



# Arizona's Natural Resource Conservation District Operations Handbook

*This handbook is a compilation of instructions from the National Association of Conservation Districts and from ASLD NRC D Managers spanning the last 15 years. The information within is to serve as a source of advisory recommendations for NRC D administrative operations and conduct.*

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# SECTION 1

## Section (1) A: NRCB Basic Concepts and Objectives

Due to the ever increasing human population, urban expansion, and subsequent stress applied to our natural resources, the conservation and orderly development of resources is urgent and will become increasingly so in the future. The responsibility for the leadership and initiation of resource conservation and orderly resource development rests with individuals in their own communities. To take part in conservation efforts, people can become active members of their Natural Resource Conservation Districts, which have proven to be effective forms of self-government for addressing natural resource conservation needs. Furthermore, federal, state and local governments have a responsibility to assist and coordinate with local citizens and political entities in carrying out land conservation objectives they cannot accomplish entirely on their own.

No resource conservation or development should be done without first developing a clearly defined goal as to what the people of a district are trying to accomplish. Once a plan is established, conservation requires the joint efforts of many federal, state and local agencies and citizen groups to help local district members develop and accomplish their long-range conservation goals and objectives. There should be great efforts to utilize non-monetary solutions for solving conservation needs before using dollars to buy a solution. Money is a limited resource which should be used only as a last resort to achieve resource conservation and development objectives.

Effective conservation combines science based use and treatment of land in accordance with its needs and capabilities without compromising the welfare of the people within the region. It recognizes the operating goals of the owner or user, and it is in harmony with the total resource conservation and development requirements of the community, area or region. In addition, effective conservation takes into account all natural resources and their effect on the economic and social welfare of people who live and work in the region. It includes the multiple uses of natural resources with the objective that all uses contribute to a healthy and productive environment for people.

## Section (1) B: DISTRICT BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

How well a conservation district board functions is directly reflected in the success of the conservation programs the board administers and delivers. The board and each cooperators is challenged to develop relationships with agricultural and environmental groups, community and business leaders, civic organizations, county and local government representatives, and school officials. Through these relationships, the district can extract the necessary feedback to deliver a conservation program that is consistent with the needs of the community, and most importantly, supported by the community. Local support makes the job of district supervisors easier, considerably more enjoyable and gratifying.

Each board supervisor should thoroughly understand the powers, authorities and responsibilities placed upon the conservation district by the Arizona State Natural Resource Conservation District law in the Arizona Revised Statutes Title 37 Chapter 6. Supervisors are responsible and accountable to the people of the district and the State of Arizona in administering the district's programs and affairs. As public officials, supervisors are required to subscribe to a standard oath of office for each term served. A supervisor's reward is in the satisfaction of making a valuable contribution to the future of the district, state and nation.

The NRCB supervisor is a public office that demands an open minded leadership style capable of building consensus to meet the various needs of the local community. Remember, most issues are multifaceted, and in the process of making decisions, being able to reach across party lines is critical to making a well-informed determination. The public trusts that its elected and appointed NRCB supervisors will make informed decisions and expend funds in the public interest. Know your community and the public you serve, and you will be successful.

**DUTIES AS REQUIRED BY STATE STATUTE OR BY  
DIRECTIVE OF THE COMMISSIONER:**

1. Furnish effective local leadership in the form of a properly constituted and operating governing body.
2. Hold regular and special meetings to plan work and to assess resource conservation needs in the district. All meetings must be conducted in full accordance with Arizona's Open Meeting Laws. [AZ OPEN MEETING LAW 101](#)
3. Prepare and submit all required reporting documents needed by the ASLD. Please see the [ASLD Reporting Manual](#) for further information.
  - Due June 20th
    - Applications for biennial State Supplemental Funds (ASLD Standard Forms)  
NOTE: two may be necessary – 1 for Supplemental Funds, 1 for Environmental Special Plate Funds
    - Annual Plan of Work
  - Due July 20th
    - Annual Report
    - Annual Financial Statement (ASLD Standard Form)

Developed with input from citizens and public agencies, the Annual Plan of Work associated with the conservation district needs identified in the Long Range Plan that covers five years. The Annual Plan of Work will identify what actions the district will undertake in the upcoming year to address the conservation needs identified.

The Annual Report documents accomplishments. The Annual Report must include a financial statement of the previous fiscal year's business (July 1 through June 30).

4. Conduct a supervisor election every two years and immediately thereafter, elected supervisors must meet, select a temporary chairperson, and select a panel of candidates to send to the Commissioner's office in order to fill the two appointed seats. Thereafter, all officers can be selected from among the board's numbers. A chair and vice-chair are required by statute. Other officers are appointed as deemed necessary to conduct business of the district.
5. Manage, in the public interest, all funds, facilities and equipment of the district as indicated by laws of the State. **All district funds are public funds regardless of the source because districts are a public body.**
6. Shall require and provide for the execution of a **corporate surety bond** to cover any person entrusted with the care and disposition of district funds or property.

**RESPONSIBILITIES EMPOWERED BY STATE STATUTE:**

1. Develop and annually update a comprehensive Long Range Plan that recognizes the interest of the people and land in the district that is compatible with area or regional development plans.
2. Hire necessary employees or appoint advisors (clerks, accountants, engineers, attorneys) to address conservation priorities and operational procedures, as fiscal budget allows.
3. Supervise, or provide for, the supervision of district employees. This should include an employment contract and clear job description.
4. Organize and establish an environmental education center.
5. Apply for, receive, and spend monies from the Arizona Water Protection Fund
6. Appoint additional advisory members to the district governing body.
7. Delegate powers and duties to board officers, members, advisors, and employees as the board deems proper.
8. Cooperate and enter into agreements with landowners, operators, and any agency or subdivision of state or federal government.
9. Compensate district supervisors according to allowance prescribed in A.R.S. § 38-611, plus any actual and necessary travel expenses while engaged in official business by order of the supervisors.
10. Independently, or cooperatively, conduct surveys, investigations, and research regarding farm and range practices and operations.
11. Conduct conservation demonstration projects.

12. Acquire by purchase, exchange, lease or otherwise, any property, real or personal, in order to carry out purposes of the district.
13. Make available to landowners, machinery, equipment, fertilizer, seed and such other material.
14. Develop, publish and bring attention to comprehensive plans for the conservation of soil and water resources within the district.

**RESPONSIBILITIES EMPOWERED THROUGH FEDERAL LAW AND AGREEMENTS  
WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE:**

1. Determine priorities for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assistance to district cooperators, informal groups, public bodies, private organizations and other individuals.
2. Convene public meetings in order to identify resource concerns of the district.
3. Identify the make-up of, and convene the Local Work Group meeting to review, identify and prioritize the resource concerns.
4. Through the Local Work Group, advise NRCS on developing priority area assessments, cost-share rates and payment levels, eligible conservation practices, evaluation and ranking processes of local application, education and outreach efforts, program performance indicators and the need for new innovative conservation practices.
5. Approve conservation plans and revisions concerning NRCS Federal Assistance Programs.
6. Carry out program responsibilities in a non-discriminatory manner.
7. Develop conservation plans and provide technical assistance where appropriate.

**ACTION ITEMS SUGGESTED TO FURTHER CONSERVATION  
PROGRAMS AND VISIBILITY OF THE DISTRICT:**

1. Assist in coordinating the resource conservation and development programs that operate within the district.
2. Enlist needed assistance from whatever sources are available.
3. Cooperate with other districts and communities in multi-district resource activities such as resource conservation and development projects, comprehensive resource planning, watershed planning, watershed protection and flood prevention, river basin programs and other resource development projects.

