

# CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OVERVIEW



***“Declaration of policy. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the legislature to provide for the conservation of soil and soil resources of this state, for the control and prevention of soil erosion, for the prevention of floodwater and sediment damages, and for furthering the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water and thereby to preserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, preserve wildlife, protect the tax base, protect public lands, and protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of this state.”***  
§76-15-102, M. C. A.

Conservation districts (CDs) are political subdivisions of state government, with the statutory powers and responsibilities to carry out a program of voluntary natural resource conservation and encourage wise natural resource management. As locally elected (or appointed) public officials, district supervisors are responsible for the operation and management of the conservation district. District supervisors develop operational plans and policies implemented by the district employees they hire and manage.

An effective CD Board of Supervisors uses all its available resources to carry out programs and operations of the district. Such resources include district employees, government agencies, private groups, individuals, industry, and other CDs for example.

An elected or appointed supervisor must reside in the boundaries of the conservation district they serve. Districts with residency ordinances have further constraints on where supervisors must reside, 76-15-301, MCA.

## **Conservation District (CD) Supervisors’ Individual Responsibilities**

As an individual supervisor you have specific personal duties that include the following:

- Attend meetings. Make time for them, engage, and come prepared.
- Be informed of local natural resource issues that impact conservation districts and landowners. Represent landowners in your area regarding those issues.
- Be a positive ambassador for conservation in the community.
- Understand that your board authority is only in quorum.
- Be open-minded and respectful.
- Disclose any conflicts of interest annually. Recuse self from hearing, discussing, or deciding anything related to that issue.
- Keep confidential matters private.
- Sign a code of conduct.
- Volunteer and support staff appropriately.
- Participate on committees.



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## Conservation District Board of Supervisors Responsibilities

The CD board is responsible for ensuring that the district operates legally, effectively, and efficiently. The board's roles and responsibilities to provide leadership and to create structures and systems for consistency, accountability, and legal compliance for sound governance and fiscal accountability include:

- Legal obligations are met. See DNRC's Accountability Assessment and Governance Calendar.
- A realistic and compelling strategic plan is in place to guide operations and programming.
- An annual operational work plan is developed and monitored regularly.
- Strategic and annual work plans are reviewed and adjusted regularly.
- Systems are in place for ongoing financial oversight and checks and balances.
- District staff have consistent and goal-based oversight and employee management.
- The Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act (310) and CD Water Reservations laws are implemented.

## Urban Supervisors

CD urban supervisors are members of a CD board. If incorporated municipalities are completely within district boundaries, the board consists of five elected supervisors and two appointed supervisors. They are appointed to represent the interests of incorporated municipalities within the district's boundaries.

While most conservation district supervisors are elected by local voters, urban supervisors provide a critical link between city governments and the broader conservation efforts of the district.

## Conservation District Associate Supervisor Responsibilities

Associate Supervisors are non-voting supervisors, appointed by the Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Associates serve as advisors to the board, providing them with experience and expertise or a general interest in issues related to natural resource conservation. Associates can serve on committees and may be a supervisor in waiting or a supervisor emeritus.

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