

Conservation District Director Orientation Session

March 14, 2005

Crowne Plaza Hotel

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Presented By:

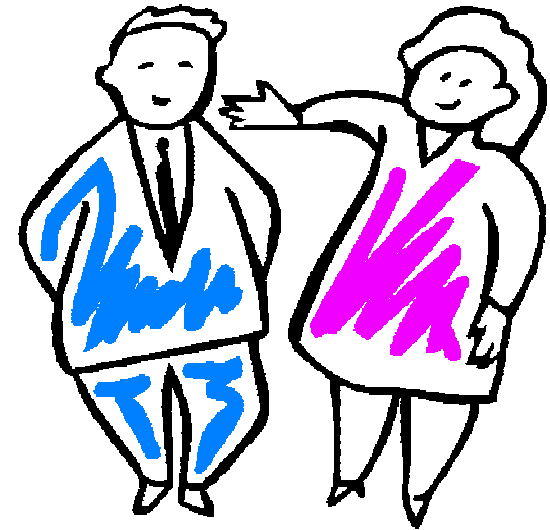
The “Building For Tomorrow” Leadership Development
Committee of Pennsylvania’s Conservation Partnership

Today's Agenda

- | (handbook)
- | History of Conservation Districts
- | Act 217: PA's Conservation District Law
 - q Powers of Conservation Districts
 - q Director Nomination Process
- | Director Duties and Responsibilities
- | The Human Factor
- | Support & Assistance

Today's Participants

- | Name
- | County
- | Interesting Fact
(hobby, accomplishment, occupation, past occupation, etc.)
- | The most pressing resource issue in your county



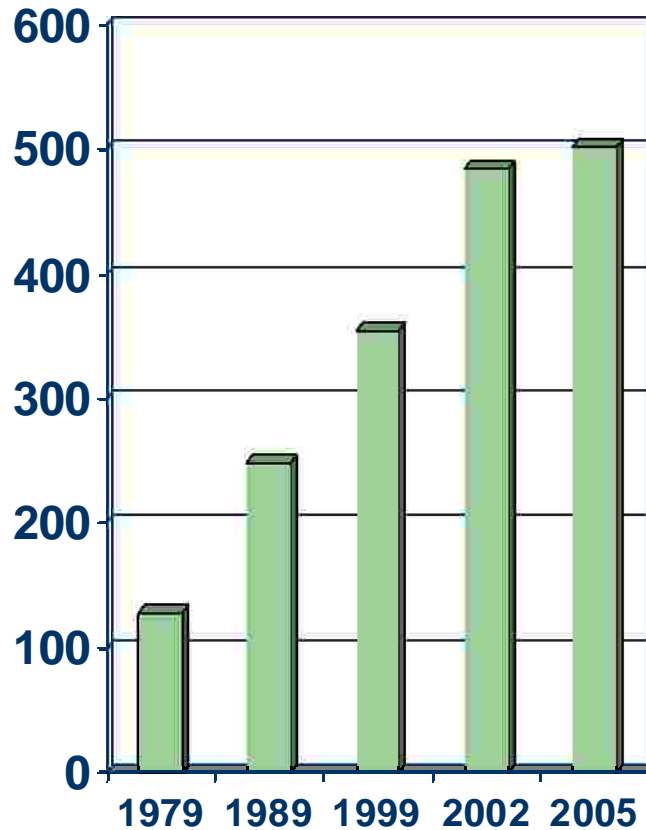
History of Conservation Districts

- | **“Dust Bowl”**
- | **Act 217 - Pennsylvania’s Soil Conservation District Act** (adopted in May 1945)
- | **Unique:**
 1. “Community-Based,” “Locally Led,” “Grassroots”
 2. Defined, by law, as political subdivisions of State Government

History of Conservation Districts

- | 66 PA Conservation Districts
(every county except Philadelphia)
- | staff range: 1 part-time employee
to
22 full-time employees
- | 50% part of the county - - 50% independent districts
- | annual budget range:
\$30,000 to \$1,500,000+

