteers to document hours
- (*See Administrative and Technical plans for other communication skills*)

## Education Skills

- Become familiar with District's education program(s)—Poster/Essay/Computer Slide Show/Computer Poster/Public Speaking contests, Envirothon, field days, school presentations, workshops, volunteer/ scholarship/grant programs, etc.
- Become familiar with Association's —"Contests, Workshops, and Awards Handbook" – especially rules and judging criteria pertaining to those contests in which your District participates.
- Select a few of the District's education programs to lead in first year; observe Mentors leading the components that are new to you, taking copious mental and written notes or videotaping mentors if possible, to use as training videos.
- Understand and incorporate into the District's education program the Key Characteristics of Environmental Education as outlined in the NC EE Plan, Third Edition, page 7. [http://www.ee.enr.state.nc.us/ee\\_plan\\_web\\_print.pdf](http://www.ee.enr.state.nc.us/ee_plan_web_print.pdf)
- Beginning now and throughout District education career, study and apply the six themes recommended in the national Guidelines for the Preparation and Professional Development of Environmental Educators by North American Association for Environmental Education (especially Themes 1 and 2 in year one.) <http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines>
- Become familiar with and practice using a variety of instructional strategies for learner-centered lessons such as those described in the Guidelines above: hands-on observation and discovery in the environment, inquiry, cooperative learning, community-based action research and problem-solving, investigating environmental issues, service learning, simulations and models, case studies, problem-based learning, and project-based learning.
- Set-up a personal library and/or District Loan Library of EE resources by using criteria contained in the national Environmental Education Materials: Guidelines for Excellence by North American Association for Environmental Education that will shape content, technique and other aspects of instruction based on six key characteristics. <http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines>
- Learn about the NC Environmental Education Certification Program and the five required components.
- Create effective teaching materials, props and visuals as needed for District lessons, exhibits and workshops.
- Develop a \*District Policy for District's education programs—along with program description that includes answers to questions such as: How will participants register? What is minimum/maximum number of registrants? What can participants expect from District educator? What expectations does District educator have of participants? What will participants receive? Outdoors or indoors? How often can requests be made for same program or different programs?
- Develop an evaluation form and/or survey to assess your personal instruction, District's education program, and to obtain constructive feedback from participants.

### **Leadership Skills**

- Volunteer to help another District to see how they organize and run programs such as Field Days, classroom presentations, contest judging, etc.
- Volunteer as an RCW Counselor to provide guidance to participating high school students and to learn about natural resources management.
- Volunteer to help at your Area Envirothon and the NC Envirothon, serving as a “Station Guide” to see how the competitions work at each level. Volunteer for another task the next year to learn more or to assist where most needed.
- Volunteer to help at the NC Envirothon Team Advisor Workshop to learn about natural resources management and to gain ideas for preparing your District’s Envirothon teams.

### **TIER 2 - Skill set needed after two years of service:**

#### **Organizational Skills**

- Increase knowledge of soil and water conservation partnership and related watershed, environmental, private and nongovernmental organizations.
- Gain working knowledge of commonly used acronyms in conservation programs and government.
- Become familiar with county natural resource maps and soil surveys.

#### **Communication Skills**

- Write Education sections contained within District Plan of Work and all required reports.
- Contact school system officials and/or school administration and/or classroom teachers to assess their needs with regards to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), environmental science, ecology, natural resources management, and outdoor classroom development.
- Develop promotional materials that meet local schools’ needs while meeting District’s goals and objectives (See “NC Standard Course of Study” below under Education Skills.)

#### **Education Skills**

- Learn about best management practices in agriculture, sediment & erosion control, and stormwater management (what these practices are and how they work) by going out in the field with District’s technical staff and/or community partners.
- Learn how to take a viable soil sample, complete sample form, mail the sample, read & understand the soil test results, and apply the recommended amount of soil amendments so as to assist landowners, homeowners and schools with this process.
- Review and incorporate improvements from feedback provided from participant evaluations.
- Enroll in the NC Environmental Education Certification Program and begin earning the required 200 hours of professional development within five years.

- Know thy audience and strive to conduct lessons with audiences of different ages and cognitive abilities: PreK, K-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12, adults, special needs, specific target audiences, etc. See Guidelines below.
- Study and apply the national Excellence in Environmental Education - Guidelines for Learning (K-12) by North American Association for Environmental Education that sets appropriate expectations for learner performance and achievement at the 4th and 8th grades and by high school graduation via four strands.  
<http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines>
- Become familiar with NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) and the new NC Essential Standards mandated for grades K-12, especially science and social studies. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/new-standards/>
- Align District's school programs (contests, field days, etc.) with NCSCOS objectives for the intended conceptual content and grade level.

### **Education and Leadership Skills**

- Research and create a new lesson; then model and share it with other District Education Coordinators.
- Volunteer on a working committee in improving and/or updating existing District Education Programs (Education Committee, District contests, Envirothon, FLP, RCW, CET, State Fair, etc.)
- Train to be a workshop facilitator in Food, Land & People and other EE curricula; then conduct a workshop within the next year to fulfill training commitment.
- Conduct a District-sponsored EE workshop for formal and non-formal educators in your county and/or Area.
- Direct District volunteers in performing volunteer work for District or improving their local environment through environmental projects (tree plantings, litter cleanups, etc.)
- Assist local schools, organizations and partners in developing outdoor classrooms and/or community gardens.

### **TIER 3 - Skill set needed after five or more years of service:**

#### **Communication Skills**

- Write and submit news articles/press releases/newsletters to broaden District's public outreach.
- Hone group facilitation and presentation skills.
- Author all Education sections contained in all District reports and publications.
- Become familiar with grant writing process and begin writing grants to fund District education programs.
- Explore the use of marketing theories and social marketing plans to alter people's environmental or natural resources behaviors.

## Education and Leadership Skills

- Help plan and host your District's Field Day, Conservation Awards Banquet, Keeping the Farm Workshop, etc.
- Play a major role in developing and implementing your Area Spring & Fall Meetings and/or your Area Contest Judging and/or Area Envirothon, including communicating with and involving all Districts in your Area.
- Serve as a Community Partner and lead a school or organization in a long-term environmental service-learning project that is student-centered, student-owned, and student-directed.
- Assist in planning and implementing District education programs such as the Education Track at the annual Conservation Employee Training (CET).
- If teaching very young children, study the Early Childhood Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence by North American Association for Environmental Education. <http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines>
- Study and apply the Nonformal Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence by NAAEE that recommend six key characteristics to professionalize District education programs. <http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines>
- Serve as a Mentor to train other District Education Coordinators via one-on-one assistance and/or invite them to shadow you in action.
- Chair a working committee to develop or improve a District education program—set the agenda, lead committee members in producing deliverables on time, guide the tasks & timeline, develop report of committee's results, initiate and maintain communications.
- Take the lead in coordinating and conducting the Education Track at the annual Conservation Employees Training (CET) Workshop.
- Assist in facilitating a Train-the-Trainer workshop for District Education Coordinators and/or District employees.
- Lead and manage District's volunteer program(s) involving all facets of volunteer recruitment and recognition, event promotion, data entry, reporting of results, ordering and distributing volunteer supplies, etc.
- Write letters of recommendation and award nominations for District colleagues, educators, students, volunteers, and participants in District education and volunteer programs.
- Develop and initiate a brand-new education program and/or workshop for Districts from conceptual inception to on-the-ground delivery.
- Write and propose new resolutions to develop, improve, and support new and existing District education programs and the policies governing the Conservation Partnership.
- Provide thoughtful feedback to draft state standards proposed by the NC Department of Public Instruction—propose and provide learning objectives that focus on the study of natural resources, consequences of mismanagement of natural resources, the role of human choices and actions, innovative solutions (i.e. best management practices), and ways learners can practice stewardship in

their daily lives), especially in Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Healthful Living, etc.

