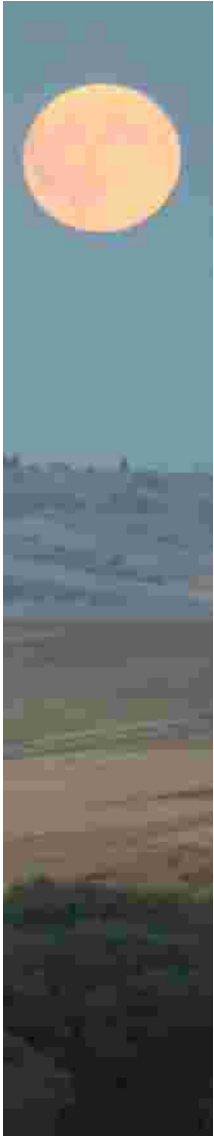


# **Orientation for Conservation District Supervisors and Staff**

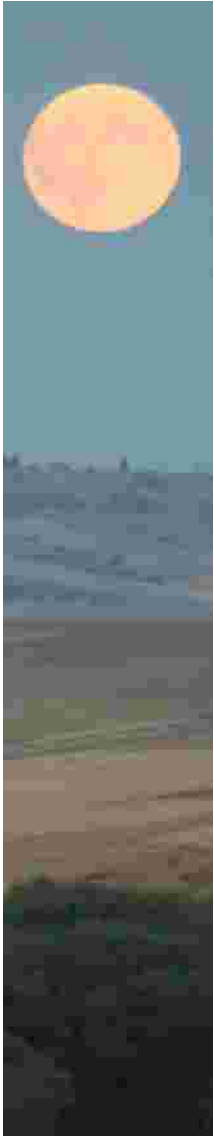
city  
date



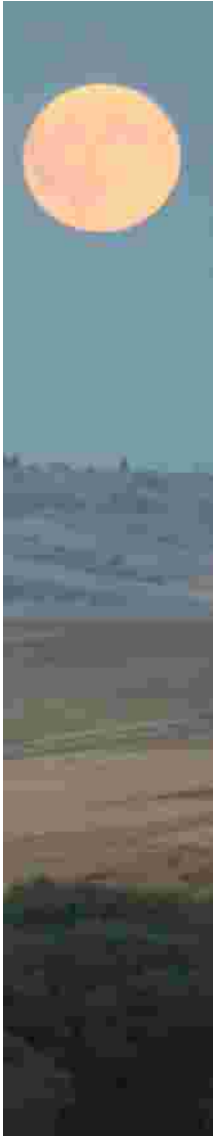
§ To take available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land user for conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources



- § 1930's Dust Bowl
- § Soil Conservation Act of 1935
- § SCS now NRCS
- § Competition between agencies
- § Local leadership needed
- § Model Conservation District Law
- § 1939 Washington State Legislature passed RCW 89.08

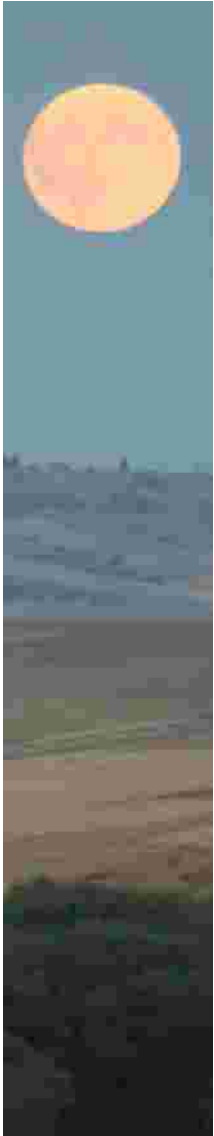


- i Conservation Districts are local government
- i Conservation Districts receive programs and funding from the Legislature
- i RCW 89.08 authorizes the mission and management of a conservation district
- i Local governance provided by your five-member Board of Supervisors

