

Supervisor's Handbook Section: Cooperating Organizations

AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS ASSISTING THE DISTRICTS

Natural Resources Conservation Service

The assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assigned to a district usually consists of a district conservationist and such other assistance as mutually determined. Additional staff may be assigned, depending on a plan of operations prepared by NRCS in consultation with the district and based upon the district's plans of work and on federal appropriations. All permanent employees of the NRCS are employed under and are subject to federal Civil Service regulations. They must meet certain standards of education and experience to be qualified for the positions they hold.

In addition to the assistance furnished soil conservation districts, the Natural Resources Conservation Service is responsible for several other activities. Among these are:

The National Cooperative Soil Survey

Leadership to carry out a National Resources Inventory (NRI) Program

The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (P.L. 566)

Leadership for the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program

Leadership for USDA participation in river basin studies

Coordinates USDA's responsibilities for flood hazard evaluations and flood plain management studies

Conducts flood insurance studies under cooperative agreement with other federal agencies

The Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMP)

Implementing the provisions of the Food Security Act (85 Farm Bill); the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act (90 Farm Bill); and the Federal Agricultural

Improvement and Reform Act (96 Farm Bill)

While the district supervisors do not have direct supervision over the NRCS staff, they assist in setting priorities for its work through their work or strategic plan. District boards of supervisors should meet at least annually with the NRCS staff to analyze the workload and to review the work of the preceding year.

The NRCS also provides such facilities as its employees may require for the efficient performance of their work. In order to best utilize the service of the technical staff, the boards of supervisors and SCD staff assist by arranging for news stories and handling the operation and maintenance of district-owned equipment. They may perform numerous other duties which would otherwise take considerable time of NRCS staff.

Resource Conservation And Development Projects (RC&D)

The USDA is authorized through the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 and other authorities to provide local groups of people technical and financial help in conserving and developing their natural resources. Resource conservation and development projects are locally initiated, sponsored, and directed. They provide a base for people to come together to plan and carry out action measures that will make their area a better place in which to live, work, and play.

The Department helps these groups sponsoring RC&D projects seek funds and services through federal, state, and local sources. It provides local people a way of helping themselves take better care of their natural resources and at the same time improve their communities' economy.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has leadership for the program and the success these projects attain depends on local participation.

The NDSU Extension Service

County extension offices serve as the local access point to the resources of NDSU and the cooperative extension system. County extension staff work with local groups to identifying educational needs and develop and implement programs to address those needs.

The NDSU Extension Service works closely with soil conservation districts on addressing conservation issues. A close coordination between the district board of supervisors and extension agents in the area of natural resource education has always been encouraged. This coordination was enhanced by the 1997 North Dakota Legislature. It provides for the NDSU Extension Service to assist the NDSSCC in performing the Committee's duties, within the limits of legislative appropriation. This encourages an even closer working relationship between extension agents and soil conservation districts when addressing conservation issues.

The purpose of the NDSU Extension Service is "to create learning partnerships that help adults and youth enhance their lives and communities." The following values or principles guide Extension's work in pursuit of this purpose:

- *Life long learning
- *Maximizing resources through partnerships
- *Informed decision making
- *Promoting economic and environmental sustainability
- *Learners are responsible for their decisions and actions
- *Integrating research - based knowledge with knowledge that is generated through the experiences of our partners and clients
- *Teamwork and shared leadership
- *Our university base, along with our local, state and national network, enhances our educational capabilities

North Dakota Forest Service

The North Dakota Forest Service is responsible for administering forestry programs state-wide. The agency operates forest conservation tree nursery at Towner specializing in the production of conifer (evergreen) tree stock. The stock is sold to soil conservation districts, natural resource agencies and directly to rural landowners. The agency also owns and manages 13,278 acres of state forest lands.

Forestry staff, under the direction of a state forester, supply technical and financial assistance for the management of state and private forest lands targeting traditional forestry practices, tree planting, windbreak establishment and renovation, wildland fire protection and forest pest management.

Soil conservation districts may receive assistance from the state forester in providing forestry training to district personnel, development of tree planting programs and technical assistance to service landowner referrals relating to the establishment and management of forest resources. Landowner requests for vender services such as tree planting, maintenance, renovation and other management needs, are referred by the state forester to the appropriate local district entity or other available private contractors.