- Provide thoughtful feedback to state drafts of the NC EE Plan, NC Environmental Literacy Plan and other statewide documents proposed by the NCDENR Office of Environmental Education—provide edits and suggestions that encompass the education work of Districts and a holistic perspective of EE content and methods provided by a diversity of EE practitioners across NC.
- Provide thoughtful feedback to national drafts of the No Child Left Inside legislation that is relevant to the NC Environmental Literacy Plan and the work of NC’s environmental educators and District Education Coordinators.
- Stay abreast of continuous changes in the fast-growing field of EE and provide updates to other District Education Coordinators.
- Serve as an active Board member on a professional education organization’s Board of Directors (such as DEA, EENC, HHB SWCD Society, NCSTA, etc.)
- Serve on the Professional Conservation Employees Program Oversight Committee to further update and refine this training template for District Education Coordinators.

# **EXHIBIT 7.6 PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATION EMPLOYEE PROGRAM (PCEP) MANAGERIAL TRAINING PLAN**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This training template is designed to develop a basic level of skills for managerial employees within the Soil and Water Conservation Partnership. This plan recognizes that employees with managerial responsibilities will often have responsibilities for administrative duties, program delivery, technical assistance, and education programs. The appropriate template for each of these areas should be utilized as a part of the overall training plan. The employees training plan should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the employee, the soil and water district, and the county.

## **PREREQUISITES FOR THE POSITION**

### **KNOWLEDGE**

- Basic awareness of local, state, and federal programs and laws that affect soil and water conservation
- Roles of Conservation Districts, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation, and others in the NC Conservation Partnership
- Fundamentals of financial management techniques and practices
- General understanding of interdisciplinary techniques, principles, and methods used for soil and water conservation practices

### **ABILITIES**

- Excellent customer service skills
- Deal effectively with local, state, and federal agencies at various levels
- Organize and plan work
- Effectively supervise
- Lead discussion groups
- Identify and define goals and objectives
- Manage daily operations of the district

## **RECOMMENDED TIMELINE**

The employee should possess a working knowledge of and be proficient in the following items.

### **WITHIN SIX MONTHS**

- Maintaining a working relationship with district supervisors and staff
- District board meetings and procedures
- Implementing the district's annual plan of work
- The history of soil and water conservation districts



- General statutes relating to soil and water conservation districts (GS139; administrative rule)
- NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Strategic Plan

## **Training Recommendations**

### Review the following publications:

1. "Guidebook on the Law and Practice of Soil and Water Conservation in North Carolina" (edited by Milton S. Heath, Jr. -2004) – Essential information for managers about Conservation Districts and the Conservation Partnership in North Carolina and including legislation and operating procedures.
2. "Challenging Careers in the Natural Resources Conservation Service" – Background information for positions within the conservation partnership
3. "In Partnership with People and a Healthy Land"- Information about NRCS and its mission
4. "Helping You Help Your Land "- Conservation from the landowner's perspective
5. "Son of the Soil" Article in the Magazine "Wildlife in North Carolina" (January 2002) to learn about Hugh Hammond Bennett and his legacy

### Participate in the following activities:

1. Meet with the district Board of Supervisors to determine their personal interest in conservation and the most critical conservation issues to be addressed in the district
2. Attend district board meetings, local work group meetings, and other meetings where strategic planning is discussed to gain a better understanding of the District's conservation objectives and workload priorities
3. Develop and maintain an organizational chart for NRCS, SWCDS, and the Division of Soil and Water Conservation
4. Develop a list of partner agencies and organizations in the district and introduce yourself to each one
5. Develop an understanding of the Soil and Water Conservation Commission Rules and Job Approval Authority Chart
6. Develop an awareness of current education efforts of the district and NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

## **WITHIN ONE YEAR**

- Coaching employees to produce desired results
- Employee performance reviews
- Budget development and management
- Maintaining relationships with county commissioners, county manager, and other local officials
- Local resource information
- Cultural resources
- Developing the district's annual plan of work an annual report

- County policies
- Compliance with workplace regulations
- Public presentations
- Education programs
- State cost share program policies (NCACSP & CCAP), planning and field assessment
- Facilities and equipment maintenance and planning
- Review training plans for all employees and update or develop them as needed
- Identify resources needed to provide the action specified in the annual plan of work and long-range plan
- Proficient use of computers

### **Training recommendations:**

#### Participate in the following activities:

1. Attend Basic Training Course for Soil and Water Supervisors offered by the UNC School of Government
2. Attend District Issues Meetings, Area Spring and Fall Meetings, and NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Annual Meeting to gain a better understanding of the issues affecting the Partnership
3. Identify the important conservation issues for all land uses in the district
4. Meet with the county commissioners, county manager and other local officials to obtain their perspective for the district
5. Become familiar with the soil survey information for the district and how different soils impact land use in the district
6. Become familiar with all the different conservation programs that are used in the district and review participation trends
7. Accompany staff members while they are providing assistance to clients to understand their role and ability
8. Become acquainted with community leaders throughout the district
9. Become familiar with the Field Office Technical Guide and what can be found in the different sections
10. Develop an understanding of conservation programs utilized in the district (NCACSP, CCAP, EQIP, etc.)
11. Recognize the components of a conservation plan and be able to explain the relationship between the contents of a plan and appropriate programs
12. Become proficient with NRCS and other available software used in the district
13. Become familiar with the district's annual plan of work and long-range plan- update these plans as necessary in cooperation with the district board, NRCS staff, and district staff

## **WITHIN TWO TO FIVE YEARS**

- Evaluating existing programs and planning for future programming
- Maintaining working relationships with boards and commissions
- Developing the district's long-range plan
- Conservation marketing skills
- Developing funding sources
- Grant writing
- Watershed and buffer rules
- Knowledge of Federal cost share programs
- Identify and develop additional services and programs to benefit the district in cooperation with the Board of Supervisors, NRCS, staff, and others
- How to diversify a locally-led district program
- Succession planning

### **Training Recommendations:**

Participate in the following activities:

1. Attend training on NRC S programs
2. Develop contacts with local media outlets
3. Develop contacts with local school system, including public, private, and home schools
4. Attend training on grant writing and management
5. Develop contacts with funding organizations
6. Participate in professional managerial organizations

## **DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS TO BE UNDERTAKEN AS TIME AND FINANCES ARE AVAILABLE**

Attend supervisory and managerial training provided by local sources, annual Conservation Employee Training, NRCS, community colleges, and the UNC School of Government-training should include:

- ❖ Understanding county government
- ❖ Budgeting and financial planning
- ❖ Customer service
- ❖ Business writing
- ❖ Communications
- ❖ Conflict resolution
- ❖ Team building
- ❖ Evaluating performance
- ❖ Workplace ethics
- ❖ Media relations

- ❖ Recruitment and Selection of Employees
- ❖ Unlawful Workplace Harassment Prevention
- ❖ Workplace Violence
- ❖ Equal Employment Opportunity
- ❖ Disciplinary Process
- ❖ Building Accountability
- ❖ American Disabilities Act
- ❖ Family Medical Leave Act and the Family Illness Leave Act
- ❖ Coaching for Employee Development
- ❖ Facilitation Skills
- ❖ On the Job Injuries (policy /process)
- ❖ Emergency Response Plan
- ❖ Diversity (could include employee /supervisors /clients etc.)
- ❖ Salary Administration
- ❖ Dispute Resolution Policies (understanding county policies whether the dispute is related to pay/performance/grievance policies)

## Long Range Plans/Annual Plan of Work

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## **Introduction**

It is very important that Soil and Water Conservation Districts produce Long Range Plans and an Annual Plan of Work. Much depends on it, including assistance from conservation partners, staffing and funding. Plans provide a clear vision of the priorities, goals and programs that are important to the district.

Districts that successfully set aside time to create Long Range Plans and an Annual Plan of Work are better at addressing their local needs. If your District does not take the time to carefully examine its goals, activities, and needs, it will most likely waste funding , staff and other resources to be a productive District.

