

Oregon Soil and Water Conservation District Guidebook

A Guide to Operations and Management

Table of Contents

Introduction

I. History of Conservation Districts in Oregon

- A. 1939 – Present
- B. Certificated Names of Conservation Districts
- C. Chronological Listing
- D. Tribal Districts

II. Oregon Laws and Rules Governing Conservation Districts

- A. Enabling Legislation
 - 1. Definitions
 - 2. Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 568
 - 3. District Powers and Authorities
 - 4. Related Statutes and Administrative Rules
 - 5. Special Districts
- B. Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program

III. Conservation District Directors

- A. District Directors
 - 1. Roles and Responsibilities of Directors and Boards
 - 2. Director Positions and Eligibility
 - 3. District Zoning
 - A. Zone Director Eligibility
 - B. At-Large Director Eligibility
 - C. Surrendering Director Positions
 - 4. Duties and Responsibilities
 - 5. Filling a Board Vacancy by Appointment
 - 6. Vacating an Inactive Board Position
 - 7. Decreasing Board Positions
- B. Director Elections
 - 1. Election Procedures
 - 2. Conservation District Elections Time Table
 - 3. Election Issues

- 4. General Election Costs
- 5. Oath of Office
- 6. Recall Election Costs
- C. Associate Director and Director Emeritus
 - 1. Associate Director
 - 2. Director Emeritus
- D. Administrative Structure
 - 1. Chair
 - 2. Vice Chair
 - 3. Secretary
 - 4. Treasurer
 - 5. Other officers and director roles
 - 6. Registered Agent and Registered Office
 - 7. Committees
 - A. Standing Committee
 - B. Ad Hoc Committee
- E. Director Compensation

IV. District Operations

- A. Staying Legal
 - 1. The Five Basic Requirements
 - 2. Posting Requirements
 - a. Federal
 - b. State
 - c. State Compliance
 - 3. Public Records Law
 - 4. Conflict of Interest
- B. Contracts and Agreements
 - 1. Contracting Handbook
 - 2. Review of Draft Contracts and Agreements
 - 3. Contract Liability – Loss of Tort Coverage
 - 4. Hold Harmless/Indemnity Clause
 - 5. Public Funds and Competition
 - 6. Commonly-asked Questions about Contracting
 - 7. Contract Review Board, Rules, and Officers
 - A. Creating a Contract Review Board
 - B. Adopt Rules Governing Contracting Procedures
 - C. Appoint a Contract Officer
 - D. Appoint a Project Manager
- C. Vehicles
 - 1. District Vehicles
 - A. Insurance Coverage for Conservation Districts
 - B. Insurance Coverage for District Owned-Vehicle
 - C. Oregon Tort Claims Act Exclusions

2. Use of Personal Vehicles
3. Use of State or Federally-Owned Vehicles
4. Leasing and Renting Vehicles
5. Licensing
- D. Equipment
 1. Equipment Accountability
 2. Equipment Insurance
 3. Purchase and Sale of Equipment
 4. Purchase of State Surplus Equipment
- E. Insurance/Risk Management
 1. Risk Management Concepts
 2. Policies and Procedures
 - A. Personnel Management
 - B. Sexual Harassment Prevention
 - C. Drug and Alcohol Use Policy
 3. Tort /Tort Liability Insurance Coverage
 - A. Definition of a Tort
 - B. Extending State Tort Liability Coverage
 - C. Insurance Coverage for Conservation Districts
 - D. Oregon Tort Claims Act Exclusions
 - E. Authority to Purchase Coverage
 5. Commonly-Asked Questions
 6. Oregon Department of Agriculture, Assistance to Districts
 7. Attorney General Legal Counsel
- F. Miscellaneous
 1. Entering Private Lands
 2. Photo Identification Cards
- G. Changing District Name or Structure
 1. Changing District Name
 2. Zone Boundary Changes
 3. District Boundary Changes
 4. Consolidation of Districts

V. Plans and Planning

- A. Planning Concepts
- B. Needs Assessments
- C. Long-Range Business Plans
 1. Benefits of a Business Plan
 - A. Mission and Direction
 - B. Internal Management
 - C. Resource Requirements/Needs
 - D. Community and Partner Relations

- 2. Business Plan Concepts
 - A. Resource Concerns and Outcomes
 - B. District Capacities, Needs and Strategies
 - C. Description of the District
 - D. Planning Process
- D. Annual Work Plans
- E. Recommendations for Writing Plans
- F. Implementing Plans
- G. Monitoring and Evaluating Plans