History of Conservation Districts



of District Professional Staff in PA

(estimated)

1979 - 128

1989 - 249

1999 - 354

2002 - 485

2005 - 502

(7,000 nationwide)

History of Conservation Districts

| **Working
Boards
– Little or No
Staff**

| **Limited
Budgets**

| **Primarily
Advisory &
Referral in
Nature**

Boards



| **Governance is Major
Role**

| **6-Figure Budgets**

| **Set Policies, Influence
Programs, Decisions
Monitored (& Disputed)**

History of Conservation Districts

>> Began: Clerical & Field Assistance, Education

>> Today: * More Technically Proficient Program Delivery

* Interact with Legislators, Funders, Agencies and the Community (on behalf of the Board).

* Mediators between the Public & Agencies

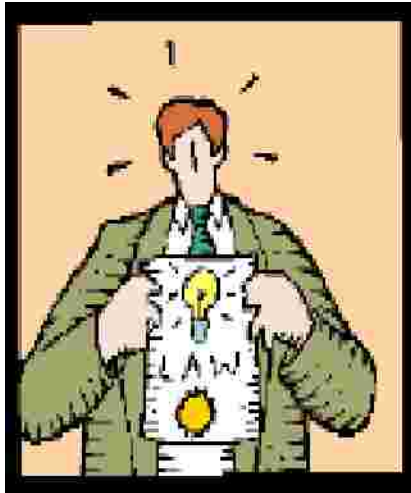
* Manage Larger Budgets

* Coordinate Larger Staffs

* Information Gatekeepers

STAFF

Act 217 – Pennsylvania's Conservation District Law



- | **Act 217**
Pennsylvania's Soil Conservation District Act –adopted in May 1945
- | Pennsylvania Conservation Districts are subdivisions of State Government
- | Section 9 – Powers of Conservation Districts

Act 217 – Pennsylvania's Conservation District Law

- | **Conduct surveys, investigations and research** relating to the character of soil erosion and the preventive control measures needed ...
- | **Employ the personnel necessary** to properly conduct the operations of the district ... and provide adequate and necessary insurance coverage for directors and employees ...
- | **Carry out preventative & control measures** on any lands ... with written consent ...

Act 217 – Pennsylvania’s Conservation District Law

- | **Cooperate or enter into agreements** with, and to furnish financial aid to any agency ... in carrying on erosion control and prevention operations ...
- | ... **to acquire** by purchase, exchange, lease, gift, grant, bequest, devise or otherwise, any **property** ... or interests therein
- | **Make available ... material or equipment** as will assist the effective conservation and utilization of soil resources; and for the prevention and control of soil erosion.

Act 217 – Pennsylvania's Conservation District Law

- | **Construct, improve, and maintain such structures** as may be necessary...
- | **Assist and advise owners and occupiers of land** in developing and/or implementing plans for storm water management, water use, water management and water pollution control, soil erosion control and conservation of water and soil resources
- | **Conduct educational programs** relating to soil and water conservation ...

Act 217 – Pennsylvania’s Conservation District Law

- § **Assist and advise county and municipal governments** in subdivision and land development reviews, ... storm water management plans, ... flood plain management, ... water pollution control and other natural resource concerns
- § **Accept ... any authority delegated** by municipal or county governments, the Commonwealth or Federal Government

Act 217 – Pennsylvania's Conservation District Law

- § **Sue and to be sued** in the name of the district, ... to make and execute contracts ...
- § ... the board of directors may **require contributions** in money, services, materials or otherwise ...
- § **Accept contributions** of any character from any source whatsoever ...

Act 217 – Pennsylvania's Conservation District Law

§ (Exempt from) provisions with respect to the acquisition, operation or disposition of property by other public bodies

§ Sponsor projects under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL 566), the Resource Conservation and Development Act , and the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962, as amended.

