



AGENCY WORKFORCE PLAN 2019-2023

PROTECTING AND
ENHANCING NATURAL
RESOURCES FOR
TOMORROW



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Agency Overview

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) was created by the Texas Legislature in 1939. The TSSWCB is charged with overall responsibility for administering and coordinating the state's soil and water conservation program with the state's soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs). Title 7, Chapters 201 and 203 of the Agriculture Code of Texas contains the provisions of law pertaining to soil and water conservation. The TSSWCB is named as the agency responsible for implementing constitutional provisions and state laws relating to conservation and protection of soil resources. Within this framework of law, Section 201.026 gives the TSSWCB responsibility for planning, implementing and managing programs and practices for abating agricultural and silvicultural nonpoint source pollution. It is through this, that water quality management planning is incorporated into conservation planning methodologies. Chapter 203 creates the Water Supply Enhancement Program, designates the TSSWCB as the implementing agency, establishes a cost-share program for water supply enhancement and provides for delegation of certain powers and duties to SWCDs.

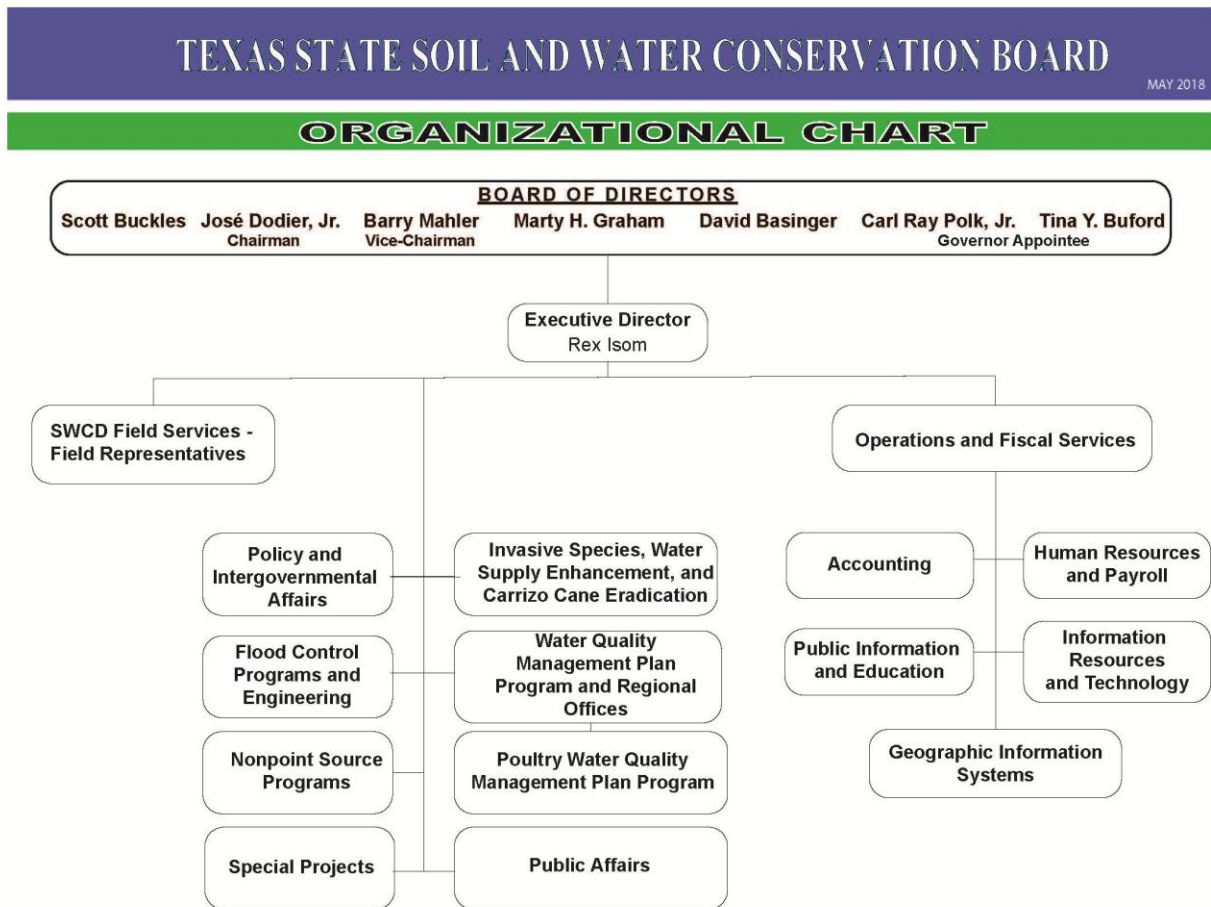
Passage of the Texas Soil Conservation Law makes it possible for local landowners to organize and manage their own SWCDs. Each local SWCD develops a Long-Range Program and Plan of Work and an Annual Plan of Operations that guide the SWCD in solving its conservation problems. These SWCD programs and plans of work are updated regularly to recognize and evaluate changes in agriculture, economy and natural resources. Farmers and ranchers desiring to use a conservation program on their land receive assistance from their local SWCD. Currently, there are 216 local SWCDs that cover the entire state.