## **Prioritization of Resource Needs**

Conservation districts were created as the local focal point for coordinating and delivering funding, information to private land owners and policy makers, and technical assistance. Federal, state, and local governments have channeled assistance through conservation districts to address different aspects of natural resource conservation. Districts have focused on setting priorities and carrying out programs based on their local needs. Conservation districts lead with the concept of a “locally-led” process. This process, which is resource driven rather than program driven, is used to guide and coordinate funds from the federal, state, and local conservation efforts. To be a locally-led conservation district, it involves a sequence of steps that involve the entire community. In both implementation and planning these steps include:

- Setting local priorities based upon input from the public
- A conservation needs assessment to analyze local needs and concerns
- Identifying program resources that are available to assist in addressing local needs and priorities
- Reach out to the public to bring local diverse stakeholders together
- Develop and implement a district plan and review and update the needs, goals, actions and accomplishments of the District

One of the most important steps in the “locally-led” conservation process is to have input from local organizations and individuals that are familiar with the local resource needs and conditions. Local stakeholders are a critical link in assessing these local resource concerns for your District. These outreach efforts can lead to establishing ongoing advisory committees and focus group meetings. The goal of this outreach is to enable local constituents to identify natural resource concerns that affect them.

A comprehensive assessment will provide an analysis of broad conservation goals and specific natural resource concerns of the District. The assessment serves as the basis for selecting the type and extent of needed conservation systems and BMPs and may be utilized for making recommendations for funding specific priorities, priority watershed areas and appropriate conservation programs.

Steps that are needed to carry out local conservation needs assessment include:

- Analyze conservation needs and priorities
- Identify geographic areas and potential priority areas
- Identify specific concerns and existing conditions and trends for each of the natural resource issues

Once your Soil and Water Conservation District has completed their locally-led process, you are very well prepared to begin the construction of your Long-Range Plan and Annual Plan of Work.

## **Creating A Long-Range Plan**

The purpose of a Long-Range Plan is to identify opportunities for the conservation and development of natural resources within the District. The function of a plan is to serve as a goal for planning and accomplishing district work with cooperators and other agencies. This plan states the District's mission, priority resource concerns, three-year goals and Annual Plan of Work, to work toward achieving your District's goals. This Long-Range Plan can lead to responsible use of soil, water, air, plants, and animals. The plan is prepared for the District's benefit by listing what needs to be done, how to do it, and when it should be accomplished.

This Plan should be completed at a Soil and Water Conservation District Board Meeting specifically set aside to carefully examined the District's needs, programs and resources. This may take more than one meeting. When correctly developed, the Long-Range Plan serves as the district's goals set for specific actions for the coming years and can assist in creating an Annual Plan a Work.

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that is signed between the partnerships requires the development of a Long-Range Plan (to be written for a period of three years), and an Annual Plan of Work written each year.

The key components of a successful SWCD Long Range Plan include:

- Statement of intent (Goals)
- Staffing and Annual budget needs
- District Definition, Function, Audience and Mission
- key individuals (Partners)
- Critical Natural Resource Issues and Geographical Areas
- Priority Actions

**Statement of intent:** Once major concerns and related areas have been identified, statements of intent, or goals, for each concern need to be set by the District. Any given natural resource concern may have several statements of intent as the issue is addressed from several different technical avenues. Each statement of intent should include:

1. What issue is being addressed
2. A date or time frame in which to accomplish the goal

3. A measurable outcome for the issue addressed

**Staffing and Annual budget needs:** Based on the specific statements of intent and priority actions developed in the plan, the District will need to identify staff and budget needs in addition to those that currently exist. The SWCD may have adequate technical, educational or administrative staff to deliver existing district programs. Most Districts with limited staff, or intentions for more aggressive future programs may want to explore adding additional staff to meet their predicted needs.

**District Definition, Function, Audience and Mission:** By setting the District self-defined function, audience and mission, the supervisors and staff are helping to focus the District's efforts in the direction which is the most appropriate for both the District's audience and its strengths and resources. A mix of agricultural and urban interests should be represented in the function, audience and mission of the District. The key is to identify goals and actions for each audience to focus upon for the development of District activities and programs.

**Key individuals:** Once the Long-Range Plan has been developed, the District should identify to whom it should be distributed, and in what manner. At a minimum, local, state and federal agencies and public officials should be made aware of the goals and proposed programs that have been set by the District, that they might better understand what is being addressed and how they might assist the District.

**Critical Natural Resource Issues and Geographical Areas:** Once the direction of the District has been established, it is time to focus on which of the critical natural resource issues should be addressed over the next three-year timeframe. District Supervisors and staff should try to limit themselves to the top few concerns that have been identified which will lead to more effectively developed programs. Geographical areas for key watersheds, municipalities or areas of special natural resource features might need to be chosen to begin tackling the overall natural resource concern in a manageable manner.

**Priority Actions:** After statements of intent are completed for each natural resource concern, individual action steps can be identified. Annual action steps incorporated into the plan have the ultimate goal of contributing towards the accomplishment of one or more of the identified statements of intent. These steps are often activities or programs that a District may already be doing for the community.

The important things to remember are:

1. The plan should reflect the SWCD's natural resource concerns, goals and annual actions to work toward addressing them.
2. Those goals, actions, programs and activities will only be accomplished if the SWCD makes the items in its Long Range Plan a top priority on a yearly and monthly basis.



## **Creating Annual Plan of Work**

When the SWCD Long Range Plan has been completed, the District's Annual Plan of Work should come directly from this document. The Long-Range Plan's annual action steps should be the content for the district's Annual Plan of Work and should help the District decide which programs are truly needed for the upcoming year's events and programs.

The Annual Plan of Work which comes from the annual action steps outlined in the Long-Range Plan, outlines the steps to be taken in the current year to accomplish the goals of the District's Long-Range Plan. Each year the annual action steps in the Long-Range Plan needs to be updated to the next year and become that year's Plan of Work. Some items that must be done each year, such as preparing the annual budget, can be added to the Annual Plan of Work but avoid putting too many of the routine items from the Long-Range Plan into the Annual Plan of Work. Include key programs, projects or activities for the next calendar year that will help get your District closer to its Long-Range Plan goals.

In general, the Annual Plan of Work emphasizes what to do, how to do it, who should do it, and when it should be done. Remember that this Annual Plan of Work is of the District and not of another agency. So, the responsibility for its completion falls on the District Supervisors with the help of their District Staff. Cooperating agency plans should complement the District work during the coming year. The District Annual Plan of Work, once developed, enables your partners to formulate their own annual plans and properly plan for assistance to the District. It helps your cooperating partners to set priorities for their work within the District and provides an administrative guide to the District and to their assisting agencies.

Once the District's resource needs, goals, programs and actions have been established and long and short-term plans developed, these programs and actions need to be regularly brought forward and completed or reviewed at monthly SWCD meetings. Annual Plans are useful in identifying key actions during a given year that contribute to the accomplishment of the District's long-term goals and priorities.

## **Resources for Completing Long Range Plans/Annual Plan of Work**

There are many Districts in North Carolina that have good Long-Range Plans and Annual Plans of Work. A few Districts have agreed to share their Long-Range Plans and Annual Plans of Work with Districts that may need assistance. The following Districts plans, and their web addresses are below:

Swain SWCD Long Range Plan:

[http://www.swaincountync.gov/page\\_files/swcd/SwainSWCD\\_LongRangePlan2020-2025.pdf](http://www.swaincountync.gov/page_files/swcd/SwainSWCD_LongRangePlan2020-2025.pdf)

Caldwell SWCD Long Range Plan:

[https://ccgov.s3.amazonaws.com/portal/Long%20Range%20Plan%20July%202014\\_8xMMGZ.pdf](https://ccgov.s3.amazonaws.com/portal/Long%20Range%20Plan%20July%202014_8xMMGZ.pdf)

# TEMPLATE

## ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK

### \_\_\_\_\_ SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### FISCAL YEAR – 2020/2021

#### OBJECTIVES

*Objective I* – Provide technical assistance to landowners to improve water quality and reduce soil erosion on agricultural lands.

