



Please list your home state:

**NACD ADVOCACY TRAINING**  
**Worksheet No. 1**  
**Leadership Expectations**

*It is the Board members' responsibility to assure proper communication of the district's goals and needs between the district, the community, elected officials and its partners.<sup>1</sup>*

What are the high priority issues your district should be communicating?

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What are the hurdles that prevent you from getting your message across?

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How can your district overcome those hurdles and be more effective in getting your message across?

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<sup>1</sup> From Pennsylvania Conservation Partnership.



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## **NACD ADVOCACY TRAINING**

### **Worksheet No. 2**

#### **Leadership Expectations: Board staff relations**

**BACKGROUND:** Basically, what the conservation district board does is governance; what the staff does is management. The functions are separate and different, but they should operate as a partnership. If there is any confusion about roles and responsibilities, it can lead very quickly to conflict, inefficiency, low morale and irritation.

Management has to be done by a manager, and no board member is likely to have the time or the day-to-day know-how to be able to out-perform the staff.

Ideally, boards provide the right mix of expertise and "hands-off" guidance. Conversely, staff members are usually far too close to the organization to provide the clear-headed objectivity required for a governance role.

The following exercise is meant to help you determine the proper roles for district board members and staff.

#### **What is the proper role for the conservation district board? (Check all that apply.)**

1. Setting long-term goals
2. Determining community needs
3. Having the final say when determining yearly objectives
4. Monitoring and managing daily operations
5. Ensuring the mission of the conservation district is adhered to
6. Finalizing budgets and allocating funds

(MORE ON OTHER SIDE)

7. Approving any changes or additions outside the budget
8. Taking responsibility for the district's financial records
9. Implementing board decisions
10. Employing staff, setting compensation, and evaluating performance
11. Providing information to the board, including recommendations for action
12. Supporting the board's planning function
13. Taking ultimate responsibility for all legal matters
14. Conducting day-to-day financial operations
15. Taking ultimate responsibility for compliance with regulatory requirements (e.g., audit)
16. Operating programs and reporting on their successes and shortcomings
17. Managing committees
18. Managing volunteers

What are your top three priorities as a Board?

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What is the greatest strength that contributes to, and the biggest challenge standing in the way of, an effective relationship between your board and staff?

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**NACD ADVOCACY TRAINING**  
**Worksheet No. 3:**  
**Political Advocacy**

**Position statements**

List the specific policy areas for which your district or association does, or should, have position statements (examples: water quality, invasive species, technical assistance, etc.)

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## **NACD ADVOCACY TRAINING**

### **Worksheet No. 4**

#### **Shaping Public Opinion:**

#### **Elevator Speeches**

The term “elevator speech” refers to a brief moment in time (such as 30 seconds) for sharing your conservation message (on an elevator or in countless other brief encounters. Here are a few examples from NACD’s “The Resource.” (Fall 2011)

#### **BEVIN LAW**

##### **Kansas Association of Conservation Districts**

Hello! My name is Bevin Law. I represent the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts. I farm in north central Kansas and use no-till practices to help improve my soils and use rotational grazing with my cows to improve native grass stands in my pastures. My family has worked the land since my great grandparents homesteaded here 135 years ago. With that history, I am proud to say my family will not do anything that we think will harm that environment. It is with great pleasure and a sense of responsibility that I am a member of the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts board and try to help others with their efforts to improve their farming efforts. (116 words)

#### **JOYCE SWARTZENDRUBER**

##### **NRCS State Conservationist**

##### **Bozeman, Montana**

Greetings! My name is Joyce Swartzendruber. I lead the overall activities of the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service in Bozeman, Mont. Our 300 employees meet directly with farmers and ranchers on their land and help them figure out how to improve their resources. For example, our engineers design erosion control structures and irrigation systems. Our agronomists help farmers with cropping systems that will make soil healthier and more resistant to erosion. We have range specialists who map out the grasses and plants on grazing lands, which can develop more efficient livestock management. Our agency provides all of this assistance in partnership with local conservation districts comprised of landowners who help us set priorities about what resources need the most attention. We have a network of professional conservationists all across the U.S. who serve at the county level, and our assistance is open to anyone, including you. (146 words)

#### **MARK SNEDEKER**

##### **Supervisor**

##### **Sanborn County Conservation District, South Dakota**

Hello! I'm Mark. I am a member of the South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts, a farmer, husband, father of five boys and grandfather of one boy. As a farmer, I make a living from a non-renewable resource - the soil. As a member of the local conservation district, I help others to be good stewards of the soil and our environment. The conservation district helps landowners to protect their land, homes and livestock. By protecting their homes and livestock, everyone has a better quality of life and can be more profitable. (92 words)

**ANGELA EHLERS**  
**Executive Director**  
**South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts**

Hello! My name is Angela, and I work for a better environment for you and your family. Working with the officials of your local conservation district, we make a difference in keeping our water clean, our soil healthy, our air clear and our future brighter. The area north of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, provides drinking water for over 100,000 people. By bringing together natural resources experts and financial incentives to assist the local landowners and producers, we ensure that water is safe to drink - and save the city thousands of dollars by not having to expand their water treatment facilities. Do you have a concern we could sit down and discuss? (112 words)

**Your turn: Write your own elevator speech:**

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Please list your home state:

**NACD ADVOCACY TRAINING**  
**Worksheet No. 5**  
**Coalition Building**

What is a goal of your organization that might be more easily achieved through a coalition effort?

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What are the common values that your coalition members would share?

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Who are some of the constituencies that might be good to invite to be a part of this coalition, and who, specifically, would be constructive individuals to represent those perspectives?

<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Constructive Representative</u>
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(OVER)

If you have participated in a coalition effort before...

- What would you replicate that worked?

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- What would you change that DIDN'T work?

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