

Want to Have a Positive Impact on Iowa's Land and People?

Become a Commissioner!

Here's How

If you're qualified to vote in a Pottawattamie County general election, you're an eligible candidate for election to the East Pottawattamie county soil and water conservation district board.

Each district is governed by five commissioners who are elected at general elections on a nonpartisan basis for four-year terms. Only one commissioner may reside in any single township (Belknap, Carson, Center, Grove, James, Knox, Layton, Lincoln, Macedonia, Pleasant, Valley, Washington, Waveland, or Wright).

You'll need a nominating petition from the county Auditor or SWCD office. At least 25 eligible voters must sign the petition and you must file it with the Auditor no later than the 69th day before the general election. You must also file an affidavit stating your name, residence and an assurance that you are an eligible candidate. No political party is designated.

If elected, you will take an oath of office and begin your four-year term on the first day in January following the election (that is not a Sunday or a holiday).

Help Direct Local Programs

As a commissioner, you'll help guide SWCD programs in the county, and will have the opportunity to influence state and national conservation programs.

Your involvement will include establishing conservation priorities, resolving soil loss complaints, establishing acceptable soil loss limits, publishing an annual report, approving soil conservation plans, and assisting in the management of district funds and personnel.

You will be reimbursed for expenses, and be protected from personal liability. Among other things, you'll be expected to take part in regular monthly meetings, become knowledgeable of the soil and water conservation laws and program, develop and carry out soil and water resource conservation plans, and help direct financial incentives programs with assistance of office staff.

A commissioner is a volunteer conservation promoter in the community, who helps direct activities such as field days, educational meetings and materials, contests, awards programs, and publicity. Again, with the assistance of office staff.

The Conservation Partnership

Soil and Water Conservation districts work closely with a number of local, state & federal agencies, as well as with local groups and organizations.

- Iowa Dept. of Agriculture & Land Stewardship- Division of Soil Conservation
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Division helps districts administer state and local programs, including financial incentive programs, and assigns state technical and secretarial people to districts.

Work With Other Agencies And Groups

Districts work closely with other entities including:

- State Soil Conservation Committee
- Conservation Districts of Iowa
- Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources
- USDA Farm Services Agency
- USDA Rural Development
- Iowa Cooperative Extension Service
- Pottawattamie County Conservation Board
- Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors

District commissioners may also call on service organizations, businesses, agricultural organizations, media, environmental organizations, schools, and other local individuals and groups to promote soil and water conservation and natural resource protection.

Help Administer Conservation Programs

The SWCD's are legal subdivision of state government. Commissioners are responsible for carrying out state laws and programs within district boundaries. These include:

- Sediment control law
- Conservation cost-sharing
- Conservation revolving loan funds
- Water quality protection projects
- Resources enhancement and protection

Federal Programs

- Conservation Reserve Program
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Wetlands Reserve Program
- Conservation Planning

Districts serve as local sponsors for watershed projects, resource conservation and development areas, and soil surveys as well.

By Law, Conservation Districts Can...

Iowa law grants authority to Conservation Districts to carry out activities that will help get conservation on the ground. According to the law, Conservation Districts can...

- Conduct surveys, investigation and research about soil erosion, sediment damages, floodwater, and development preventative control measures
- Conduct demonstration projects
- Cooperate or enter into agreements with, and furnish financial or other aid to government or other agencies, or any owner or occupant of land within the district to carry out erosion control and watershed protection.
- Obtain options and acquire property, rights, or interests by purchase, exchange, lease, gift, grant or otherwise. May maintain, administer, and improve properties acquired. May receive income from such properties and expend income to carry out conservation activities.
- May accept donations, gifts and contributions in money, services, materials, or otherwise from the United States or any of its agencies, and from the State or any of its agencies to carry on district operations.
- Encourage local school districts to provide instruction about soil conservation as part of course work relating natural resources conservation and environmental awareness.
- Develop comprehensive plans to conserve natural resources including controlling and preventing soil erosion.
- Help administer cost share for conservation practices in the county.

The major criteria for being a successful commissioner is an interest in the natural resources and people of Iowa.

Equal Opportunity For All

Districts offer services without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, political beliefs or marital status. To help broaden interest in district programs, and to bring different perspectives to district boards, districts encourage everyone to consider serving as a SWCD Commissioner.