*Objective II* – Provide an extensive informational and education program on natural resource conservation to all citizens of \_\_\_\_\_ County.

*Objective III* – Proceed with the ongoing watershed operation in the county and provide technical assistance related to stormwater issues.

*Objective IV* – Protect farmland and promote agriculture in \_\_\_\_\_ County.

*Objective V* – Administer office operations and provide employee development needs to enhance full potential of resources available.

*Objective VI* – Ensure equal opportunity, protection of civil rights, and parity in program delivery and all phases of office operations.

*Objective VII* – Implement quality assurance measurements on all cost share programs and technical practices.

**OBJECTIVE I** – Provide technical assistance to landowners to improve water quality and reduce soil erosion on agricultural lands.

**GOAL 1 – Reduce soil erosion on cropland.**

<b>ACTION ITEM PROGRESS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Utilize all cost-share programs to provide financial incentives to install conservation practices.		All Year
2. Complete ranking and eligibility requirements related to various cost share programs.		All Year
3. Provide on-site technical assistance to all land-users regardless of program participation.		All Year
4. Prepare and revise conservation plans related to Farm Bill compliance as requested.		All Year
5. Maintain no-till seed drill for rental to promote soil health.		All Year

**GOAL 2 – Provide technical assistance to livestock & poultry producers in order to improve water quality and soil productivity.**

<b>ACTION ITEM PROGRESS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Utilize all cost-share programs to provide financial incentives to install conservation practices.		All Year
2. Complete ranking and eligibility requirements related to various cost share programs.		All Year
3. Provide assistance to livestock and poultry producers in carrying out waste management plans and the implementation of such plans.		All Year
4. Work with livestock and poultry producers to implement best management practices for water quality improvement.		All Year
5. Assist poultry and livestock producers to		All Year

implement best management practices that address waste and mortality issues.

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 6. Provide operation and maintenance assistance to producers with active contracts. | All year |
|---|----------|
- 

**GOAL 3 – Update strategy plans to address the local resource concerns.**

<b>ACTION ITEM PROGRESS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Convene Local Work Groups to discuss priorities for the USDA Farm Bill Programs while adhering to responsibilities and standard operating procedures.		As Required
2. Develop the required Annual Strategy Plan outlining funding requests needed to address local needs to address resource concerns.		5/20
3. Develop BMP audit summarizing program funding allocated, encumbered and expended each year.		5/20
4. Develop the District’s Annual Plan of Operation.		7/20
5. Develop the District’s Annual Report.		7/20
6. Update the District’s Long-Range Plan.		Every 5 years
7. Seek additional state program funds as they become available to meet existing conservation needs of eligible applicants.		As Available
8. Seek grant funding to complement existing cost-share programs for special water quality projects.		All Year

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**OBJECTIVE II** – Provide an extensive informational and education program on natural resource conservation to all citizens of \_\_\_\_\_ County.

**GOAL 1 – Assist the District Board in providing an effective informational and educational program in the county conservation efforts.**

<b>ACTION ITEM PROGRESS</b>	<b>WHEN</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1. Prepare a District budget that meets the district's funding needs to provide extensive educational programs.		5/21
2. Assist with the annual Farmer Appreciation events by coordinating with partner Ag. agencies to plan and present events each year.		1/21 – 4/21
3. Coordinate the annual Environmental Field Day Program for 5 <sup>th</sup> grade classes.		4/21
4. Work with teachers to select a student to attend the Conservation Resource Workshop.		3/21
5. Seek out groups to participate/compete in the Envirothon competition.		10/20
6. Prepare bi-annual newsletter listing conservation programs offered and upcoming District events and opportunities.		10/20 & 3/21
7. Prepare news articles on various conservation topics.		All Year
8. Create flyers, brochures and pamphlets advertising District programs.		All Year
9. Set up a fair booth each fall highlighting conservation topics.		9/20
10. Coordinate the annual Poster, Essay, Speech Slideshow, and Computerized Poster contest.		10/20
11. Organize the District's annual Awards Banquet.		5/21
12. Seek nominees for the District's Conservation Farm Family of the Year award and recognition of other nominees.		3/21
13. Seek nominees for the District's annual Conservation Educator of the Year award.		3/21
14. Provide conservation awareness presentations to students, teachers, community groups and organizations.		All Year

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| 15. Maintain District website with assistance of website manager.  | All Year |
| 16. Represent District office on Area Education Committee.   | All Year |
| 17. Assist Area with regional conservation programs and events.  | All Year |
| 18. Seek volunteers that are willing to donate their time to assist and promote the conservation initiatives of the District office. | All Year |
- 

**OBJECTIVE III** – Proceed with the ongoing watershed operations and provide technical assistance related to stormwater issues.

**GOAL 1 – Provide assistance on maintenance of existing watershed structures.**

<b>ACTION PROGRESS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Assist District Board with the annual inspections of watershed structures.		4/21
2. Prepare watershed inspection follow-up report.		5/21
3. Work with federal and state agencies to meet Dam Safety requirements of watershed structures.		All Year
4. Prepare and maintain records, reports, contracts and modifications for watershed structures.		All Year
5. Coordinate with contractor(s) to ensure proper maintenance of watershed structures.		All Year
6. Provide monthly updates to District Board regarding status of watershed structures.		Monthly

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**GOAL 2 – Provide technical and cost share assistance to landowners impacted by stormwater runoff.**

ACTION ITEM PROGRESS	WHO	WHEN
1. Provide technical and cost share assistance to landowners impacted by stormwater runoff causing erosion and sedimentation issues.		All year

**OBJECTIVE IV - Protect farmland and promote the agricultural industry in \_\_\_\_\_ County.**

**GOAL 1 – Reduce the amount of prime farmland converted to non-agricultural uses.**

ACTION ITEM PROGRESS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to support and advertise the Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VAD) program in the county.		All Year
2. Assist the VAD Board members with the administration of the program.		All Year
3. Attend the quarterly meetings of the VAD Board.		All Year
4. Work with the County Planning & Mapping Dept.’s to ensure accurate records of the VAD.		All Year
5. Prepare required conservation plans for VAD applicants.		All Year
6. Continue to research various ways to preserve farmland (conservation easements, purchase of development rights, etc.).		All Year
7. Seek sources of funding for farmland preservation.		All Year
8. Assist partnering conservation agencies in educating the public about the need for land preservation.		All Year

**GOAL 2 – Protect the agricultural community in \_\_\_\_\_ County.**

<b>ACTION ITEM PROGRESS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Provide assistance to farmers seeking alternative crops.		All Year
2. Participate in local and state opportunities for policy and/or program development that benefits the agriculture community.		All Year

**OBJECTIVE V** – Administer office operations and provide employee development needs to enhance full potential of resources available.

**GOAL 1 – Seek support and funding to maintain office operations to meet the District’s goals and objectives.**

<b>ACTION ITEMS PROGRESS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Work with county government to designate funding during their annual budget process to maintain and enhance office operations.		2/21
2. Present annual updates to county officials outlining District projects, goals, and accomplishments demonstrating responsible use of all available resources.		8/21 or As Requested
3. Organize conservation tours educating officials on benefits of conservation practices, District programs, and staff responsibilities.		As Needed
4. Prepare a District budget that meets office funding needs to implement programs and services while following LGFCA rules and reporting requirements.		5/21
5. Seek any grant funding that will enhance District’s goals and objectives.		All Year



**GOAL 2 – Promote training for all employees so that they can perform at their highest potential.**

ACTION ITEMS PROGRESS	WHO	WHEN
1. Develop a plan for staff to participate in formal training sessions that are made available.		All Year
2. Encourage and support staff to obtain job approval authority as needed to plan and oversee practice installation as required for programs.		All Year
3. Promote opportunities for staff to obtain necessary certifications to utilize available planning tools.		All Year
4. Discuss training needs with staff and schedule training as appropriate.		All Year
5. Seek local, state or federal scholarships available for staff training and development.		As Needed

**GOAL 3 – Utilize fully the computer capabilities available in office.**

ACTION ITEM PROGRESS	WHO	WHEN
1. Obtain and maintain necessary certifications to utilize software planning tools.		All Year
2. Attend training sessions of new software programs and existing software program updates.		All Year
3. Work with local and federal IT services to maximize computer capabilities in the office.		All Year

**OBJECTIVE VI** – Ensure equal opportunity, protection of civil rights and parity in program delivery and all phases of field office operations.