Since their creation SWCDs have effectively administered conservation programs based on the voluntary application of conservation practices. The voluntary approach, incorporating the basic philosophy prevalent throughout the farming and ranching industry, has proven successful. That philosophy recognizes private land as property of the owner and management a responsibility of ownership. Most Texas landowners have great respect for natural resources including water quality. With appropriate education, these landowners readily recognize the desirability of implementing suitable management practices. These management practices are what constitute conservation plans and water quality management plans.

The current network of 216 SWCDs into which Texas is organized is the logical vehicle to provide the necessary local leadership and the appropriate information as to what practices are best for individual farming or ranching operations. The TSSWCB is responsible for coordinating the programs of SWCDs through advice and consultation.

The agency structure consists of seven State Board members (five Board members are elected by SWCDs, two Board members are Governor appointed) and staff. The staff is organized with the Executive Director, SWCD Field Services (administered by Field Representatives) and several program areas: Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs, Invasive Species, Water Supply Enhancement and Carrizo Cane Eradication (administered out of San Angelo), Flood Control, Water Quality Management Plan Program, including Poultry Water Quality Management Plan Program (administered out of Regional Offices), Nonpoint Source Programs, and Public Affairs. Operations and Fiscal Services (includes: Accounting,

Human Resources and Payroll, Public Information and Education, Information Resources and Technology and Geographic Information Systems). See Organization Chart below (Figure 1).



The TSSWCB is currently staffed by 69 (68 FTEs) employees and has a current operating budget of approximately \$75 million for the biennium. Twenty-six (25 FTEs) employees are centrally located in Temple, Texas in close proximity to the state headquarters of the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resource Conservation Service(USDA-NRCS), a federal agency that is a partner in the statewide conservation program. The other 43 employees are located throughout the state. Seven regional water quality offices have a total staff of 26 employees. Ten field staff employees serve their assigned SWCDs from a designated headquarters location. One Director administers the Invasive Species, Water Supply Enhancement, and Carrizo Cane Eradication Programs, out of the San Angelo field office with a satellite office in Johnson City. One program office specializes in poultry water quality management plans along with two additional satellite offices. Two field positions coordinate Flood Control activities.

Overview of Operations

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board's workforce plan describes each major program of the agency and its associated workforce planning.

Board Members

The TSSWCB board of directors consists of five elected members and two gubernatorial appointees who must be actively engaged in farming or ranching. The five TSSWCB members are chosen in a convention type election by SWCD directors in the State District in which the TSSWCB member represents.

Executive Director

Directs the administrative affairs of the TSSWCB staff including the execution of rules, guidelines, decisions, and directives of the TSSWCB to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the agency. Serves as lead liaison between TSSWCB governing board of directors, state and federal governmental entities and agricultural interest groups.

