



# Michigan's Conservation Districts

Gateways to Natural Resource  
Management

# What is a Conservation District?

What is it supposed to do?

Who are the people involved in getting the job done?

# Legally Speaking

A Conservation District is a legal unit of government established by State law

A Conservation District is NOT a non-profit organization

Michigan Conservation Districts are NOT authorized to levy taxes

# Legally Speaking

Michigan CDs can ask their county commissioners to place a millage on the ballot

In many ways, a CD can act as a business. It can own property, accept gifts, sue and be sued, and raise funds from work performed

CDs do not have the right of eminent domain. They generally cannot mandate conservation practices.

# Legally Speaking

Districts are responsible for educating the public to the benefits of conservation practices. They work to convince resource users to protect the resource, maintain its productivity, and protect or improve its profitability.

# Districts as Gateways: Key Activities

On an ongoing basis, CDs assess the resource needs of the District (Resource Assessment)

They develop long-range and annual plans with goals and objectives designed to meet prioritized needs

They provide linkages between land users and conservation service providers

# Districts as Gateways: Key Activities

They seek funding to implement land user education, public awareness, and the adoption of conservation practices based on the needs identified in their long-range plan

On an ongoing basis, they assess the progress of the District in meeting the goals of their long-range plan

# Roles of the CD Directors

Be aware of the different natural resource needs within the District and actively seek input for solutions

Be an example of conservation management by practicing applicable conservation methods

Promote the ethic of good resource stewardship among all residents



# More Roles of the CD Directors

Be familiar with laws, policies, and program concepts of importance to the District

Keeps informed of the activities of the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)

# More Roles of CD Directors

Manages staff, finances, property of the District  
(through Administrator or Executive Director)

Regularly attend District meetings and functions,  
take an active role in overseeing your  
employees' activities, and generally make  
Conservation District business a priority

# Roles of CD Staff

Responsible for the day-to-day business of the CD: maintaining office records, performing conservation projects, and being the representative of the District and the CD board to the community

Implement policies and activities as directed and approved by the Board

# More Roles of CD Staff

Recommend Board action on District business as appropriate, advise the Board on issues, projects, budgets, and any other matters as necessary or requested

Reports to the Board, CD residents, state agencies on a regular basis about CD activities, meetings and events

# People to Call on for Help

MACD Staff

MACD State Council (Region Chairs)

MDA Field Reps

Local Partners: NRCS, MDNR, MDEQ, FSA,  
other local, state and federal agencies,  
conservation organizations