4. Partner with other districts and agencies to pool available resources in addressing conservation issues.
5. Plan activities commemorating Soil Stewardship Week, Earth Day and/or Arbor Day.
6. Publish a newsletter to keep cooperators and the community informed on resource issues in the area.
7. Interact with the local community to understand what the resource concerns are and to gain support for a strong district program.
8. Keep the State Legislators and the U.S. Congressional Delegation informed on district activities and concerns.
9. Involve youth groups and public schools in conservation education activities, such as poster contests, field tours and exercises and classroom presentations.

### **Section (1) C: Minimum Requirements for an NRCD**

1. Districts are governed by Arizona State Revised Statutes, Title 37, Chapter 6.
2. NRCD's are quasi political subdivisions of the State of Arizona. District Supervisors are public officers and subject to all laws and requirements pertaining to public officials.
3. Districts operate on the state fiscal year, beginning July 1 and ending June 30.
4. Districts should adhere to a regular meeting schedule.
5. Districts must meet at least once in any 90 day period. However, it is highly recommended to meet once a month or bi-monthly.
6. All meetings must be held under the **Open Meeting Law**. [AZ OPEN MEETING LAW 101](#)
7. Location of posting of meeting notices and agendas must be filed with the Clerk of the County Board of Supervisors. If you change location, you must re-file.
8. A **Notice of Meeting** must be posted in a public place a minimum of 24 hours prior to the meeting.
9. **Agendas** must be posted a minimum of 24 hours before the meeting.
10. **Minutes** (draft) of each meeting must be received at the State Land Department within 72 hours following the meeting.
11. Signed copies of the approved minutes from the previous meeting are to be submitted with the above said draft.
12. Districts must post a **surety bond**.

13. Districts are to submit an **Annual Report and Financial Statement** no later than July 20 each year, and apply for state funding annually. **Applications for State Funds**, accompanied by an **Annual Plan of Work**, are due June 20 every year. [ASLD Reporting Manual](#)
14. District elections are held the first Saturday in May of even numbered years. Elections are governed by Arizona Revised Statutes Title 37 and Title 16.
15. There must be at least three (3) legally serving supervisors: e.g., oath of office is current and supervisors meet all legal residence requirements.
16. To legally resign from office, a supervisor must send a written **Letter of Resignation** to the State Natural Resource Commissioner. [Supervisor Resignation Letter](#)
17. Districts with education centers have additional meeting (**Annual Meeting** per Articles of Incorporation or Articles of Association) and reporting requirements to the Arizona Corporation Commission and the Land Department. [ASLD Reporting Manual](#)

### **Section (1) D: History of NRCDs in Arizona**

- 1935: Public Law 46 passes Congress by unanimous vote. Soil and water conservation and wise land use declared a national policy.
- 1937: President Franklin D. Roosevelt provided states with model legislation to create conservation districts.
- 1941: March 17, Arizona Soil Conservation District Enabling Act became effective. Only crop land was included. A State Soil Conservation Committee was established consisting of the Governor, the Water Commissioner, the Arizona State Land Commissioner, and the Director of the Agriculture Extension Service.
- 1944: First meeting of the Arizona Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) held in December.
- 1945: The State Soil Conservation Committee was abolished and administration was transferred to the Arizona State Land Commissioner. H. Lynn Anderson was appointed Administrative Officer for the Division of Soil Conservation at the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD). 27 districts were in existence.
- 1946: The National Association of Conservation Districts was formed.
- 1950: Wayne Kessler appointed as the Soil Conservation Administrative Officer. The job title changed several times. During his tenure Wayne also continued serving the Arizona Association of Conservation Districts, first as Secretary and then as Program Director.
- 1954: Rangeland was added to the districts. There were 46 districts in AZ.
- 1968: Statutes revised to provide for adjustment of district boundaries, name changes, and broadened authority. Consolidation results in 32 districts, from 52.
- 1972: First state funding approved for the districts – \$3000 per year, per district.

- 1972: Name changed to Natural Resource Conservation Districts (NRCD).
- 1974: Wayne Kessler retired from state government, was elected to the Agua Fria NRCD Board, and as Vice-President of the AACD Executive Board.
- 1975: Bob Yount was named NRCD Administrator.
- 1982: State funding increased to \$5000 per year, per district.
- 1984: Bill Dowdle was named as NRCD Administrator.
- 1986: Funding increased to \$10,000 per year, per district.
- 1995: State funding increased to \$15,000 per year, per district, and each education center was authorized for \$30,000 per year.
- 1991: Bill Warskow accepted the appointment to serve as NRCD Administrator and AACD hired their first paid Executive Director.
- 2001: Jody Latimer, former NRCD Supervisor and AACD Executive Board member, is named as NRCD Administrator.
- 2007: Douglas Witte, former ASLD Area Range Resource Manager, is named as NRCD Program Manager.
- 2012: Amber Morin was named NRCD Manager.

<b>Arizona NRCD Organizational Timelines</b> NRCD NAME	YEAR CREATED OR CONSOLIDATED	NAME CHANGE
Agua Fria	1968	
Apache	1942	
Big Sandy	1945	
Bridgeport		
Buckeye-Roosevelt	1962	Name changed to Buckeye Valley
Cactus		
Camp Verde	1961	Name changed to Verde NRCD
Casa Grande		
Chino Valley	1970	Combined with Upper Agua Fria Basin Name changed to Chino Winds
Coconino	1967	
Duncan Valley		Combined with Gila Valley
East Maricopa	1946	
Eloy	1948	
Florence Coolidge	1945	
Fredonia	1943	
Gila Bend	1946	
Gila River	1988	
Gila Valley	1942	
Hereford	1944	
Indian Bend		Combined with East Maricopa

Laguna	1954	
Littlefield-Hurricane Valley	1961	Name changed to Littlefield Hurricane
Mesa-Tempe	Combined with East Maricopa	
Navajo County	1942	
New River	Combined with Agua Fria	
Parker Valley	1957	
Pima County	1943	
Pinal		
Queen Creek	Combined with East Maricopa	
Redington	1943	
San Carlos Apache	Split from Gila Valley NRCD. Still legally organized under ASLD. Receives no state funds.	
San Francisco Peaks	Combined with Coconino	
San Pedro	1947	
San Simon Valley	Combined with Willcox	
Santa Cruz	2001	
Selma		
Stanfield		
Sitgreaves Mountain	Combined with Coconino	
South Side	Combined with East Maricopa	
Tonto	1951	
Triangle	1945	
Upper Agua Fria Basin	Combined with Chino Winds	
Welton-Mohawk	1950	
West Pinal	1961	
Whitewater Draw	1942	
Wickenburg	1956	
Willcox-San Simon	1964	
Winkelman	1948	
Yuma	1952	

# SECTION 2

## Section (2) A: PRINCIPLE DUTIES OF DISTRICT OFFICERS

- Officers of the district board are appointed by the board at the first meeting after each election. Chair and Vice-Chair, by state statute, are required officers.
- The Secretary, although optional, is a recommended position responsible for meeting logistics and maintaining a complete record of all proceedings.
- The Treasurer, often combined with the Secretary, is responsible for all financial accounting. The Treasurer can be a hired accountant rather than a board member. **In any case, the person responsible for district funds and property must be surety bonded.**

### **A. CHAIRPERSON**

1. Prior to scheduled meetings, works out a tentative agenda with input from the Secretary and/or Clerk and all board supervisors and the NRCS District Conservationist. The tentative agenda is also sent to each board supervisor and district cooperator with an attached meeting notice. (Agenda must be available to the public at least 24 hours prior to meeting. A.R.S. § 38-431.02.)
2. Makes certain meeting notices and agendas are extended to all individuals who should attend the meeting and take part in the discussion such as district cooperators; federal, state, and local cooperating/coordinating agencies, local educators, and local political officials, and invited guests.
3. Calls special meetings when necessary and presides at all meetings, and adheres to Robert's Rules of Order. [AZ OPEN MEETING LAW 101](#)
4. Starts the meeting promptly at the specified time.
5. Appoints committees and delegates responsibility for tasks and projects.
6. Makes certain the board reviews the actions and recommendations of its officers or cooperating/coordinating agencies.
7. Refers regularly to the district's Long-Range Plan and the Annual Plan of Work to ensure that all planned projects are carried out.
8. Recognizes visitors and other individuals present.
9. Encourages participation of all members in discussions.
10. Avoids expressing his or her opinion when necessary.