North Dakota Department of Health

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDH) is the lead state water quality agency.

Noupoint Source Pollution Management Program

Section 319 of the 1987 Clean Water Act included the Noupoint Source (NPS) pollution program. The NDDH is responsible for administration and implementation of the program. The Section 319 Funds available through the state's NPS program are primarily used for state and/or local projects which promote voluntary reduction or control of NPS pollution. The funding is available on a competitive grant application process and applications are due to the NDDH by September 1 of each year. Funding is on a 60:40 federal/local/state

match basis, respectively.

The NPS goals are to:

1. Increase public awareness of NPS pollution
2. Reduce/prevent the delivery of NPS pollutants to waters of the state
3. Disseminate information on effective solutions to NPS pollution

To meet these goals; the local sponsors utilize demonstrations and/or educational programs to increase public awareness on the types of NPS pollution in the state as well as the various methods available for NPS pollution control. In conjunction with the educational activities, many of the projects, particularly the watershed projects, also provide financial and technical assistance to promote the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMP) that control or prevent NPS pollution.

State and local projects currently supported with Section 319 funding essentially include three different types of projects. These project types or categories are:

1. Development phase projects
2. Educational projects
3. Watershed projects

Although, most projects clearly fit into one of these categories, there are also several projects which include components from all three categories.

The primary purposes of the **development phase projects** are to identify beneficial use impairments or threats and determine the extent to which those threats or impairments are due to NPS pollution. A majority of the scheduled work activities for these projects are related to water quality and land use data collection. Development phase projects are generally one to two years in length.

Educational projects, as the name implies, are designed to disseminate information on various NPS pollution issues. These projects are one to five years in length and focus on a variety of local or statewide NPS pollution concerns. Educational tools typically used by the project sponsors include brochures, all media (TV, radio, newspapers, etc.), workshops, tours, exhibits, and demonstrations.

The **watershed projects** are the most comprehensive projects currently implemented through the NPS pollution management program. These projects are typically the most long-term in nature and designed to address documented NPS pollution impacts within approved priority watersheds. The primary goals of a watershed project are to:

- Reduce/prevent NPS pollution by promoting the voluntary application of Best Management Practices
- Disseminate information on effective solutions to NPS pollution
- Evaluate the projects progress and benefits

Watershed projects are generally five to ten years in length, depending on the size of the watershed and extent of NPS pollution impacts. The NDDH may also be able to provide you with technical assistance on water quality issues.

Other Programs:

In addition to the 319 Program, other programs or funds administered by the NDDH which SCD's should be aware of are: 1. 604(6) Funds (Water management and planning); 2. Clean Lakes Program; 3. Livestock Waste Management Program

North Dakota Game and Fish Department

The Game and Fish Department Private Land Initiative is available to provide private land owners the opportunity to enhance the wildlife habitat on their property. A variety of cost sharing opportunities exist. Tree planting, nesting habitat establishment and food plots are activities that are available along with a broad range

of other habitat development activities. The cost sharing is associated with the federal cost share available. The program also includes some land leasing possibilities. Game and Fish Department Wildlife Habitat Resource Biologists are available in Bismarck, Williston, Riverdale, Harvey, Devils Lake and Jamestown Game and Fish offices. These personnel can assist the SCD with information on Game and Fish program availability.

Game and Fish Habitat Biologists are also knowledgeable about other wildlife programs. There is a wide range of opportunities available from other wildlife agencies and organization which may prove beneficial to landowners and cooperators. Project planning including Game and Fish Department personnel may bring additional cost savings to projects developed within the District.

Farm Service Agency

Farm Services Agency (FSA), in addition to administering various production control programs, also administers the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) which offers ten-to-fifteen year contracts with farmers to cost-effectively conserve and improve the nation's natural resources base by protecting the nation's soil, water, and wildlife resources; improving and preserving water quality and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat.

The CRP is administered at the county level by the FSA County Committee with the assistance of the county office staff headed by a County Executive Director. Conservation Districts have the opportunity to approve conservation plans.

