

**PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATION EMPLOYEES PROGRAM  
TRAINING PLAN—ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
<b>Position:</b>	<b>Work Unit:</b>
<b>Period:</b>	
<b>Supervisor:</b>	
<b>List here the employee's technical/admin resource advisors &amp; mentors:</b>	

**BACKGROUND (Purpose of Plan)**

North Carolina's conservation partnership has a strong heritage of providing quality assistance to the state's landowners and citizens. Because of this, conservation districts have earned a high level of trust with landowners, and this trust is the backbone of an effective delivery system that is envied by other agencies and organizations. To a large degree, the future of conservation districts is directly tied to continued quality assistance provided through all employees.

In order to enhance the professionalism and accountability of the conservation partnership's employees, a committee was formed to develop a training guide to be used across the state. The committee consists of district supervisors, as well as employees from Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The vision of this committee is to have a statewide training template to guide the training and development of employees within the conservation partnership. The committee identified four employee job areas for focus: managerial, administrative, technical and educational.

Training plans for administrative professional employees will consist of three tiers to guide the training process. Tier 1 is geared toward partnership employees with up to 1 year of experience; Tier 2 for those with two years of experience; and Tier 3 for those with 5 years of experience. The committee realizes that each employee's training plan should be tailored to meet the specific employee's and/or District's needs, but many of the items listed are applicable to all employees.

The concept of a state-wide training tool has evolved into the Professional Conservation Employee Program (PCEP). The PCEP has been introduced at various meetings across the state during the past twelve months, and the committee has now completed the first of four training plan templates (technical). The conservation partnership will ensure its future success by being proactive and supporting employee development. Below is the PCEP training plan for employees with administrative responsibilities.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP**

Review the following NRCS publications:

- “Challenging Careers in the Natural Resources Conservation Service”
- “In Partnership with People and a Healthy Land” (to learn about NRCS and its mission)
- “Helping You Help Your Land” (to understand conservation from the landowner’s perspective)

Review the questions and answers in “The Guidebook on the Law and Practice of Soil and Water Conservation in North Carolina” (edited by Milton S. Heath, Jr. - 2004) to learn about Conservation Districts and the Conservation Partnership in North Carolina.

Read the article “Son of the Soil” in the magazine “Wildlife in North Carolina” (January 2002) to learn about Hugh Hammond Bennett and his legacy of soil conservation.

Meet with one or more District supervisors to find out what their interest is in conservation and what they feel are the most critical conservation issues that need to be addressed in the county.

Attend a District Board meeting, Local Work Group Meeting, or other meeting where strategic planning is discussed to gain a better understanding of the District’s conservation objectives and workload priorities.

Attend an Area District Issues Meeting, Area Spring and/or a Fall Meeting to gain a better understanding of the issues affecting partnerships across the Area.

Review organizational charts for the local district, county, Division of Soil and Water Conservation and Natural Resources Conservation Service. Discuss these charts with your supervisor.

Review a list of District partner agencies and organizations and become familiar to each one.

## **SKILL LEVELS**

### **Skill set needed after one year of service:**

- -Proficient in standard office etiquette
- Good oral and written communication skills with concentration on correct grammar and punctuation
- Proofreading skills
- Good telephone skills
- Excellent customer service skills with emphasis on professionalism
- General computer skills (PowerPoint, Excel, Word, Outlook)
- Proficient organizational skills
- Ability to multitask
- Working knowledge of board meetings and minute taking
- General accounting skills
- Knowledge of all programs offer by District, including technical and educational
- Maintain appointment calendar and designated meetings calendar

- Basic Training Course for Soil & Water Conservation Supervisors, UNC-CH Inst. of Government
- Good listening skills
- District filing protocol
- Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Proficient in time management skills
- Secure/establish trust and confidence by co-workers and board of supervisors to execute duties as an administrative professional
- Ability to properly notice meeting and to adhere to open meetings law (e.g. executive session; post emergency meetings)
- Ability to follow Robert's Rule of Order
- Demonstrative effective meeting skills (e.g. ability to run an effective meeting)

**Skill set needed after two years of service:**

- Proficient computer skills
- Proficient in business etiquette
- Working technical knowledge of programs offered through District
- Working knowledge of district's budget and fiscal management procedures (e.g. Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act)
- State Public Records Laws and Freedom of Information Act and other privacy policies
- Knowledge of soil and water conservation partnership and related watershed, environmental, private and nongovernmental organizations
- Working knowledge of commonly used acronyms
- Proficient in preparing business reports (e.g., annual reports), correspondence, and memoranda
- Working knowledge of all forms used by District
- Knowledge of all federal, state and local government leaders, officials and related organizational structure
- Proficient in preparing meeting agendas, minutes and supervisor forms
- Familiarity with county natural resource maps and soil surveys
- Proficient in county, state, and federal policies and procedures
- Proficient in record retention in accordance with district's document retention schedule
- Effective interpersonal skills
- Proficient in environmental education and community outreach
- Positive assertiveness
- Creating rapport (using personal power to influence, not control)
- Workplace ethics
- Project management
- Proficient in teamwork skills

- Proficient in consensus decision making
- Awareness of office politics – aiming for positive results from fair practices
- Managing upward – succeeding with one’s supervisor (skills in give and take)

**Skill set needed after five years of service:**

- Proficient knowledge of budget, finance and statewide contracts
- Working knowledge of how to prepare news articles/press releases/newsletters (public relations)
- Event planning (special events)
- Ability to develop/implement project tracking system
- Participate in budget analysis and cost savings planning
- Proficient in grant writing skills
- Proficient in developing/using District Plan of Work
- Knowledge of taxes and insurance (e.g. general liability insurance; bonding of staff/district supervisors; holding of property) as required by district (e.g. stand alone district)
- Effective office management
- Advanced communication skills
- Group facilitation skills
- Presentation skills
- Strategic planning skills
- Environmental Education Certification (for District education coordinators)
- Working knowledge of payroll withholding regulations (if necessary for District)
- Knowledge of how to prepare and participate in a financial audit (if necessary for District)