11. Disposes of each topic properly after adequate discussion.
12. Insists and encourages regular meeting attendance.
13. Closes meeting promptly after all business has been completed.

#### **B. VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

1. Assumes the duties of the Chairperson in their absence.
2. Assists in program organization and in activating the program.
3. Maintains a level of active membership to lead by example.
4. Guides and directs activities of the various committees, as needed.
5. Is familiar with the total program of the district in order to work closely with the Chairperson and to fill in for him/her when necessary.

#### **C. SECRETARY**

**\*Some boards have both a board Secretary and Clerk. The duties below are designated to the board Secretary by Robert's Rules of Order. If a Clerk is employed, it is necessary for the board to provide clear directives as to who will fulfill the administrative duties of the board.**

1. Keeps a register or roll of all members and calls roll when required.
2. Maintains a complete record of all proceedings of the district meetings.
3. Forwards copies of the minutes to the ASLD. Minutes should meet requirements of Arizona Open Meeting Law and show the following:
  - a. Name of NRCD
  - b. Place of meeting
  - c. Date of meeting
  - d. Time of meeting
  - e. Indication of type of meeting: regular, special, emergency, etc.
  - f. Name of presiding officer.
  - g. Names of those present and absent:
    - (1) Board members present
    - (2) Board members absent, and whether excused
    - (3) Others present: name, title, organization
  - h. Record each motion in full, giving name of person making the motion. State if seconded and by whom. State whether motion was adopted or rejected. A motion withdrawn should not be recorded.
  - i. Show any points of order or appeal, whether sustained or lost.
  - j. Record completely all actions taken by the board.

- k. Brief summary or provide attachments of each report (i.e. agencies and guest organizations).
- l. Signature of chairperson when the draft minutes are approved.

#### **D. TREASURER**

1. Maintains balances of all accounts
  - a. Income
    - i. Money received since last meeting
    - ii. Money due to the district
  - b. Disbursements
    - i. Disbursements made since last meeting
    - ii. Bills payable listed
2. Submits a report at every regular board meeting describing activity on all accounts and attains and maintains a corporate surety bond.

#### **Section (2) B: SUGGESTIONS FOR BOARD OF SUPERVISORS & DISTRICT CLERK**

1. Know the specific functions of the district. (Refer to: NRCD Law, Open Meeting Law and Rules of the State Natural Resource Conservation Commissioner; informational material furnished by the ASLD, NRCS, AZNRCD, and NACD).
2. Review annually all **Memoranda of Understanding** the district has with state and federal agencies, and with operating procedures of the district's cooperative arrangements with individuals, governmental subdivisions, municipalities, organizations, agencies, etc.
3. Be familiar with the Natural Resource Conservation District Operations Handbook, the district's Long Range Plan, outline for Annual Plan of Work, outline for Annual Report and other sources of information and instructions for the operations of districts. [ASLD Reporting Manual](#)
4. Be familiar with conservation practices of the district.

#### **Section (2) C: SUGGESTIONS FOR BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

1. Review annually the district Long Range Plan.
  - a. Strive continuously to bring unanimity of action among local, state and federal agencies, and all others concerned with the conservation, use or development of land, water and related resources, in order to effectively and expeditiously attain the objectives of the district's Long Range Plan.
  - b. Enlist bankers, newspaper editors, county school superintendents, ministers, etc., to become long-range program members of the district conservation team by inviting them to special meetings of the board. Explain: the Long Range Plan; the scientific approach to a solution of problems; the increased value of land operated by conservation-oriented

farmers and ranchers; and the effect of better farm and ranch operations upon all of the community business and educational activities.

- c. Demonstrate, by board action, that the district is a quasi-political subdivision of state government created by and for the local people. Success of the district depends on the initiative exemplified by the members of this governing body and the assistance of all local leaders.

**2. Develop an Annual Plan of Work (Business Plan).**

- o Formally invite the county extension agricultural agent to serve as an advisory member of your board on agricultural information and education matters. At the beginning of each year, request assistance in planning, scheduling and assuming active leadership for conservation meetings, youth activities, tours and demonstrations during the year.

**3. Publish an Annual Report.** Have it carried in local newspapers. Send copies to all groups and institutions within the District, to legislators, the Governor, ASLD, NRCS, etc.

**4. Plan to hold a public annual meeting of all district cooperators.** Invite other landholders of the District, representatives of civic groups, school officials, P.T.A., luncheon clubs, 4-H, F.F.A., etc. Use part of the day for viewing some outstanding conservation work on the land.

**5. Maintain and update annually a master list of the district cooperators.**

**6. Make certain that the district is fully represented in the affairs of both the Arizona and National Associations of Conservation Districts.**

**7. Find methods of raising funds to finance the board's minimum essential activities, including the payment of state and national association membership dues.** The following activities, among others, are currently carried out by various Arizona Districts, using state funds where authorized:

- a. Reimbursement of supervisors' traveling expenses to important conservation meetings (locally and nationally).

- b. Printing of annual reports, and publishing illustrated district information booklets.

- c. Providing food (barbecue, etc.) at annual district meeting, or on annual conservation field tour.

**Individual NRCD Supervisors should consider the following goals:**

1. Expose themselves to indoctrination in soil and water conservation, and in new opportunities in broad resource planning. There are many ways of doing this such as attending workshops and being involved with professional organizations like the Soil and Water Conservation Society and the Society for Range Management.

2. Develop basic conservation plans for their own properties.
3. Apply planned conservation practices to the land as far as finances will permit.
4. Many of the management practices require no financing.

## **Section (2) D: SUGGESTIONS FOR DISTRICT CLERK**

The Clerk is often the first representative of the district to meet and greet the public in instances where the job location is situated in a district office. This vitally important position is the direct responsibility of the district board of supervisors during the time of employment. **Therefore, the general priorities of work and a concise job description should be established by the board of supervisors of the district, so that the responsibilities of the Clerk and board Secretary do not overlap.** Conservation district clerks' role should be to support the work of the districts, keep the districts organized, and help the boards comply with the Arizona Revised Statutes.

1. Schedule appointments for supervisors.
2. Record and keep all correspondence for the supervisors to review and forward items to the appropriate supervisors.
3. Type district correspondence and respond to correspondence at the discretion of the board.
4. Type public notices of regular meetings for posting.
5. Type final agenda of each board meeting (regular, special, emergency), as directed by the board and NRCS District Conservationist, and have agenda available at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. [AZ OPEN MEETING LAW 101](#)
6. Mail notices of each board meeting to supervisors and ex-officio members (advisors, ASLD, NRCS, BLM, USFS, etc.) well in advance of scheduled date, including agenda, if possible. Make reminder telephone calls if directed by Chairperson.
7. Record and type minutes of all meetings and have available to the public and ASLD within 72 hours following the meeting.
8. Mail copies of Notice of Public Meeting, agenda, minutes, and financial reports as directed by the board, including a copy to the ASLD.
9. Type Treasurer's Report if the responsibility is outlined in the job description. Assemble bills for a Treasurer's Report and present for board approval and payment.
11. Type supervisors' travel claims for board approval.
12. Keep records and assist in compiling and consolidating data for regular and special reports (e.g. Annual Plan of Operations).

