



10-Minute Supervisor Trainings

Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission

JUNE 2012

ETHICS

As Conservation District Supervisors roles, responsibilities and commitments have changed in dramatic fashion over the last decade. You may have never had as much interest in programs and probably never been accountable for as much money as your district is today. Board Supervisors as elected officials are obligated by law, ethics and public trust, and are thereby RESPONSIBLE for ensuring taxpayer funds are used legally, wisely and for the purpose of fulfilling their counties conservation plans.

Conservation district boards must be accountable to themselves and each other on matters of conduct. Proper ethics begin with each board member.

The principles contained in the Ethics Statements below provide valuable guidance in reaching decisions which are governed, ultimately, by the individual conscience of the public official and his or her commitment to the public good.

- Properly administer the affairs of the district according to state law, Soil and Water Conservation Commission guidance and by keeping in mind the taxpayers of your community.
- Listening and respecting the opinions of your fellow board members.
- Respect and support the decisions of the board.
- Promote decisions that benefit the public interest.
- Keep safe all funds and investments of the district.
- Maintain a positive public image to pass constant public scrutiny.
- Be well informed on issues affecting the district and community.
- Treat employees fairly and equitably.
- Call attention to any issues that will have an adverse effect on the district.
- Declare any conflict of interest between yourself and the board and avoid voting on such issues.



- Represent all constituents of the district.
 - Board members should not be critical of each other in or outside of the board meeting.
 - The district or any part of the organization (state or federal) should not be used for personal advantage.
 - Board members should not improperly influence or attempt to influence other officials to act for their own benefit.
 - Board members should not accept anything of value from any source which offered to influence their actions as a public official.
 - Board member should not discuss the confidential proceedings of the board outside of a board meeting.
 - Board member should not promise to vote one way or the other before hearing all sides of an issue.
 - When hiring employees, it is important to be aware of non-discrimination and harassment laws. Also be aware of issues such as nepotism.
 - District supervisors also need to be non-discriminatory in their program delivery.
 - As always, district supervisors should serve as an example to people in their community through wise use and management of our natural resources in their farming practices or other endeavors.
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DISCUSSION

1. What issues have you witnessed that have made you question ethics of a group?
2. What are some ways that your board can "test" decisions to make sure that it does not put the district in a bad light?
3. What are some positive steps your board has taken to be more transparent to the public?

For more information on ethics, please visit:

<http://ethics.ky.gov/Pages/boardsCommissionsGuidelines.aspx>