

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Conservation Commission Commissioners**

- Identify problems affecting state's renewable resources
- Set resource based goals to address problems
- Establish eligible cost-share conservation practices
- Establish cost-share rates for practices
- Establish state average costs for practices and components
- Adjust average costs, if necessary
- Allocate funds from the Conservation Cost-Share Fund
- Designate beginning and ending dates for Program year
- Establish the allocation period
- Redistribute unallocated funds
- Identify priority watersheds
- Establish min/max cost-share payment/participant/program year
- Determine if a reserve fund is needed
- Appoint hearing officer for appeals
- Coordinate with NRCS State Conservationist on assistance for the program annually

### **Conservation Commission Staff**

- Prepare a list of problems affecting state's renewable natural resources
- Recommend to Commissioners goals to address problems
- Recommend to Commissioners cost-share practices
- Develop standards and specifications for conservation practices not present in NRCS field office technical guides
- Assist districts in identifying and prioritizing non-point source problems
- Assist and give guidance to districts in evaluating and selecting cost-share conservation practices
- Perform clerical, administrative and record-keeping duties
  - process claims
  - issue cost-share payments to districts
  - provide program evaluation and auditing to districts
  - receive and maintain monthly reports from districts
  - submit quarterly reports to the Commissioners
  - submit annual reports to Commissioners, Governor and Legislature
  - track accomplishments with GIS
  - give guidance to districts - policies, procedures, forms
- Develop procedures for processing errors in technical determinations
- Consult with NRCS on development of conservation practice standards and specifications
- Recommend cost-share rates and state average costs
- Recommend priority watersheds and funding
- Develop procedures for reallocation of unallocated funds
- Act on appeals
- Monitor, evaluate and assess waters of the state

- Identify and prioritize problems affecting the district's renewable natural resources
- Hold at least annually a conservation cost-share program development public meeting
  - seek input from Commission, NRCS, FSA and other interested groups or individuals
  - select conservation practices, subject to Commission approval
- Apply for an allocation of funds for the locally led conservation initiative and , if applicable, the priority watershed initiative
- Establish and maintain a list of identifiable components, cost-share rates, cost-share methods and average costs used for conservation practices
- Compile average costs and provide to Commission for determining state average costs
- Identify who the designated technical representative shall be for the district
- Announce, conduct local information and outreach activity for the conservation cost-share program
- Establish the time period for accepting applications
- Accept and process applications
- Determine eligibility of land and persons
- Establish, under Commission guidance, a system for evaluating applications and selecting participants
- Obligate allocated funds for approved applications
- Provide or arrange for the designated technical representative to assist applicants and participants
- Notify applicants of application determinations in writing
- Establish case files for participants
- Certify the completion of conservation practices
- Approve cost-share payments to participants
- Maintain control ledgers tracking cost-share funds
- Submit claims, reports and other documents in a timely manner as outlined in the handbook
- Submit monthly reports to the Commission
- Submit requests to the Commission for reallocated funds
- Release all funds not obligated by the end of the allocation period
- Act on appeals

### **Natural Resources Conservation Service State Office**

- Coordinate with Commissioners and OCC staff on program implementation
- Execute with OCC agreements regarding technical assistance and support
- Provide costs data and associated information for development of practice lists and average cost
- Provide technical standards and specifications for conservation practices
- Coordinate quality assurance of conservation practice design and implementation.

## **Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office**

- Provide input to local conservation district regarding natural resource needs/concerns for development of annual program
- Provide input to local conservation district regarding variance to the eligible practices, cost-share rates, and average costs
- Annually submit to conservation district their approval, the NRCS designated technician(s) meeting the criteria to provide technical services for the State Cost-Share Program
- Assist local conservation district personnel in evaluating the conservation practice need and eligibility
- Assist local conservation district and applicant in the development of a conservation plan meeting NRCS policy, procedures, and standards
- Provide design and layout, where applicable, of approved conservation practice(s) consistent with NRCS approval authorities
- Provide to local conservation district and applicant timely checkout and certification of completed conservation practices
- Formally notify local conservation district and NRCS state office of technical errors in conservation practice implementation
- Refer all program policy cost-share/payment issues to responsible local conservation district personnel
- Report information of potential fraud, waste or abuse to local conservation district and NRCS state conservationist.

## **Designated Technical Representative**

- Have a minimum one year practical experience in planning, designing, and applying conservation practices
- Assist applicants/participants in developing conservation plans
- Design and layout approved conservation practices
- Determine compliance with standards and specifications
- Certify conservation practice quantities and completion of conservation practices