



Creating a Long-Range Resource Plan

Module XVI

What you will learn in this module

- Why you should develop a long-range resource plan
- Who should be involved in the planning process
- What's included in a long-range resource plan
- Most effective ways to develop a long-range resource plan
- Five-step planning process

Why do a long-range resource plan?

- Conservation districts will face challenges to survivability in the coming years.
- Important to maintain relevance in a changing environment that includes shrinking budgets, calls for less government, population shifts, and non-governmental organizations fulfilling conservation needs.
- Resource planning helps districts identify threats and challenges and ways to address them proactively.

Who should be involved?

- The conservation district resource planning committee should include, at a minimum, the following people:
 - ✓ All supervisors of the district
 - ✓ All district employees
 - ✓ NRCS personnel who work with the district
- May want to include others in the community who might be helpful to the process; i.e., local municipal officials, business and industry reps, other special interest reps.

What's included in a resource plan

- An analysis of the environment in which the conservation district operates.
- A list of the issues the conservation district faces, as well as potential opportunities.
- A set of objectives for addressing issues and taking advantage of opportunities.
- A resource inventory listing the condition of soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources, as well as human, financial, and equipment resources.
- A list of possible solutions (action steps).
- A list of the action steps chosen for implementation, listed in order of priority.

Most effective ways to develop a long-range resource plan

- Keep the process as simple and focused as possible: break it down into steps by responding to each individual element of the plan.
- Give thoughtful consideration to responses, but don't labor over them and make the process more time-consuming than necessary.
- It is impossible to know every future event that can impact your district, so use your best judgment based on trends and what you know now to predict future challenges.

Most effective ways to develop a long-range resource plan, *cont.*

- Utilize the Resource Planning Workbook to keep the process focused and to help the planning committee formulate appropriate responses.
- Ask Robin Lehman at KACD for assistance if something is unclear or confusing.
- Make a commitment to complete the workbook as soon as possible and submit it to Robin at KACD. You will have the opportunity to add to and/or revise your plan once she has developed a preliminary draft for your review.

Five-Step Planning Process

I. Identify concerns and opportunities.

- What are the major natural resource issues facing your district?
- Are those natural resource issues changing? Are they improving or worsening?
- What are the assets you have for handling those natural resource issues (human, financial, equipment, etc.)?
- Can you think of ways to multiply those assets (such as a call for volunteers, increased information disseminated to the community, sharing of resources with other districts)?
- What are the limitations you have in addressing your issues?
- Can you think of ways to overcome some of the limitations (such as partnering with other agencies in the community, providing better information in order to gain support from citizens or lawmakers, etc.)?
- Are there events or programs you've never tried that might provide opportunities to draw positive attention to your district?

Five-Step Planning Process, *cont.*

II. Determine objectives

- Objectives identify the “what,” where action steps focus more on the “how.”
- When you consider the natural resource issues and opportunities your district faces, what might be the best ways to address them? In other words, what would you like to see happen with each of those issues?
- What can the district reasonably accomplish on its own, with existing resources (human, financial, equipment, etc.), to address these issues?
- Are there some issues that can be resolved more effectively using collaborations with other agencies, either governmental or nonprofit? If so, what result(s) would be mutually beneficial to all parties?
- If necessary, use a phased approach to determine objectives. In other words, sometimes an issue or opportunity may need to be handled in stages with one stage nearing completion before the next one can be tackled.

Five-Step Planning Process, *cont.*

III. Conduct a resource inventory

- This is arguably the most critical element in the development of a long-range resource plan.
- Evaluate the district's natural resources (physical characteristics, topography, soils and land classification, water, climate, etc.).
- Evaluate the judgmental features such as general usage of land, water, fish and wildlife, etc., and the trends pertaining to them.
- What human, financial, equipment, and other resources are available to the district, including available assistance through federal, state, and local conservation programs?
- Think about conservation measures and actions that have been taken and consider their effectiveness. What other practices or programs are needed to address the district's natural resource issues?

Five-Step Planning Process, *cont.*

IV. Formulate possible solutions (action steps)

- Now that you have listed your objectives in addressing natural resource issues and opportunities, how do you intend to carry those out?
- Brainstorm possible solutions for the “how” of addressing them; i.e. specific, measurable, time-lined action steps.
- Are there additional detailed plans that would be useful for meeting the district’s objectives, such as a fundraising plan or marketing plan?
- What action steps can be taken within existing resources, both financial and human?
- What action steps would the district take if additional resources became available?
- Who is/are the person(s) responsible for ensuring that the action steps are completed?

Five-Step Planning Process, *cont.*

V. Make decisions

- Look at the list of possible solutions and begin to cull out those action steps that are less desirable for one reason or another.
- Be sure to include actions that increase the visibility of the district in the community.
- Are there activities that can be carried out with minimal cost or time commitments that can be valuable for educating others about conservation?
- Of the possible solutions listed, which ones would most effectively and efficiently allow the district to meet its conservation objectives?
- List the chosen action steps in order of priority.

Review Question

1. Conservation districts will face challenges to _____ in the coming years.

Review Answer

1. Conservation districts will face challenges to _____ in the coming years.

survivability

Review Question

2. Of the five steps related to the planning process, which one is perhaps the most critical?
 - a. Identify concerns and opportunities.
 - b. Determine objectives.
 - c. Conduct a resource inventory.
 - d. Formulate possible solutions (action steps).
 - e. Make decisions.

Review Answer

2. Of the five steps related to the planning process, which one is perhaps the most critical?
 - a. Identify concerns and opportunities.
 - b. Determine objectives.
 - c. *Conduct a resource inventory.***
 - d. Formulate possible solutions (action steps).
 - e. Make decisions.

Resource Planning Assistance

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