Soil and Water Conservation District Field Services

Provides assistance to SWCDs and their employees through TSSWCB field representatives that meet regularly with the SWCDs to provide guidance, training and consultation. Field representatives also coordinates the activities of SWCDs and provides a direct link between the TSSWCB and SWCDs. Field Representatives explain TSSWCB policies, programs, rules, and regulations to SWCDs; assist SWCDs in developing and implementing their local conservation programs; provide guidance on proper expenditure of funds, bookkeeping procedures, and audits; train SWCD employees in proper accounting and fiscal reporting procedures; provide guidance to SWCDs on employment issues, open meetings, and open records; and assist SWCDs in organizing and conducting conservation education activities.

Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs

Serves as a liaison between TSSWCB Executive Director, state and federal governmental entities, and other agricultural interest groups. Assists with strategic planning, agency reports, constituent inquiries, administrative rules, coordinates expert testimony as needed, and monitors the legislative process. Represents TSSWCB on various task forces, planning groups, and coordination committees.

Invasive Species

Because invasive species are likely to cause economic harm, environmental harm, or harm to human health, the Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee (TISCC) was established by the 81st Texas Legislature (SB 691), and is administratively attached to the TSSWCB.

The TISCC serves as a catalyst for cooperation between state agencies in the area of invasive species control, facilitating governmental efforts to prevent and manage the spread of invasive species and to mitigate the effects invasive species have on the economy, the environment, and people's health.

The member agencies of the TISCC are the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), the TSSWCB, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the TFS, and the TWDB.

The TISCC provides a forum for developing interagency strategies and policies for invasive species control. Its member agencies cooperate through an orderly exchange of information, jointly held meetings, and the appointment of sub-committees and working groups in order to facilitate development of effective and timely state responses to invasive species and to make recommendations to the leadership of state agencies regarding research, technology transfer, and management actions related to invasive species control.

The TSSWCB is also anticipating an increase in the state's ability to control invasive species through the work of the Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee. Since the TISCC began its work, the TSSWCB and other agencies feel that improvements in the state's efforts to mitigate the effects of invasive species will occur due to: a greater emphasis being placed on them, the potential for increased federal funding, and increased coordination between state agencies.

Many of TSSWCB's programs support the State's invasive species management goals and contribute to achieving the goals and objectives of the TISCC.

Water Supply Enhancement

Carries out duties and responsibilities associated with administering the WSEP; manages a financial incentive cost-share program supporting the removal of water-depleting brush; coordinates the work of SWCDs that implement specific water supply enhancement projects; collaborates with various state and federal entities to conduct brush control feasibility studies to identify priority watersheds; and develops resource management plans for landowners addressing brush control and other natural resource issues.

Carrizo Cane Eradication

In order to help meet the Governor's border security priorities, staff carries out the enacted legislation of the 84th Texas Legislature, which directed the TSSWCB to develop and implement a program to eradicate Carrizo cane along the Rio Grande. The goal of the program is to improve border security and restore function of the Rio Grande through invasive species control.

The TSSWCB must develop a program that establishes long-term management of invasive carrizo cane at a landscape scale along the entire Rio Grande, an international border with great ecological and cultural significance. Comprehensively addressing the impacts of arundo on border security are paramount to the program, while also accruing benefits to the ecosystem health of the Rio Grande and water user groups in south Texas.

Flood Control Programs

The 81st Legislature appropriated funding to the TSSWCB to administer grant programs to SWCDs for conducting operation, maintenance, repair and rehabilitation activities on the State's approximately 2,000 flood control dams. Local SWCDs, county governments, municipalities, water control and improvement districts, and other special districts are all party to sponsorship agreements across the state

whereby they have agreed to perform needed maintenance and repairs on federally designed and constructed flood control dams on private property. The TSSWCB has developed two separate grant programs for delivering these funds to local dam sponsors. The Flood Control Operation and Maintenance Grant Program focuses on routine up-keep activities, while the Flood Control Structural Repair Grant Program focuses on major repair activities related to dam function. Both programs became effective during Fiscal Year 2010.

