

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

of a SWCD Director

Congratulations on becoming a SWCD Director!

You have joined over 1,000 other district directors in Texas, and more than 15,000 other leaders of conservation district programs and services across the United States committed to the stewardship of natural resources at the local level.

As a director, you are a public official that will represent and protect the needs and interests of the public through your actions and decisions. You will be looked to for guidance and to add valuable expertise to your district. More importantly, you are being entrusted with the power to administer state and local programs, receive and spend public funds, educate the public on conservation issues, and more. The citizens of your local district, as well as the state of Texas, are counting on you and are pleased to have you come aboard.

ATSWCD: Association of Texas Soil & Water Conservation Districts

SWCD: Soil & Water Conservation District

TSSWCB: Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board

USDA-NRCS: U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

TSSWCB

The TSSWCB is the lead state agency for planning, implementing, and managing coordinated natural resource conservation programs for preventing and abating agricultural and silvicultural nonpoint sources of water pollution. TSSWCB also works to ensure that the state's network of over 2,000 flood control dams are protecting lives and property by providing operation, maintenance, and structural repair grants to local government sponsors.

TSSWCB is governed by seven board members, all of which are actively involved in agriculture or silviculture. Five of the board members are voted in by a delegation of their peers, and two board members are appointed by the Governor of Texas.

Headquartered in Temple, Texas, TSSWCB offers technical assistance to the state's 216 SWCDs. TSSWCB also maintains regional offices in strategic locations throughout the state to help carry out the agency's responsibilities.

VISIT

www.tsswcb.texas.gov

for more information & additional resources

SWCD

Texas SWCDs are political subdivisions of the state of Texas that cover the entire state. There are currently **216 SWCDs**, each responsible for coordinating natural resource conservation activities, such as preventing soil erosion, protecting water quality, and enhancing water conservation. This is accomplished through technical and financial assistance to landowners and agricultural producers within the district. SWCDs are also responsible for operation and maintenance of flood control dams located on private properties.

All of a SWCDs efforts are to support voluntary conservation efforts within their jurisdiction. SWCDs are the local component to a Local-State-Federal Conservation Partnership between the SWCD, the TSSWCB, and USDA-NRCS. This partnership exists across the entire state and is formalized through a memorandum of understanding.

SWCDs receive significant technical and administrative support from employees of the TSSWCB and NRCS as needed at each SWCD board meeting. SWCD directors meet once a month. The meeting location, frequency, and timing is at the discretion of the board. Directors serve for staggered terms of four years with the term of one or two members expiring each year.

TO GET STARTED:

Sit down with the district chairman and district employees to hear what your district is all about. Become familiar with the topography, demographics, and resources that are useful to influence the specific goals of your SWCD.

Schedule one-on-one time with your district employees to find out specifics about the board-employee relationship. Identify which roles you will need to fulfill to ensure the relationship is successful.

Schedule one-on-one time with your TSSWCB field representative. Their job is to assist you through advice and consultation about the state soil and water conservation laws, including the rules and regulations under which SWCDs operate.

Read the Texas Conservation District Law. Pay special attention to the powers of conservation districts.

Ask for copies of your district's annual goals and objectives, annual report, and long-range strategic plan. These documents will give you a picture of what the district is all about and what they are trying to accomplish.

Ask your fellow directors about regional and statewide meetings and opportunities for training on specific aspects of the conservation district.

Your new role as a SWCD Director is an important one. Your roles & responsibilities will include:

Setting and scrutinizing the district's mission and overall strategy, and working to achieve it.
Supporting your district employees and assuring they function efficiently and responsibly. They represent your district to the community on a day-to-day basis.
Managing the district's resources; both funds and property.
Serving as a bridge and buffer between the district and its cooperators and partners; and serving as an advocate for the district to build support in the community.
Be familiar with Texas Conservation District Law. Know the powers, authorities, responsibilities, and limitations placed upon you by the law.
Assure that the actions and policies of the district and its employees remain within the limitations of the Conservation District Law.
Attend regular and special meetings of the district board.
Accept the responsibilities of any office to which you are appointed. Serve on committees and present reports on their accomplishments and activities.
Set local policy to reflect the need of the community you represent.
Act as a district representative in communicating district action, policy, etc., to your local community.
Develop, set, and implement personnel policies for the hiring and supervision of district staff.
Encourage landowners to become cooperators with the district.
Attend state, national, and other conservation meetings on behalf of the district to stay current with conservation issues and programs. Always remember to represent the policies of your district as a whole.
Pursue funding for district programs and initiatives.
Develop, in cooperation with other board members, an annual district budget to ensure district fiscal responsibility.
Develop a working relationship with county government, legislators, agency officials, local municipal and county officials in organizations that do or could cooperate with your district.
Stay informed on conservation issues in your county and be familiar with important laws, policies, and programs.
Be familiar with district programs and activities. Be positive, innovative, and action-oriented