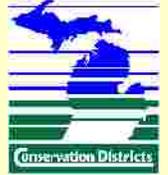


Planning For The Future

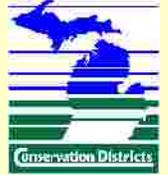
- Includes the Resource Assessment, Strategic Plan, and Annual Plan of Work -

**Training
Module 11**



What You'll Learn In This Module

- | What is planning?
- | Why should Districts be involved in planning?
- | Who should be involved in the planning process?
- | What are the elements of a strategic plan, resource assessment, and annual plan of work.



Discussion Questions

- | What is planning?
- | Why should community leaders be involved in the planning process?
- | What are the elements of a Resource Assessment?
- | What are the elements of a Strategic Plan?
- | What are the elements of an Annual Plan of Work?



Planning Overview

Planning provides the foundation of overall Conservation District programs and operations.

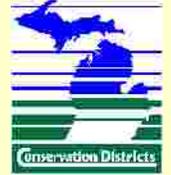
The planning process broadly defines the vision of the future, and then focuses on the steps that are needed to address specific goals and objectives.



Planning Overview (continued)

The three components of the planning process are:

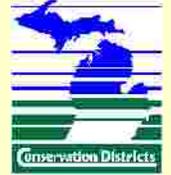
- **Resource Assessment:** is a document that outlines information about the natural resource needs and concerns in the District's service area and summarizes the District Board's priority issues.
- **Strategic Plan:** provides clear goals and objectives to be attained within a five year time frame. Specific issues in the strategic plan comes directly from the resource assessment.
- **Annual Plan of Work:** is the annual work plan for the District. It provides specific activities, timelines, evaluation expectations, and describes the responsible person and/or persons who will complete the work outlined in the plan. The content of the annual plan of work generally comes from the strategic plan.



Who Should Be Involved in the Planning Process?

Districts should involve a broad spectrum of community representation in their planning process.

Stakeholders, like local conservation leaders, community leaders, educators, agricultural producers, industry leaders, and community citizens at large should be invited to participate.



Resource Assessment

The planning process begins with assessing the natural resources within your District. The resource assessment is a document that outlines information about the natural resource needs and issues.

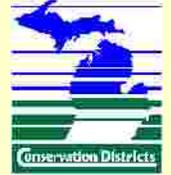
The next several slides takes you through the process of preparing a resource assessment.



Resource Assessment (continued)

Step 1. Overview of the District

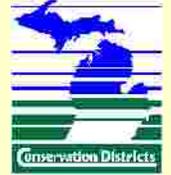
Prepare an overview of your District and its features – this includes current conditions and trends. Much of this information can be found in the beginning of the county's soil survey. Check to see if this information is still current and accurate before using it.



Resource Assessment (continued)

Step 2. Link and Scan Your Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people who have information and a vested interest in natural resources in your county. The “linking and scanning” concept means that you need to inform the stakeholders that your District is undergoing strategic planning and you would like them to be involved in the process by asking them questions.



Resource Assessment (continued)

This type of information gathering can be done via telephone, group meetings, letters, surveys, one-on-one interviews, etc.

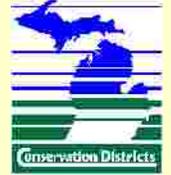
The following questions can be used as a basis for gathering information:

1. *What do you believe is the Conservation Districts purpose?*
2. *What type of resource management issues do you see emerging in the next 5 years?*



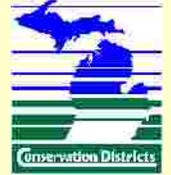
Resource Assessment (continued)

3. *What types of future plans are you presently making for your organization in response to the issues identified?*
4. *In your view, what are the trends in government regulation/policy at the federal, state, and local level that will impact resource management during the next 5 years?*
5. *Given your thoughts on emerging issues and trends in government regulation and policy, what changes should the Conservation District plan for in the next 5 years?*



Resource Assessment (continued)

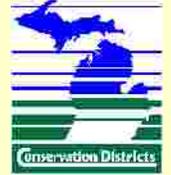
6. *How effective is the Conservation District in meeting or addressing existing needs of the community?*
7. *Are you aware of areas that require attention on the part of the Conservation District?*



Resource Assessment (continued)

Step 3. Compile results

Using a format that will be useful to your Conservation District, compile results from your scanning efforts and add this to your resource library. Consider including this compilation as an appendix to the Resource Assessment.