The TSSWCB provides grants to sponsors of flood control dams for operation, maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation. The Flood Control Program administers an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Grant Program and a Structural Repair Grant Program, both of which are administered according to rules adopted by the TSSWCB in 31TAC529. The rules for these programs specify which flood control dams are eligible for funding, the entities that are eligible to apply and receive funding, and the conditions under which a grant must be administered, matched, and reported.

Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) Program

Assists agricultural and silvicultural producers in meeting the state's water quality goals and standards through a voluntary, incentive-based program. There are special requirements regarding Poultry WQMPs. Staff carry out duties and responsibilities associated with administering the WQMP Program; provide technical assistance to SWCDs and cooperators in developing and implementing WQMPs on agricultural or silvicultural operations; certify WQMPs; conduct engineering work associated with implementing WQMPs; manage day-to-day operation of the agency's Poultry WQMP Program; address the issue of nuisance odors created by poultry farms and land application of poultry litter; investigate water quality complaints involving agricultural and/or silvicultural NPS pollution; and manage a financial incentive program supporting WQMP implementation.

Nonpoint Source Programs

Constitutes the agency's technical program support team funded under the strategy of implementing a Statewide Management Plan for controlling NPS Pollution. The team's responsibilities include overall management of the agricultural and silvicultural aspects of the Texas Nonpoint Source Management Program. In carrying out this program, the team administers the Federal Clean Water Act, Section 319(h) NPS Grant Program, an Environmental Data Quality Management Program, a Watershed Protection Plan Program, a Total Maximum Daily Load Program, and the Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program, as well as the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan Program for the dairies in the North Bosque and Leon River Watersheds. Members of the team may represent the agency on the Water Conservation Implementation Task Force, Water Conservation Advisory Council, the Coastal Coordination Advisory Committee and the Texas Drought Preparedness Council. The team may also provide support to other agency staff on natural resource matters to the agency's field staff and regional office personnel in the areas of water quality, agronomy, soil science, and environmental compliance coordination with state and federal agencies.

Public Affairs and Public Information and Education

Responsibilities include: plans and coordinates the Annual State Meeting of SWCD Directors; manages the Texas Conservation Awards Program including the public speaking, poster, and essay contests; provides administrative services and programmatic support for the Wildlife Alliance for Youth; produces the agency's Quarterly Program Update; distributes agency news releases and Conservation News updates; produces content for the agency's social media platforms; supports conservation education for teachers through continuing education workshops; provides conservation education demonstration models on nonpoint source water pollution for schools; plans and coordinates SWCD Program Development Workshops; and represents the agency at numerous task forces, planning groups, coordination committees, trade shows and conferences across the state.

Special Projects

Responsibilities include: coordinates open records requests; coordinates the complaint resolution process; maintains an open and relevant relationship between SWCDs, NACD, NASCA and ATSWCD; advises and plans the Annual State Meeting of SWCD Directors; represents the TSSWCB on various interagency task forces, planning groups, and coordination committees.

Operations and Fiscal Services

Operating and Fiscal Officer

Responsibilities include: development and oversight of TSSWCB's overall budget, revenue and expenditures, strategic planning, performance measures, cost recovery efforts, and proper expenditure of state appropriations and federal grants in order to ensure compliance with the agency's fiduciary responsibility. Serves as lead for internal TSSWCB operations, programs, and policies.

Accounting

Responsibilities include: managing TSSWCB's general ledger and ensuring the proper processing of cash, communicating and implementing state and federal cash management practices, monitoring and processing expenditures in accordance with state and federal statutes and regulations, and information technology. Budget and Accounting also performs contract management; and manages the Conservation Implementation Assistance Grant Program, the Conservation Assistance Matching Funds Grant Program, Conservation Activity Program, and the SWCD Director Mileage and Per Diem Reimbursement Program. The accounting program executes all purchasing efforts for the agency in accordance with state and federal requirements, the HUB program and vendor recruitment requirements.

Human Resources and Payroll

Responsibilities include: overseeing all personnel matters including benefits administration, state classification plan, payroll, leave accounting, employment and recruitment, managerial, developmental and safety training. Human Resources also ensure that TSSWCB personnel practices are in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. Human Resources serve to consult and advise all staff regarding human resource matters.