13. Assist in preparing for field days, contests, tours, school programs, educational meetings, Soil Stewardship Week, etc.

14. Anticipate and order office and other supplies as needed and approved by the board.

15. Maintain standardized filing system for the district for minutes, reports, property and equipment, supervisor's certifications, etc.

16. Type Long Range and Annual Plans of Work, and mail approved items to the ASLD. Assist in preparing all standard forms as required by the ASLD and assist the board in complying with all aspects of the Arizona Open Meetings Act.

# SECTION 3

## Section (3) A: CONSERVATION DISTRICT LONG RANGE PLANS

### ***BENEFITS OF A DISTRICT LONG RANGE PLAN***

A Long Range Plan provides a number of benefits to conservation districts and their partners and to the consumers and communities the district serves. The audiences of the Long Range Plan are both internal and external. A significant internal benefit is that Long Range Plan information can be extracted and used within with other plans like the required NRCS Strategic Approach to Conservation (SAC) Plans. **However, district Long Range Plans should not be confused with the SAC Plans required by NRCS; they are separate, but complimentary documents.**

To clarify, the Long Range Plan should be a guiding document for a five-year period and encompass **everything** -communication, education, history of the district, major operations/logistics, projects outside of the scope of the NRCS (non-agriculture projects, but natural resource related), major policies related to resource issues, coordinated planning goals with other agencies, and should include the resource priority planning SAC needed by NRCS. A District could have several SAC's within one Long Range Plan depending upon the scope of each SAC and the capacity of the district.

The SAC Plans should focus on detailing the targeted resource concern(s) of each district, which will provide the NRCS with the information needed to provide on the ground implementation of the Farm Bill.

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More examples of Long Range Plan benefits are listed below.

#### ***1. MISSION AND DIRECTION***

A plan provides the district with a road map and helps the district define what it wants to accomplish with its current resources. Knowing where the district is heading and how it plans to get there builds confidence and enthusiasm among supervisors, employees, and partners. It guides and directs local district/partner decision makers to:

- Describe current natural resource concerns and geographic areas of concern
- Define the desired conditions, outcomes and results
- Identify and evaluate alternative strategies and approaches to address resource concerns and achieve the desired conditions
- Determine long-range strategies and necessary resources
- Formulate an Annual Plan of Work with measurable objectives and defined responsibilities
- Assign fiscal, material, and personnel resources to carry out the objectives and implement their Annual Plan of Work
- Monitor progress and evaluate results.

A Long Range Plan provides goals, targets, and priorities for the NRCD Annual Plan of Work.

## **2. INTERNAL MANAGEMENT**

- A plan provides information to supervise employees, which is more directed and effective since specific responsibilities, job functions, and expectations can be identified for each employee.
- The Long Range Plan specifies the content and issues and the goals and objectives on which annual reports are based. Annual reports describe the progress in achieving the long-range goals as well as the Annual Plan of Work objectives.
- Leads to specific fiscal allocation, costing, and budgeting.
- Can eliminate superfluous and unproductive actions; those not leading to the objectives and those not within the mission of the district and field office (not “our thing”). Provides a solid justification for saying **NO**.

## **3. COMMUNITY AND PARTNER RELATIONS**

A plan should inform and educate the public about the district, the problems and issues to be addressed, the goals and objectives, and the resources needed. In addition, it should enhance partner relations and identify specific areas for collaboration where help is needed and responsibilities overlap.

## **4. RESOURCE NEEDS/CONCERNS**

A Long Range Plan identifies the resource needs and what is necessary to carry out the work:

- Describes resource concerns
- Estimates personnel (a workload analysis of how much work is required by hours, disciplines and skills, and partners to accomplish each objective and task)
- Estimates physical resources (equipment, space, vehicles, etc.)
- And estimates fiscal resources needed to accomplish the task.

It describes the needs and what it takes to bring about changes by providing the information on which decisions can be made to assign new resources or to reduce or re-assign current resources.

A plan also serves as credible information on which to develop, defend and market funding proposals such as state or federal grants.

## DESCRIBING A NATURAL RESOURCE CONCERN

A natural resource concern is a condition that does not meet agreed-to or established criteria. These criteria are defined in district or public expectations; the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide; state water quality standards and total daily maximum loads; Endangered Species Act requirements; or other standards specifying what water and land conditions should be.

Resource concern descriptions in the Long Range/Annual Plan of Work should be specific enough to paint a picture in the minds of all readers, particularly the public and key decision makers. Everyone should be able to (a) envision the conditions, (b) understand why they are important, and (c) accept that positive efforts should be made to remedy resource problems. This amount of detail is important to help persuade people to support the work and costs necessary to effect needed changes.

A natural resource concern description does not need to be a single phrase or sentence (such as “erosion on cropland”). In fact, districts will be better served by providing enough information to fully explain the conditions/concerns and their effects. By answering the following questions, information will be generated that can be written as a useful resource concern description. Select other questions you think are relevant.

1. What is the resource concern?
2. Who else views it as a concern?
3. How large is the problem?
4. What geographic areas are affected?
5. How long has it been a concern?
6. What current trends are apparent: is it getting worse, staying the same, or improving?
7. How severe are the effects?
8. What people are affected? How are they affected?
9. What impacts does it have on water quality, water quantity, or other natural resources? To what other problems does it contribute?
10. What will happen if nothing is done to correct the problem?
11. What environmental benefits will be gained by bringing the condition up to standard?
12. What needs to be done to address this resource concern?
13. Why should the general public be concerned about this problem?

A thorough, well-written resource concern description has multiple uses, among which are:

- Provides a body of information on which to develop goals, objectives, and strategies.
- Provides content for public information and education efforts, such as fact sheets, brochures, talking points for public presentations or newspaper articles.
- Can be used as information for the “problem statement” or “present situation” sections of funding requests or grants.
- **Strengthens partner relations by providing information on which to identify common perceptions of problems and strategies and to develop collaborative efforts.**

## A SAMPLE LONG RANGE PLAN OVERVIEW

The Long Range Plan is probably one of the most comprehensive planning documents that conservation districts develop. As a general rule, the document should be a guiding document for a five-year period. Of course, as priorities and programs change and new opportunities present themselves, the plan should be revised. The plan should reflect the conditions of the resources, the district's objectives and goals in addressing the resource needs, and any strategic ideals (present and future partnerships, for instance) pursued by the district that would further their programs.

Here again, there is not a prescribed format for assembling a Long Range Plan. Items that might be considered in developing a Long Range Plan are listed below.

### ***Section I – Background of the District “This is who we are and what we do.”***

- History, organization date, and achievements
- Structure and legal identity: unit of state government, public body
- Responsibilities, powers and authorities
- Vision and mission
- Guiding principles and core beliefs
- Partners, collaborators, delivery system team members
- Names of supervisors
- Time and place of regular board meetings
- General location of district- a map of the district boundary and land ownership
- Acreage and classes of lands in the district ownership (rangeland, farmland, urban land, etc.)

