

DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

Listed here is a synopsis of most, if not all, of the items a district will be involved with each year.

Annual report

The annual report is a published report of the district's yearly activities. The annual report can be timed to coincide with the end of the calendar year or the fiscal year. The best advice in preparing for the annual report is to collect photos and documentation throughout the course of the year. Record keeping is critical to having an accurate, comprehensive annual report to present to the public. In preparing to release this information to the public, plan your draft to be complete at the monthly board meeting prior to your scheduled publication date. This will give everyone the opportunity to make any needed changes prior to publishing.

Annual plan

This document should be derived directly from the long-range plan. It should be a 1/5th-scale model of your long-range plan with additional goals based on current needs. Specific short-term goals, which might not be included in the long-range plan, such as the completion of a grant proposal and its subsequent implementation or a pilot or trial project are examples of items that may be included in an annual plan but not the long range plan. Input from all the partners and from cooperating agencies and groups is critical to having a usable document that will produce results.

Audit

Each district is required to conduct an annual financial audit. A true audit will be done by a CPA and will involve some expense on the part of the district. In addition, there will be the time involved preparing the district's financial records for the CPA. The alternative to a true audit is to have the board conduct its own financial check. The requirements for this form of audit are for two board members other than the treasurer to perform a complete review of the status of the finances of the district, including a close examination of the checking and savings account records. The DNR-LWCD should be notified upon completion of the audit. DNR-LWCD does not receive the actual results of an audit, only the notification that one has been done for the current fiscal year.

Awards

There are many award categories. Some districts have their own awards in combination with the SCACD awards. For a complete listing of the various awards, check with your Conservation Specialist or your District Employee. Due dates vary by contest and are typically sent with the notification forms. Rules likewise vary as to the content and the amount of supplemental documentation allowed. Districts have the option of deciding to enter a contest. For example, we strive for 100% participation in the Goodyear contest, but even that contest is optional. The District Board will make the decision as to which awards competitions to enter. Record-keeping throughout the year will enhance your ability to put together a good awards entry.

Budget request

Both state and county governments require the submission of requests for appropriations. The timing will vary based on the planning schedule of the governmental unit, but will generally take place in January or February in anticipation of a July budget approval. It is extremely important that all the partners consider the district's needs for funding prior to the actual request. Be realistic with your requests, but don't be shy! It is a good idea, especially at the county level to be prepared to present your request in person. If your district provides benefits for the county, be sure to emphasize that in the proposal or request. Also, it is advantageous to "toot your own horn." Let county council know what you are doing for the citizens of the county.

Election

Your responsibilities include insuring that all potential candidates know the rules and regulations regarding election to either a district commissioner or a watershed director position. It is also your responsibility to attend to petitions and filing fees, deadlines, required numbers of petition signatures and the required documentation such as ethics forms or campaign disclosure forms. You should conduct a follow-up inquiry with the local election commission to determine if the potential candidate has met the requirements for being included on the printed ballot. Following the election, a second inquiry should be done to determine the successful candidate(s). The results should be forwarded to DNR-LWCD.

Correspondence

Correspondence generally consists of two types: agency and district. *Agency* correspondence will usually be related to projects that you are directly involved with, such as teacher workshops, clinics or seminars. *District* correspondence could be anything from something as simple as transmitting news releases about the local education contests to the local papers to something as complex as writing to the Congressional delegation regarding the Farm Bill. You might be expected to draft letters for your board. Sometimes you will only need to edit and approve correspondence written on your behalf by District Employees. Correspondence may involve considerable time between preparation and actual mailing and sometimes will have a deadline so short as to require personal delivery.

Equipment

Most districts own equipment for public use. It can range from the PVE no-till type drills to mulch-laying equipment. Periodic inspection, maintenance, record keeping, and advertisement may be part of your responsibilities. Tasks will vary greatly from district to district.

Ethics forms

Your responsibilities concerning ethics forms will include being familiar with the deadline for submission, and working with the district employee to insure that the copies are submitted and filed. District employee participation varies greatly from district to district. The District Employee's manual contains more information regarding the preparation of these forms. The deadline for submission is April 15th of each year. Failure to comply can result in a fine for the commissioner affected.

Financial reports

Financial reports are generally considered to be a function of the district employee. However, in your own interest, you should be familiar with the accounting system used in the district and in what reports are needed, including the due dates of each. A major part of your responsibility may lie in helping to train a new district employee in the financial record keeping system.

Oath of office

Each elected official must receive the Oath of Office prior to assuming the role as an official or voting member of the District Board. A Notary Public must legally give the Oath. Documentation of who is to take the oath will generally be sent to you from the state office with copies for signatures. Maintain the appropriate copies in the district files and send a copy to DNR-LWCD. A news release with an accompanying photo is also needed. (Save an extra photo for your annual report.)

Travel voucher

To be reimbursed for expenses incurred on official district business, you must submit a travel voucher to DNR-LWCD. The district employee is generally the person that prepares the voucher. You should insure that the preparer receives your mileage and receipts for lodging or other expenditures. Your reimbursement from the DNR is contingent on certain stipulations. Your conservation specialist can provide you with this information. You should follow up to insure that vouchers are submitted in a timely manner, especially at the end of the fiscal year (June 30). Before the voucher is sent to Columbia, your Conservation Specialist must review the travel vouchers for accuracy.