VI. District Finances

- A. Public Funds
- B. Fiscal Administration
- C. Budgets
 - 1. Developing and Adopting Budgets
- D. Financial Reports/Records
- E. Audits and Bond Requirements
 - 1. Oregon Municipal Audits Law
 - 2. Levels of Financial Audit Requirements
 - 3. State Audit Review/Audit Process
 - 4. Federal Audit Requirements
 - 5. Fidelity and Surety Bonding
- F. Sources and Mechanisms for Funding
 - 1. State Funds
 - 2. County Funds
 - 3. Taxing Authority
 - 4. Federal Funds
 - 5. Grant Funds
 - 6. Fund-Raising
 - 7. Tax Exempt vs. Nonprofit
 - 8. Tax Deductibility for Donations/Contributions

VII. Legislative Issues and Relations

- A. Supporting or Opposing a Ballot Measure or Candidate
 - 1. The Governing Body
 - 2. Elected Officials
 - 3. Agency Staff
 - 4. Political Action Committee (PAC)
 - 5. Ballot Measure Campaigns
 - A. General
 - B. Preparation and Distribution of Written Materials
 - 6. Penalties for Violations
- B. Lobbying

1. Definition
2. What is Lobbying?
3. Conservation Districts' Authority to Lobby
4. Registration

VIII. Legal and Effective Meetings

- A. Public Meetings Law
- B. Voting Requirements
- C. Executive Session
- D. Notice Requirements
 1. Meeting Notices
 2. Commonly Asked Questions and Answers
- E. Meeting Management and Arrangements
 1. Meeting Agendas
 2. Meeting Time Limits
 3. Meeting Arrangements
- F. Parliamentary Procedure
- G. Control of Meeting
- H. Public use of Tape Recorders, Cameras and Microphones
- I. Smoking at Public Meetings
- J. Minutes of Meetings

IX District as Employer

- A. Legal Responsibilities of an Employer
 1. Register as an Employer
 2. State Withholding Tax
 3. Federal Income Tax and Social Security Tax
 4. Unemployment Tax
 5. Workers' Compensation Insurance
 6. Year-end Reporting Responsibilities
 7. Oregon Posting Requirements
- B. Equal Opportunity Employer
- C. Employee vs. Independent Contractor
- D. Hiring Practices
 1. Hiring and Firing Employees
 - a. Hiring Public Employees Issues
 - b. "Employment-at-will"
 - c. Employment Contracts
 - d. Wrongful Discharge
 - e. Contract Issues
 - f. Public Policy Issues
 - g. Other Claims Available to a Fired Employee
 - h. Avoiding Wrongful Discharge Claims

- i. Remedies for the Wrongfully Terminated Employee
- E. Recruitment and Job Descriptions
 - 1. Recruitment and Hiring Process
 - 2. Post-Hiring
- F. Supervision of Employees
- G. Employee Classification and Compensation
- H. Personnel Policy Guidelines
- I. Employee Benefits
- J. Trial Service
- K. Employee Performance Appraisal

X. Developing and Maintaining Partner Relationships

- A. Oregon Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Division
 - 1. Governing Legislation
 - 2. Purpose and Function
 - 3. Contact Information
- B. Soil and Water Conservation Commission
 - 1. Governing Legislation
 - 2. Purpose and Function
 - 3. Membership
 - 4. Contact Information
- C. Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD)
 - 1. Formation
 - 2. Membership
 - 3. Structure
 - 4. Purpose and Function
 - 5. Policies
 - 6. OACD Foundation
 - 7. Contact Information
- D. Oregon Conservation Employees Association Network
- E. National Association of Conservation Districts
 - 1. Formation
- F. Natural Resources Conservation Service
- G. Resource Conservation and Development
- H. Farm Service Agency
- I. Oregon State University Extension Service
- J. Watershed Councils
 - 1. Definition
 - 2. Enabling Legislation
 - 3. Purpose and Function
 - 4. Contact Information
- K. Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

1. History and Formation of the Agency
2. Mission Statement
3. Board Membership
4. Programs
 - A. Grant Program
 - B. Fiscal Services and Training
 - C. Restoration Inventory
 - D. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
 - E. Watershed Council/SWCD Assistance
 - F. SWCD Small Grant and Landowner Workshops
 - G. Watershed Technical Tools
 - H. Small Grant Program
 - I. Watershed Research
5. Contact Information