



2015 Committee Reports

Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission

DECEMBER 2015

NATURAL RESOURCES, 1 OF 2

This committee encourages conservation districts to responsible of providing for the wise use of our natural resources. We depend on the soil and water for our vital existence as it is vital for food and fiber production, liquid consumption, energy and industrial production, transportation and recreation.

The most vital thing that every conservation districts can do for natural resources in their local communities are:

1. Work closely with local state and federal entities as well as legislators
2. Stay informed of new legislation and educate the public
3. Promote the Ag Water Quality Act and assist landowners in complying with the state law
4. Recognize local leaders and landowners who are doing a good job
5. Raise public awareness of all Division of Conservation programs such as the Kentucky soil erosion and water quality cost share program, agricultural districts, PACE, conservation reserve program, the Ohio and Mississippi River Basin Initiatives and equipment loans.
6. Promote the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) with farm owners, farm operators, contractors, developers, equipment operators etc.

Research:

1. All districts should have an updated long-range plan based on present land use, resource problems, current trends and other data and update them at least every five years.
2. Districts should support the development of a state soil survey computerized database to include digitizing all completed soil surveys.
3. Districts are encouraged to stay informed of changes in Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) and Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) that affect livestock operations.
4. Districts should assume the leadership role in developing and implementing sediment and storm water management control programs for the protection of sinkholes and other sensitive areas as required in the KY Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Plan.
5. Districts should be involved in the development of ground water protection programs as they relate to agriculture.
6. Districts should assist farmers and landowners in understanding and implementing the new animal welfare bill.



Education:

1. District supervisors should be kept abreast of new developments in land use concepts and practices and apply them in their district. Districts should work to better inform citizens as to the value of sound land use planning and benefits it can provide to their community in protecting individual land rights while meeting the future growth needs of the community.
2. Districts should encourage the use of conservation videos at community meeting with county and regional officials, local community TV stations or other interested groups. Districts should encourage the use of conservation videos, DVD's, websites, Facebook and other multimedia including NRCS web videos on conservation topics that are posted on YouTube.
3. Districts, through their various public information programs, and in cooperation with the extension service, should stress the seriousness of cropland erosion and water quality with direct attention to proper use of crop residues. Districts should continually update information to cooperators on new chemicals available for conservation tillage. Work with other agencies to better inform cooperators and landowners on the proper handling and disposal of chemicals. Districts should promote possible recycling of pesticide containers and waste oil on the farm and around the home.
4. Districts are encouraged to cooperate with other agencies such as the local health department and Water Treatment Plants in encouraging homeowners to identify and eliminate domestic, untreated sewage discharges to the environment. They should provide public education and assist in local community wide initiatives for sustainable waste management solutions.
5. Districts should promote the Envirothon, Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom, and Food, Land and People, and other significant conservation education programs.
6. Districts should promote and encourage soil health practices, activities and education.

Legislation:

1. Districts should have a close working relationship with legislators on the local, state and federal level and should talk with them on a regular basis. Districts should also invite them to be a part of all district activities throughout the year. Working relationships should be established to keep them aware of what is going on in your community and any needs that arise.
2. All districts should encourage possible legislation mandating comprehensive land use plans in all decisions by state government in the location of industries, regional landfills, highway projects, etc. State government projects and acquisition of land should take into consideration and conform to locally developed comprehensive plans which are set forth in state law for land use in their community. Public meetings and input from citizens should be encouraged and given serious consideration.
3. Districts should encourage community involvement on water needs and issues while working with local and state entities.
4. Support funding for the state cost share program and promote best management practices relating to water quality.
5. Districts are encouraged to seek federal 319 Clean Water Act funds to address problems and work with multiple local and state agencies on these projects. Also need to work to obtain "matching" funds to make these grants possible.



Cooperative Relations:

1. Each conservation district should be the local leader in its community in the promotion and support of sound resource management planning according to the land capability and limitations. Districts should strengthen working relationships with their local planning and zoning commission by participating in any comprehensive planning activities and work toward a planning efforts.
2. Districts should arrange an annual joint meeting with their fiscal court, city councils and other local officials to develop cooperative land use planning activities and consider other land use decisions, such as floodplain ordinances.
3. Districts should cooperate with local agencies in land set-aside programs and encourage the application of adequate conservation treatment on these areas.
4. Districts should encourage the formation of groups to provide oversight of government projects proposed on agricultural land of 50 acres or more. Districts should encourage the retention of these prime and unique agricultural lands to the maximum extent possible. It is important that landowners/land users and local citizens be standing members on any such committee.
5. Districts are encouraged to partner with PRIDE Programs across the state to identify viable projects and provide local resources, such as manpower, technical and financial assistance, public education, site assessments that focus attention to a variety of environmental problems and to finding solutions and other information.
6. Districts are encouraged to continue their support and cooperation with the Agriculture Development Councils by continuing to nominate two persons to represent conservation districts on these councils in every county. They should also take the lead in developing and implementing proposals and projects that protect our valuable natural resources.
7. Districts should continue to support NRCS in implementing conservation practices under their many available programs such as CSP and EQIP including WRP, GRP, WHIP and EQIP.
8. Districts should participate and cooperate in a local Farmland Protection Program.