Chapter 4: Supervisor Recruitment

This chapter should be used by the Nominating Committee and possibly the entire district board and staff when the process of supervisor recruitment begins. This is a very critical step in developing and maintaining an effective local SWCD.

Sec. 1 Identifying Recruitment Needs

Effective district programs are built with qualified and outstanding supervisors. A district board whose members possess and exhibit a diverse combination of skills will be better able to develop effective programs, as well as to gain community support for the district and its local conservation efforts.

Before you begin to look for someone to serve as a district supervisor, your board should first identify what the district's needs are for human resources and skills. This is an opportunity for your board to expand the constituency base of the district and to find people that can help bolster the district program. Here's a suggested way to determine these needs:

- List current programs and activities of your district.
- List skills, abilities, knowledge, and experiences provided by each current board member
- List the major strengths and weaknesses of your district as a whole, such as skills, experiences, community contacts, etc.
- Identify programs and activities which you would like to do, but because of the lack of resources, human and other, have been unable to accomplish
- Identify who your district currently serves or wishes to serve.
- Identify what new types of board members might help diversify your board, accomplish your mission, and better serve key groups of clients.
- Identify types of people that have knowledge, experience or skills that can help you meet these accomplishments
- Identify ways to actively recruit and educate identified individuals on the responsibilities and powers of the SWCD and supervisors as you begin involving these persons in District activities.

A sample worksheet to assist your Board in analyzing its human resource needs is found on the following two pages.

Analyzing the Needs of Your District

Before the SWCD board begins a search for a district supervisor, the SWCD board should first identify the needs of the district related to human resources. This is an opportunity for the SWCD board to diversify and expand the role of the district in the community and to find people that can help the district expand its programs. The following worksheet will assist the supervisors in analyzing district needs.

1. List the top ten major programs and activities of the district.

   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.
   5.
   6.
   7.
   8
   9.
   10.

2. List the top three strengths and weaknesses of the district.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
1.	
2.	
3.	

3. What programs and activities would the district like to do, but has been unable to accomplish due to the lack of resources (human and otherwise)?

4. Identify the types of people that have the knowledge, experiences, or skills that can help you accomplish these goals.

5. List the skills, abilities, knowledge, and experiences provided by each current supervisor. (To use the SWCD Supervisor Evaluation Template for this purpose go to the Soil and Water Conservation District's page of ISDA's SharePoint. Once on this page of SharePoint go to Document on the left navigation panel then click on District Tools. Click on the folder titled Supervisor Recruitment Tools then go to Supervisor Recruitment Evaluation Form.) You can also find this template at ISDA website://www.in.gov/isda/2347.htm under Supervisor Recruitment Tools.

6. Who does your district serve? List your clients.

7. What new types of supervisors could help diversify your board, accomplish your mission, and better serve your clients?

Sec. 2 Supervisor Diversity

Once the types of individuals needed by your District have been identified, the recruitment of qualified and talented supervisors requires looking beyond the supervisors' current circle of friends, relatives and business associates. It means actively seeking prospects that may have ideas, interests or experiences that might be different from those of the majority of the supervisors. This diversity could bring new and potentially better ways of addressing conservation issues. Your local board should develop a list of potential groups, organizations and individuals to contact when recruiting new supervisors. Some examples to consider may include:

- Commodity and business groups
- Conservation and environmental special interest groups
- People on boards of key organizations, such as local banks, charities, and industry
- Urban interests – urban planners and contractors
- Lake and watershed association members
- Teachers and college professors
- Researchers and writers
- Timber harvesting contractors and professional foresters
- Horticulturists, nursery operators and tree farmers
- Full and part time farmers and ranchers
- Former legislators and public officials
- Public relations and fund-raising professionals
- Community groups that represent women and minority cultures
- Accountants, bankers, land appraisers, and investment managers
- Retired local, state or federal employees
- Agronomists, soil scientists, geologists and engineers