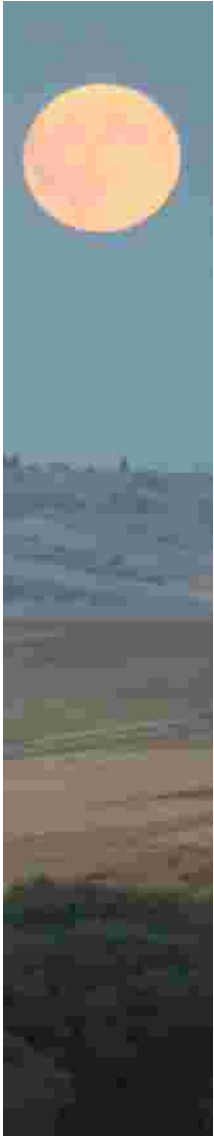


## i RCW 89.08

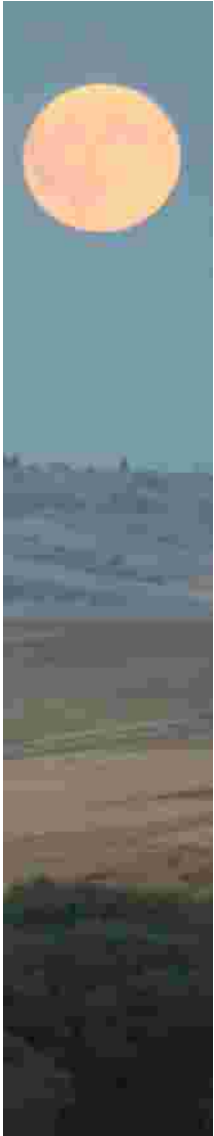
A conservation district organized under the provisions of this...act shall constitute a governmental subdivision of this state and a public body corporate and politic exercising public powers...and the supervisors thereof, shall have the following powers...



- i Conduct surveys, investigations and research
- i Conduct educational & demonstration projects
- i Carry out preventative and control measures
- i Cooperate, or enter into agreements with and to furnish financial or other aid to, any agency, governmental or otherwise, or any occupier of lands within the district . . .
- i Prepare and keep current a comprehensive long-range program
- i Prepare an annual work plan

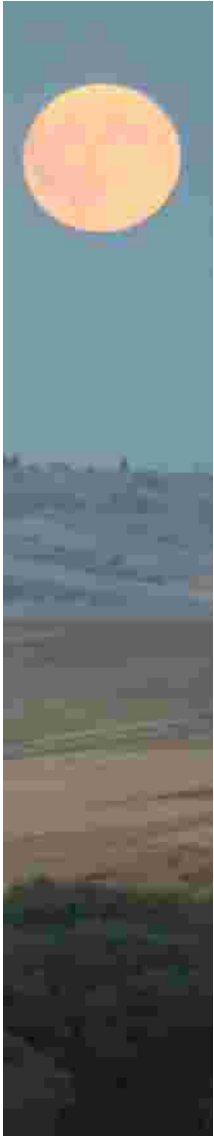


- i Hold public hearings
- i Plans, developed by each district...shall have official status
- i Administer any project or program concerned with the conservation of renewable natural resources
- i Cooperate and enter into joint arrangements with other (conservation) districts.
- i Accept donations, gifts, and contributions in money, services, materials, or otherwise
- i Designate an area, state, and national association of conservation districts as a coordinating entity...




- i Conservation districts develop and implement programs to protect and conserve:
  - § Soil
  - § Water
  - § Prime and Unique Farmland
  - § Rangeland
  - § Woodland
  - § Wildlife
  - § Energy
  - § Other renewable natural resources on non-federal lands

