



Guide for Prospective Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors

Understanding the Position and Election Process

The History

North Carolina has a long history of natural resources protection. This history dates back to 1939, when the first Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) was started in Anson County as the Brown Creek Soil and Water Conservation District. This was a very fitting place to start this movement, as its founder Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett was a native of this North Carolina county. Dr. Bennett, a graduate of UNC, used his knowledge to address the concern of soil erosion and the effects soil health had on agricultural production.

The North Carolina Law

In February of 1935, a model Soil and Water Conservation District Law was developed to be considered by each state. This was the birth of Conservation Districts and North Carolina adopted General Statute 139 (G.S.139) "Soil and Water Conservation District Law". The North Carolina general statute puts in place the framework by which conservation is delivered by a local governance, the Soil and Water Conservation District.

Soil and Water Conservation District Boards

North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation District Boards consist of three (3) officials, called Supervisors, elected by citizens of the District and two (2) officials appointed by the North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Terms are four (4) years and there are no term limits. These officials are responsible by G.S. 139 for the development and oversight of conservation delivery within District boundaries. In North Carolina, 95 of the boundaries follow county lines and one (1), the Albemarle District in the northeastern NC, consists of 5 counties. Though there are multiple counties within the Albemarle District, each county has representing officials.

Election of District Boards

Election of District officials (Supervisors) is done in the general election as non-partisan candidates. Terms are staggered so that two (2) Supervisors are elected on one two (2) year cycle and one (1) is elected on the alternate two-year cycle. Per G.S. 139, the filing period for this office is the second Monday of June through the first Friday of July.

In the event of a mid-term vacancy on a Soil and Water Conservation District Board, the North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Commission appoints a qualified candidate to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. That position does not appear back on the ballot until the conclusion of the full term.

What is Expected of a Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor?

This position shares the same expectations as other elected positions. Supervisors are elected to represent the citizens of the District for the delivery of sound conservation. Soil and Water Conservation District Boards are considered public bodies and must adhere to applicable rules and laws: open meeting requirements, quorums, public records, and meeting notification guidelines are some items to consider. Decisions about District priorities, contracts, finances, and other business related topics shall be addressed during regularly held meetings.

All Supervisors are required to complete Basic Training and obtain six Supervisor Training Credits per term of service per G.S. 139. Compensation for days of "official service" is available dependent upon state appropriations and submission of employment eligibility and tax documentation.