The background of the slide features three blue folders stacked diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right. Each folder has a silver-colored metal clip attached to its top edge. The folders are slightly offset, creating a sense of depth. The text is overlaid on the upper right portion of the folders.

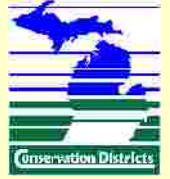
Understanding and Developing Board Policies

Training Module 9



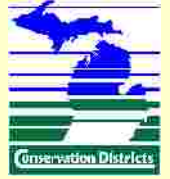
What You'll Learn In This Module

- | Why policies are important and their purpose
- | Questions to ask when developing policy
- | Sources of policies
- | Elements of a good policy
- | Amending and suspending policies
- | The policy manual
- | A list of recommended District policies.



Discussion Questions

- | What do policies do for your District?
- | List several purposes for establishing policies.
- | How are policy decisions made?
- | Why should policies be developed before a crisis occurs?
- | Who should keep the District policy manual updated?



Why Policies Are Important

The board is entrusted with the authority to establish policy for the governance of the Conservation District.

Board policy establishes the parameters and guidelines for board members, committees, management and staff.



The Purpose of Policies

The purpose of District policies are to:

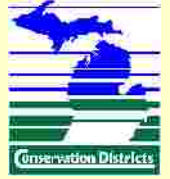
- | Inform everyone of board intent, goals and aspirations
- | Prevent confusion among board members, staff and public
- | Promote consistency of board action
- | Eliminate the need for instant (crisis) policy making
- | Reduce criticism of the board and management
- | Improve public relations
- | Clarify board member, Administrative/Executive and staff roles
- | Give management a clear direction from the board



Developing Policy

All policies proposed to the board should be evaluated to consider if the proposed policy is:

- | Really necessary for good operation of the District?
- | Consistent with the District's mission statement?
- | Within the scope of board authority?
- | Consistent with local, state and federal law?
- | Compatible with other policies of the board?
- | Practical?
- | Broad enough to cover the subject completely?
- | Enforceable?



Developing Policy (continued)

All policy decisions should be made by majority vote of the board and only at board meetings. Before adopting any policy, all board members should receive a copy of the proposed policy in advance of the meeting at which the vote is to be taken.



Sources of Policies

Policies may be recommended to the board by committees of the board, individual board members, or by the Administrator/Executive Director. All proposed policies should be researched to ensure that they are legal, and do not contradict with already established policies of the District. If approved by the board, policies are written, coded, dated at the time of approval and included in all copies of the board policy manual.



Good Policy Writing

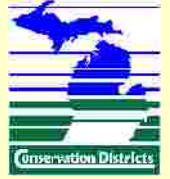
Policy development should occur before a crisis develops. A District board should consider the following fundamentals of good policy writing:

1. No policy should be put into writing that has not had thorough discussion and review for present and future implications.
Never make a policy under the gun if you can avoid it.
2. Administrative District staff can be given the responsibility of drafting basic policies for approval by the board for such areas as personnel management.
3. Policies must be understood by those to whom they apply.



Good Policy Writing (continued)

4. Policies must be accessible. They shouldn't be locked in the storage room in the District office.
5. A regular review should be provided so that policies are regularly brought up-to-date.
6. Policies should be specific enough to be interpreted, but broad rather than narrow and restrictive.
7. Policies should be flexible and adaptable.



Amending/Suspending Policy

All policies should be annually reviewed by the board or a committee of the board for accuracy and appropriateness, and recommendations should be made to the board for amendment, addition or elimination.

Except as otherwise provided by law, any policy of the board may be suspended, repealed, amended, or waived by a majority vote of the board.



The Policy Manual

A copy of the board policy manual should at all times be available in the District office for review and inspection by employees and board members. Each board member should be given a revised policy manual.

The policy manual should be kept updated by the Administrator/Executive Director.



Recommended List of District Policies

The following, recommended by the Michigan Dept. of Agriculture and the Michigan Assoc. of Conservation Districts, is a list of subjects on which Conservation Districts should adopt policy:

- **Structure of the District:** *chain of command, delegation of activities to Exec. Dir./Administrator*
- **Board Organization:** *board meeting attendance, authority of board members, committees of the board, public forum during board meetings, board officers*



Recommended List of District Policies (continued)

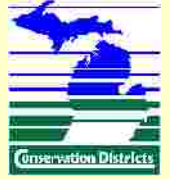
- **Employment/Personnel:** *make consistent with state and federal laws*
- **Conflict of Interest:** *board and staff*
- **District Finances:** *financial management, budgeting, signing checks, use of credit card, investment practices, spending authorizations*
- **Facilities & Equipment**
- **Administrative Procedures for Conducting Board Meetings**



Recommended List of District Policies (continued)

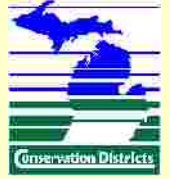
Also available, as part of this module, is the Policy and Procedure Handbook Template that includes a compiled list of policies that are currently in place in Conservation District's around the state.

This Template is meant to be a starting place for Districts to create or update policy. Please don't consider these samples as the final word on policies. They are merely for review.



Summary

- I The board is entrusted with the authority to establish policy for the governance of the Conservation District. Board policy establishes the parameters and guidelines for board members, committees, management and staff.



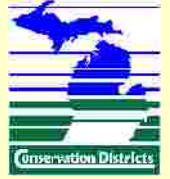
Summary

- | All proposed policies should be researched to ensure that they are legal, and do not contradict with already established policies of the District.
- | Policy development should occur before a crisis develops.



Summary

- I All policies should be annually reviewed by the board or a committee of the board for accuracy and appropriateness, and recommendations should be made to the board for amendment, addition or elimination.
- I A copy of the board policy manual should at all times be available in the District office for review and inspection by employees and board members.



Review Questions

- | What do policies do for your District?
- | List several purposes for establishing policies.
- | How are policy decisions made?
- | Why should policies be developed before a crisis occurs?
- | Who should keep the District policy manual updated?



Resources Available

Resource Available	Where to Find It
Policy and Procedure Handbook and Template	Click here to view the Template.
The Policy Builder	For purchase from the Cain Consulting Group at 1-800-735-9471.