

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 at the local level. Minnesota's 88 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.

Do you have what it takes? Being a Supervisor involves attending one board meeting a month, three area meetings per year, committee meetings as scheduled, and many incidental responsibilities. Supervisors receive no salary, although they do get per diem and reimbursed for expenses. For more information, call the Brown SWCD office at 507-794-2553.