**GOAL 1 – Perform all duties with consistency to demonstrate fairness, cooperation, and respect toward clients, co-workers, visitors and SWCD cooperators.**

<b>ACTION ITEM PROGRESS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Distribute information to all demographic groups.		All year
2. Annually update District Supervisors and staff of their Civil Rights responsibilities.		1/21

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**GOAL 2 – Ensure a safe and productive workplace that is free of discrimination and violence.**

<b>ACTION ITEM PROGRESS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Review employee grievance and complaint procedures with staff. Take immediate action to resolve complaints.		9/20
2. Review sexual discrimination / harassment policy with staff.		9/20
3. Review workplace violence policy and emergency action plan with staff.		9/20
4. Take immediate action to remove employees from potential danger and violence.		All Year

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**OBJECTIVE VII – Implement quality assurance measurements on all cost share programs and technical practices.**

**Goal 1 – Provide oversight and reviews of technical practices and program policies.**

<b>ACTION ITEM PROGRESS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Perform annual spot checks on 5% or more of all active contracts per program as required by the SWCC.		9/20 & 4/21
2. Review active cost share plans that are slated to expire and determine a plan of action.		1/21
3. Assist NRCS and Division staff with spot checks		As Needed/Requested

on practices installed and/or program reviews for quality assurance.

4. Conduct periodic reviews of conservation contracts to ensure contracts are developed according to policy.

All Year

5. Review APO quarterly to ensure progress of assigned responsibilities.

Quarterly

6. Conduct employee evaluations to measure job performance, identifying areas for improvement and providing positive feedback on accomplishments.

6/21

# Chapter 9

## IN DEPTH DESCRIPTIONS OF PARTNERSHIPS

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## NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation

**Background:** The NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation, Inc. is a North Carolina Corporation chartered on April 27, 1999. The NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts formed a committee in 1996 that led to the recommendation to form a separate nonprofit that will support the purpose of local soil and water conservation districts. The Foundation is a public non-profit tax-exempt organization having obtained its 501(c)(3) status on February 22, 2000. It maintains its headquarters at 5171 Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh, NC. The Foundation has raised over \$15,000,000 and leveraged over \$16,000,000 in the first 20 years.

**Purpose:** The Foundation is organized to carry out the present and long-term mission and purposes of the North Carolina Soil & Water Conservation Districts that locally address statewide conservation needs.

**Mission:** The Foundation's mission is to promote, protect and improve North Carolina soil and water resources for the enhancement of economic growth and stewardship of the natural environment.

**Objectives:** The Foundation's objectives focus on three major categorical priority areas: Building Conservation Capacity, Educating the Citizens, and Improving the Natural Environment

**Organizational Structure:** The Foundation is governed by a 20+ person board of directors representing all geographic regions of the state and exhibiting a wide diversity of professional backgrounds and organizations that support conservation efforts. It has a two to four person staff that handle the Foundation's day to day operations with project managers added as needed.

**Program Structure:** The Foundation uses a multi-pronged approach to support conservation across the state, below is a summary of current methods.

- Secures large grants from federal, state or private funders and offer mini-grants to Districts or to Districts and their participating producers. These efforts operate like cost-share programs and usually involve installation of practices and an outreach meeting.
- Facilitates building broad coalitions of support, such as the partnership with the military. Specific Districts will be invited to participate to during different times to either seek information from local communities, test out program delivery and marketing approaches, or determine future program needs by running a pilot.
- Coordinate special projects as requested by partners such as hurricane recovery in 2018 – 2019.
- Work directly with a Conservation District or a group of Conservation Districts to address a regional need or when efforts can lead to larger program development.

**How Can Districts Participate:** The Foundation invites discussions with any District staff, board member or conservation partner to explore ideas. The Foundation must secure resources for each additional initiative or project idea. From early program discussions to delivering a program, expect a timeline of 6 months to 2 years, depending on concept complexities and potential funder. The Foundation provides program updates at Area Meetings, the Annual Meeting, and statewide trainings. For program participation opportunities or interest surveys, email announcements are posted to the two listserves managed by the Division, visit their website for sign-up information.

- District Listserve: Post program announcements or general updates
- District Only Listserve: Post request for proposals or interest surveys



## **NC Association of Soil and Water**

### **Conservation Districts**

The NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Association) was organized in 1944 to support and enhance the efforts of local soil and water conservation districts (Districts) in conserving the natural resources of North Carolina. It is organized exclusively for educational, scientific, and charitable purposes and is a 501(c)(3) organization. These Districts were created in 1937 by North Carolina General Statute 139 for the primary purpose of providing local direction to voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs to assist landowners protect and conserve the state's natural resources, including soil, water, wildlife, unique plant and animal habitats, and others.

The Association's members are the 492 District Supervisors (Supervisors) that are elected or appointed to the local District boards. Supervisors are members by their position and make up the voting body for Association policies, positions and action items. In the state, there are 96 Districts, with most Districts being represented by county lines. The Albemarle District in the northeast portion of the state is the only multi-county District, but has county representing Board members as well. Governing positions of the Association consists of the President, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Past President, Treasurer, Secretary, Finance Chair, Legislative Chair, Southeast National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and the Chair of each of the Association Areas (Areas).

North Carolina is divided into 8 Association Areas. Each Area is represented by area associations of the state Association and operate under the Associations 501 (c) (3). These areas work geographically to address concerns and put forth resolutions to the state Association for adoption. Areas are represented by the Supervisors from those respective counties. Each Area has its own Executive

Committee with a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary-Treasurer and other appointees as needed. The Areas may have sub-committees such as District Issues and those designated by the Area Executive Committee.

Though the Association is not directly formed by state general statute, members of the Soil and Water Conservation Commission (Commission) are covered in general statute as being the President, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Past President and 3 geographic representatives of the Association and elected by the body of Association. In concert with the Commission, the Association through its resolution process, assists with policy and program development as well as state and national legislation to enhance conservation efforts through the local Districts.

Education and outreach programs through the Association are carried out by cooperative work with Districts and many partners. These partnerships are connected through various agreements and contracts. Envirothon, Food, Land and People (FLP), Poster and Essay, Speech, Employee awards, Conservation Farm Family and Hall of Fame are some of the programs through the Association that reach school groups and citizens to enhance conservation knowledge and awareness of Districts contributions to the community and environment.

For more information about the Association, visit [www.ncaswcd.org](http://www.ncaswcd.org)



## **Commission of Soil and Water Conservation**

The seven-member Soil & Water Conservation Commission provides oversight, rules and policy for the state soil and water conservation programs. These programs are voluntary and emphasize a locally-led approach to improve and protect water quality and natural resources for a wide range of land uses. The commission is responsible for determining cost share allocations to the state's 96 conservation districts. In return, the local districts utilize these funds to provide financial and technical assistance to landowners to install best management practices on the landscape of North Carolina. The commission also has the responsibility and authority to appoint and remove soil and water conservation district supervisors.



## **Division of Soil & Water Conservation**

The division provides programs, technical services and educational outreach promoting voluntary natural resource management and conservation on the private lands of NC through a non-regulatory, incentive-driven approach.

The division cooperates with federal, state and local partners to administer a comprehensive statewide program to protect and conserve the state's soil and water resources. The division serves as staff for the North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Commission to help deliver conservation programs at the local level. The division provides leadership and assistance in locally-led conservation to the state's 96 local soil and water conservation districts by providing financial, technical and educational assistance to districts, landowners, agricultural producers and the general public. The division delivers programs in nonpoint source pollution management including cost share funding for installation of best management practices and securement of conservation easements; technical assistance in engineering, soils, conservation planning, nutrient and animal waste management; and support for environmental and conservation education.

