

Utah Conservation Districts Continuing Education

District Board
Recruitment and
Diversity



Election timeline

- November: Nominating committee meets
- December: Nominations due
- January: Nominations close
- February: Ballots mailed
- Mid-February: Election closed
- March: Candidates take office

Election procedures are handled by Jake Jacobson's office with the Utah Soil Conservation Commission.

Up for re-election - 2007

- Daggett: Floyd Briggs, Alex Radosevich, Lesa Asay
- Duchesne: Weldon Brown, Ed Bench, Garth Sorensen
- Uintah: Bill Rasmussen, Shayne McKee, Merlin McKee

Supervisor nominating committee

- Utah law designates the nominating committee members.
- Nominating Committee Members include:
 - Chair of county commission/council
 - Chair of FSA committee
 - Chair of conservation district
 - If the chair of the Conservation District is up for election, he or she should designate a supervisor to represent them on the nominating committee.
 - County Extension agent

Why recruit?

- Effective conservation districts have outstanding and qualified board members.
- A diverse district board will be better able to gain community support for local conservation efforts.
- A board's diversity should reflect the community.

Recruiting considerations

- Think of the conservation district as you would your own business. When you are hiring, you are looking for the most qualified individual.
- Utah law requires that three SCD board members are farmers/ranchers. That leaves two other seats. Gain community support by including others on the board. They will learn more about conservation and agriculture and carry the message to others in the community.
- Communities change. A fresh set of eyes can bring new ideas to the board and enrich your district program. It can improve delivery of conservation programs.

Diversity

- What does “diversity” mean for your board?
 - Race, ethnicity, sex, age, location, occupation
- What would diversity bring to your board?
 - Leadership, fund-raising, education/outreach or other skills

If your conservation district is not representative of different geographic regions within the district, board members can split the district into more than one voting district. Jake’s office sends out a form in the fall asking if they’d like to do this.

Diversity

- *"Of mankind in general, the parts are greater than the whole."*
 - *Aristotle Greek Philosopher (384-322 BC)*
- *"Some leaders are born women."*
 - *Unknown*

Elements of effective recruitment

- Values
- Needs
- Competition
- Rewards
- Examples

Conservation values

- An important question
 - “What would you want to accomplish as a conservation district board member?”
- People are motivated in different ways
 - Political, economic, business, social, community service, accomplishments, heritage, other
- Once known – recruitment is matching the personal motivation with opportunities to accomplish

Conservation values

- Good district board members have a strong conservation ethic, skills and knowledge in conservation, as well as management skills and leadership abilities. Recruitment of potential board members begins with the identification of the qualities desired.
- Board members should be selected based on the identified qualities and not on the criteria of “*who’s available that we know.*”

Conservation values

- **Potential board members need to know**
 - What the district is and does
- **The District:**
 - Function
 - Mission and vision statements
 - Your district's primary goals and objectives
 - Legal authority
 - Major issues
 - Major programs and activities
 - Funding sources
 - Expectations of district board members
 - Benefits of being a district board member

Competition

- Effective leaders are in high demand.
- There is competition for talented people's time.
- It is necessary to match interests with opportunities. The District should be as important as their other interests.

Recruitment process

- Identifying qualities and qualifications
- Analyzing the needs of your district
- Job description
- Recruitment considerations
- Recruitment strategies & materials
- Maintaining prospective board members

Recruitment

Identify qualities and qualifications

Open minded	Strong leadership skills	Innovative
Likable and kind	Professionalism	Understands conservation issues
Good speaking skills	Progressive	Always learning
Fundraising abilities	Personnel management skills	Legislative understanding skills
Leadership network in the community	Devote adequate time to the job	Ability to get along with others

District needs

Analyzing the needs of your district

- Inventory district programs & activities
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, goals of district
 - Review the District's Strategic and Annual Plans
- Identify the current talents of board members
- Recruit for needed talents
- Invite local organizations to recommend candidates with needed talents, experience, knowledge

Recruitment

Once candidates are identified, it might be helpful to hand them a...

Job Description

- Includes:
 - general function
 - duties & responsibilities
 - term of service
 - qualifications
 - commitment required
 - training requirements
 - function of the conservation district

Recruitment

- Phased recruitment
 - Test the interests, commitment and skills of potential members
- Base evaluations on:
 - Legal considerations
 - Best fit with the board mission & goals
 - Participation & commitment

Rewards

Three things all board members need:

- To know role and responsibilities
- To be kept informed
- To have a meaningful contribution
 - No one wants to attend a meeting once a month and feel like it's a waste of time. Everyone is involved because they feel like they are accomplishing something.

Rewards

- Ideas:
 - Full participation in committees
 - Responsible for some part of district program
 - Match assignments to personal interests
 - Instill a feeling of belonging and that they are integral to the District
 - Ask for their opinions and input on issues
 - Keep informed of programs, activities, issues
 - Recognize successful governance

The reward

- The important question
 - “What would you want to accomplish as a conservation district board member?”
- Once known – recruitment is matching the personal motivation with opportunities to accomplish

Recruitment strategies & materials

Example strategies

- Develop a referral network
- District board members information form
- Letter to organizations
- Public service announcements
- News releases
- Newspaper advertisements

Recruitment strategies & materials

Example strategies

- Recommendations from staff and others
- Recruitment at annual & special meetings
- Distributing recruitment prospectus & job description
- Personal contacts

Getting started

Orientation (once recruited)

- Conservation handbook
- District function
- District powers and authorities – state law
- Key partners and programs
- “What do you want to accomplish as a conservation district board member”

Resources available

Resource Available	Where to Find It
Utah Conservation Handbook	Each supervisor should have a copy for personal use.
Conservation District <u>Operations</u> Handbook	Located in each zone office
UACD continuing education modules	Located online at www.uacd.org
Conservation District Board Members Recruitment and Community Outreach Guide	Available through the National Association of Conservation Districts at www.nacdnet.org