Information Resources and Technology

With respect to information technology (IT), the program installs and maintains network services including: local area networks; wide area network; internet services; local application support; infrastructure security; implements and maintains web-based technology; and trains staff on the use of applications and services. IT also configures, secures and maintains both wired and wireless local area network environments and troubleshoots computing hardware and software problems for local and remote staff in all agency departments. The program audits and tracks the use of hardware and software deployments; members of the staff serve as the agency Information Technology Coordinator, Information Resource Manager, and Information Security Officer, working with the Department of Information Resources to ensure agency compliance with state IT law; develops, maintains, and enforces policies regarding security, the acceptable use of IT infrastructure, and disaster recovery and works with agency purchaser on the procurement of IT software and hardware.

Workforce Profile

Guiding Principles

- Integrity - Upholding the highest moral and ethical standards in all we do
- Service - Striving to exceed expectations and build confidence and trust of those we serve
- Professionalism – Action driven and friendly. Treating all whom we come into contact with dignity and respect

Critical Workforce Skills

Although the TSSWCB has qualified employees, there are several critical skills that are important to the agency's ability to operate. Without these skills, the TSSWCB could not provide basic services. These skills are listed below:

- High ethical and moral values
- Strong work ethic
- Professionalism
- Developing and promoting voluntary approaches
- Working with locally elected SWCD directors
- Coordinating activities of SWCDs
- Providing a liaison with SWCDs
- Knowledge of legislative processes
- Knowledge of applicable state and federal laws
- Interpreting legal statutes
- Strategic planning
- Providing liaison with other local, state, and federal agencies and interest groups
- Performance management
- Negotiation and facilitation
- Stakeholder group facilitation
- Invasive species management
- Endangered species management
- Carrizo Cane management
- Conservation Planning
- Developing Water Quality Management Plans
- Providing technical assistance
- Agronomic expertise
- Expertise in soil science
- Engineering expertise
- Integrated watershed protection planning
- Geo-spatial data manipulation
- Research and data analysis
- Interpretation of hydrologic data, research and computer modeling studies
- Environmental data quality management
- Water quality pollutant load reduction characterization
- Grant management
- Project/Contract management
- Technology advances in agricultural best management practices
- Database development and maintenance
- Data and information management
- Web application development and delivery
- Strategic Human Resources
- Customer service
- Educating clientele

Workforce Demographics

Information from the State Auditor's Office (SAO) Human Resources Analysis System shows fiscal year end 2017 FTE count was 67. Of that total, with regard to headcount, 42 employees were male and 26 were female. The overall percentages are shown in Figure 2. 65% of TSSWCB's employees are age 40 or older as shown in Figure 3 below. As shown in Figure 4; 42% of employees have less than 10 years of service. These employees have the potential for continued service with the agency. 58% of employees have 10+ years of service and have the ability to serve as mentors to the other staff. The following charts profile TSSWCB's workforce for fiscal year 2017.