### **Soil and Water Conservation Commission**

The commission provides leadership in the partnership between the division, local districts, federal, state and other agencies. The commission is the policy and rule-making board for state programs, and establishes cost share procedures, allocates funds, considers programmatic changes and settles contract disputes.

### **Conservation Partnership**

The division is recognized as having one of the nation's top soil and water conservation programs for private lands. This effort is achieved through a conservation partnership comprised of the state division, local soil and water conservation districts and the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service, as well as private and nonprofit entities. The

partnership is successful in putting conservation measures on the ground across the NC landscape, largely due to the strong local district infrastructure.

Local conservation districts help the division meet NCDA&CS goals

The division is statutorily connected to NC's 96 local conservation districts through General Statute 139 and delivers its programs through the comprehensive district infrastructure. The division cost shares on 109 county-employed district technician positions throughout the state.

Districts partner with federal, state and local entities to deliver state and federal conservation programs related to water quality practices, farmland protection, wetlands restoration and wildlife habitat enhancement. Districts assist with community conservation planning in natural resource management areas such as erosion and sediment control, stormwater management, flood control, water use efficiency, stream restoration, small-plot forestry management and restoration efforts after natural disasters. Districts also help implement conservation easements and respond to local projects, such as building environmental education centers.

#### Partnership Mission Statement

This statement was developed by the North Carolina Conservation Partnership, which consists of the division, the NRCS, the commission and soil and water conservation districts.

*Vision: A dynamic partnership committed to quality leadership and customer service for the conservation of our natural resources.*

Guiding Principles: *The partnership values:*

- *voluntary, incentive-based programs*
- *diversity in the partnership*
- *clean water*
- *conservation as an investment in the future*
- *productive agriculture being environmentally compatible*

- *opportunities to provide assistance*
- *full respect for the total partnership*

*Greatest Strengths: Legislative support, technical knowledge, organization for local delivery of programs, credible history of quality programming, trusted by clients and customers.*



## Natural Resources Conservation Service

Sometimes defining what a federal agency does for the public can be confusing, and rarely does one word sum it all up. So, when someone asks us, “What can the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) do for me”, we want to provide a clear and concise message so that you know exactly what services we offer you. What can the NRCS do for you? We help you help the land, which is our mission, “Helping People Help the Land”.

How do we do that exactly? We help you help the land by providing you, our customers and partners, technical and financial assistance, which we offer through five business lines. The first business line is “conservation planning and technical consultation”. We provide technical consultation and planning assistance to help you make beneficial decisions about natural resource management. Our second business line is “conservation implementation”. We help you install conservation practices and systems that meet established technical standards and specifications. The third business line is “natural resource inventory and assessment”. By collecting, analyzing and providing you with natural resource data, we help you to establish the best conservation plans and resource-use decisions for all landscapes. Fourth is, “natural resource technology transfer”. We develop and distribute a wide array of technology pertaining to resource assessment, conservation planning, and conservation system installation and evaluation. This also includes training, and certification in standards and procedures. The last of the five business lines is “financial assistance”. The NRCS provides financial assistance to encourage the adoption of beneficial land-treatment practices that conserve and protect our nation’s valuable natural resources.

Financial assistance is awarded to those who voluntarily enter into contracts, easements and agreements to conserve natural resources. Financial assistance is provided through cost-share/ incentives, easements, grants and stewardship payments. So, what can the NRCS do for you? We help you help the land. It’s that simple. By providing technical and financial assistance through our five business lines, we will help you help the land.

To find out more about the NRCS in North Carolina and what we can do for you, please check out the rest of our website or visit the national NRCS website.



## NC Conservation District Employee Association

The North Carolina Conservation District Employee Association is a coalition of the district employees in each of the 96 Soil and Water Conservation Districts that make up North Carolina. District employees are the backbone of the North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts. They are the local connection between the farmer, local landowner/user to available resources that are available from our partners that include, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Division of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Foundation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. District employees from across the state are the leaders of natural resource education initiatives in their local districts.

North Carolina Conservation District Employee Association is a non-profit 501c3 organization whose primary function is to help develop, promote and strengthen conservation district employees and their programs in North Carolina. North Carolina Conservation District Employee Association primarily operates on annual dues paid by district employees. They also hold fund raising events to help fund other opportunities that they provide for district employees.

Our mission:

To strengthen the local Soil & Water Conservation Districts of North Carolina, by providing a vehicle for personal development of district employees and to assist them to better fulfill their responsibilities.

## District Fieldwork and Site Visit Safety

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## Introduction

Safety is integral to the function and success of district operations. All employees must internalize the importance of job safety and be aware of safety policies to accurately and appropriately fulfill their district duties. Many safety policies for the office workplace have already been created to comply with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act and the North Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Act. Only certain sectors, not including Soil and Water Conservation, have additional mandated field operations standards. For now, fieldwork and site visit safety policies and standards are set by individual districts to protect new and veteran employees when they are performing outdoor duties and interacting with clients outside of the office. Establishing formalized field safety practices and policies is an additional step districts can take to instill the importance of safe operation within district employees, volunteers, and friends of the district, in order to maintain and improve a positive health and safety culture.

## Components of a Field Safety Plan

Several districts already institute a mix of formal and informal district field operations and site visit protocols for staff. Existing district field safety policies range in scope and detail, but some common elements include requiring staff to perform field duties in pairs when visiting remote locations or new clients, setting up emergency protocols in case of field injuries or other crises, describing required personal protection equipment (PPE) to be worn during specific activities, outlining backup communication systems, and establishing best practices for livestock or wildlife interactions. Other components of field safety plans might include, but are not limited to:

- Assessing remote locations lacking cell coverage, neighborhoods or areas posing additional risks, and known local hazards in the district.
- Establishing protocols for assessing individual site access challenges.
- Describing biosecurity issues in the district and mitigation measures staff take in the field.
- Assessing and identifying hazards at field sites (heights, falling debris, ground debris, water, wildlife, excessive noise and vibrations, heavy machinery, power tools, etc.).
- Defining conditions to curtail or cancel fieldwork or site visits.
- Delimiting operations and protocols during harmful weather conditions.
- Setting drinking water and break/shade expectations for staff performing outdoor work during high heat conditions.
- Identifying typical physical and mental demands (driving, hiking, wading, carrying and lifting heavy objects, constant alertness, emotional stress, etc.) on staff performing fieldwork to set a training plan to make sure staff are meeting demands safely.
- Creating an inventory of first aid and other safety equipment available to staff and specifying location and person(s) responsible for upkeep.

- Documenting staff training completed and identified training gaps (equipment operation, first aid, situational awareness, workplace violence prevention, harmful wildlife identification, etc.).
- Establishing pre-fieldwork protocols to be performed by staff.
- Establishing lone worker procedures for fieldwork or site visits performed by one individual.
- Describing safe vehicle operation procedures and outlining vehicle limitations.
- Formalizing protocols for reporting near-misses and incidents experienced in the field.
- Determining a process to take corrective safety action based on submitted near-miss and incident reports.
- Prohibiting horseplay and other unsafe acts that can adversely affect employees and field operations.

## **Field Safety Plan Template**

A fillable district safety plan template was created to assist and guide districts in formalizing safety protocols for fieldwork and site visits and in preparing staff to appropriately deal with potential safety issues they may encounter in the field. The components of a field safety plan outlined in the previous section were organized into a table format for districts to review and tailor to their area and operations. An additional table detailing signs and symptoms, treatment, and response actions for common field injuries or illnesses was also included in this template. Writing and formalizing expected safety procedures to follow in the field will be useful to districts in onboarding new staff, volunteers, or district friends, and mitigating the potential for accidents or injuries resulting from outdoor operations and client interactions.

