

LAND STEWARDSHIP ACTION PRESENTS

The Power & Importance of SWCDs



What is a Soil & Water Conservation District?

SWCDs are local units of government that manage and direct natural resource management programs at the local level. Districts work in both urban and rural settings, with landowners and with other units of government, to carry out programs for the conservation, use, and development of soil, water, and related resources.

What is an SWCD Board?

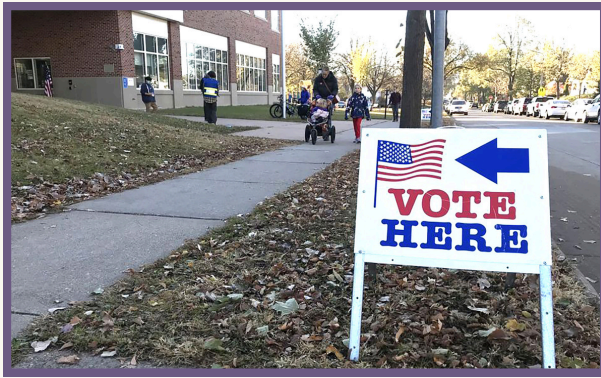
SWCD boards set overall policy and long-term objectives regarding natural resource management programs for their district and work with the hired SWCD staff to see that policies and plans are implemented.

Minnesota's 88 Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are each governed by a board of five Supervisors who are elected by citizens in their respective counties. Each SWCD board is responsible for policy development, annual plans, budgets, and more. Supervisor positions are four-year terms, require between 1 to 3 monthly meetings and receive compensation for their service, but compensation rates depend on the county.

Soil and Water Conservation Policy includes:

- Control or prevent erosion, sedimentation, siltation, and related pollution in order to preserve natural resources
- Ensure continued soil health, defined as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living system that sustains plants, animals, and humans, and soil productivity
- Protect water quality
- Prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs
- Reduce damages caused by floods
- Preserve wildlife
- Protect the tax base
- Protect public lands and waters





Why is this important for Land Stewardship Action?

SWCD Board Members are on the front lines of the maintenance, support, and promotion of sustainable ag practices at a local level. Board Members are leaders in their local democracies who can influence land use practices in their communities in support of clean air, water, and soil and successful farmers. Through education, technical assistance, and financial assistance, a SWCD Board Member can foster a new land ethic in their community.

How do they advance LSP's work?

- Electing supportive SWCD officers will help us pass a stronger statewide soil health bill by showing support from local leaders
- Electing supportive SWCD officers will mean Minnesota implements soil health programs that are actually impactful for small and mid-sized farmers
- Electing supportive SWCD officers will build more relationships between government and farmers

- Electing supportive SWCD officers will result in them hiring staff that will be creative and innovative with how programs are implemented and will have a lens of equity in funding distribution
- Electing supportive SWCD officers will allow for a better experience for farmers and those working with the office to receive funding for different types of operations
- Electing supportive SWCD supervisors will help drive county and state NRCS funding toward local efforts that uplift small and mid-size farms, not to large operations that aren't acting as stewards of the land



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