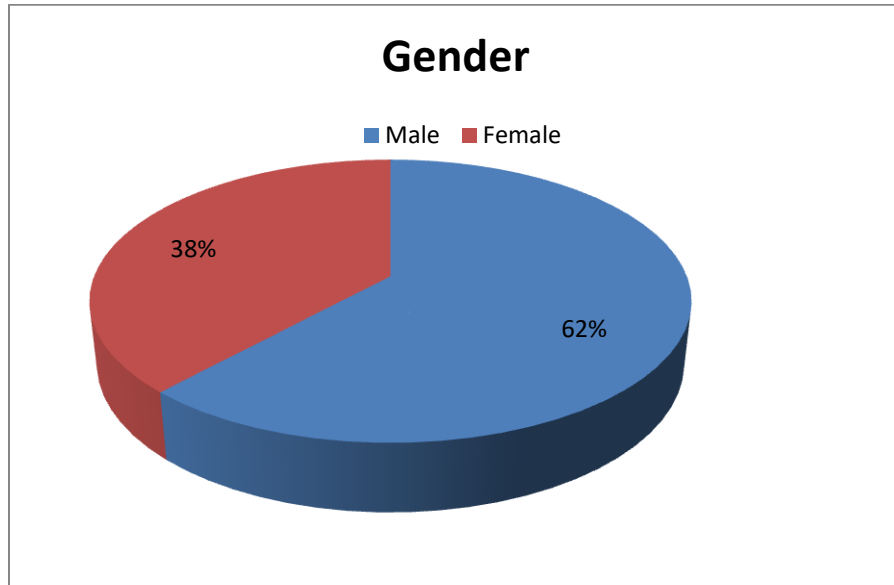


Figure 2. Percentages of male and female population employed at the TSSWCB.
Chart includes: Classified Regular Full-Time & Classified Regular Part- Time Employees.

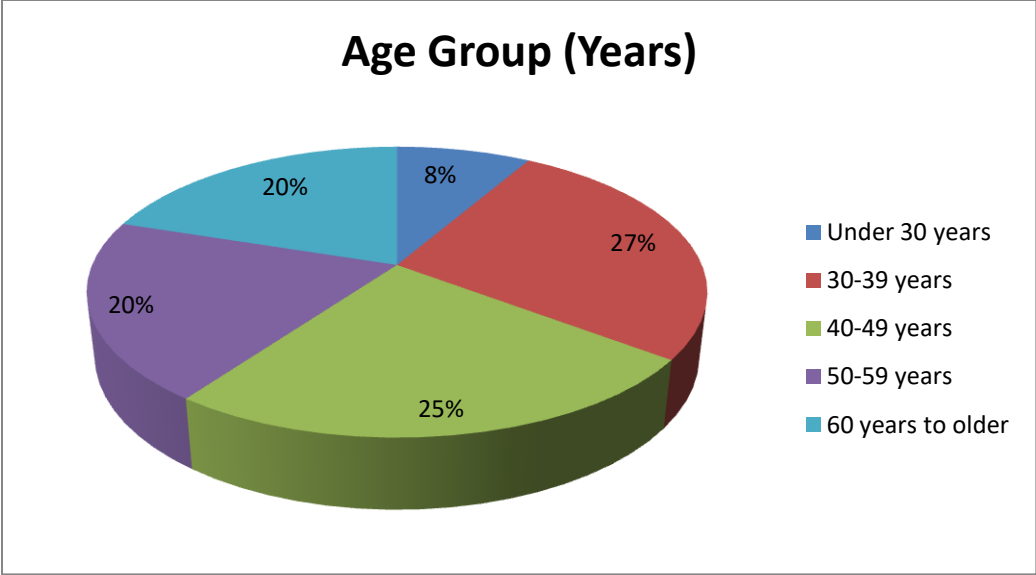


Figure 3. Employees' age employed at the TSSWCB.
 Chart includes: Classified Regular Full-Time & Classified Regular Part-Time Employees.