Resource Assessment (continued)

Step 4. Identify the resource/describe the problem

From the scanning process will emerge a list of resources with problems or concerns, such as soil, forest, wildlife, water, etc. Describe each of these resources separately and explain the issues and problems (losing soil, no wildlife, too much wildlife, contaminated water, etc.)

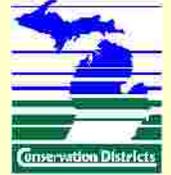


Resource Assessment (continued)

Step 5. Prioritize issues/problems

Explain what the most critical issues are, and prioritize them from the most important to the least important.

Prepare the list of prioritized issues/problems that the District will address. This section will be the heart of the Resource Assessment. The clearer this step is, the easier it will be to relate proposed actions back to the Assessment.



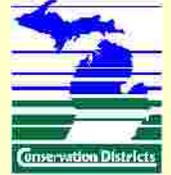
Resource Assessment (continued)

Step 6. Prepare & Print Assessment

This is no one required format for the final document. Develop a format that will be most useful for your District. Make sure to get **board approval** of the finished assessment before printing.

Make adequate copies for necessary distribution.

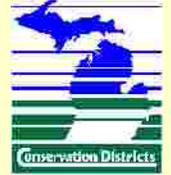
[Click here](#) to view a sample outline of a Resource Assessment



Resource Assessment (continued)

Step 7. Begin Strategic Plan

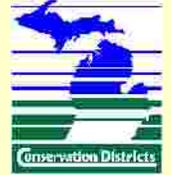
Now that your Resource Assessment is completed you can begin to work on the strategic plan, using the issues identified in Step 5. These issues become the substance of your goals and objectives.



Strategic Planning

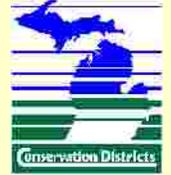
The second step in the planning process is to develop a strategic plan for your District.

Strategic plans are focused, detailed, and clear about what is to be done, who is/are involved and how, when each step is to be performed, and how the plan will be evaluated.



Elements of a Strategic Plan

- | **Mission statement** – A one-sentence statement of the purpose of the organization. (i.e., Why are we here?). Mission statements are usually broad and open to interpretation.
- | **Goals** – One or more statements of intent to fulfill the mission statement of the organization (i.e., What do we want to do?). Goals should relate to the mission statement; they should be relevant.



Elements of a Strategic Plan

- | **Objectives** – One or more measurable statements of intent to achieve a goal.
 - For example: “We will increase our District cooperators’ awareness of the need to control water erosion on lands sloping from 2 to 6 percent.”

- | **Strategies** – One or more specific, measurable statement to define how the objective will be accomplished.
 - For example: “We will develop, implement, and complete plans to establish erosion control systems with ten cooperators on 2,000 acres of land each for the next five years.”



Sample Strategic Plan Outline

A strategic plan's mission statement, goals, objectives, and strategies might look like this:



Mission Statement

Goal 1

Objective 1

Strategy 1

Strategy 2

Objective 2

Strategy 1

Goal 2

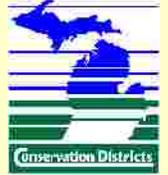
Objective 1

Strategy 1

Strategy 2

Strategy 3

Strategy 4



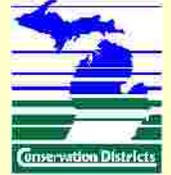
Strategic Planning Points to Remember

1. There is one mission statement.
2. There may be one or more goals, one or more objectives to meet each goal, one or more activities to satisfy each objective, and one or more strategies to complete each activity.



