



What does it take to be a soil and water conservation district supervisor?

Soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) are local units of government that manage natural resource programs. Minnesota's 91 SWCDs cover the entire state; their boundaries usually coincide with county lines. Each SWCD is run by a board of five elected supervisors.

To be a supervisor you need:

KNOWLEDGE:

Supervisors must have – or be willing to learn – some basic knowledge to effectively carry out their responsibilities. They must understand:

- Some of the fundamentals about the environment and how it works
- The relationship between land use decisions and the environment
- The effect environmental decisions have on other aspects of our lives
- Local concerns, attitudes and needs

CONCERN:

Supervisors must be concerned about:

- Our environment and natural resources
- Maintaining and improving water quality
- Protecting our soil

LEADERSHIP:

Supervisors must be willing to take a proactive leadership role in the community. This can involve:

- Setting local conservation priorities
- Educating friend and neighbors about the environment
- Working with other local units of government, state and federal agencies, and other elected officials
- Setting an example
- Taking unpopular stands
- Sacrificing short-term gains for long-term benefits

Do you have what it takes? Being a supervisor involved one board meeting a month, and many incidental responsibilities. Supervisors receive no salary, although they do get per diem and expenses.