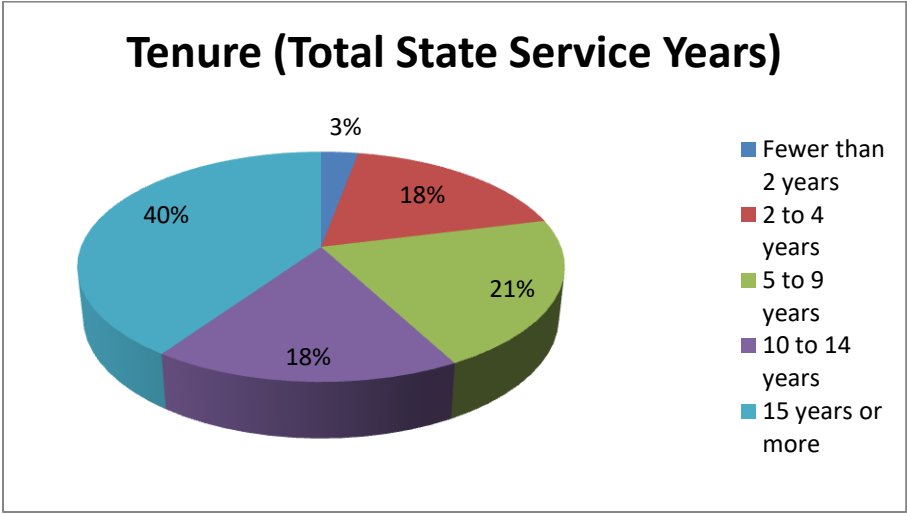


Figure 4. Total years of service for each employee.
 Chart includes: Classified Regular Full-Time & Classified Regular Part-Time Employees.

Employee Turnover

Turnover is an important issue in any agency, and TSSWCB is no exception. Figure 5 compares the TSSWCB turnover to that of the State over the last five fiscal years. For the last five fiscal years, TSSWCB's employee turnover rate has remained way below the statewide average for turnover.

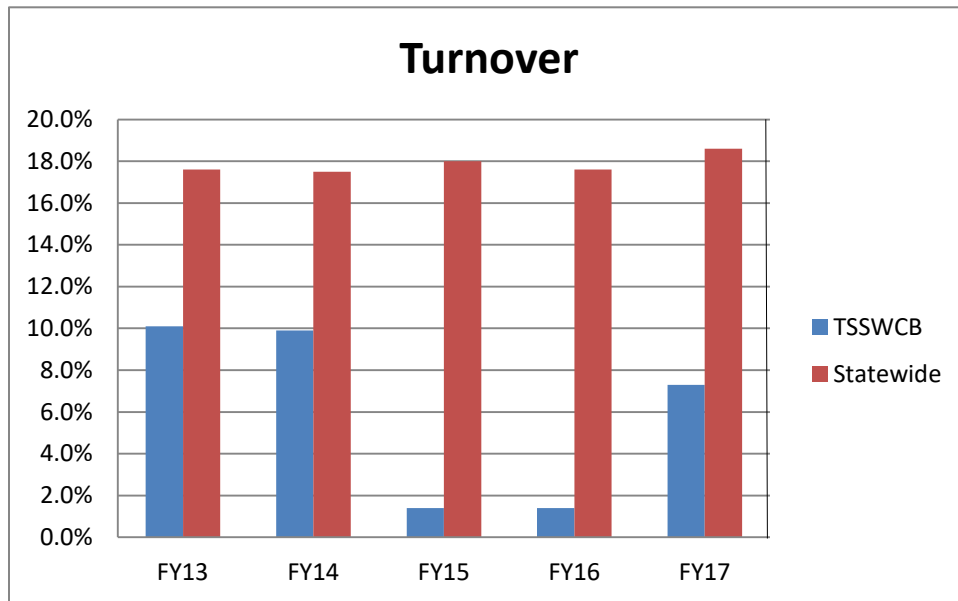


Figure 5. *Employee Turnover Rate excluding interagency transfers at TSSWCB as compared to Statewide

*TSSWCB FY17 Turnover rate including interagency transfers was 8.7%, resulted from 1 interagency transfer.

Attrition

TSSWCB has not experienced forced attrition in the last 16 fiscal years.

Retirement Eligibility

Since 40% of TSSWCB’s employees are 50 years of age or older, retirement accounts for a considerable part of employees leaving the agency. Because 25% of the agency’s employees are between the ages of 40 and 49, in the next few years, retirement will become increasingly significant. Currently the agency could experience a potential loss of at least 9 employees over the next several years. These employees have helped to further establish and improve the agency, and it is important to ensure that this knowledge and organizational experience is not lost.

Future Workforce Profile

The ultimate goal is to ensure continuity of task performance in each area and program at TSSWCB. Employees approaching retirement eligibility should work with management to be consistent with the succession plan for their program area.

TSSWCB workforce changes are anticipated to be driven by goals, strategies, performance measures, technology, work, workloads, work processes, program related federal grants, and federal contract programs.

The knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform specific functions and tasks within the agency requires an educated staff that has extensive information technology, project management, managerial and professional training. Written and verbal proficiency is essential in all agency positions. Individual skill development will also need to be accommodated to recruit, train, retain, and motivate workers.

Projected future workforce knowledge needed includes the following:

- Developing and promoting voluntary approaches
- Working with locally elected SWCD directors
- Coordinating activities of SWCDs
- Providing a liaison with SWCDs
- Knowledge of legislative processes
- Knowledge of applicable state and federal laws
- Interpreting legal statutes
- Strategic planning
- Providing liaison with other local, state, and federal agencies and interest groups
- Performance management
- Negotiation and facilitation
- Stakeholder group facilitation
- Invasive species management
- Endangered species management
- Carrizo Cane management
- Conservation Planning
- Developing Water Quality Management Plans
- Providing technical assistance
- Agronomic expertise
- Expertise in soil science
- Engineering expertise
- Integrated watershed protection planning
- Geo-spatial data manipulation
- Research and data analysis
- Interpretation of hydrologic data, research and computer modeling studies
- Environmental data quality management
- Water quality pollutant load reduction characterization
- Grant management
- Project/Contract management
- Technology advances in agricultural best management practices
- Database development and maintenance
- Data and information management
- Web application development and delivery
- Strategic Human Resources
- Customer service
- Educating clientele

TSSWCB recognizes the need to maintain and improve current skill levels and anticipates projected future workforce skills needed includes the following:

- Technical planning
- Decision making
- Communication
- Engineering services
- Customer service
- Public service
- Contract management
- Technical writing

The strategic vision anticipates annual technological advances requiring knowledge and skill improvement. TSSWCB anticipates information will be processed faster and more accurately allowing for smooth transitions during staff changes. TSSWCB foresees more electronic document exchange, more accountability and more reporting requirements.

TSSWCB also projects an increase in involvement addressing agriculture, silvicultural, and nonpoint source pollution concerns, water supply enhancement and brush control activities, flood control, invasive species management and control, endangered/threatened species management, and contracting to provide technical services for federal agriculture programs.

It is also recognized that additional future changes to strategies and goals are contingent on legislative activities, new initiatives defined by the TSSWCB and changes in state and federal laws. Economic trends in the marketplace would dictate our ability to retain and recruit employees with competitive job skills.

Changes We Anticipate in Our Workforce

- Expansion of Rio Grande Carrizo cane control and border security activities
- Addressing flood control infrastructures
- Addressing mandated deadlines/requirements for Poultry operations
- Emerging technology
- Increased emphasis on endangered/threatened species
- Implementation of Centralized Accounting Payroll and Personnel System (CAPPS)

Expected Workforce Changes

- More direct relation with producers
- Increased use of technology to revise, increase efficiencies, streamline work processes enabling better communication between mobile staff members and an increasing mobile public
- Employees cross-trained in functional areas
- Attrition due to possible staff retirements

Anticipated Increase/Decrease in Number of Employees Needed to Do the Work

- Expect current staff to remain relatively static
- Increased demands to be addressed by reallocation of workload within the agency
- While there are no known retirements, more staff are reaching retirement eligibility

Gap Analysis

The projected retirement or loss of employees in technical and professional areas has the potential to create a shortage of expertise in various areas. Mentoring, coaching, cross training and succession planning along with improved on-the-job training has taken on greater importance. The increased reliance on information technology requires lifetime learning for all employees.

Strategy Development

TSSWCB is utilizing succession planning by identifying key positions and focusing on encouraging individual advancement of employees who demonstrate talent through high performance, potential, willingness to take on additional tasks, training and education of various programs. The goal is to preserve and manage knowledge essential to the agency.

Our strategies to address gaps in our workforce agency-wide include: (dependent upon budget constraints) adequate salary; merit increases; monetary and non-monetary rewards for performance; flex time; career, leadership and professional development; cross training, contract workers; and increased participation in agency programs. When possible, a mentoring process whereby replacement employees are hired prior to the current employee retiring, contingent upon FTE issues is utilized as needed. A continual review of the agency's Workforce Plan is conducted as business goals change.