FSA Ag Credit Teams (formerly FmHA) are authorized to make various conservation loans to landowners, operators and groups of farmers. The local Ag Credit Managers encourage their clients to farm the conservation way. They can make the following loans:

Watershed - for the purpose of paying the applicant's share of projects to protect and develop and water resources in small watersheds.

Irrigation and Drainage - for the purpose of developing community irrigation, drainage and other soil and water conservation and use facilities.

Resource Conservation and Development - for the purpose of conserving and developing the natural resources in areas designated by the National Resources Conservation Service. Loans must be for community benefit and contribute to the economic improvement of the area.

Soil and Water Conservation - for the purpose of financing land and water development measures, forestation, drainage of farm land, irrigation, pasture improvement and related land and water use adjustment.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is responsible for conservation and protection of Indian lands. The Bureau has staffs who supervise the program on those levels.

US Fish and Wildlife Service

The US Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for preserving and restoring wildlife environments. Major activities include a consultation and coordination with USDA on wetland provisions of the Farm Bill, and implementation of the "Partners for Wildlife" program, which provides technical and financial assistance to landowners for developing wildlife habitat on their property.

Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is a federal agency in the Department of Interior that manages 272 million acres of surface lands and 572 million acres of minerals in the US. Most of these lands are located in the 11 western states. In North Dakota, BLM manages about 60,000 acres of surface lands and 6.1 million acres of minerals.

The agency is mandated to manage public lands and resources under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield with special emphasis on consideration of resources on an ecosystem basis. The BLM seeks to

carry out resource management that best serves the needs of the American people today and into the future. This requires the expertise of professionals such as archeologists, engineers, geologists, and surveyors.

The primary minerals the BLM manages in North Dakota are coal, oil and gas. BLM has the responsibility to mitigate potential adverse impacts from coal, oil gas exploration and to develop both surface and subsurface resources. This is normally achieved through the development of mitigation measures and protective stipulations in the environmental analysis process.

The majority of the 60,000 acres of public surface lands are located in Bowman County (32,000) and Dunn County (15,000), while the remaining are scattered throughout the state. Management of these lands is centered around the multiple use, sustained yield, ecosystem principle which allows for the best mix of resource management practices to provide livestock forage, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, recreation, etc.

National Association of Conservation Districts

. . . a membership organization of nearly 3,000 conservation districts working to advance their cause. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is controlled by its member districts and state associations of districts.

NACD'S MISSION

- To represent districts as their national voice on soil, water and related conservation issues.
- To provide useful information to soil and water conservation districts and their state associations.
- To analyze conservation programs and policy issues that has a direct impact on local districts.
- To offer needed and cost-effective services to member districts.

NACD is a grass-roots organization whose governing board members and officers are representatives from districts. Individual districts shape the policies of state associations; the state associations, through membership on the NACD Board of Directors, decide on national policies at the annual NACD meeting. Board members select the 12 member executive board, including the four officers of the association, and the CEO.

The association is led by a president, two vice presidents and a secretary-treasurer. The officers, executive board and board of directors of NACD are all experienced district officials.

NACD is a nongovernment, nonprofit organization that is financed by the voluntary contributions of its members.

All conservation districts and their state associations are members of NACD. In addition, NACD offers nonvoting membership to those who wish to show their support to NACD. Contact any NACD office for information on how to become a member.

NACD maintains its headquarters office in Washington, DC, just a short walk from the Capitol Building and the Congressional offices of all members of the House and Senate. NACD speaks up loud and clear on legislation and regulations that affect resource conservation in America. The grass-roots support that backs up NACD has helped it become highly respected in the nation's capitol.

North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts

A membership organization of elected and appointed soil conservation district supervisors organized to advance the interests of North Dakota soil conservation districts.

The North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts (NDASCD) has its office at Lincoln-Oakes Nursery, 3310 University Drive, Bismarck, North Dakota. The mailing address is PO Box 1601, Bismarck, North Dakota 58502. The telephone number is (701) 223-8518.

MISSION: The mission of the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts is to disseminate information and promote cooperation between soil conservation districts; cooperate with state and federal agencies; promote the welfare of soil conservation districts; promote the conservation of soil and water resources; and assume active leadership in promoting conservation education in the state.

