



# Oklahoma Conservation Commission

## District Directors' Responsibilities:

### A 10-Minute Guide Series

This is one in a continuing series of informational/discussion topics designed to help conservation district directors become more informed and knowledgeable about their responsibilities. It is suggested that board members review these guides before a board meeting and then have a ten minute discussion on them at a meeting.

---

#### *Guide No. 14 - Recruiting Board Members*

Effective conservation district programs are built with outstanding and qualified district board members. A district board whose members exhibit a diverse combination of skills will be better able to gain community support for district and local conservation efforts.

##### **The Need for Recruitment**

District boards should identify potential board members before a position comes open. Districts often have a difficult time replacing a board member who leaves their elected or appointed position. While the loss of a respected board member is difficult, the turnover of members can stimulate board activity.

A board should make sure that each prospective board member is a registered voter and has a cooperative agreement on file with the district. By doing so, the process of appointment won't be delayed or cause the individual not to qualify for election.

##### **Identify Qualities and Qualifications**

Recruitment of district board members begins with identification of qualities desired in current and prospective board members. District boards then develop and use a variety of recruitment strategies to find citizens who have skills and interests compatible with the district.

Good district board members will have a strong conservation ethic, skills and knowledge in conservation as well as management skills and leadership abilities. District board members should be selected based upon the identified needed qualities and qualifications, and not on the criteria of "who's available that we know".

##### **Analyzing the Needs of Your District**

Before beginning to look for someone to serve as a board member, your board should first identify what the needs of the district are for human resources.

This is an opportunity to diversify and expand the membership of the district board and to find people that can help the district expand the district program.

Diversity on conservation district boards is a good thing. For a conservation district to truly represent the people in their district, they need to understand the conservation needs of everyone. Having directors of different races, sex, educational backgrounds, professions, and interests and skills help in creating a diverse conservation program that meets all needs.

##### **Recruitment Strategies**

Now that you have identified your district's needs, it is time to develop your recruitment strategy. The following is only a beginning for what your district can develop. Ongoing recruitment using a variety of strategies normally produces a greater number of potential nominees who represent more diverse skills, interests, and backgrounds. Some sample strategies include:

- Letters to organizations
- Public service announcements
- Develop a referral network
- News releases
- District recruitment brochure
- Recommendations from staff and cooperating agencies
- Personal contacts

##### **Associate Board Members**

An associate board member program is an excellent way to help identify future board members. Serving as an associate member provides individuals an opportunity to attend meetings and help carry out district activities.

In order to realize the full potential of associate directors, the board should assign them specific duties and responsibilities.

### **Maintaining Prospective Board Members**

Recruitment of district board members, associate members, and volunteers is a continuous, ever-changing process. Ultimately, at any time, a district should have a choice among many from which to recruit new board members.

### **Hints to Keep Potential Board Members Active**

- ◆ Ask them to participate fully on committees and task forces
- ◆ Have them be responsible for some aspect of a district activity or program
- ◆ Match the assignments with their personal interests
- ◆ Instill within them a feeling of belonging and being an integral part of the district
- ◆ Ask for their opinion and input on issues
- ◆ Keep them informed of programs, activities, and issues

### **Additional Resources:**

NACD publication - Proud to Serve -Conservation District Board Members Recruitment Reference Book

Conservation District Handbook - Chapter 3 - Board Members.