

10 Minute Supervisor Trainings



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Backyard Conservation

The purpose of conservation districts is to conserve and develop all renewable natural resources within the district. Developing programs and engaging with all landowners and community members within your county is an important part of conserving these resources. Backyard conservation can be a valuable way to carry out conservation work in your county.

What is backyard conservation?

Backyard conservation is a community-based approach to implementing various conservation practices. This can be small scale projects like raised bed gardens, rain barrels, or other similar practices. The goals of backyard conservation can be to reduce non-point source pollution, conserve water resources, provide food in marginalized communities, and/or storm water management. There are even national programs that can assist homeowners in transforming their backyards into wildlife habitats.

How can districts get involved?

There are several different ways to get involved with backyard conservation. Districts can participate in education and outreach, develop local partnerships, or even create local cost share programs.

Education and Outreach

One of the easiest ways to promote backyard conservation in your community, and often at low or no cost to the conservation district, is to do education and outreach. This can be as simple as providing information in your local office about backyard conservation. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife (KYFW), and other local agencies have free resources that you can use to promote backyard conservation in your office.

You can also create your own materials through free resources like Canva. These materials can be geared toward a specific practices or address specific concerns in your community. You can also participate in local events like fairs, festivals, fiscal court meetings, school educational events, and other similar events. These opportunities are great ways to promote not just backyard conservation, but all district programs.



Partnerships

One of the ways districts can promote backyard conservation is by utilizing community partnerships. Each county has a local extension office and a partnership with your local agent can be invaluable. Local extension offices often hold educational events and trainings that districts can partner in. These events can be as simple as providing district materials to be handed out or as in-depth as co-hosting.

Another important partnership is your local schools. Participating in local education events can not only promote district programs and provide education about conservation, but build community trust. Events with schools are also often fun opportunities to get out in your community!

Other groups to partner with can be local homeowner organizations, chamber of commerce, commodity groups (cattlemen's association, etc.), local civic groups, parks and recreation, other state agencies, and other similar agencies.

Cost Share Programs

Conservation districts can host backyard conservation local cost share programs. Some districts may also classify these as urban agriculture programs. Districts can use environmental grant funds for backyard conservation programs. Below are some examples of projects or practices for backyard conservation programs:

- Raised bed gardens
- Rain barrels or rain gardens
- Bat houses
- Compost bin or composter
- Pollinator garden
- Streambank stabilization

There are many other practices your district can use to promote conservation in your community. Don't be afraid to get creative!



Above is a picture of a rain barrel collecting roof runoff



Above is a picture of a rain garden to minimize storm water runoff