

## TAB 4

### DISTRICT PLANNING

- District Program of Work – Long Range Plan
  - Plan of Operations & Calendar of Work
    - District Policies
      - Locally Led Conservation



# PLANNING

# **DISTRICT PLANNING**

Know who we SERVE and WHY:

- Who we **SERVICE** is crucial in developing activities and funding opportunities
- **WHY** do we serve – set up a mission statement to meet your targeted goals; Look at both nationally and locally as a whole. This will help you focus on what issues are the most important we as soil conservation districts face.

Effective Organizations:

1. Set Goals
2. Will have tensions
3. Need to provide a positive working environment
4. Provide a set of procedures that is to be followed by the office
5. Follow through

## **DISTRICT PROGRAM OF WORK – Long Range Plan**

***These Policies are to be reviewed yearly in December or January***

When a Soil Conservation District is organized, a program of work is prepared for that district. Each organization has a stated purpose for its existence. This program of work (long range plan) is the stated purpose of the soil conservation districts and is prepared on the basis of the best data available. It contains the physical facts of the district; such as, climatic and soil conditions, land use, size and type of farming, and conservation problems as they existed when the work plan was prepared. It also contains suggestions for a program that will help correct the conservation problems that exist. It is essential that district officials be thoroughly acquainted with resource problems, be able to evaluate their importance and be willing to take appropriate steps to solve these problems. (***See Template Tab 4***)

The process of doing the long-range and annual planning is an excellent opportunity for the board to bring in other agencies, groups, or individuals with interest and responsibilities in conservation to work together in planning and activating a dynamic conservation program that will benefit all. Many districts utilize trained facilitators to receive public input to assist in identifying and prioritizing conservation needs.

The Program of Work should be reviewed annually and revised whenever it becomes out of date because of changing methods of farming, new techniques for meeting conservation problems, or as new information; such as, more accurate soils surveys become available.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service technical assistance is provided the soil conservation districts on the basis of this work program. The local soil conservation district enters into a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States Department of Agriculture, and a Supplemental Memorandum of Understanding with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the State Soil Conservation Committee.

## **PLAN OF OPERATIONS AND CALENDAR OF WORK**

After the program of work has been reviewed and revised if necessary, a plan of operation for the next year should be developed. This plan should include the items which will receive the major emphasis in the education and operation program for the coming year. Go back to the work program and lift from it the most pressing soil and water conservation problems in the district. List these problems and decide what you will do about them the coming year.

List the objectives of the educational program and decide what activities will be carried out or promoted. Review the results of last year's operations and decide the goals for the next year. Ask yourself if you are satisfied with the progress being made.

Once the objectives and goals have been listed, develop a calendar of work (Annual Plan of Operations/Work) for the coming year. This calendar should organize the year's district activity by showing:

1. List Resource Concern(s) your district feels are important
  - Establish priorities  
Soil Erosion, Soil Condition, Water Quality/Quantity, Air Quality, Plant Suitability/Condition, and Animals
2. Who will be responsible for an activity and who will assist. (Develop your committee members)
  - Develop a good education and publicity program
3. Set your districts goals
  - Emphasis on the kind of amount of conservation work to be done during the period.
4. When the activity will take place. (Suggested Activities – examples are workshops, tour, meetings, any educational activity)
  - Assignment of responsibilities for carrying out the plan
  - A schedule of time and place work will be done

Your current year's goals should be addressed monthly at your board meetings paying close attention to areas that are not being reached. This is a good chance to also review employee progress.

## **DISTRICT POLICIES – a policy defines an outcome**

The development of district policies is to be used as a working document with new policies added as the need arises. Policies should be in writing and reviewed annually with the staff and Board of Directors. Keeping all policies and procedures in written form improves the chances that they will be fairly and impartially applied to every employee of the district. Clear policy and procedures enable each employee to know what is expected and rules to follow.

Some suggested guidelines on information contained in a district policy manual could include:

- Board of Supervisors
- History of District and Certificate Organization
- References used in developing district policies
- Memorandums of Understanding
- Area Research Farms
- Awards
- Auxiliary
- Banquets
- Chemicals
- Contributions
- Equipment
- Irrigation
- Meetings, Notices, and Public Law
- Minutes
- Operations & Management
- Customer Relations
- Outreach Education
- Program Contracts
- Memberships
- National Convention
- Work Plans
- Personnel
- Services
- Volunteer Program
- Licenses

## **LOCALLY LED CONSERVATION**

Local leadership for conservation has been a responsibility of conservation district for several years and the idea of locally led conservation is to build on this experience. Locally led conservation means involving the entire community in assessing needs, determining priorities and working together to solve natural resource problems. Local people understand local problems and, working together, can determine the best solutions.

Conservation districts, working with USDA, EPA, other conservation organizations, producer groups, environmental groups and other local interests can develop a shared vision for conservation and resource enhancement in the community. Anyone with an interest in natural resource management should be involved in the process.

### **WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED**

- FSA County Committee & Staff
- SCD Board Members & Staff
- NRCS District Conservationist
- County Extension Agent
- State or local elected/appointed officials
- Other Federal & State Government Representatives
- Representatives of American Indian Governments

### **IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES**

Once specific resource concerns are identified, the committee should identify the local resource priorities and where they need to be addressed. It should also set conservation goals for the local program, which could include, for example: reducing erosion to sustainable levels; water quality; restoring wildlife habitat; or many others. Identifying local priorities and setting conservation goals will be key factors in determining state and national priorities, priority areas and program goals.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT CLERK / MANAGER**

The District clerk/manager may be asked to prepare mailing lists for participants, coordinating meeting facilities, follow-up phone calls, record minutes, and gather meeting materials.

- The invitation should include a brief description of the local district, a brief description of the conservation needs assessment process and the agenda for the meeting.
- Follow-up phone calls should be made to key organizations and individuals three to five days prior to the meeting.
- Make sure you keep a separate folder or binder with your local work group material and maintain for permanent reference.