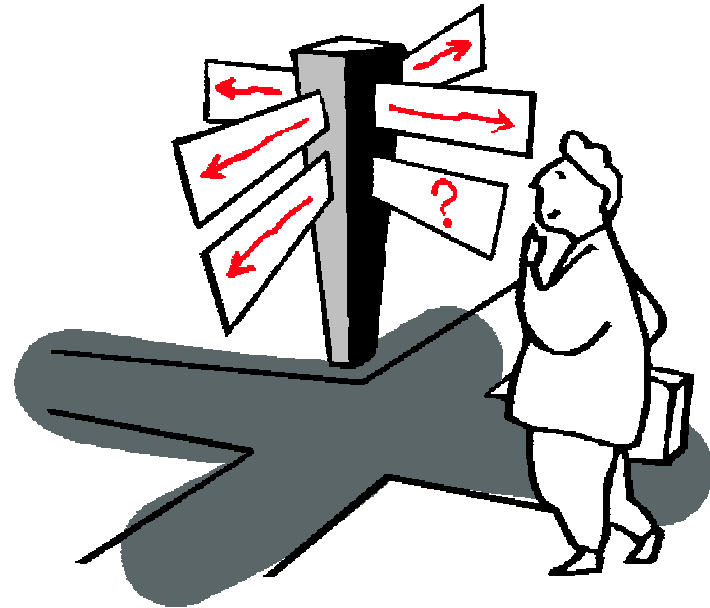
Act 217 – Pennsylvania’s Conservation District Law

- § Enter public or private property to make such inspections as are necessary to determine compliance to the extent that such authority has been delegated to a district by the department
- § Establish a program of assistance to environmental advisory councils

Act 217 – Pennsylvania's Conservation District Law

**How Did I Get
Here??**

Why Me?



Act 217 – Pennsylvania’s Conservation District Law

I Director Appointments

- n Approved Nominating Organizations
- n Appointed by County Government
- n Nominating Organizations, Community Members, County Government think YOU can do the job

- What’s the job??

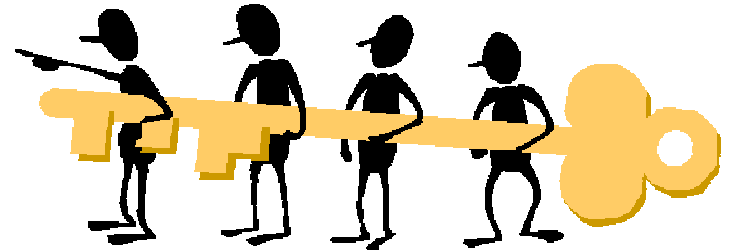
Small Group Activity

- | What skills, abilities and knowledge do you think are important for someone who serves on a board?
 - Talk with your neighbors for 2-3 minutes
 - Develop a list of 5 – 7 items

Director Duties & Responsibilities

I District Personnel

- Job Descriptions
- Personnel Policies
- Procedures for Hiring/Disciplining/Firing
- Training
- Evaluations
- Sounding Board - Communications



Director Duties & Responsibilities

- **District Operations**

- § **Mandates**

- § **Sunshine Law & Ethics Act**

- § **Annual Report, Audits**

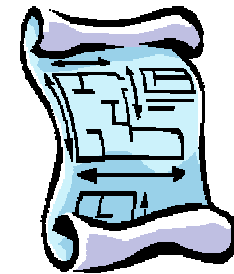
- § **Program Planning and Prioritization**

- § **Annual, Long-Term and Strategic**

- § **Written Policies**

- § *“An Ounce of Prevention*”

- § **Program Evaluations**



Director Duties & Responsibilities

- | **Advice on District Operations**
 - § **Know and Use Your Strengths**
 - § **DO NOT Delegate or Abdicate**
 - § **Prioritize and Allocate Limited Resources**
 - § **“Need” “Fit” “Impacts”**
 - § **Tough Decisions**
 - § **Ask Questions!**

Director Duties & Responsibilities

| District Finances

– Funding Sources

- | County – salaries, space, operating expenses, etc.
- | State – cost-share for staff, administrative expenses
- | Fees for Services
- | Fund Raisers
- | Sponsors, Memberships
- | Grants and Special Projects

Director Duties & Responsibilities

I District Finances

§ Budget Process

- ∅ Know it. Question it (Ask ???) .
Improve it.

