

CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISOR RECRUITMENT

WHO ARE CD SUPERVISORS?

Supervisors are public officials who must reside within the conservation district (CD) boundary, and, in some instances, in a particular area within the CD. This is a requirement for those CDs that have a formal residency ordinance that was filed with their county.

Most CD supervisors (typically five) are elected in the general election, 76-15-303, M.C.A., and are sometimes referred to as rural supervisors. Often, the other two supervisors are urban and are appointed by incorporated municipalities within the CD for three years. CDs without incorporated municipalities do not have urban supervisors, but can convert those to elected positions, still resulting in a seven-member board, 76-15-305, M.C.A.

CDs have the authority to pass a residency ordinance that creates areas within a district boundary and that requires supervisors to live in the area they represent. Many CDs still operate as if they had an ordinance, but unless they specifically passed the ordinance, supervisors may live anywhere in the district.

Exercise 1: *Take 10 minutes to examine where the current CD supervisors live, particularly if there are delineated areas on maps (provide a copy of the CD map to board members). If there are vacancies, brainstorm individuals for recruitment for open board positions. If there are no vacancies, brainstorm individuals for associate supervisor positions, who can also become “supervisors-in-training”. Remember, if no formal residency ordinance exists, areas can be adjusted and still be representative.*

OATH OF OFFICE

Elected supervisors take office for their four-year term following the general election, even if no election was actually held. These supervisors, even if repeatedly serving, must be sworn in and file an oath of office when their new term starts. The same is true for urban supervisors or other appointed supervisors, but not for associate supervisors.

It is important to make sure that a potential CD supervisor does not have any conflicts of interest as a public official serving on other boards. For example, in small communities, individuals may serve on numerous boards. If there is the potential for conflict, they may need to resign from some boards to serve on the CD board.



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IMPORTANT ELECTION TIMELINES

Elections occur in even years. Regardless of how many individuals may run, the appropriate election paperwork must be filed. If a vacancy occurs before the election, a supervisor can be appointed but only until the next election, at which point they may be elected to a two- or four-year term, depending on the time of the appointment. The election timeline follows:

December Odd Year: Assess who is up for election in the next year.

February Even Year: Those that are identified as up for election must file a Declaration for Nomination and Oath of Candidacy by March. There is no fee for this filing. This does not mean there will be an election. That will depend on how many individuals file, and the election administrator will determine if an election needs to happen.

June Even Year: Election if needed.

November Even Year: General Election if needed.

RECRUITMENT

Many CDs don't hold elections because they often don't have more individuals running than open board positions. Vacancies are a common issue, and some CDs have difficulties recruiting new people. In some instances, board members may want to resign but can't find a replacement and stay on without any succession planning.

Although recruitment resources are available that can be printed in the local newspaper (see *next page*), the best recruitment strategy for volunteerism is a tailored elevator speech that can help generate interest within individuals.

Exercise 2: *Take 10 minutes to create a tailored elevator speech. It's important to customize as to what a potential supervisor may be interested in, e.g. focusing on a specific individual from the previous exercise, tailor a speech to their interests and tie it back to something the CD has done. Then focus on something that the CD could do with this individual's participation. Remember, this is focused on generating their interest!*



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SAMPLE NEWSPAPER RECRUITMENT MATERIALS:

Volunteers Needed for Conservation District Board of Supervisor Positions

Your local conservation district needs community leaders to advance Montana's conservation legacy and requests. You might ask yourself, what is a conservation district? It is a group of local leaders who meet monthly to address natural resource concerns within their communities. Your local conservation district has a long history of serving people and addressing natural resource issues, starting in XXXX. Keep this tradition going and become a conservation leader today!



Join your local Conservation District and make a difference!

Exercise 2: Create an Elevator Speech *An elevator speech is a clear, brief message or "commercial" about your organization. It's typically about 30 seconds; the time it takes people to ride from the top to the bottom of a building in an elevator. The reason it's called an elevator pitch is that it should be short enough to present during a brief elevator ride.*

What does the conservation district do?

Why do you care about the work the conservation district does?



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Provide an example of how you serve others:

Identify an interest(s) of the person you are recruiting for the board to include in your speech: *This personalization will pique their interest and illustrate how they can contribute to the district.*

Disclaimer: This information is provided for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. The information provided should not be used as a substitute for a legal opinion from your county attorney or otherwise retained and qualified legal counsel. If you need advice regarding a specific legal situation, contact your legal counsel.

