

What does it take to be a soil and water conservation district Supervisor?

Soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) are special purpose units of government that manage natural resource programs. Minnesota's 90 SWCDs cover the entire state; their boundaries usually coincide with county lines. Each SWCD is run by a board of five elected Supervisors.

To be a Supervisor, you need:

Knowledge

Supervisors must have - or be willing to learn- some basic knowledge to effectively carry out their responsibilities. They must understand:

- some of the fundamentals about the environment and how it works;
- the relationship between land use decisions and the environment;
- the effect environmental decisions have on other aspects of our lives; and
- local concerns, attitudes and needs.

Concern

Supervisors must be concerned about:

- our environment and natural resources;
- maintaining and improving water quality; and
- protecting our soils.

Leadership

Supervisors must be willing to take an active leadership role in the community. This can involve:

- setting local conservation priorities;
- educating friends and neighbors about the environment;
- working with other local government units, state and federal agencies, and other elected officials;
- setting a positive example;
- taking unpopular stands;
- balancing economic needs with environmental concerns; and
- sacrificing short-term gains for long-term benefits.

Being a Supervisor involves a minimum of one board meeting a month. There are other regional and state meeting responsibilities as well throughout the calendar year. Supervisors receive no salary, although they do receive a daily per diem of \$125 per day for attending meetings as well as incidental expenses such as mileage.

For more information about the programs and activities of the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District, visit their website at www.dakotaswcd.org or call our office at 651-480-7777.