Good district supervisors should have strong environmental ethics and knowledge of conservation issues, as well as management and leadership abilities. Recruitment of potential supervisors begins with identifying the desired qualities that are needed to be effective. Some of these qualities would include:

- Strong leadership skills
- Good communication skills
- Understands conservation issues
- Understands legislative issues
- Experienced with personnel management
- Networked with community, state and national leaders
- Possesses fundraising abilities
- Professional
- Progressive and open-minded

- Able to think for oneself and voice an opinion
- Innovative

In addition to these, other qualifications to look for could include:

- The ability to devote adequate time to the position of District supervisor. Some districts have a written policy dictating removal of a supervisor for missing a certain number of monthly board meetings.
- The ability to get along well with other district supervisors, staff and supporting conservation partnership agencies and organizations.
- The ability to tolerate criticism they may receive. An individual's judgment and integrity are vital.
- The ability to represent their own constituencies and avoid conflicts of interest.

Sec. 3 Developing Supervisor Recruitment Strategies

Once the supervisor skills needed to strengthen your district have been identified, your SWCD needs to begin work on locating and recruiting individuals who can assist in making your SWCD and its programs stronger. The sample strategies that follow are only a few of the ways in which your SWCD might begin expanding its supervisor recruitment base. There are advantages and disadvantages to each strategies or technique listed, and it's up to each SWCD to choose the ones that best suit your District's needs. The most successful SWCD boards are those which use a variety of recruitment strategies to slowly build a strong network of supervisors, volunteers and community supporters who represent more diverse skills, interests and backgrounds.

Possible Strategies for Supervisor Recruitment

Personal Contacts:
Personal contacts with a variety of community and organization leaders by district supervisors can be an effective method to create a pool of candidates different from that of a current circle of friends and relatives. Efforts to personally contact various groups and organizations could pay off through the development of joint projects between your district and those organizations.

Establish Functioning District Committees:
Many potential candidates become involved with districts through issues or programs that are of direct interest to their needs, occupations or recreational interests. By developing and maintaining a fully-functional committee system where individuals can become involved in topics of special interest to them, candidates can become aware of other opportunities for their abilities within the district as they consider becoming full supervisors.

Letters to Organizations:
Direct correspondence to various groups and organizations asking for potential nominees for district supervisor positions is an effective way to attract qualified individuals. The letter should also include qualifications the board is looking for in potential nominees and any materials available showing the district's short- and long-term goals, programs and activities.

Recommendations from Staff and Cooperating Agencies:
Various staff people that provide direct services to clients are an excellent source of ideas for potential candidates that have qualifications being sought by a district board. Staffs also have contacts throughout the community that may be different from the current board members' contacts.

Develop a Referral Network:
Build a third-party referral system for recruitment by developing long-term relationships with various groups and organizations. These relationships can yield valuable contacts for potential supervisors that have qualifications needed for your district board.

News Releases:
Another method of reaching a wide audience regarding a district supervisor vacancy is through news releases in newspaper, radio, television and other media. Sample announcements are available on the Soil and Water Conservation District's page of ISDA's SharePoint. Once on this page of SharePoint go to Document on the left navigation panel then click on District Tools. You can also find these samples at ISDA's website: http://www.in.gov/isda/2372.htm under Supervisor Recruitment Tools.

Newspaper Advertisements:
Well written and attractive advertisements in newspapers that target underserved audiences may help create interest in an SWCD supervisor position. Sample newspaper advertisements are available on the Soil and Water Conservation District's page of ISDA's SharePoint. Once on this page of SharePoint go to Documents on the left navigation panel then click on District Tools. You can also find these samples at ISDA's website: http://www.in.gov/isda/2372.htm under Supervisor Recruitment Tools.

Public Service Announcements:
Radio and television stations run free public service announcements for community organizations. Sample public service announcements are available on the Soil and Water Conservation District's page of ISDA's SharePoint. Once on this page of SharePoint go to Documents on the left navigation panel then click on District Tools. You can also find these samples at ISDA's website: http://www.in.gov/isda/2372.htm under Supervisor Recruitment Tools.