# SWCD Field Safety Plan Fillable Template

<b>Staff Information:</b>	<i>Names of Technical Staff Performing Fieldwork / Lead Staff Member</i>	<i>Revision number:</i>	<b>1</b>	<i>Date of last revision:</i>	<i>Mo-Day-Yr</i>
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A field safety plan serves as a tool to assess and document potential hazards, establish communication protocols, formalize field emergency procedures, and identify additional training needs. Developing and using a field safety plan is an effective way to prevent injury and illness resulting from fieldwork or site visits.

This plan should not only identify hazards but indicate how they will be addressed and mitigated. For any identified hazards indicate what steps will be taken to minimize the risk to staff, volunteers, or friends of the district.

Steps to prepare for fieldwork or site visits:

1. Complete a field safety plan.
2. Complete appropriate training for fieldwork operations and site visits (heat illness monitoring, first aid, etc.).
3. Hold at least an annual meeting to review the field safety plan, assess safety equipment availability and integrity (first aid kit, fire extinguisher, etc.), and identify remaining or additional training needs for staff.

Site Information	
<b>Geographic Location</b>	Name: <i>e.g. State, County</i>
<b>County Information</b>	<i>Describe general terrain and environment in the district. Make special note if there are known areas without cell signal and/or places in the county where fieldwork is more isolated or remote. Similarly, note if certain neighborhoods or areas pose additional danger risks to staff conducting field operations.</i>
<b>Travel to Fieldwork</b>	<i>Consider how staff will get to field sites. Note any dangerous roads or conditions or known local hazards. Detail the protocol to follow with regards to assessing site access challenges.</i>
<b>Wildlife and Livestock</b>	<i>Describe any potentially dangerous livestock, wild animals, insects, poisonous plants that staff may encounter in the field. Provide intended mitigation measures.</i>
<b>Farm Chemicals</b>	<i>Describe any dangerous chemicals staff may encounter in the field including fertilizers and pesticides (insecticides, herbicides, rodenticides, fungicides, etc.). Provide intended mitigation measures to exposure.</i>
<b>Biosecurity</b>	<i>Describe potential biosecurity concerns in the district. Specify protocols for staff to follow for each concern to minimize exposure and disease spread.</i>
<b>Other Site Hazards</b>	<i>Describe any other hazards staff may encounter in the field including heights, falling debris, tripping or falling hazards (debris, holes, etc.), excessive noise and vibrations, high force motion, heavy machinery, power tools, hunters etc. Provide intended mitigation measures to reduce such hazard risks.</i>
<b>Go/No Go Criteria</b>	<i>Describe the conditions under which approach to, or work at, field sites should be curtailed or canceled. E.g., Recent heavy rains if access is on dirt roads that have swelling clay soils. Electrical storms, snow, within 2 hours of high tide, or wave heights over 1 m. Hunting seasons Spring, Fall and Winter</i>

<b>Weather</b>	<p>Make note of potential weather conditions (normal and extreme) that could occur in the district and impact fieldwork (e.g. high heat, wind, rain, lightning, snow, approaching storm). Discuss additional preparation protocols to be taken by staff before performing fieldwork in such conditions and mitigation measures to employ in the field.</p>		
<b>Drinking Water</b>	<p>If forecast exceeds 80° F, it is generally advised for individuals to drink at least one quart (4 cups) per person per hour of fresh and suitably cool water.</p> <p>Establish expectations for staff to bring drinking water (watercooler with ice, bottled water, etc.) to field sites especially during high heat conditions. Describe at-risk conditions that require additional water and provide intended mitigation measures to heat illness or stroke risk.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Staff to bring own water bottle <input type="checkbox"/> Water cooler with ice provided by office <input type="checkbox"/> Bottled water provided <input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>		
<b>Shade/Shelter</b>	<p>If forecast exceeds 80° F, it is generally advised for individuals to take rest breaks in the shade (building structures, trees, etc.) if available or in an air-conditioned vehicle.</p> <p>Establish expectations for staff to take rest breaks in the shade while performing fieldwork especially during high heat conditions. Include description of at-risk conditions that require additional care to be taken and provide intended mitigation measures to heat illness or stroke risk.</p>		
<b>High Heat Procedures</b>	<p>High Heat Procedures are those to take when heat index temperatures are expected to exceed 95° F. Heat index temperatures are those felt by the body as a result of air temperature and relative humidity.</p> <p>Establish expectations for staff during High Heat conditions and outline mitigation measures for staff to follow to prevent heat injuries during the summer. Mitigation measures may include requiring a pre-operations meeting before fieldwork commences, limiting strenuous tasks to morning or late afternoon hours, and establishing communication, observation, and monitoring protocols for staff to follow for themselves and one another (e.g. direct supervision, buddy system, reliable cell or radio, etc.).</p>		
<b>Emergency Services and Contact Information</b>			
<b>Nearest Emergency Medical Services (EMS)</b>	<p>Contact information for nearest emergency medical services first responders. A full telephone number is preferential to 911.</p> <p>Check with local sheriff's office to see how 911 is implemented in the county. In some instances, the best first contact may be with the state police, highway patrol, or county sheriff's office.</p>		
<b>Nearest Emergency Departments (ED)</b>	<p>Contact information and addresses of emergency medical care providers. The list may include hospitals with an Emergency Department (ED), urgent care clinics, or other providers.</p>		
<b>Cell Phone Coverage</b>	<p><b>Device carried?</b> <input type="checkbox"/>yes <input type="checkbox"/>no</p> <p><b>Type:</b></p> <p><b>Coverage in the County:</b></p>	<p><b>Satellite device (phone or locator)</b></p>	<p><b>Device carried?</b> <input type="checkbox"/>yes <input type="checkbox"/>no</p> <p><b>Type:</b></p> <p><b>Coverage in the County:</b></p>
<b>Staff Information</b>			
<b>Staff Performing Fieldwork or Site Visits</b>	<p>Primary Leader: <u>          </u> Secondary Leader: <u>          </u> Other Staff: <u>          </u></p>		
<b>Physical Demands</b>	<p>List any physical demands required for fieldwork operations and training/certification required/provided for special activities. E.g. Diving, hiking, wading, carrying heavy objects, high altitudes/heights, confined or restricted spaces, etc. Consult with county environmental health and safety departments regarding the availability of training and the process to appropriately document staff training.</p>		

<b>Mental Demands</b>	List any mental demands required for field operations and potential high stress situations staff may encounter in the field. E.g. work requiring constant alertness for long periods of time, or work with high levels of emotional stress with clients. List any training or certifications required for fieldwork or specific field activities. Consult with county environmental health and safety departments regarding the availability of training and the process to appropriately document staff training.
<b>Additional Medical Needs</b>	As appropriate, and with staff permission, discuss additional medical needs and resources for all staff participating in fieldwork. This may include snacks for diabetics, EpiPen's for those with severe allergies, inhalers for asthmatics, etc.
<b>First Aid</b>	List team members trained in first aid and other types of medical assistance training.  Location and description of staff medical/first aid kit: Briefly describe components of available first aid kits and list any other safety equipment or sanitary products used in field operations. Detail where kits and other safety equipment are located and identify the person(s) responsible for the upkeep, availability, and integrity of field safety equipment and resources.
<b>Training Needs</b>	Discuss staff vulnerabilities to both mental and physical demands of fieldwork and site visits. Identify additional training needs for staff and outline regular safety meetings to identify these needs throughout the year. Training may include first aid, situational awareness and hazard identification, workplace violence prevention, work harassment prevention, harmful wildlife identification, equipment operation, etc. Document corrective actions to meet training gaps.
<b>Equipment and Activities</b>	
<b>Pre-Fieldwork and Site Visit Protocols</b>	Develop a protocol for field staff to follow prior to commencing field work. May include check-in procedures (supervisors, fellow staff, other staff in building, etc.), special protocols for first-time clients or specific types of activities (residential vs school vs. farm site visits), communication equipment best practices (cell phone or radio fully charged), and transportation best practices (full tank, equipped with appropriate safety equipment, etc.).  Will staff ever be working alone in the field? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  If yes, develop a communications plan with strict check-in procedures. Designate if it should be a verbal or visual check, check-in frequency, and whether a written log of contact is needed. Generally, check-in procedures require the main contact person to know destination, estimated time of arrival, return time or date, contact information, mode of travel, changed plans, a code word to identify a crisis, and an emergency activation plan to follow in a crisis or after no contact. Consider requiring a satellite communication device to be carried for work in remote locations without cell coverage and as a back-up communication device in non-remote settings.
<b>Fieldwork and Site Visit Transportation</b>	Determine what vehicles will be used during fieldwork operations and if county or federal identification is needed on the vehicle. Briefly discuss safe vehicle operation on and off the road and limitations for each type of vehicle in use.
<b>Fieldwork and Site Visit Activities</b>	Detail common types of fieldwork activities and general safety procedures to follow when performing such activities in pairs or alone. Detail specific protocols to follow in high risk, emergency situations.
<b>Hazards and Tools</b>	Describe any potentially hazardous items or tools staff may have to transport to a site to access the site or perform duties. Include procedures for mitigating exposure and risk.
<b>Personal Protective Equipment</b>	<b>Required</b> —Boots, safety glasses, safety vests (especially during hunting season), hardhats, sunscreen, etc. <b>Recommended</b> —Walking sticks, gloves, long pants, bug-spray, etc.

