



Conservation districts are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level. Most districts' boundaries coincide with county lines, but in a few states, are multi-county or along watershed boundaries.

Conservation districts serve as coordinators for conservation in the field, as well as:

- Implement farm, ranch, and forestland conservation practices to protect soil productivity, water quality and quantity, air quality, and wildlife habitat;
- Conserve and restore wetlands, which purify water and provide habitat for birds, fish, and other animals;
- Protect groundwater resources;
- Assist communities and homeowners in planting trees and other land cover to hold soil in place, clean the air, provide cover for wildlife, and beautify neighborhoods;
- Help developers control soil erosion and protect water and air quality during construction; and
- Reach out to communities and schools to teach the value of natural resources and encourage conservation efforts.

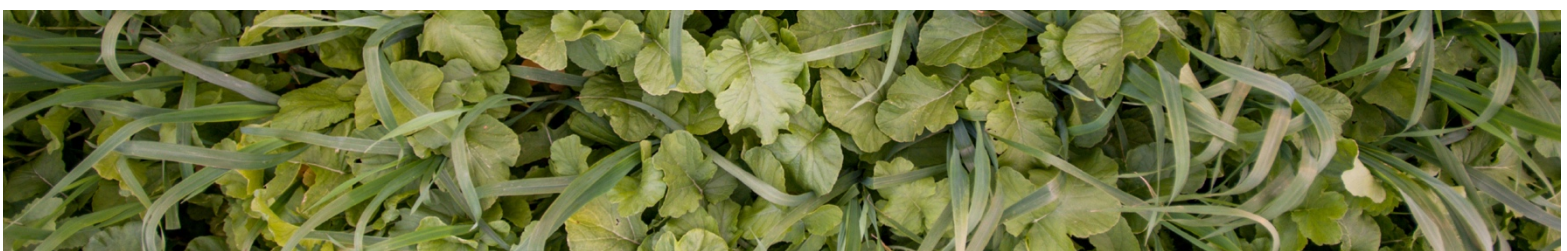
The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is the nonprofit organization that represents America's 3,000 conservation districts, their state and territory associations, and the 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. **The association was founded on the philosophy that conservation decisions should be made voluntarily at the local level** with technical and funding assistance from federal, state, and local governments, as well as the private sector.

Depending on the state, districts may go by different names—"soil and water conservation districts," "resource conservation districts," and "natural resource districts"—but they all share a single mission: to coordinate assistance from all available sources to develop locally-driven solutions to natural resources concerns.

Conservation districts receive funding through their state and county governments, cooperative or contribution agreements with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), competitive grants, and in some instances, through taxes or fees.

All districts are governed by a board of directors, who are appointed or elected and serve set terms of office. These directors—who may also be referred to as commissioners,

depending on the state—are public officials that meet on a regular basis to conduct business and set priorities for their districts. Conservation district officials are usually subject to the same laws as other elected or appointed members of state government. District programs and operations are generally carried out by paid district employees, whose interests are represented by the National Conservation District Employees Association.





The National Association of Conservation Districts on

The Basics of Conservation Delivery

Districts work with millions of landowners, land managers, and local communities every year, helping them manage and protect land and water resources on private and public lands across the United States and its territories. Many districts have been serving their communities for seven decades or more.

Many of the voluntary, incentive-based natural resource programs that districts use to deliver conservation to landowners and operators are administered by NRCS. In most instances, NRCS field offices are co-located with district offices and their staffs work together to provide conservation planning services, practice implementation assistance, and other resources to customers.

In implementing the state laws that created conservation districts, each governor has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the USDA, outlining their collaborative relationship. Each conservation district also has a more specific memo with the USDA NRCS. Over 70 years of working together to plan and install conservation measures, many working arrangements between NRCS and districts have been established to better serve conservation customers, including co-location.

In most states, a state agency (often the state department of agriculture or natural resources) provides coordination, training, and other resources to their respective conservation districts as well. These state conservation agencies are represented nationally by the National Association of State Conservation Agencies.