GOAL: To provide quality membership services and nursery products to carry out the soil conservation program of the soil conservation districts of North Dakota.

OBJECTIVES:

- #1 Carry out recommendations adopted at the annual meetings of the NDASCD.
- #2 Disseminate information pertaining to programs of the NDASCD.
- #3 Provide for information and educational exchanges for soil conservation district supervisors and employees.
- #4 Produce and market quality trees and grass seed to anticipated demand.
- #5 Provide for continued employee development and training.

Standing Mission: The association has 7 standing committees. Each committee has 5 supervisor members, one from each of the five areas of North Dakota. Each committee meets annually and again at the time of each annual meeting of the Association. The standing committees are: Soil Stewardship, Legislative, Research, Water Resources, Education & Youth, District Outlook, and District & Agency Programs.

Annual Area Meetings: The NDASCD conducts five annual area meetings each year during the month of June to provide educational opportunities for supervisors; to elect directors to the NDASCD Board of Directors and members to the North Dakota State Soil Conservation Committee; to conduct Association business; and to formulate Association policy.

Annual Meeting: The NDASCD Annual Meeting provides an opportunity for all elected and appointed soil conservation district supervisors to assemble in an educational setting and to conduct the business of the Association. The state convention and annual meeting is held each year in mid-November and is the time supervisors determine policy and direction of the Association.

Policy Positions: The policy of the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts is determined by its members - the elected and appointed soil conservation district supervisors. Most policy positions originate as recommendations with soil conservation districts. Recommendations are considered at the annual area meetings and by NDASCD standing committees. Recommendations become policy if adopted by the membership at their annual meeting.

Directors: The work of the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts is directed by 10 directors. Two directors are elected by the soil conservation district supervisors from each of the 5 areas of the state. Directors serve 2-year terms. The directors select the officers of the Association.

Lincoln Oakes-Nurseries: Lincoln-Oakes Nurseries are owned and operated by the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts. The "Lincoln" unit is located at 3310 University Drive, South of Bismarck, North Dakota, and part of the former Fort Lincoln Military Post. The "Oakes" unit is located south of Oakes, North Dakota. The nurseries total 535 acres with the headquarters located at Bismarck, North Dakota. The nurseries produce over 60 species and cultivars of tree and shrub seedlings for soil conservation districts. All species are produced from known seed sources that are climatically suited to the region. The nurseries operate under a nursery manager who directs the work of the nurseries with up to 85 permanent, seasonal and temporary employees.

North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation — Auxiliary

The Auxiliary is a non-profit, non-partisan organization formed for the specific purpose of assisting the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts in its stated objectives.

The Auxiliary works in full and close cooperation with the Association. Membership is open to anyone interested in soil conservation and who is willing to assist in the democratic methods and principals of soil conservation districts.

The Auxiliary is governed by a president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer who are elected annually. Their source of money is dues from members, contribution from the state association and its nurseries.

North Dakota Conservation District Employees Association

The North Dakota Conservation District Employees Association is a membership organization of soil conservation district employees organized for the following purposes:

To promote professionalism among soil conservation district employees to better enable them to carry out the duties of their position and to provide assistance for coordinating the efforts of the SCD Supervisors, Districts, NDASCD, NDSSCC, and USDA agencies in achieving their conservation goals.

A means of communication for employees to effectively exchange information and ideas resulting in better coordination and effectiveness of district programs on a local, state, regional, and national level; to provide opportunity and tools necessary for developing and maintaining an adequate education program.

To strengthen communications and working relationships with SCD supervisors, instill pride, and encourage dedicated service to employers.

To strengthen communications and working relationships with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

To encourage a uniform system of record keeping, filing and other office procedures for providing networking assistance to present and to new employees.

To promote the development of an SCD Employees Handbook (similar to the SCD Supervisors Handbook).

To encourage each district office to develop job descriptions for employees so as to encourage excellence in fulfillment of duties by employees in their job capacities.

To promote the establishment of a "Career Ladder" to be used as a guideline by SCD supervisors in hiring district personnel.

To hold an annual Employees Association Meeting at the NDASCD Convention; to request educational seminars for employee development; to encourage SCD personnel involvement in local, state, regional, and national conservation activities and meetings.