District Recruitment Brochures and Materials:
An effective way of informing potential candidates about district programs and activities, and about the powers and authorities of a district supervisor is through well developed, clearly written materials. Such materials and brochures may be developed just for

recruitment purposes, or may include already existing items such an information flyer/brochure about your district's purpose, structure, goals, programs and key activities, your district's business plans, your key partners, flyers on current or past field days or events, your or anything else which helps a candidate understand how he or she might best contribute to the district's goals and programs.

Recruitment at Annual/Special Meetings:
Make a special point to advertise your annual and special meetings in the media discussed above, to involve as many members of the public as possible. Keep an attendance list at events as a source of names and addresses of people interested in key district programs and activities, as they may be willing to serve on committees or as a supervisor in the future.

Develop a District Marketing Program:
Any individual has a limited amount of time, energy and personal resources to dedicate to any group. To insure that a potential candidate will view a supervisor position as time well spent, a planned marketing program should be in place. A marketing program would also promote the SWCD to the community and leaders for additional financial, technical and educational resources. Many candidates are often reluctant to serve on what they see as a "dead board" where little is known to be accomplished. By promoting the many activities with which your district is already involved, your district may expand the support it receives on many levels. For additional information on promoting your SWCD, refer to Chapter 13, entitled, "Marketing and Public Relations".

Sec. 4 Associate Supervisors

One of the most common ways to recruit and train potential supervisors is through the establishment of "***Associate Supervisors***". Many districts utilize Associate Supervisors (also sometimes referred to as "*Assistant Supervisors*") to help carry out their programs. The Indiana District Law (IC 14-32-4-10.5) officially recognizes the position of "Associate Supervisor" and states that "Associate Supervisors may be appointed to assist the district in performing its duties". It further states that "Associate Supervisors are non-voting members of the board and may not hold officer positions on the board. Associate Supervisors may be reimbursed for their approved expenses but are not entitled to per diem".

Volunteers

The simple recruitment of volunteers to assist the district in carrying out activities such as district tree sales, operating conservation equipment rental programs, constructing outdoor labs and education centers, hosting or coordinating field days and seminars, or serving as a local speaker for county civic and service groups is a great way to access the

level of interest and knowledge individuals have and develop a list of potential supervisors. Often these volunteers become elected or appointed to the position of supervisor if they continue demonstrating their interest and have skills to contribute to the district board.

Volunteers ***may*** receive reimbursement for out-of pocket expenses incurred while carrying out assigned duties establishes in advance by the district. In order for any volunteer to receive reimbursement, the responsibilities and assigned duties must be spelled out in an agreement with the district and the agreement recorded in the minutes prior to carrying out the duties. An estimate for the expenses of the volunteer must be pre-approved by a motion and affirmative vote of supervisors at a SWCD meeting and recorded in the minutes prior to incurring the expense. The district is not obligated to reimburse the volunteer if funds are not available or the duties of the volunteer and the estimated out-of-pocket expense were not officially approved by the supervisors prior to the expense being incurred.

Sec. 5 Available Supervisor Recruitment Materials

Numerous materials have been developed to assist SWCD supervisors and staff in examining the Board's supervisor strengths and weaknesses, as well as for recruiting and retaining supervisors. Available materials include surveys to examine the District's supervisors' skills and experiences, worksheets for examining potential supervisors' skills and experiences, and supervisor handbooks and job descriptions as well as supervisor recruitment articles and public service announcements for local newspapers, newsletters and radio.

To access these materials for your Districts' to use in recruiting potential supervisors go to the Soil and Water Conservation District's page of ISDA's SharePoint. Once on this page of SharePoint go to Documents on the left navigation panel then click on District Tools. You can also find materials at ISDA's website: http://www.in.gov/isda/2372.htm under Supervisor Recruitment Tools.