

# Roles of a Supervisor

SWCD supervisors are elected officials who have been entrusted with some of Minnesota's most precious assets - our natural resources. The primary responsibility is to ensure that the community uses its natural resources wisely, with an eye toward the future. To do this, supervisors must seek and achieve a delicate balance between people and the land we inhabit.

In order to be an effective board member and feel a sense of accomplishment for the people you serve, you must have a good working knowledge of your responsibilities as:

1. A SWCD board member
2. An elected official
3. A community leader

## 1. Role of Supervisor as a SWCD Board Member

**There are three key aspects to the role of a supervisor** as an SWCD board member: policy development, planning, and working with the district staff.

### A. Policy Development:

The SWCD board of supervisors is a policy board, meaning that its primary focus is not on running the day-to-day activities of the district, but on setting overall policy and long-term objectives. The staff then uses these policies and objectives to ensure that the district is proceeding in the general direction laid out by the board.

Typical policy development may include personnel management, charges for services, election of officers, training, and technical assistance.

### B. Planning:

One of the most important parts of the job is developing the district's annual and comprehensive plans. Supervisors must be involved in all aspects of plan development and implementation, particularly in determining the long-term objectives of the district.

Main areas of planning include:

- Definition of purpose
- Prioritization of resource concerns
- Development of objectives
- Determination of actions

### C. Working with Staff

Policies include annual and long-range plans developed by the board which guide the district staff in everyday activities, but there are also a number of more specific items you should work on with the staff.

- Delegate responsibilities and set priorities
- Develop annual and long-range budgets
- Identify training needs
- Develop an employee evaluation system
- Provide adequate clerical and technical help to meet the needs of the district
- Provide employee job descriptions
- Attend monthly board meetings and serve on various committees as assigned
- Look for ways to expand existing programs
- Support local, state, and national associations to keep lines of communication open

## 2. Role of Supervisor as an Elected Official

**As an elected official, you're responsible for operating the district as a political subdivision of state government.** In addition to establishing district conservation and legislative priorities, other duties include:

- Establishing policies to implement state grant programs
- Maintaining a working relationship with other political bodies and state agencies
- Entering into working agreements with other agencies to coordinate programs
- Pursuing funding options for district operation as opportunities arise
- Cooperating with other districts and watersheds in resource activates
- Monitoring your actions to comply with program rules and regulation

## 3. Role of Supervisor as a Community Leader

**As a community leader, supervisors help guide the community in natural resource issues.**

Specifically, supervisors are responsible for:

- Communicating with our community to peruse better soil and water practices
- Maintaining good conservation on the land you manage
- Acting as a spokesperson on conservation and environmental issues
- Utilizing existing and new innovative programs to promote conservation at the local level, such as:
  - Educational programs
  - Tree programs
  - Erosion Control
  - Exhibits, demonstrations, etc.
  - Cost Share
  - Wetland Conservation Act
  - Buffer Law
- Discussing the district's programs with businesses, civic and sporting clubs, professional groups, educators, and farm owners and operators
- Joining various planning organizations and agencies and helping to guide these people in the use of good resource management practices