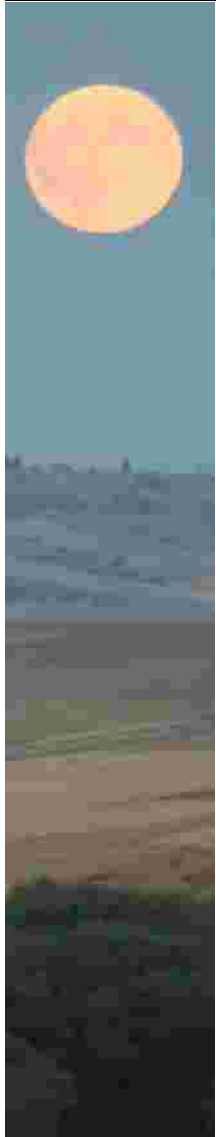




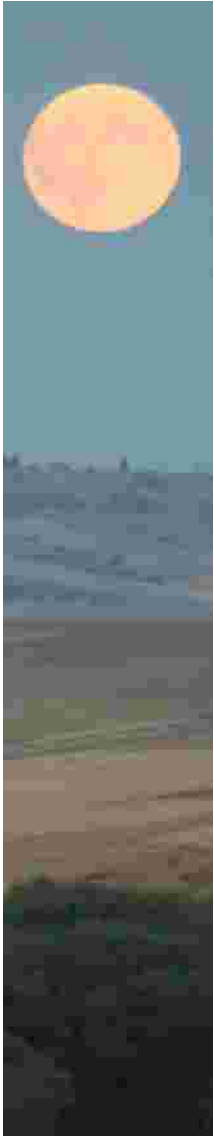
## i Basic Principles

- § Conservation should be led by local citizens
- § Final responsibility for conservation lies with the landowner
- § Landowners have legitimate operating goals
- § Responsive to both landowners and operators, and the community as a whole
- § The best agricultural land should be maintained for agriculture

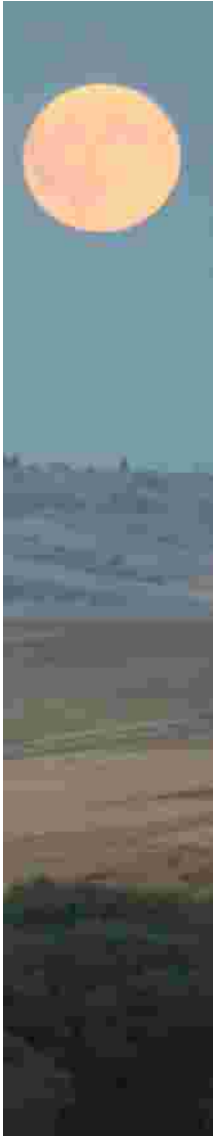
- 
- i Supervisors have three primary roles:
    - § Establish policy
      - ? Supervisors set direction through policy
      - ? Staff implements policies
    - § Hold people accountable
      - ? Staff, each other, partners, agencies, and others
    - § Work directly with decision makers
      - ? Local, state, tribal and federal legislators and agencies
      - ? Regional, state and national associations



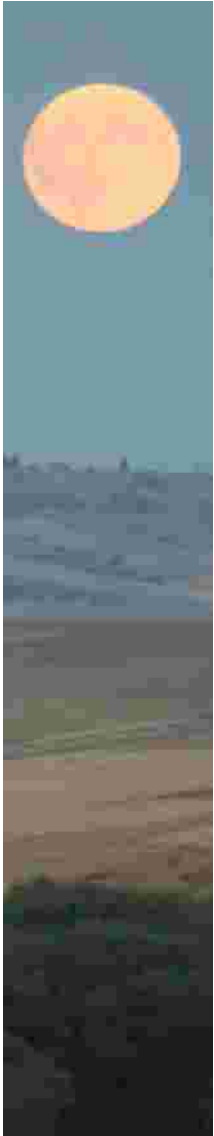
- i are public officials
- i may employ staff
- i shall determine staff duties and compensation
- i may delegate authority
- i shall provide records of all proceedings
- i shall provide for an annual audit
- i shall serve without compensation
- i shall not levy taxes or issue bonds



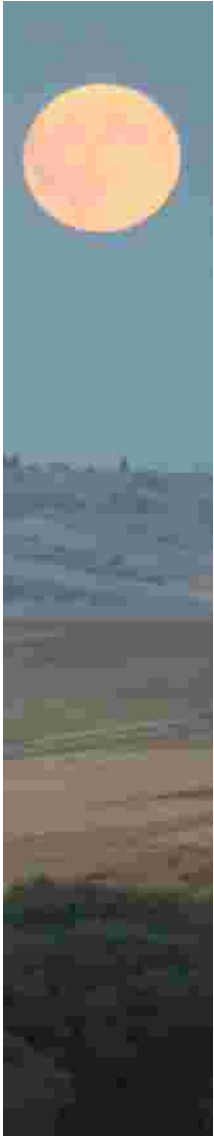
- Term of office is 3 years
- 12 regularly scheduled board meetings
- Committee and special meetings
- WACD area and state meetings
- Estimated average – 20 days per year



- i District Program
- i Education
- i Staff Supervision
- i Administration
- i Participation at local, state, regional and national levels



- i Personal satisfaction
- i Interaction with others
- i Critical input
- i Learning opportunities
- i Unique opportunity to make a real difference!



