

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

Soil & Water Conservation Districts are special purpose units of government that manage natural resource programs. Minnesota's 90 SWCDs cover the entire state; their boundaries usually coincide with the 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 know how it works;
- The relationship between land use decisions and the environment;
- The effect environmental decisions have on other aspects of our lives; and
- Local concerns, attitudes, and needs.

Concern

Supervisors must be concerned about:

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

Leadership

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

- Setting local conservation priorities;
- Education friends and neighbors about the environment;
- Working with other local government units, state and federal agencies, and other elected officials;
- Setting a positive example;
- Taking unpopular stands;
- Balancing economic needs with environmental concerns; and
- Sacrificing short-term gains for long-term benefits.

Being a Supervisor involves one SWCD board meeting a month, three area meetings per year, and many incidental responsibilities. Supervisors receive no salary, although they do get per diem (\$75.00 per meeting per day), and are reimbursed for mileage and expenses. For more information, call the Brown SWCD at (507) 794-2553.