



10-Minute Supervisor Trainings

Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission

JUNE 2014

OUR MISSION

Although we have had trainings in previous years regarding the past and future of conservation districts, those trainings have focused on the procedural and budget areas of our existence, and not necessarily our purpose. Over time, our counties are changing from the traditional agricultural setting to more of a mix of urban and rural. It's important that the conservation districts reflect that change in their practices.

KRS 262.020 Purpose of soil and water conservation district -- Methods of achieving purpose.

The purpose of a soil and water conservation district is to conserve and develop all renewable natural resources within the district. In so doing, the district is authorized to undertake, sponsor, or participate in projects and activities which promote the conservation, development, maintenance and use of the land, water, trees and other renewable natural resources of the district. Such projects and activities shall include but not be limited to conservation practices on agricultural lands, the control of soil erosion, retardation of water runoff, the construction of flood prevention and control reservoirs, the maintenance of flood plains, the promotion of projects to assure an adequate municipal, industrial and agricultural supply of water, watershed stabilization, the avoidance and abatement of sedimentation and pollution in streams and other bodies of water, forestation and reforestation, the establishment of parks and outdoor recreation areas, the protection of open space, greenbelt areas and scenery, the preservation of wilderness areas, the protection of fish and wildlife, working for the location of highways, industries, housing developments, airports and other structures as are consistent with the district's objectives and will offer the least possible interference with the conservation and best multiple use of the renewable natural resources, and all other activities consistent with the total natural resources development of the district.



Some things to note in KRS 262.020:

- Conservation districts were created to “conserve and develop all renewable natural resources within the district,” and this includes “land, water, trees and any other renewable natural resources.”
- Conservation practices on agricultural lands are a very important part of the projects/activities suggested by the regulation, but there are many other projects/activities that a district can do in addition to these.
- Conservation districts may get involved in projects to enhance all renewable natural resources, including things like all water runoff issues (including non-agricultural lands), water pollution and conservation, watershed health and stabilization, forestation, parks and outdoor recreation areas, greenbelts, wilderness areas, etc. Also, the district can be a voice in the development of communities (road locations, industry location, housing, etc.) to offer community planning being consistent with conservation goals in mind.
- Environmental education is also now a big goal of many conservation districts that serves many of the above referenced objectives.

Conservation District Mission Statement:

Each conservation district’s mission statement should reflect the work that the district is trying to do in the community. As a new fiscal year is starting next month, this is a perfect time for each district to decide how they want to carry out the purpose that is prescribed to them by the KRS statute that forms conservation districts.

An example conservation district mission statement:

The mission of the _____ County Conservation District is to eliminate and/or control soil erosion and water pollution and to maintain and/or improve the quality of our environment by planning and wise use of sound conservation practices and by encouraging all land users to become cooperators and to develop water quality plans for their land.

Questions to ask:

How is my conservation district meeting the needs of ALL the landowners of the county?

Is my district reaching potential stakeholders in addition to farmers?

How is my district reaching landowners who don’t farm to help them make sure they are protecting Kentucky’s soil and water?