- i Conservation Districts can and should provide local leadership, knowledge and experience to protect natural resources



**Services to Land Occupiers**

**Conservation District Program**

***Resource  
Needs***

***Planning!***

***Resource  
Users***

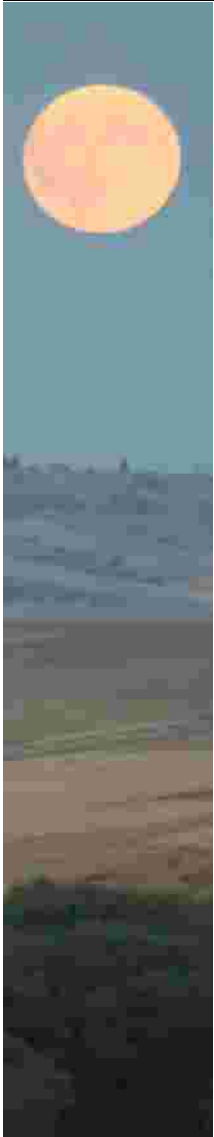
Federal  
Laws

State  
Laws

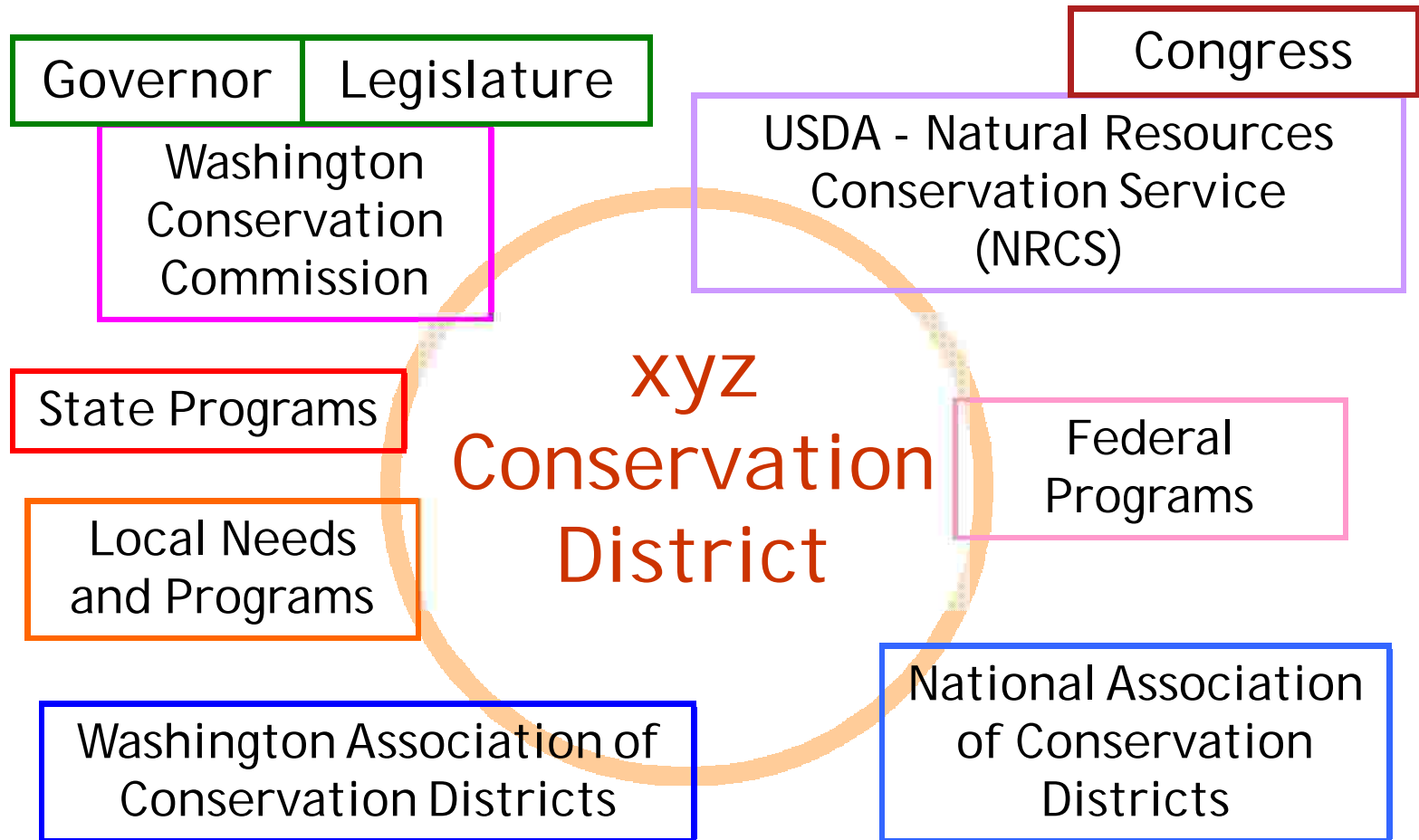
Local  
Ordinances

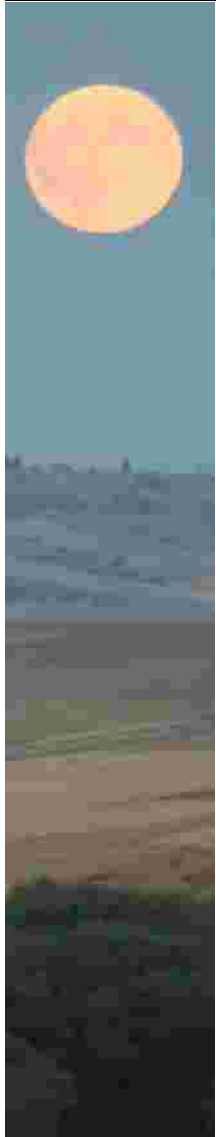
Available  
Resources





- i Values = what you care about
- i Vision = desired future condition
- i Mission = why your organization exists
- i Goals = achievable results
- i Program Areas = resource concerns
- i Annual Priorities = what is most important?
- i Annual Plan = schedule of tasks/activities
- i Track progress and revise = do it better





- i WACD – Washington Association of Conservation Districts
- i WSCC – Washington State Conservation Commission
- i NRCS – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- i Other local, state, federal and private organizations