§ Payment of Bills

- ∅ Is the District Running Efficiently?

§ Internal Controls

- ∅ Important, Easy, Smart

§ Annual Audits



Director Duties & Responsibilities

I District Meetings

- Attendance
- Preparation
- Ask for What You Need and Set Expectations for Staff
- Participation (another chance to ask questions!)
- Follow-Up/Volunteer



Director Duties & Responsibilities

I District Committees

- “Many Hands Make Light Work”
- More Effective Board Meetings
 - § committee explores, analyzes and recommends (written report)
 - § “built-in” director involvement and understanding
- “Shine Outlet”



Let's Take a Break!



Director Duties & Responsibilities



Our Challenge to You:

- ASK QUESTIONS
- DIVIDE & CONQUER

Scenarios

LET'S GET REAL!!

- | What information do you need?
- | What questions do you ask?

Whew!

- | “Welcome A-Board”
- | Handbook – appendices
- | Program & Budget Book
- | Lending Library

The Human Factor

I Introverts

vs.

Extroverts



The Human Factor

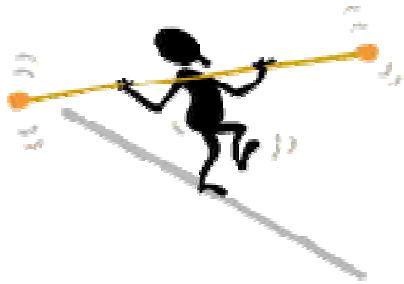
| Details

vs.

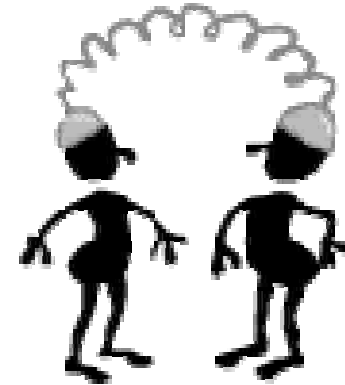
Big Picture



The Human Factor

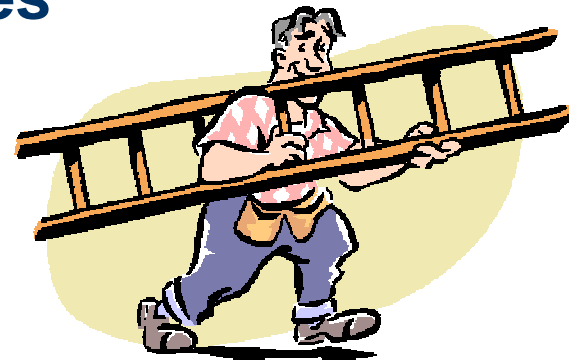


- | Challenge of blending individual skills & comfort factors



Support and Assistance

- | **People, Products and Projects that can help**
 - **Organizations and Individuals**
 - **Products and Tools**
 - **Projects and Opportunities**



PACD -Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts

- serves as the collective voice for PA's conservation districts
- provides advocacy, education and training, and program coordination
- works side-by-side with private organizations, business and industry partners, and many federal and state agencies

State Conservation Commission

- Oversight and support of conservation districts
- Pennsylvania Nutrient Management Act program
- Dirt and Gravel Roads Maintenance Program
- Administrative and staff cost-share funding
- Special Projects
- State Agency Coordination

Dept. of Environmental Protection

- Funding – Base Support and for Delegated Programs
- Field Representative & Regional Office Assistance
- Coordinates Training & Leadership Development
- Envirothon Support
- Funds District Watershed Specialists
- Secretary serves as State Conservation Commission Chair Biennially