### ***Section II – Natural Resource Conditions, Trends, Concerns, Opportunities. “These are the current conditions of our natural resources, the desired conditions, and the work we need to do.”***

- Current conditions – Natural Resource Concerns (detailed description)
- Desired conditions – Goals
- What we plan to do in the next 5 years – Prioritize objectives of the following:
  - Farmland
  - Rangeland
  - Watersheds/Water Quality
  - Recreational Activities
  - Wildlife Habitat
  - Social implications/Recreational
  - Geographical Areas i.e. Watersheds

***Section III - Objectives for the next five years. “This is what we need to do our job in the next 5 years and how we plan to obtain these needed resources.”***

- What we have now = Current Capabilities
- What we need to implement the long-range objectives = Needs
- How we plan to get what we need = Strategies
- How do we pay for it? = Application for State Supplemental Funds, Grants, Subsidies

**Consider the following partnerships and programs:**

**Partnerships Developed**

USDA NRCS  
Cooperative State Research, Education and  
Extension Service  
Watershed Associations  
Legislators  
BLM/FS/FWS, etc.  
Information and Education Activities

**Programs**

EQIP and other USDA Farm Bill Programs  
Education Center  
Water Protection Fund  
Special Legislative Funding  
Grants

***Section IV - Business Plan/Plan of Work - “This is what we plan to accomplish in the next year.”***

- What we plan to accomplish – Conservation Objectives & One Year Goals
- What we plan to do – Actions and Tasks
- Who will do the work? – Persons Responsible for Each Task
- When will the work be done? – Timelines, Schedules, Deadlines

**Section (3) B: ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK**

**(Fiscal Year beginning July 1, Due June 20)**

As a quasi-political subdivision of State government and to conform with the practices of the State government, each district should have a locally adopted, well prepared district Annual Plan of Work covering foreseeable goals for the next year. The district board of supervisors is responsible, under the leadership of the Chairperson, to develop the written plan with the assistance of representatives of local, state and federal agencies and others available to the board (NRCS, County Extension Agent, etc.)

***\*\*\*A copy of the Annual Plan of Work must be filed with the Arizona State Land Department each year.\*\*\****

## ***Developing the Annual Plan of Work***

The board's Annual Plan of Work should be brief, realistic and readable. It is important to put together a well thought out, comprehensive plan.

District boards should include and emphasize items that are primary responsibilities of the district. Developing the goals cooperatively (other agencies should be invited) allows for maximum coordination and meshing of operational plans by district supervisors, NRCS, Extension Service, other USDA agencies, USDI agencies, state agencies and others who actively cooperate with the districts. An opportune time to consider Annual Plan of Work items for the next fiscal year is at a Local Work Group meeting held in March or April. NRCS facilitators can assist in coordinating Local Work Group meetings on request from the district. District boards should never lose sight of the fact that their primary job is conservation - planned, applied, and maintained on the land. Cooperation in regional natural resource conservation and development programs is necessary to meet this primary objective.

- **An Annual Plan of Work should provide for completing segments of the overall job of carrying out the district's Long Range Plan. If the Long Range Plan is not clear cut, then a priority job for the fiscal year would be to bring the Long Range Plan up to date.**
- There is not a prescribed format for the Annual Plan of Work. However, strong consideration should be given to making assignments of responsibility and setting completion dates to the individual items of the plan.

## **Section (3) C: Guidance for Annual Reports**

### **Annual Reports and Year-End Financial statements are due by July 20.**

Annual Reports are important because they are an opportunity to tell your Legislators, Congressional Delegates, Cooperators and your Community about the district's achievements over the past fiscal year (July 1- June 30). Clearly describe your projects and programs. Communicate not just your activities, but your accomplishments. Quantify your achievements: How many acres? How many tons? How many feet of lined concrete ditches? How much water conserved? How many acres of rangeland brought a under management plan? How many students? How many volunteer hours?

Use the report to recognize special people including donors and volunteers and board members who go beyond the call of duty. The report serves as a historical record of your progress and can help you raise money by attracting new donors and convincing existing supporters that their funds are being well spent.

Provide a full and accurate record of all receipts and disbursements, accounting for both public funds and money from other sources. Use pie charts, then explain your financial situation, on both the income and expense sides. Use the categories provided on the sample financial forms. They coincide with the "Application for Supplemental Funds" form that will be due next year.

## Four Easy Steps to Writing a Great Annual Report

These reports are a great tool for assessing the performance of an organization and they will often consist of 4 sections:

Section 1: Chair of the board letter

Section 2: Description of the purpose, actions, accomplishments, etc. of the organization

Section 3: Financial statement

Section 4: Directory of supervisors and partnering organizations

- **Section 1:** Chair of the board letter of introduction and welcome to an inside look at the prior year district activities and accomplishments.
- **Section 2:** A useful place to start in evaluating an organization is the description section; this is where you tell your story. This section should describe the activities of the organization. It should be clear why the priority program areas were chosen, what action the organization took to address the priority programs, the budget in terms of cash, in kind contribution, volunteer hours, and who benefited from the accomplishment. Always remember, photos of accomplishments can tell a thousand words.
- **Section 3:** The financial statement is one of the most important areas to carefully evaluate. This is often broken into:
  - Certified Public Accountant opinion letter or a report from the internal Budget and Audit Committee
  - Report of accounts receivable and accounts payable
- **Section 4:** The list of directors and partnering organizations gives some idea who is associated with your district. How are the supervisors selected to serve on the district board. Are the directors respected in the community? What association do they have with other organizations and businesses in the community? Once again, pictures of the supervisors and staff can bring the document closer to the reader.

### **Section (3) D: EVALUATING EXPENDITURES OF PUBLIC FUNDS**

No hard and fast rule can be laid down for determining whether a proposed NRCD or education center expenditure of public funds is valid as devoted to a “public purpose”. Each case must be decided with reference to the object sought to be accomplished and to the degree and manner in which that object affects the public welfare.

The Arizona Legislature, in creating Natural Resource Conservation Districts declared its policy to be:

It is declared the policy of the legislature to provide for the restoration and conservation of lands and soil resources of the state, the preservation of water rights and the control and prevention of soil erosion, and thereby to conserve natural resources, conserve wildlife, protect the tax base, protect public lands and protect and restore this state's rivers and streams and associated riparian habitats, including fish and wildlife resources that are dependent on those habitats, and in such manner to protect and promote the public health, safety and general welfare of the people. (A.R.S. § 37-1001)

The Arizona State Land Commissioner has the authority to audit the expenditures of NRCDs and their sponsored education centers for compliance with their statutory mandates. In reviewing expenditures, the Commissioner will look at the statutory goals and powers listed in A.R.S. § 37-1054 and A.R.S. § 37-1015.

**Note: As quasi political subdivisions of the state, NRC and education center funds are public funds, regardless of the source. All funds should be expended in the same way as appropriated funds. This also applies to non-profit corporations that receive a portion of their funds from public funding sources.**

**None of the following are acceptable:**

- **Illegal Activities**

- **Nepotism** (hiring family, investing with friends, collusion)

Conflict of Interest Laws, A.R.S. § 38-503: A. Any public officer or employee of a public agency who has, or whose relative has, a substantial interest in any contract, sale, purchase or service to such public agency shall make known that interest in the official records of such public agency and shall refrain from voting upon or otherwise participating in any manner as an officer or employee in such contract, sale or purchase.

- **Lobbying** (it is okay to provide information, but never say Vote Yes or No) Lobbying activities and expenditures by public bodies are subject to registration and reporting requirements.

"Public body" means the Arizona board of regents, a university under the jurisdiction of the Arizona board of regents, the judicial department, any state agency, board, commission or council, any county, any county elected officer who elects to appoint a designated public lobbyist or any city, town, district or other political subdivision of this state that receives and utilizes tax revenues and that employs, retains, engages or uses, with or without compensation, a designated public lobbyist or authorized public lobbyist. A.R.S. 41-123.1

- **Gifts** (Have the potential to violate the Arizona Constitution)

Arizona Constitution, Article IX Section 7

Neither the state, nor any county, city, town, municipality, or other subdivision of the state shall ever give or loan its credit in the aid of, or make any donation or grant, by subsidy or otherwise, to any individual, association, or corporation, or become a subscriber to, or a shareholder in, any company or corporation, or become a joint owner with any person, company, or corporation, except as to such ownerships as may accrue to the state by operation or provision of law or as authorized by law solely for investment of the monies in the various funds of the state.