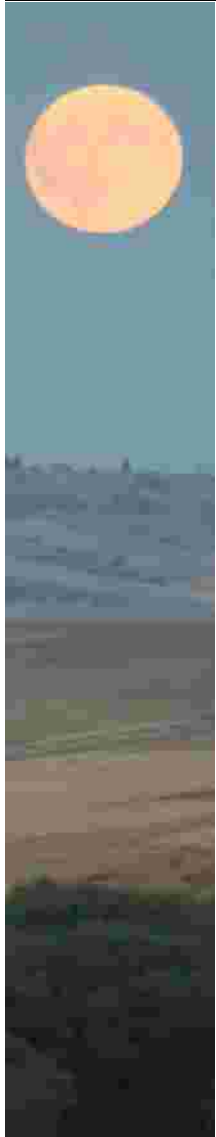
Individuals

Local Conservation District (5 supervisors)

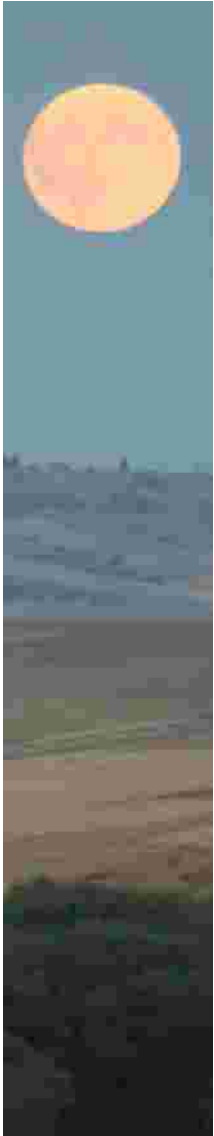
Area Associations (6 areas across state)

Washington Association of Conservation Districts  
(48 districts)

National Association of Conservation Districts  
(2946 districts)



- i Are non-governmental
- i Are not-for-profit organizations
- i Provide a combined voice
- i Pursue legislative and policy activity
- i Provide service to local districts



- i State Conservation Commission (WSCC)
  - § State agency providing money, services and guidance to Conservation Districts
- i The Commission is governed by a ten-member board
  - § Three elected by conservation districts, plus the WACD president
  - § Two appointed by governor
  - § Four appointed by directors of Agriculture, Ecology, Natural Resources, WSU
- i Commission duties and authority provided in RCW 89.08