PA Department of Agriculture

- Physically Houses the State Conservation Comm.
- Ag Land Preservation Program
- Assistance with Nutrient Management Program
- Fund Allocation for Special Initiatives and to Supplement District Staff Cost-Shares
- Secretary serves as State Conservation Commission Chair Biennially

NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service

- A federal USDA agency offering support at both the state and local levels
- Conservation Technical Assistance & Training
- Participation in National Programs
- Soil Surveys, soils maps
- Assist with the Erosion Control Program
- Envirothon Assistance
- Co-located (some counties)

Penn State Cooperative Extension

- Conservation Education Assistance & Training
- Education Materials
- Resource Statistics
- Co-sponsorship of Local Programs
- Space-sharing (some counties)

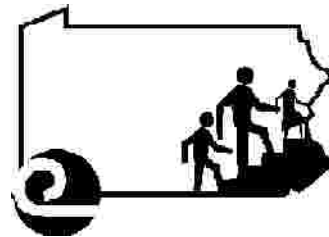
Support and Assistance



- | **Conservation District Field Representative**
 - 8 across Pennsylvania
 - Work with between 6 and 12 districts

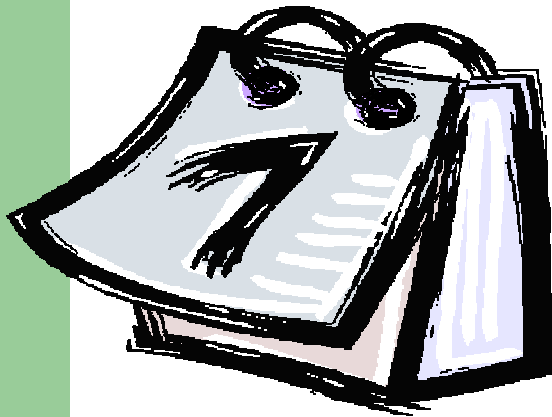
Support and Assistance

“Building for Tomorrow” Leadership Development Program



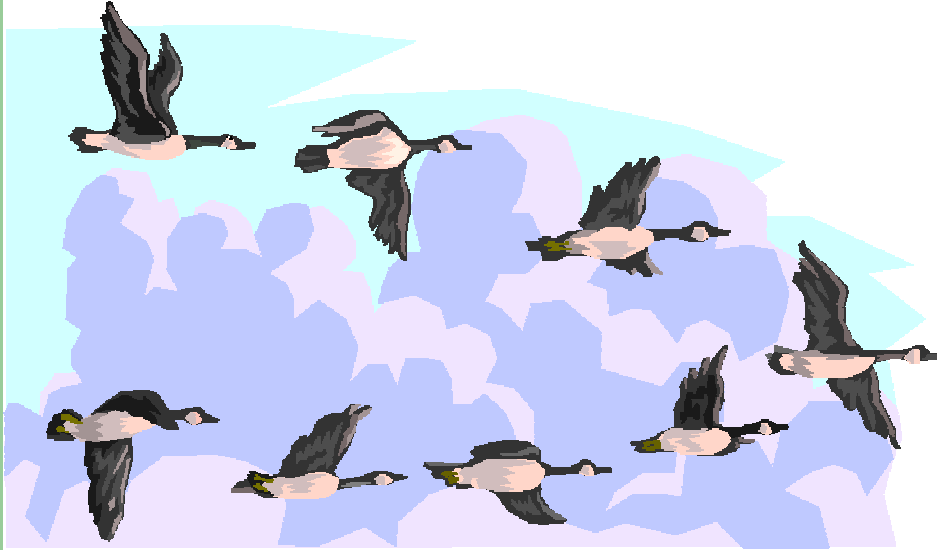
Support and Assistance

| Other Conservation Districts



- Contact information in “Team Sheets”
- Newsletter Mailing Lists
- Websites (via PACD.com)
- Visit – meetings & programs
- Joint Meetings