- **Use of public funds for personal gain**

**Section (3) E: EXAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR NRCD FISCAL POLICIES**

\*\*\*NRCD policies are not required by statute or a requirement to receive State funds, but they reflect good management and procedure. They cannot, however, override any local, state, or federal laws.\*\*\*

**Natural Resource Conservation District**

**SAMPLE**

**Procurement Policy**

1. A petty cash account in the amount of \$100.00 shall be maintained by the Treasurer for purchase of standard office supplies. In no case shall any single purchase from this account exceed \$50.00. The petty cash account will be replenished after approval at a regularly scheduled board meeting.
2. Purchases between \$50.00 and \$200.00 for an item needed before a regularly scheduled meeting may be made with the approval of one (1) NRCD supervisor with the expenditure ratified at the next meeting.
3. Expenditures between \$201.00 and \$1000.00 require prior approval of the board at a regularly scheduled meeting.
4. Purchases between \$1001.00 and \$5000.00 require obtaining prices (verbal quotations, newspaper ads, etc.) from three sources and approval at a regularly scheduled meeting.
5. Purchases between \$5001.00 and \$10,000.00 require obtaining written price quotations and approval at a regularly scheduled meeting.
6. Purchases over \$10,000.00 require a sealed bid process. Prior approval must be obtained from the board at regularly scheduled board meeting before soliciting bids. The bidding process shall be conducted in accordance to current policies in place at the Arizona State Land Department.
7. A receipt is required before any reimbursement can be approved.

These actions apply to all funds, both State and local.

Adopted by the \_\_\_\_\_ NRCD \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

# Natural Resource Conservation District

**SAMPLE**

## **Fiscal Accounting Policy**

1. The NRCD accounts shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer.
2. The Treasurer shall assemble bills and present for board approval and payment.
3. A report, reviewed by the Treasurer, shall be made at each regularly scheduled board meeting.
4. The journal and checkbook statements shall be maintained by the district Clerk.
5. Only supervisors are eligible to be signatories on the account.
6. An independent review shall occur whenever there is a change of Treasurer or as directed by the Chair.
7. The Procurement Policy adopted by the board shall govern all transactions.

Adopted by the \_\_\_\_\_ NRCD \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

# Natural Resource Conservation District

**SAMPLE**

## **Travel and Per Diem Policy**

1. Compensation of the district supervisors shall not exceed the compensation and travel allowance prescribed by §38.611.
  - A. The current per diem rate is \$30.00 for each day engaged in the service of the district.
  - B. The current rate for reimbursement for use of a personal vehicle is \$0.375 per mile.
2. Per Diem and mileage shall be offered to supervisors attending regularly scheduled NRCD board meetings.
3. Compensation for actual and necessary travel expenses (e.g.: meals, lodging, registration) shall be made to supervisors when engaged in the business of the district.
4. Compensation for official business of the District requires prior approval by the board at a regularly scheduled meeting.
5. Compensation can be considered wages and is considered taxable income by the IRS.
6. A travel claim with receipts must be furnished to the Treasurer prior to any compensation.

Adopted by the \_\_\_\_\_ NRCD \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

# Natural Resource Conservation District

## **SAMPLE** **Disposition Policy**

1. An inventory of all equipment of the district shall be maintained by the Clerk.
2. Unneeded equipment may be donated to a public body with prior approval of the board at a regularly scheduled meeting. A receipt acknowledging the donation shall be obtained.
3. Disposition of equipment with a value of greater than \$5000.00 requires accepting sealed bids after advertising the availability of the item(s) for a two week period in a local paper.

Adopted by the \_\_\_\_\_ NRCD \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

# Natural Resource Conservation District

## **SAMPLE** **Scholarship Policy**

**NOTE: State funds are not to be used for scholarships. It is a potential violation of Arizona's Gift Clause. No matter what the source of the funds, the board needs to adopt a clear cut set of rules, procedures and evaluation criteria.**

Adopted by the \_\_\_\_\_ NRCD \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman

# SECTION 4

## Section (4) A: Arizona Laws and Rules Guiding Biennial NRCD Elections

**\*\*\*All election materials will be provided each election cycle to each NRCD Election Board by the ASLD NRCD Manger.\*\*\***

Every election year, many questions arise about conducting NRCD elections. Arizona Revised Statute Titles 16 and 37 provide the foundation. Title 16 contains Arizona's election laws and Title 37 contains NRCD election laws.

Title 37 explains that NRCD boards are composed of five supervisors. Three supervisors serve in an elected capacity with staggered 6 year terms of office, and two supervisors are appointed every even year by the ASLD Commissioner for 2 year terms. Supervisor elections are held on the first Saturday in May of each even numbered year, and in order properly to hold an election each NRCD is required to appoint an election board that is responsible for conducting the elections (A.R.S. § 16-531.A).

Only qualified electors may run for office, be appointed to office and vote in district elections. An NRCD qualified elector is a person who is a district cooperator and a qualified elector of the state (A.R.S. § 37-1002.13). Qualified electors must meet statutory residency requirements. The location of a person's family residence is the primary determining factor for residency, not the location or place of one's business, farm or ranch. A person may have only one residence for the purpose of voter registration. A person can be a cooperator in more than one district, but can only vote and hold office in the district where they reside.

District cooperators are any person who has entered into a cooperative agreement with the district for the purpose of protecting, conserving and practicing the wise use of natural resources under his or her control. Cooperative agreements may apply to owners of residential lots as well as large ranches. Many farms and ranches are now operated by trusts, L.L.C.s or other corporate bodies. The qualified elector of the district is a natural person, not an artificial person such as a corporation.

New cooperator agreements must be reviewed by the NRCD board at the next meeting, but do not require formal board action via a motion to approve and vote for acceptance; the criteria to become a cooperator are stated in A.R.S. 37-1002 and cannot be challenged by board action. In advance of NRCD elections, cooperator and qualified elector lists should be reviewed and updated by the NRCD board of supervisors or the election board to ensure accuracy.

If an individual meets the requirements of a qualified elector, they are eligible to run for office by filing a nominating paper or a write-in nominating paper. A nominating paper must be received by ASLD 10 days before the election. The number of signatures required to nominate a candidate for district elections is set at 25 by A.R.S. § 37-1051.B. Write-in candidates do not have a signature requirement, but must file their nominating papers no later than 40 days before the election per A.R.S. §16-312. Any person not filing the required affidavit or filing by these deadlines will not have their name printed on the official ballots and cannot be counted in the final vote tally.

## **Section (4) B: NRCD Biennial Election Protocol and Process**

### **Biennial Election of Supervisors:**

A.R.S. § 37-1051 A. establishes the first Saturday in May of even numbered years as the election date.

### **NRCD Election Board:**

In January or February of the election year each district shall appoint an election board responsible for the entire election process.

### **The Electoral Board shall consist of:**

- a.) **One inspector:** preferably one of the elected supervisors who is not up for election.
- b.) **Two judges:** additional supervisors or cooperators of the district at large. The Election board is responsible for posting public notices of election, availability of nominating petitions, monitoring the polling place, tallying of cast ballots, submitting the final tally sheet to the ASLD NRCD Manager, and the security / retention of all election records.

### **Notice of Election:**

By February/March of the election year, the election board is responsible for posting a **Notice of Natural Resource Conservation District Supervisor Election** in a publication of district wide distribution. The notice should inform the general public of:

- 1.) The name of the district soliciting petitions for candidate nomination.
- 2.) The date of the election.
- 3.) The location / locations of the polling place.
- 3.) The time period during which the polling place is open.
- 4.) Candidate qualification and eligibility requirements:
  - a.) must be 18 years of age.
  - b.) a registered voter in the State of Arizona.
  - c.) a resident of the district in which the election is being held.
  - d.) have a current Cooperative Agreement with the district in question.
- 5.) Instructions on how to become a cooperator with the district, if they are not.
- 6.) Location at which nomination papers and write-in papers may be obtained.
- 7.) Instructions on where both types of nominations need to be filed. Nomination papers must be filed 10 days and Write-in papers filed 40 days prior to the scheduled date of election at the following location:

*NRCD Manager  
Arizona State Land Department  
1616 W. Adams  
Phoenix, AZ 85007*

Candidate Nomination Petition:

A.R.S. § 37-1051.B. provides for a standard Nomination Paper and affidavit of qualifications to be filed with the ASLD 10 days prior to the scheduled election.