<b>Near Miss and Incident Reporting</b>	<i>Describe the protocol for staff to follow to report near misses or incidents in the field to their supervisor, and if appropriate/applicable the county Human Resources Department. Determine the district protocol to review near misses or incidents in the field to improve field safety. Document corrective actions taken.</i>
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**First Aid Reference – Signs & Symptoms of Common Field Injuries and Illnesses**

<b>Signs &amp; Symptoms</b>	<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Response Action:</b>
<b>ANIMAL BITES &amp; WOUNDS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puncture wounds</li> <li>• Swelling and redness around the wound(s)</li> <li>• Pain at bite site</li> <li>• Difficulty breathing</li> <li>• Vomiting and nausea</li> <li>• Blurred vision</li> <li>• Sweating and salivating</li> <li>• Numbness in face or limbs</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Move away from animal.</li> <li>2. Keep victim calm, quiet, and have them lay down.</li> <li>3. Cover wound with loose sterile bandage.</li> <li>4. Remove jewelry and shoes if near a swelling wound.</li> <li>5. May need anti-venom, rabies vaccination, or tetanus shot at the hospital.</li> <li>6. Do not cut the wound, attempt to suck out venom, apply a tourniquet, or give the person alcohol, caffeine or medications.</li> </ol>	<p>Non-Poisonous Bites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact health care provider. A tetanus shot or rabies vaccination may be needed.</li> <li>2. Be ready to describe the animal that attacked (snake, fox, bat, etc.).</li> </ol> <p>Poisonous Bites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Call EMTs immediately. To work, anti-venom has to be delivered in 12 hours.</li> <li>2. Be ready to describe the poisonous animal that attacked.</li> </ol>
<b>INSECT BITES &amp; WOUNDS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puncture wound(s)</li> <li>• Itching, swelling, and redness around the wound</li> <li>• Pain at bite site</li> <li>• Possible anaphylaxis if trouble breathing, dizzy, or light-headed.</li> <li>• For poisonous bites (black widow, etc.) may experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Muscle cramps in bite area</li> <li>○ Chills, fever, nausea</li> <li>○ Sweating</li> <li>○ Severe body or head pain</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Move away from the insect or remove the insect carefully. Save the insect if possible, for identification.</li> <li>2. Keep victim calm and quiet.</li> <li>3. Cover wound with a sterile bandage.</li> <li>4. Take an antihistamine to decrease itching, redness and swelling.</li> <li>5. Apply ice 15 – 20 minutes/hour for 6 hours for pain.</li> <li>6. May need anti-venom, rabies vaccination, or tetanus shot at the hospital.</li> <li>7. Do not cut the wound, attempt to suck out venom, apply a tourniquet, or give the person alcohol, caffeine or medications.</li> </ol>	<p>Non-severe Bites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Most insect bites generally heal on their own with no medical assistance. If additional symptoms develop or pain at the bite spot worsens, contact a health care provider.</li> <li>2. Be ready to describe or show the animal that attacked (spider, tick, mosquito, etc.).</li> </ol> <p>Severe Bites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Call 911 or drive victim to the ER. May need epinephrine, anti-venom or an antibiotic.</li> <li>2. Be ready to describe the insect (if seen) that attacked. Try to save ticks for identification.</li> <li>3. Have victim stay alert to symptoms indicating disease or infection (flu-like symptoms, bullseye or other rashes, redness and inflammation, neurological symptoms, etc.)</li> </ol>

**First Aid Reference – Signs & Symptoms of Common Field Injuries and Illnesses**

<p><b>FERTILIZER AND PESTICIDE EXPOSURE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic and inorganic fertilizers and soil conditions can cause a range of symptoms:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Infections from pathogens (salmonella, listeria, E. coli, etc.) and parasites (roundworms, tapeworms, etc.)</li> <li>○ Irritation in nose and throat</li> <li>○ Skin burns and drying</li> <li>○ Eye damage</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Acute mild symptoms from pesticide exposure:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Headache, sweating, diarrhea, skin irritation and rashes, nose-throat-eye irritation, weakness, thirst, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Acute severe symptoms from pesticide exposure:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vomiting, convulsions, reflexes, body aches and cramps, fever, thirst, unconsciousness, difficulty breathing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Chronic symptoms from pesticide exposure:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Birth defects, tumors, genetic changes, blood disorders, nerve disorders, reproductive effects, damage to immune system.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine route of entry (mouth, nose, eyes, skin) and determine type of pesticide and keep label for physician.</li> <li>2. If inhaled get to fresh air, loosen clothing to help with breathing, and perform CPR if trained and needed.</li> <li>3. If in eyes, rinse with clean water for 15 minutes or with a flush kit.</li> <li>4. If absorbed through skin, remove contaminated clothing and wash thoroughly with soap and water.</li> <li>5. If swallowed induce vomiting if pesticide label indicates or rinse out mouth with lots of water.</li> <li>6. Keep victim comfortable and warm.</li> </ol>	<p>Call 911 or seek medical help immediately. Do what you can to assist as you are able to by following first aid instructions on fertilizer/pesticide labels and what you are trained to do.</p>
<p><b>HEAT EXHAUSTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dizziness, headache</li> <li>• Rapid heart rate</li> <li>• Pale, cool, clammy or flushed skin</li> <li>• Nausea and/or vomiting</li> <li>• Fatigue, thirst, muscle cramps</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stop all exertion.</li> <li>2. Move to a cool shaded place.</li> <li>3. Hydrate with cool water.</li> </ol>	<p>Heat exhaustion is the most common type of heat illness. Initiate treatment. If no improvement, call 911 and seek medical help. Do not return to work in the sun. Heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke.</p>
<p><b>HEAT STROKE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disoriented, irritable, combative, unconscious</li> <li>• Hallucinations, seizures, poor balance</li> <li>• Rapid heart rate</li> <li>• Hot, dry and red skin</li> <li>• Fever, body temperature above 104 °F</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Move (gently) to a cooler spot in shade.</li> <li>2. Loosen clothing and spray clothes and exposed skin with water and fan.</li> <li>3. Cool by placing ice or cold packs along neck, chest, armpits and groin (Do not place ice directly on skin)</li> </ol>	<p>Call 911 or seek medical help immediately.</p> <p>Heat stroke is a life-threatening medical emergency. A victim can die within minutes if not properly treated. Efforts to reduce body temperature must begin immediately!</p>

**Signature of Supervisor:**

I acknowledge that this safety plan has been prepared in accordance with district internal policies and field safety procedures set forth at the county, state, and federal level.

Name	Signature	Date	Phone Number

**Field Staff Roster - Training Documentation**

I verify that I have read this safety plan, understand its contents, and agree to comply with its requirements.

Name/Phone Number	Affiliation	Signature	Date	Emergency Contact/Phone Number

Version: August 13, 2020



## **Bibliography**

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