Leadership Lessons From Geese



- | Cooperation
- | Interdependence
- | Encouragement
- | Teamwork

based on the work of Milton Olson

Leadership Lessons From Geese

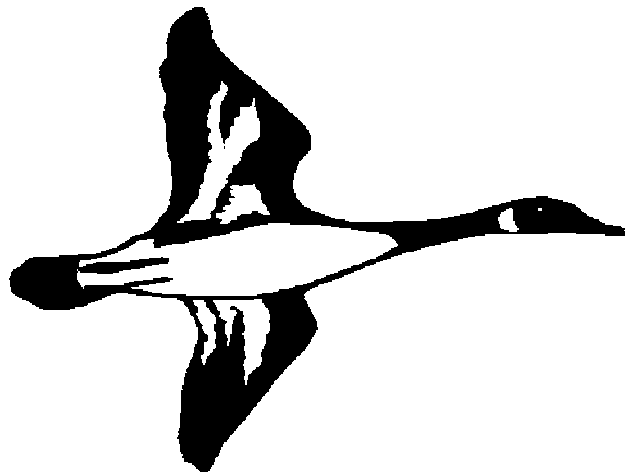
Cooperation



As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an "uplift" for the birds that follow. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

Leadership Lessons From Geese

Interdependence



When the lead bird tires, it rotates back into the formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

Leadership Lessons From Geese

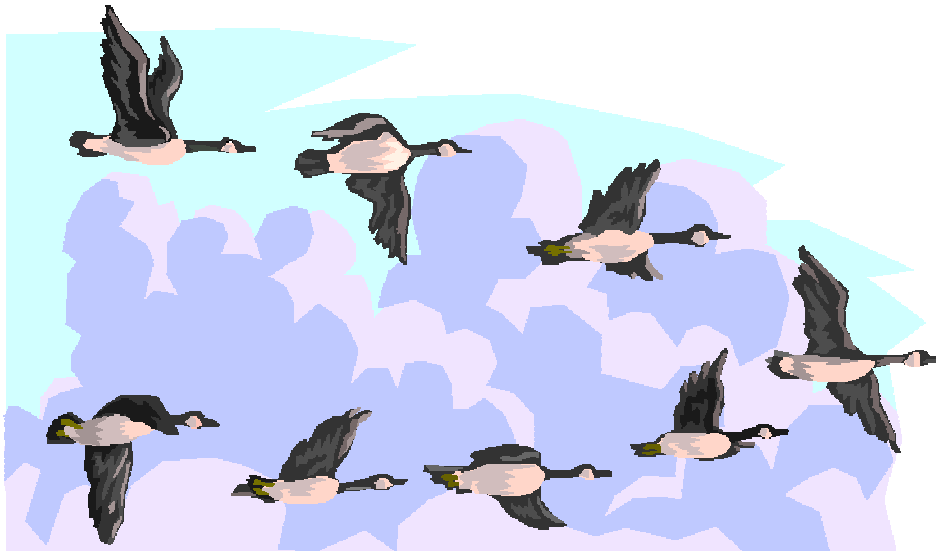


Encouragement

The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Leadership Lessons From Geese

Teamwork



It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership.

As with geese, people rely on each others' skills, capabilities, and unique arrangements of gifts, talents, or resources.

Thank You!



Thank you for accepting a position as a conservation district director.

Thank you for caring about the future of the natural resources in your county and across the state.

Thank you for today's attendance and participation.

Presented By:

The "Building For Tomorrow" Leadership Development Committee of Pennsylvania's Conservation Partnership

For More Information and Answers to Specific Questions



- | **Sit down with your District Manager and/or the Chair of the Board**
- | **Refer to your Director Handbook**
- | **Contact your Field Representative**
- | **Call PACD or the State Conservation Commission**
- | **Call one of us:**

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