Write In Candidate Petition:

A.R.S. 16-312 provides for a standard write-in nomination paper and affidavit of qualification to be filed with the ASLD 40 days prior to the scheduled election.

Notice of Required Ballots:

By no later than 20 days prior to the election the electoral board shall notify the ASLD of the number of mail out ballots request by electors and number of ballots required at the polling place.

**NOTE:** A.R.S. § 37-1051 B. states, “Qualified electors who wish to vote by mail ballot shall file a first class mailing address with the District governing body at least 30 days prior to the date of election.” Official return mail in ballots and accompanying envelopes will be provided in the quantity requested.

Preparation of ASLD Official Ballots:

Based on the election board’s request, official mail out and polling place ballots indicating the name of qualified candidates will be prepared by the ASLD for local distribution by district officials.

**NOTE:** It is the electoral board’s responsibility to mail ballots to those voters requesting such, in time for return mail by the election date. Mail in ballots are to be delivered in their sealed envelopes to the election board at the polling place prior to closing.

Election Day:

- All polls should be kept open between the hours stated in the Public Notice of Election.
- Voting may commence as soon as the polls open.
- All voters shall sign an approved Polling Place Register.
- Any qualified elector present at the time the polls close shall be permitted to vote.

Electoral Board Election Day Responsibilities:

- Determine eligibility of each voter if in question.
- Monitor the Polling Place Register sign in.
- Provide the voter with an official ballot.
- Monitor the placement of the ballot in the ballot box.
- **Note:** At the request of the voter, ballots that have been spoiled / mismarked may receive a replacement ballot. The spoiled ballot should be destroyed in public. Once the name of the last voter has been entered on the Polling Place Register, the Judge / Inspector shall write: “We certify the election completed with the voting of (enter the name of the last voter of record). The election results shall be recorded on an Official Tally Sheet and signed by all election board members.
- A Certificate of Returns must then be completed, signed by the election board members and submitted to the ASLD.

Oath of Office:

ASLD NRCM Manager will prepare an Oath of Office in triplicate the winning candidate for notarized signature. The returned notarized Oaths of Office will be signed by the ASLD Commissioner, the ASLD NRCM Manager, and the Arizona Secretary of State. One original will be retained by the ASLD NRCM Manager, and one original will be sent to the district headquarters for their files. The successful candidate will be sent a **copy** of the said Oath.

Appointed Supervisors:

At the first meeting in June of the election years, the three elected supervisors shall recommend to the ASLD Commissioner, in writing a minimum, of two qualified candidates for appointment to the district board of supervisors. The term of appointment is for two years. Oaths of Office for the two appointed supervisors will be prepared by the ASLD NRCD Manager.

Notice of Resignation:

In the event an appointed or elected supervisor resigns before his or her term has expired, a Notice of Resignation shall be filed with the ASLD NRCD Manager.

Nomination to Fill Unexpired Term of Office:

Supervisor vacancies shall be filled by submission of a [Nomination to Fill the Unexpired Term of Office](#) or the [Appointment Request Form](#) document with the ASLD NRCD Manager.

# SECTION 5

## Section (5) A: GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SUPERVISOR / STAFF WORKING RELATIONSHIP

Just as natural resources must be stewarded with care, so should NRCD employees (and volunteers). District employees should have an annual work plan and be evaluated yearly to clarify expectations, identify continued professional development needs and address concerns. One board supervisor should be designated as the contact person. You can reasonably expect the following from staff:

- Attention to details of a meeting
- Complete, concise and accurate information
- Honesty in individual and organizational relationships
- Judicious use of time
- Meeting of agreed upon deadlines with notification if deadlines cannot be met (and reasons why)
- Prompt response to requests for information
- Prompt return of phone calls and e-mails

In return, staff working for NRCD's can reasonably expect:

- Honesty in individual and organizational relationships
- Fulfillment of commitments with agreed upon deadlines
- Organizational knowledge and ability
- Candid performance appraisal and assistance in performance
- Support in controversial situations
- Prompt response to requests for information
- Easy access by phone or visitation

### EXAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL POLICY

\*\*\*NRCD policies are not required by statute or a requirement to receive State funds, but they reflect good management and procedure. They cannot, however, override any local, state, or federal laws.\*\*\*

The \_\_\_\_\_ Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD) hired you because we are confident in your ability. We expect your conduct on the job to be governed by your good judgment, consideration of others and respect for the ideals of the Conservation Districts.

#### **TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT**

*Full time Employees* - Those employees who work a minimum of 40 hours per week. These employees are eligible for applicable benefits.

*Part time Employees* - Those employees whose regular schedule consists of less than 40 hours a week. These employees are not eligible for benefits.

**PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

The first three months of employment beginning with the date of hire are considered a probationary period for all employees. This time provides an opportunity for you to become better acquainted with your new hire and for you to evaluate your new employee. Either the NRCD or the employee may terminate employment for any reason during this time. Applicable benefits will begin at the end of the probationary period.

**WORK WEEK**

For payroll purposes, the pay period covers 12:01 am Monday through 12:00 pm Sunday.

**ABSENCE**

Our overall effectiveness is dependent on the punctual and regular attendance of each employee.

**PAYDAY**

Employees are paid biweekly on Friday for the period of work completed at 12:00 pm the previous Sunday.

**PERSONAL PROPERTY**

The NRCD does not assume responsibility for any personal property left or damaged in the office.

**BENEFITS- FULL TIME EMPLOYEES**

Matching FICA

Workman’s Compensation

5 personal leave days a year with no more than two days to be taken at one time. Sick leave shall accrue at the rate of 4 hours per pay period after the probationary period has ended.

Paid Holidays listed below:

- New Year’s Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Independence Day
- Christmas Day
- Labor Day
- Medical, dental, life insurance and retirement are not available at this time.

**WORKMAN’S COMPENSATION**

Workman’s Compensation- Any employee who is accidentally injured on the job, no matter how minor should report the injury immediately. This will insure that all claims are processed as quickly as possible. Failure to report an injury within a reasonable length of time may cause ineligibility for Workers Compensation.

PERSONNEL POLICY PART TIME EMPLOYEES:

Matching FICA

Workman’s Compensation

**CORRECTIVE ACTION FOR ALL TYPES OF EMPLOYEES**

From time to time job related problems may develop. These problems deserve a candid and open conversation with the objective of improvement and prompt resolution. Such problems may include, but are not limited to, violation or conflict with NRCD policy, performance on the job or consistent absence. The following steps cover the normal pattern of corrective action:

1. The supervisor discusses with the employee the specifics of a problem, the corrections which are needed, and the dates by which the correction should occur. The supervisor will document the date and content of the conversation.
2. If the problem persists, the employee will then receive written warning containing a statement of the problem, noting the date of the verbal warning, and a list of necessary corrections. The employee will be asked to sign an acknowledgment that he or she has read it; a copy will be placed in the employee’s file and a copy given to the employee.
3. If the problem persists, a second written warning will be given using the same format as step two.
4. If the problem re-occurs after the second written warning, corrective action up to and including dismissal may occur.

The corrective action policy described above does not apply to serious infractions which may justify immediate dismissal for cause. Such infractions include, but are not limited to stealing, substance abuse on the job, insubordination, dishonesty, and breach of confidence. In such cases, the decision to terminate an employee with cause must be approved by the board prior to any action being taken.