Strategic Planning Points to Remember (continued)

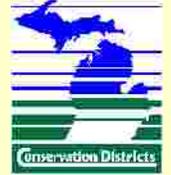
3. Strategic plans usually cover a period no longer than 5 years, and the written goals are often written or updated every year or two. Goals should be attainable within a reasonable time so that they can be measured and evaluated.
4. Conservation District strategic plans should contain the list of prioritized issues from the Resource Assessment.



Annual Plan of Work

The District's strategic plan, if available, can be broken down into annual segments which are readily identifiable and guide the District in its day-to-day programs.

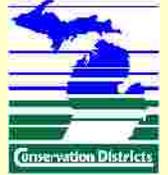
The annual plan lists specific activities, timelines, and evaluation expectations. This plan describes the responsible person and/or persons to complete the work outlined in the plan.



Annual Plan of Work (continued)

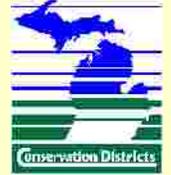
The plan of work includes:

- | A list of key issues and goals
- | Activities to be completed under each goal
- | The person (s) responsible for carrying out the activity
- | A timeline for completion
- | Evaluation of expectations
- | An annual budget



Annual Plan of Work (continued)

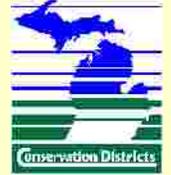
During an annual planning session, the board and staff chose their priority goals for the year, using their resource assessment or strategic plan for guidance.



Annual Plan of Work (continued)

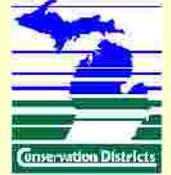
The following is an **example** of how to address one issue in an annual plan of work

- | Identified Resource Assessment issue: Reforestation
- | Goal: Increase customer base of tree sale to increase tree plantings
- | Action: Promote the Tree Sale through group meetings and media
- | Who: Forester, staff and board (or put your appropriate staff name or names here)
- | When: January - March 2004
- | Evaluation: At the board meeting following the tree sale
- | Budget: \$3000 (cost of mailing, advertising, printing, travel, etc)



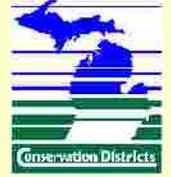
Annual Plan of Work (continued)

You may have more than one goal and more than one action/activity item per issue identified.



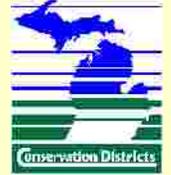
Summary

- | Planning provides the foundation of overall Conservation District programs, broadly defining the vision of the future, and then focuses on the steps that are needed to address specific goals and objectives.
- | Planning for Districts can be done on three levels: resource assessment, strategic plan, and annual plan of work.



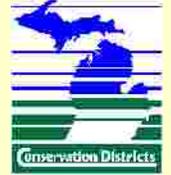
Summary

- | Stakeholders, like local conservation leaders, community leaders, educators, agricultural producers, industry leaders, and community citizens at large should be invited to participate in the planning process.
- | The resource assessment documents information about the natural resource needs and issues in your District, and is part of the strategic plan.



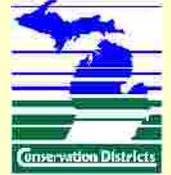
Summary

- | Strategic plans focus on what is to be done, who is/are involved and how, when each step is to be performed, and how the plan will be evaluated. The annual plan comes directly from the strategic plan.
- | The annual plan guides the District in its day-to-day programs specifying activities, timelines, evaluation expectations, and described the responsible person and/or persons to complete the work.



Review Questions

- | What is planning?
- | Why should community leaders be involved in the planning process?
- | What are the elements of a Resource Assessment?
- | What are the elements of a Strategic Plan?
- | What are the elements of an Annual Plan of Work?



Resources Available

Resource Available	Where to Find It
Booklet: "Planning to Serve: Facilitators guide for Conservation District strategic planning"	Available through the National Association of Conservation Districts. Order online at www.nacdnet.org