- i Assist in coordinating district programs statewide
- i Provide financial and technical assistance
- i Assist with projects, practices, budgets, contracts, laws and regulations, programs, plans
- i Disseminate information concerning activities and programs of districts
- i Assist districts with exercising their powers spelled out in district law



Basic framework  
for cooperation  
with USDA

Mutual  
Agreement

Signed by:

- § Secretary
- § Governor and/or Tribal Council
- § District and/or Tribe

Basic framework  
for state  
cooperation

Cooperative  
Working  
Agreement

Signed by:

- NRCS
- State conservation agency and/or Tribal Council
- District and/or Tribe

Locally developed  
detailed working  
arrangements

Operational  
Agreement

Signed by:

- NRCS
- District
- Others as deemed necessary by district





Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources

Chief NRCS

Regional Conservationist - West (regional staff)

State Conservationist (state staff)

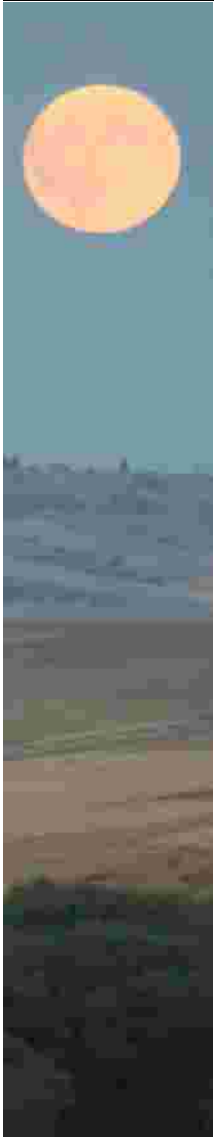
Area Conservationist (area staff)

District Conservationist (field office staff)

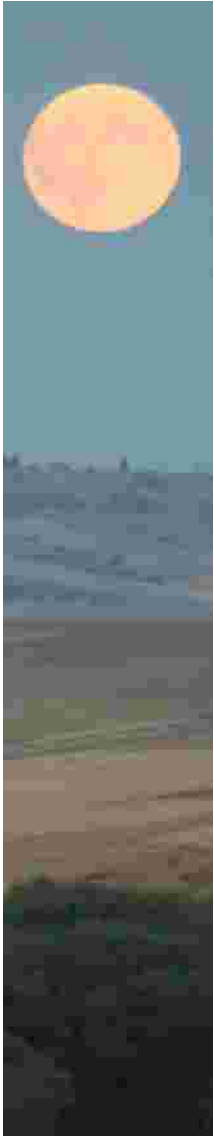
Resource Conservationist (field office staff)



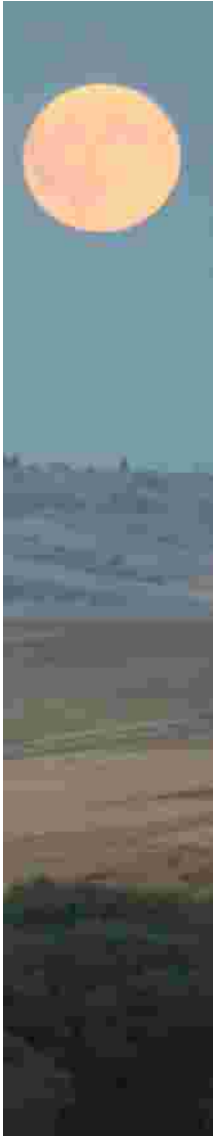
- i District Supervisors must set overall direction for district employees
- i All administration of employees is the responsibility of the conservation district board
- i One district supervisor should be the primary liaison between the board and district employees ("contact supervisor")



- i Orientation sessions should be provided to all new employees
- i Job descriptions should be clearly written and roles clearly understood between district employees and NRCS personnel
- i District officials should plan workloads with their employees and NRCS personnel
- i Performance reviews for employees should be done regularly



- i Legislature & RCW provide limited authority
- i Board governs District within scope of authority
- i District staff perform work as directed by Board



- i Board members do not govern, either through lack of knowledge or lack of commitment
- i Board members micromanage staff. The Board must set policy and enforce it. Employees serve at the will of the Board, not the other way around.
- i Board members are not active in representing the work and needs of the District with other decision makers at all levels. As public officials, you are more credible than your staff when talking with elected officials!

