



District Authority * Defining Your Message

Purpose:

This month we'll cover two topics: **"District Authority"** and **"What is Your Message?"**

- Have you asked yourself "just what can we as a district do using our statutory authority"?
- How many times have you been asked "What is a Conservation District" or "What does a Conservation District Do"? or "What does a CD Supervisor do"?

Did you have a quick answer or did you stutter and sputter a little. If you did sputter a little, you're not alone. These two topics were the focus at the MACD annual convention supervisors workshop. The purpose was to recognize what districts have done using their authority, and to develop a simple statement of what a Conservation District is.

No more "Best kept secret"...

Everyone should develop their own 'elevator speech' message so they can say it from the heart with conviction when asked the question. On the back side of this training, we listed a few answers to common questions that were mentioned.

What has your district done using its authority?

As a reminder, review your law book, **MCA 76-15-101, Legislative Determinations** (page 5) & **MCA 76-15-102, Declaration of Policy** (page 6): *It is hereby declared to be the policy of the legislature to provide for the conservation ..., protect the tax base, protect public lands, and protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of this state.* In a nutshell, Conservation Districts have been given statutory authority to do just about anything to protect the natural resources. At the MACD 2010 convention, districts shared what they have done using their authority in the following areas:

310 permitting: Montana conservation districts have been given the authority to administer "The natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act of 1975". Below are a few examples of what

districts have done related to stream permitting:

- Provide, process, and permit numerous 310 applications each year.
- Set standards for bridges across public waterways.
- Sponsored stream restoration projects.
- Fined a contractor \$5,000 for non compliance
- Denied 310 projects for lack of an acceptable plan.
- Investigate 310 violations.

Rule Making: Districts have the rulemaking authority MCA 76-15-321 such as:

- Adopted 310 permitting Rules:
- Modified adopted rules to ban Marinas.
- Adopted rules prohibiting sod busting without district approval.
- Adopted rules requiring an upfront reclamation bond for oil well drilling within the district.
- Coal Bed Methane Protection

Take a moment to reflect what your district has done, and share with your younger supervisors.

Education: In most districts, education is a key component of what they do.

- Subdivision control of wells and sewer systems
- Making landowners aware of rules regarding dam building/cleaning.
- Range Days, Youth Range Camp, Ag days
- Rolling Rivers Trailer at various local events
- Range workshops

Other: There are numerous other things districts have done using their authority such as:

- Adopted resolutions addressing:
 - Protection of private property rights.
 - Wolves & Endangered Species Act.
 - Aquatic and Invasive species.
 - Wake zones on rivers.
- Started a well testing Program to monitor domestic/stock wells
- Provide local comment/feedback to federal agencies on management of federal lands.
- Sponsor Channel Migration Zone studies
- Developed a Cost Share Grant Program



District Authority * Defining Your Message (Cont'd):

What is Your Message??

The second part deals with defining your message. For some of us, to explain just what CD's/supervisors do is easier said than done. During the workshop, we asked four questions, with the goal of developing a single answer for "what is a conservation district". Below is each question with a few of the answers intended to help jog your thought process and to see other supervisors answers.

What is a Conservation District?

- Entity given authority to address soil and water issues.
- Group of people publicly elected to verse conservation efforts in the given county to protect land and water for future generations.
- One of the oldest conservation groups in the USA.
- Group of people publicly elected to oversee local conservation efforts in the given community to protect land, water and wild life for future generations.
- A locally elected nonpartisan group dedicated to the protection of natural resources through cooperation and education.

What is a Conservation District?

Group of non-partisan people publicly elected to oversee local conservation efforts in the given county to protect the multiple use of land, water and wildlife for future generations.

Developed by supervisors at 2010 MACD
Convention supervisors workshop

What does a CD do?

- Promotes conservative practices of soil and water.
- Administrators of 310 Law.
- Balanced approach to resource management.
- Everything between landowner to agency.
- Mediation of disputes between agencies and local landowners.
- Represent local interests regarding state or federal regulations.

What do Supervisors do?

- Help address direct programs and technical assistance in implementing processes.
- Implementation – responsible for programs allocated to address local needs.
- Tell stories.
- Speak from the heart

Why am I a Supervisor?

- Twisted arm into position – railroaded!!
- Concerned about natural resources for future generations.
- Protect the land and preserve our heritage

Because I care! We all want to leave things better than when we found them.

Do you have an 'elevator speech'? It's not always easy to think off the top of your head just what you want to say... below is a list of talking points to help spark the thought process!!

Talking Points

- Send clean water down the river
- Ended the Dust Bowl
- Promote wildlife habitat
- Smaller/local gov't, link/liaison between the landowner and the government
- Non-Partisan, Quasi Government
- Non-policing, non-regulatory
- Educate
- Grass-roots Conservation
- Local, hands on
- Assist in establishing wind breaks which help prevent wind erosion
- Elected officials
- Protect our land and preserve our Heritage

Homework: As you finish up calving, those last few cows will be a great audience for you to practice your 'elevator speech' on!!

Common questions..

What is a Conservation District?

What does a CD do?

What do Supervisors do?

1. What is the main purpose of the document?
 2. What are the key findings of the study?
 3. What are the limitations of the study?
 4. What are the implications of the study?
 5. What are the conclusions of the study?
 6. What are the recommendations of the study?
 7. What are the future research directions?
 8. What are the acknowledgments?
 9. What are the references?
 10. What are the appendices?
 11. What are the footnotes?
 12. What are the tables?
 13. What are the figures?
 14. What are the captions?
 15. What are the legends?
 16. What are the abbreviations?
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This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal blue or grey lines across its entire width. The lines are uniform in thickness and spacing, providing a guide for handwriting. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.