

District Operations Brief

DO Brief #3 - 2008



Conservation District Supervisor Responsibilities

Conservation district supervisors, as elected or appointed officials of a local government, have an obligation to uphold the law and fulfill the public trust, using taxpayer dollars as effectively as possible. Volunteering time does not make district supervisor obligations any different than those for other elected officials like county commissioners. Many responsibilities and requirements of district supervisors in how they conduct district business are outlined in the Conservation Districts Law (RCW 89.08). However, the concept of the public trust is broader. It encompasses the public's expectation of a responsive, just, and equitable district government accountable to its citizenry. Providing such a government is your primary challenge as a district supervisor.

A significant time commitment is associated with performing the responsibilities of a Conservation District Supervisor. The regular time commitment includes: monthly board meetings (2-6 hours), area meetings in October (1 day), WACD convention in November (3 days), committee & special meetings, community contact, preparation time, continuing education (6 hours/year)

The attached listing includes responsibilities for Supervisors to fulfill to realize your district's mission, your responsibilities under the Conservation Districts Law, and your general obligations to the public. The citizens of your district will hold you accountable to these standards.

Public Official Leadership & Outreach:

Legal Obligations <i>Supervisor Duties</i> (RCW 89.08.210)	Supervisor Responsibilities	District Powers (RCW 89.08.220 except where otherwise noted)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uphold all applicable federal, state, and local laws (see below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Envision a complete program to conserve the renewable natural resources in your conservation district <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communicate with the citizens in your district, cooperating public and private agencies, local governments, stakeholders, and other partners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify critical resource conservation needs in your district <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seek feedback about your district's conservation program <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Be a spokesperson for conservation district activities within the communities served <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attendance at monthly board meetings and events and WACD meetings and events. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Solicit comment at public hearings, confer with other public and private agencies, and keep state and local agencies fully informed (RCW 89.08.341) about the district renewable resources program

Employing Staff

Legal Obligations <i>Supervisor Duties</i> (RCW 89.08.210)	Supervisor Responsibilities	District Powers (RCW 89.08.220 except where otherwise noted)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employ staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supervise your staff and provide for adequate training	

Saturday, April 12, 2008

"This information is provided as a courtesy to Washington State Conservation Districts. It is not legal or tax advice. For legal and tax status questions, we encourage you to consult qualified legal and accounting professionals."

Uphold Applicable Federal, State & Local Laws:

Legal Obligations <i>Supervisor Duties (RCW 89.08.210)</i>	Supervisor Responsibilities	District Powers (RCW 89.08.220 except where otherwise noted)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uphold all applicable federal, state, and local laws including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Civil rights/Equal Opportunity Laws <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment/Personnel Management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Municipal Ethics <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open Public Meetings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Records Disclosure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whistleblower Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Responsibility to avoid “malfeasance” – meaning wrongful conduct that affects, interrupts, or interferes with the performance of a supervisor’s official duty. (WSCC Can Remove Supervisor under RCW 89.08) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Responsibility to avoid “neglect of duty” – meaning failure by a supervisor or supervisors to perform mandatory duties. (WSCC Can Remove Supervisor under RCW 89.08) 	

District Business Accountability & Reporting

Legal Obligations <i>Supervisor Duties (RCW 89.08.210)</i>	Supervisor Responsibilities	District Powers (RCW 89.08.220 except where otherwise noted)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintain a full and accurate record of district business that is available to the Conservation Commission and State Auditor for review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oversee your district’s finances, record keeping, & cooperative agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hold everyone involved in your conservation program accountable for its success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make available to other districts, state, and local agencies the district’s maps, reports, and data (RCW 89.08.341)

Financial, Accounting, & Assessments

Legal Obligations <i>Supervisor Duties (RCW 89.08.210)</i>	Supervisor Responsibilities	District Powers (RCW 89.08.220 except where otherwise noted)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secure surety bonds for board officers and employees who handle money <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carry out an annual financial audit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oversee your district’s finances, record keeping, & cooperative agreements 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administer projects related to the conservation of renewable natural resources within the limits of lawful financial appropriations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certify a list of best management practices and approve conservation plans for a property tax exemption under RCW 84.36.255 and make the appropriate forms available to property owners who may qualify (RCW 89.08.440) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Submit a tax assessment request to the county legislative body (RCW 89.08.400) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept or expend donations, gifts, or other contributions in accordance with statutory authority <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pay dues to WACD or NACD

Policies & Procedures

Legal Obligations <i>Supervisor Duties (RCW 89.08.210)</i>	Supervisor Responsibilities	District Powers <i>(RCW 89.08.220 except where otherwise noted)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Solicit legal counsel <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delegate board authority <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appoint advisory committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uphold all Conservation Commission policies and procedures, and your district's own policies and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make available to cooperators agricultural equipment, materials, or supplies on terms the district prescribes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/certify dairy nutrient management plans (RCW 90.64.026) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cooperate with other districts, the county (RCW 89.08.210), and local municipalities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make internal policies and procedures; enter into agreements; make or execute contracts; acquire or sell personal or real property; borrow money; sue or be sued

Planning, Services & Program Delivery

Legal Obligations <i>Supervisor Duties (RCW 89.08.210)</i>	Supervisor Responsibilities	District Powers <i>(RCW 89.08.220 except where otherwise noted)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a long range plan and annual work plans for your district based on critical needs and constituent feedback <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide technical, financial, and educational assistance to resource users in your district to address priority conservation needs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Help build the relationships with agencies, organizations, and individuals that lead to effective alliances to improve program delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare a long range program to conserve renewable natural resources within the district boundaries <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research the conservation of renewable natural resources in cooperation with state or federal agencies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare an annual work plan based on the long range program <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Submit the long range program and annual work plan to the Conservation Commission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate and implement best management practices