



# Personnel Management for Conservation Districts

# Effective Personnel Mgmt.

District board members are responsible for the administrative supervision of their personnel.

You probably didn't know you would be put in this role when you were elected and you might not have any experience in this area.

There is help.

District boards "should" designate supervision of any staff to the executive director/administrator and trust them to the **day-to-day** supervision and to do their job.

# Role of the Directors

The roles of the District directors, District executive director/administrator, and staff must be clearly defined.

Establish a board liaison so that the staff have a “go to” person in the event of conflict with the executive director/administrator.

# Role of the Directors

Communicate a clear message to all involved regarding the chain of command.

Directors must establish a sense of trust in their executive director/administrator and authorize them to supervise the staff, make staff work assignments, and evaluate the work of the staff.

# Role of the Directors



Forget the  
budget,  
I'm  
golfing!

Individual directors  
must then be willing  
to step away from  
day-to-day conflicts  
that may occur...

and always follow  
the chain of  
command that  
they themselves  
have set.



# Role of the Directors

Feedback Feedback Feedback

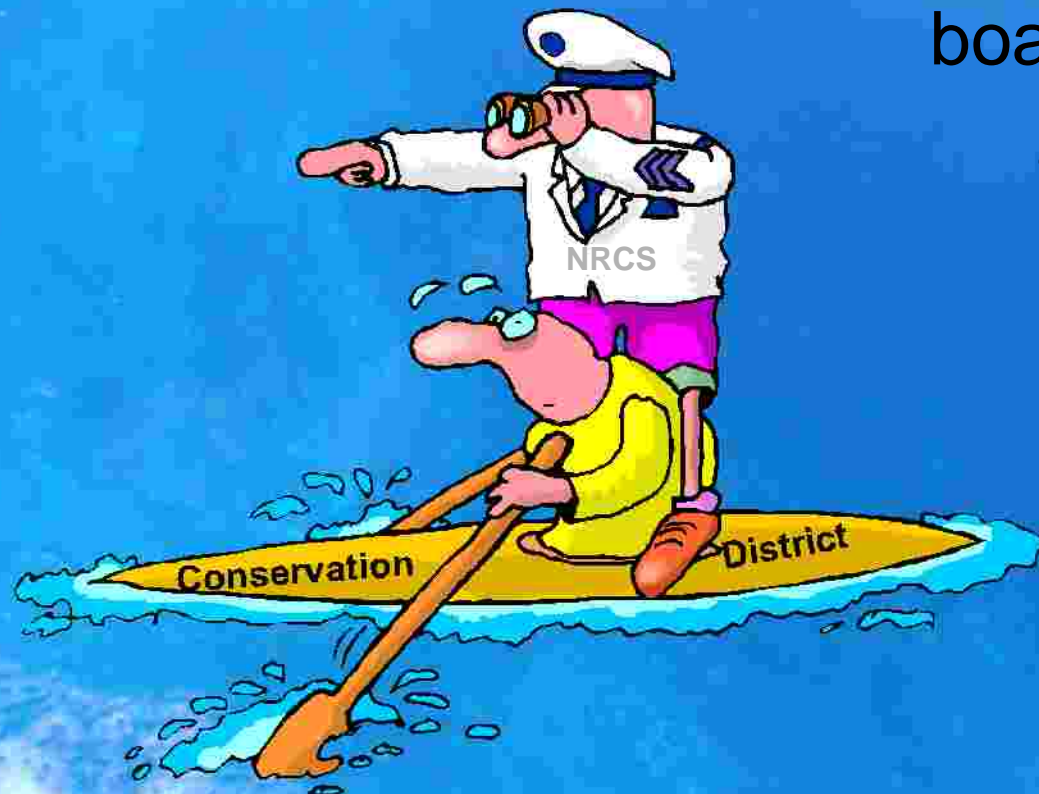
Provide clear, timely, and specific feedback on the performance of the District supervisor.

District supervisor in turn, needs to provide performance feedback to District staff.

Everyone needs constructive criticism.

# Role of the District Supervisor

The executive director/administrator should be directly responsible to the District board, **NOT** to any federal or state employee.



# Role of the District Supervisor

While an employee is ultimately hired by the Conservation District, they often must work under the guidelines of a different agency or funding source:

- Dept. of Environmental Quality
- Dept. of Natural Resources
- Michigan Dept. of Agriculture
- Private foundation grants



# Hiring District Staff

## Recruiting

- Develop a thorough job description
- Follow the law for posting (...regardless of age, race, sex, etc.)
- Post widely, not just in your newsletter or local paper
- Document your process

# Interviewing

Before hiring a District employee, Directors with the assistance from the District supervisor, should:

- Develop a personnel policy
- Develop a work agreement
- Participate in the employee selection process (bring in program related outsiders for interview, not just board members)
- Provide a realistic job preview to the applicant for the position before the job offer has been accepted

# After Interviewing

- Check resumes and references
- Offer benefit package with:
  - vacation leave, sick leave, bereavement, retirement, holiday pay
- Sign personnel policy (two copies – one for the employee and one for the files)
- Sign the work agreement (which defines the job and what work is expected along with the expected time frame of completion).

# After Interviewing

- Send staff to appropriate training
- Be sure to leave money in your budget for training new staff
- Have staff shadow at a neighboring district for an afternoon or a day

# The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

- Establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and youth employment standards affecting full-time and part-time workers in the private sector and in Federal, State, and local governments.

# Compensatory Time

Protect your district and your employees  
and have a policy in place.

# ***Just cause***

- A legal term used as the guiding principle utilized by employers whenever engaging in some form of corrective action or discipline for employees.

**Just cause** is determined

- by examining the reasonableness of the discipline according to a set of guiding principles
  - (i.e. was the employee adequately forewarned that the particular behavior would result in discipline or termination;

# ***Just cause***

**Just cause** determinations continued:

- management conducted a fair and objective investigation of the facts prior to administering any discipline;
- rules, orders, and disciplinary action must be applied in a consistent and non-discriminatory manner;
- discipline must be reasonably related to the seriousness of the offense and the employee's past work record, etc.)



# ***At Will Employment***

- State of Michigan views “At Will” employment after 90 days as “Just Cause” as you had 90 days to determine whether or not it was going to work out or not and in their book, 90 days is sufficient.

# All The Legal Stuff

Because of state and national laws it is important that correct selection procedures be followed.



Department of  
**Civil Rights**

*What's legal to ask, and what's not  
in an interview?*