



# 10-Minute Supervisor Trainings

Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission

February 2013

## **THE FUTURE OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

We have looked at the past and present, now it is time to look ahead to the future of conservation districts. We have to ask what will the districts future hold? How can we take measures to ensure that districts will continue to thrive as time goes on?

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What is your district's future?

No one can predict the future. So, if we look at the past, you will begin to realize that changes do occur. How can a district strengthen themselves when changes occur?

- Be visible.
  - **Fiscal Court meetings:** One of the most important things you can do is ensure financial stability. This can be done by attending a Fiscal Court meeting a few times a year and making a presentation. In your presentation you can give an update on budget, activities and successes. This will make it easier for both the Judge and Magistrates to understand how your funds are being used and you will have a better chance of gaining their support when needed. Let your fiscal court members know what money comes into their county via State Cost Share, CAIP (if your district administers), Local Cost Share, Federal Funds, etc.
  - **Host yearly cooperators meetings:** The Board should showcase their activities and programs and gain more local involvement. These meetings also give the landowners in the community a chance to ask questions and voice their concerns.
  - **Local Resources:** Make use of what your community has to offer such as local radio and newspapers. Publish a weekly article, advertise upcoming events, equipment rentals, cost share programs etc. Most will let you do this free and it is great exposure. Newsletters and Websites are also a big success. Facebook is another option. If your county has a page, promote it.





- **Be open to new ideas.** Districts may have to get creative in how to do what they have always done in these uncertain financial times.
  - Find sponsors for events such as field days or awards banquets. Look for different or unique ways for sponsorships.
  - Work with your surrounding districts. Is the district in the next county over doing something similar? Is there away you can connect with them to make the event bigger and better?
  - Education goes beyond the youth in your community. Adult education can include more than just the farmers in your county. What about those who live in the city? Think about their soil and water conservation needs.
- **Be Transparent in all financial dealing.** With the recent audit of special districts, it is important that districts are transparent in all financial dealings to the public in which they serve. They taxpayers in our communities are our livelihood. It is important that districts maintain the trust by complying with all laws including reporting requirements, financial administration and open records.

### **Remember:**

- Districts have been in existence within the state of KY since the 1940's. During this time, many obstacles have been crossed making districts stronger.
- We continue to face the unknown. Many districts now provide their own office space and in most cases, their own computers and internet. These issues seemed like problems when we first faced them, but districts overcame and continue to provide millions of dollars to the landowners of KY.
- Districts will continue to conserve and develop all renewable natural resources within the district. In doing so they will continue to put conservation "on the ground" across the Commonwealth. This is our common goal, no matter if you are local, state or federal.

### **DISCUSSION**

1. Does your district see a future need or concern locally?
2. How are you beginning to find a solution? |
3. Discuss what your districts priorities could be 5 years from now.