

## **New Hanover Soil & Water Conservation District Handbook**

Supervisors (elected, appointed, associate)

### **Job Description**

1. Identify local soil, water and related natural resource concerns, set natural resource priorities, and then develop, implement and evaluate long and short range plans and programs to address these prioritized resource concerns.
2. Participate in appropriate multi-government and/or organization activities such as watershed projects, river basin projects, resource conservation and development efforts, and multi-government and/or organization activities educational efforts such as field days, workshops, and seminars.
3. Educate and inform landowners and operators, general public, and local, state, and federal officials and legislators on conservation issues and programs relevant to New Hanover County.
4. Seek funding and coordinate program assistance from local, state and federal sources, commercial sources, charities, and private groups and individuals.
5. Administer the SWCD programs and activities by delegating tasks through a structure of SWCD supervisors, staff, committees and volunteers.
6. Supervise SWCD staff and volunteers working with the SWCD, and coordinate conservation efforts with cooperating agency personnel.
7. Manage all district-owned funds, facilities and equipment.

### **Planning and Budgets**

Because board members focus on long-range objectives and goals, one of the most important parts of your job is developing your district's annual and comprehensive plans. Supervisors must be involved in all aspects of plan development and implementation, particularly in determining the long-term objectives of the district although, theoretically, the board members write the plan and the staff carry it out, realistically, staff involvement is often critical in the plan development and supervisors often have a strong role in carrying out the plan. When working on the annual and long-range plans, supervisors should take a strong leadership role in the following areas:

- Definition of purpose: Supervisors must determine the purpose of the district in the community.
- Prioritization of resource problems: Supervisors must decide which resource problems the district will address and their relative importance. Supervisors should

look at the big picture and develop broad policies that address the resource as a whole in their SWCD. Staff can work within these broad policies to address individual concerns.

- Development of objectives: Supervisors must adapt the objectives they feel the district should pursue to meet the resource needs of the district.
- Determination of actions: Supervisors must outline the actions to be taken by the board and staff to carry out their stated objectives. These actions should be consistent with their stated purpose and will result in a more effective conservation program.

Adoption of plan: The board must formally adopt the plan. To achieve full participation in the planning process by both board and staff, a planning committee may be formed to develop the plan for recommendation to the board. The chair may appoint one or two board members to work with staff to develop the plan. Annual plans, comprehensive plans, and budgets should be reviewed on a regular basis to determine if goals are being achieved. The stated goals can be compared with actual performance and dollars available. Supervisors can use this information to decide what changes, if any, may be necessary to keep the district on track.

### **Working with Staff**

Although the policies and annual and long-range plans developed by the board will guide the district staff in everyday activities, there are a number of more specific items you should work on with the staff. The district manager or other lead staff person should be the board's key contact to supervising the operation of the district.

The board should work closely with the manager to:

- Delegate responsibilities to employees.
- Set work priorities.
- Develop annual and long-range budgets.
- Identify training needs and arrange schedule for board and staff.
- Implement an employee evaluation system.
- Provide adequate clerical and technical help to meet the needs of your district. Provide each employee with a specific job description. Obtain a surety bond for all individuals within the district organization entrusted with district funds and equipment.
- Keep in close contact with the North Carolina Division of Soil & Water Conservation (NCDSWC), both the board conservationists and central office, to keep lines of communication open.
- Approve or reject conservation plans.
- Look for new programs to expand existing programs.
- Support local, state, and national associations to keep lines of communication open and provide representation of SWCD concepts to all levels.
- Prepare an annual report of accomplishments, making sure to circulate copies to all interested parties.

## **Role of a Supervisor as a Community Leader**

As a community leader, you help guide your community in natural resource issues. Specifically, you are responsible for:

- Acting as a local grassroots representative for soil and water conservation.
- Maintaining good conservation on the land you manage.
- Acting as a spokesperson on conservation and environmental issues.
- Utilizing existing and new innovative programs to promote conservation at the local level, such as:
  - Youth education.
  - Award programs.
  - Newsletter.
  - Tours.
  - Exhibits, demonstrations, and special projects.
- Discussing the district's programs with businessmen, civic and sporting clubs, professional groups, educators, county residence and farm owners and operators.
- Joining various planning organizations and agencies, within the conflict of interest guidelines, and helping to guide these people in the use of good resource management practices.