**GRIEVANCE**

If an employee has a grievance to be filed, first discuss with the Chairman of the Board. Appropriate action will be taken from there.

**TERMINATION**

Employee or employer will receive written notification of termination no less than 30 days prior to the selected termination date.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

In the interest of employee health, safety, and the maintenance of effective business relations, it is the policy of the NRCD to prohibit the use of mind altering substances, including alcoholic beverages, during working hours. Employees reporting to work under the influence of such substances will be released without pay for the balance of that workday and may be subject to further corrective action, including discharge.

By signing below, I acknowledge that:

1. I have read understood and agree to and support the policies stated above.
2. I have reviewed and understand my written job description (attached)

**Signed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## EXAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY

\*\*\*NRCDC policies are not required by statute or a requirement to receive State funds, but they reflect good management and procedure. They cannot, however, override any local, state, or federal laws.\*\*\*

**The purpose of this policy is to affirm the NRCDC's commitment to equal opportunity, nondiscrimination and affirmative action. It is the policy of the NRCDC to uphold a management system for officers, directors, employees, members, volunteers, and others that ensures high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality and conduct. It is further policy of the NRCDC to ensure a safe and healthy work place free from discrimination or harassment of any kind.**

### **I. Nondiscrimination-Equal Opportunity-Affirmative Action**

The NRCDC does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, veteran status or disability. This policy covers all programs, services and procedures of the NRCDC, including employment.

The NRCDC will aggressively pursue equal opportunity for all qualified employees and applicants for employment. Positive action will continue to be taken to ensure conformance to the policies set forth herein. The objective of this policy is to obtain individuals qualified and trainable for positions by virtue of education, training, experience and personal qualifications without regard to race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, veteran status or disability. It's further objective is to maintain a work place free from discrimination or harassment in any form.

### **II. Harassment**

#### **A. General**

Harassment in any form is an unacceptable behavior and will not be tolerated by the NRCDC. In general, harassment is any conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. Harassment is defined to include: participating in coercive or repeated, unsolicited and unwelcome verbal comments or gestures; or using implicit or explicit coercive behavior in the process of conducting business, or to control, influence or affect the career, salary or job of an employee.

Harassment includes such unwelcome behavior as: verbal abuse; insults; suggestive, demeaning or degrading comments; jokes; notes or picture displays alluding to race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, veteran status or disability. Harassment may also take the form of physical aggressiveness, threats or other intimidating behaviors.

#### **B. Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is a specific type of discrimination based on sex, and is prohibited by Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when: submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or such conduct

has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Sexual harassment, like other forms of harassment, includes: coercive or repeated, unsolicited and unwelcome verbal comments, gestures or physical contacts of a sexual nature; or using implicit or explicit coercive sexual behavior in the process of conducting business, or to control, influence or affect the career, salary or job of an employee. It can also include: verbal abuse, insults, whistles, or suggestive comments; jokes; notes or pictures; touching and physical aggressiveness; pressure for dates; or threats or sexual assault.

The rules and guidelines concerning sexual harassment are not confined just to the office, but also apply to business trips, meetings and conferences away from the regular work place, and off-the-clock, work related social activities.

### **C. Policy**

Officers, supervisors, employees, and others affiliated with the NRCD must maintain high standards of conduct at all times. Any such individual engaging in harassing behavior or activities is subject to disciplinary action, which may include removal from office or employment. Managers and supervisors who tolerate such behavior, who fail to take appropriate action on reports of harassment, or who retaliate against individuals who report incidents or file claims of harassment are also subject to disciplinary action for failure to perform their supervisory or managerial duties.

This NRCD policy applies to officers, directors, employees, volunteers and others affiliated with the NRCD. It also applies in their working relationships with non-NRCD employees and contractors.

### **D. Complaint Procedures**

Persons who believe that they are being, or have been, subjected to harassing or discriminatory behavior should report the incident(s) to their immediate supervisor or the Chair of the NRCD Board. If a complainant's supervisor cannot satisfactorily resolve a complaint, it should be brought to the attention of the Board. Throughout any harassment resolution process, the confidentiality of the complainant(s) and witness(es) will be maintained.

Every attempt will be made to satisfactorily resolve matters internally at the initial stage of a complaint. However, other alternatives are available to a complainant if she or he is not satisfied with a NRCD proposed resolution. An individual may file a formal complaint through the appropriate state human rights commission within 180 days of an incident, or with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission within 300 days of an incident.

### **E. Sanctions and Disciplines**

Any officer, director, manager, supervisor or employee who violates this policy either by engaging in such previously defined inappropriate conduct, or by allowing such conduct to go unaddressed, will be subject to disciplinary actions. Such actions include, but are not limited to, counseling, reprimands, suspensions without pay and/ or removal from office or termination of employment.

### **F. Contact**

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
3300 North Central Avenue  
Northwest tower, Suite 690  
Phoenix AZ 85012  
(800) 669-4000



5. I understand that there is no Workers Compensation coverage.

Signature of Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent or guardian ( If the volunteer is under 18) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (print or type) \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

6. While this Agreement is in effect the sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ (**sponsor name**) agrees to:

a. Provide or provide for such materials and supplies, equipment, support services, facilities and supervision as are needed to accomplish this project, except as specified in an attachment, marked \_\_\_\_\_. Any special provisions, concerning expenses, are set forth in an attachment, marked \_\_\_\_\_.

b. Provide training as needed.

Signature of (**sponsoring organization**) Official: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (type or print): \_\_\_\_\_

Title/ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Elaboration of Volunteer's duties or modifications/ amendments to this agreement:

8. Completion or Termination: This agreement was (completed/ terminated) (cross out one) \_\_\_\_\_ (date).  
Remarks:

Signature of (**sponsoring organization**) Official \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# SECTION 6

## Section (6) A: NRCD Sponsored Education Centers

A.R.S. § 37-1054 outlines the power of a conservation districts to organize and establish environmental education centers, and statute is clear that in order to receive state supplemental funding the education centers must adhere to the following: foster practical, hands-on learning experiences, encourage critical thinking, demonstrate the need for individual stewardship, and demonstrate urban and rural interdependence; provide balanced environmental programs - providing courses or programs to the general public in a formal setting on the relationship of humans to their artificial and natural surroundings and includes the relationship of population, pollution, resource allocation, conservation, transportation, technology and resource production to the environment; be based on current scientific information - either updated in the last five years or that has not been shown to be out of date; lastly, include discussions of economic and social implications.

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Statue gives little guidance to the NRCDs regarding the establishment of their education centers, but the following are recommended.

- Tax ID Number
- Mission Statement
- Annual Plan of Work
- Long Range Plan
- A Governing/Advisory Board under the direction and/or control of the sponsoring NRCD or NRCDs that are responsible for setting policy and procedures and that is the final authority on education center matters.
- 501c3 Non-profit status
- Articles of Association
- Personnel policy, job description and contract for director

### ***Required Reporting to the State Land Department: [ASLD Reporting Manual](#)***

- Meeting agenda must be posted in a public area and a copy sent to the Land Department 24 hours before every meeting.
- Per A.R.S. §§ 38-431(6) and -431.01(B) advisory committees and subcommittees are required to take meeting minutes. Monthly or quarterly meeting minutes, depending on when the education center board meets, must be available to the public and provided to ASLD within 72 hours after the meeting was held. A signed and approved copy of the minutes should be sent to the Land Department after they are approved at the following meeting. It is required that education center boards meet at least once every 90 days.

- Annual Report including the standard Report Cover Page and a Financial Statement due July 20 each year.
- Application for Education Center Funds and Plan of Work due June 20 each year.
- Meeting location notice is due once, unless it changes.