

DID YOU KNOW?



Interesting Facts & Anecdotes from your District Operations and Member Services Committee

January 2015

Did you know?....

Please allow me the privilege of a personal note. This DYK is the 21st since the project's inception in 2013. The District Operations and Member Services Committee regards DYK as an important service to our members. We embodied our name by delivering "member services" while talking about "district operations."

I am honored to have been allowed the chance to author these DYKs with the encouragement of Committee members, Phylis Brooks, and our advisors. Thanks to the Communications staff for polishing them up and getting them ready to distribute. And thanks to you who took the time to read them. I hope they, in some small way, helped you, your districts, your state associations, and maybe even our partners to understand district operations better.

Even though I will not be on the DO/MS Committee after New Orleans, I am confident the Committee will continue the effort and also expand the number of contributors. If asked, please contribute.

Being a district official is an extremely important job. When done well, it can be lots of work. When done well, it can sometimes be difficult. When done well, it can be exciting, rewarding and even fun – seeing one's efforts contribute to make conservation districts vital and successful protectors and enhancers of our precious natural resources and related industries.

Paraphrasing a common phrase about horses which lose horse shoes: for lack of a good board, the conservation district doesn't reach its potential. When its potential is not reached, services to our constituents, customers, the environment, and our economy are not equal to the challenges and opportunities. And when our services are not high quality, then _____ (you fill in the blank).

To recap, this list highlights some of the actions of a quality conservation district board.

- Knowing your district well – the people, their challenges and opportunities, resources, and solutions to the problems and concerns
- Articulating a powerful vision and mission
- Hiring and training quality employees
- Providing professional fiduciary oversight
- Making sure the district has the resources needed to do the job
- Ensuring legal and ethical integrity and accountability
- Getting the district to know you and "like" you for what you do
- Recruiting new board members, associate members, and volunteers
- Writing good plans
- Continually improving, learning, entertaining new ideas, seeking advice, and growing
- Making sure your district is a safe, comfortable, and energized place to work
- Rewarding excellence, but never settling for just "good enough"
- Appreciating your history while charting your future
- Saying "thank you" for even the smallest gifts

Respectfully,
John McDonald

Making every Did You Know? statement be completely accurate for all states is impossible. The DO/MS Committee requests your understanding. We also invite you to find out what your state and local laws and policies say about any particular item.

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