



ALABAMA
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS

OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS THAT MATTER

BUILDING STRONG,
ACCOUNTABLE, AND EFFECTIVE
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

4 KEY AREAS FOR BUILDING A HIGH-PERFORMING DISTRICT

SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

EFFECTIVE BOARD LEADERSHIP

STRONG & EMPOWERED STAFF

INFORMED & ENGAGED DECISION MAKERS

SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT: SMART RESERVES

REMEMBER: IDLE FUNDS
DON'T SERVE YOUR
MISSION—INVEST IN
IMPACT!

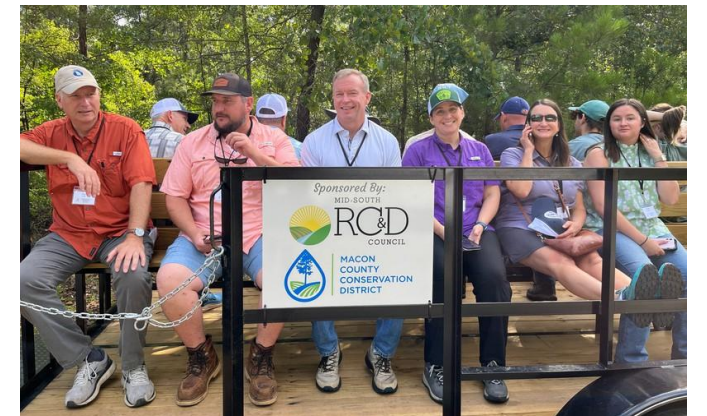
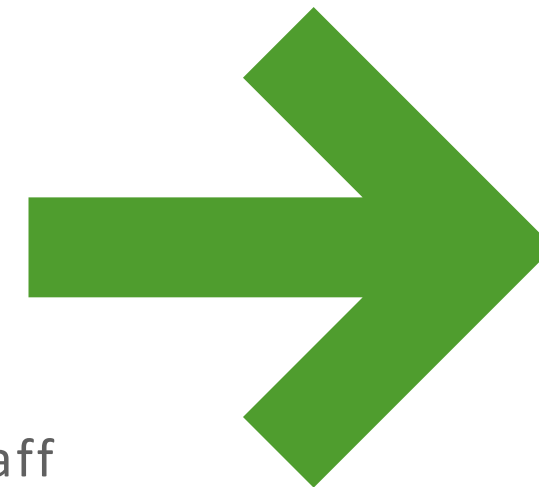
Maintain no more than 2-3
years of reserve funds for
cash flow stability

Develop a clear spending
plan for funds above that
threshold

Refer to the Supervisor
Handbook - Powers &
Responsibilities

Possible Investments

- Demonstration projects
- Technical or part-time staff
- Rental equipment
- Specialized conservation plans
- Landowner field days
- Classroom Education
- Support local FFA Chapters



SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT: DIVERSIFY FUNDING SOURCES

Create a sustainable, multi-source funding model

Look beyond a single funding stream

Strengthen partnerships



- ✓ ATP (Assisting NRCS)
- ✓ County Commission
- ✓ RC&D Councils
- ✓ Community Grants

EFFECTIVE BOARD LEADERSHIP: ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE



PARTICIPATION IN CIP

- Supervisors may apply for CIP cost share but must fully recuse from all related discussions, decisions, influence, and votes on all applications. That also applies for when an applicant is within the fourth degree of kinship (by blood or marriage)
- Supervisors may not approve, authorize, or sign payments related to CIP if they or a family member (within the fourth degree of kinship) have been approved
- All funding decisions are made independently to ensure fairness, transparency, and public trust

EFFECTIVE BOARD LEADERSHIP: ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE



HIRING PROCESS

- Supervisors fully recuse from all hiring discussions and decisions when a candidate is within the fourth degree of kinship (by blood or marriage)
- Supervisors recuse from supervision, evaluation, promotion, or discipline of related employees
- Personnel committees may be designated to oversee employment matters
- All hiring decisions reviewed to ensure policy and legal compliance

EFFECTIVE BOARD LEADERSHIP: DEVELOP A RECRUITMENT & RETENTION PLAN

Ask these questions:

Does one of your supervisors plan to retire in 3-5 years?

Do we have a plan for recruiting new supervisors?

Do we have a designated advisor or mentor?

Aim for a diverse board that reflects your communities range of views, skills and backgrounds

Recognize and appreciate current supervisors to improve retention



EFFECTIVE BOARD LEADERSHIP: BOARD PARTICIPATION



Effective participation looks like:

- Regular attendance and engagement at board meetings
 - Visible support at district events and local outreach activities
 - Representation at area and state meetings to stay informed and connected
 - Preparedness and follow-through on decisions and responsibilities
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Results:

- Improves governance and accountability
- Strengthens staff support and morale
- Enhances credibility with partners and decision makers
- Helps ensure the district remains efficient and audit-ready

STRONG & EMPOWERED STAFF: MAKE TRAINING A PRIORITY

- Ongoing professional development
- Area and state training participation
- Up-to-date program and compliance knowledge

KEY PERSPECTIVE:
TRAINING IS AN
INVESTMENT, NOT AN
EXPENSE

ACDEA Annual Workshop & Area Trainings



Monthly DAC Training



AACD Area Meetings & Annual Meeting



STRONG & EMPOWERED STAFF: EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

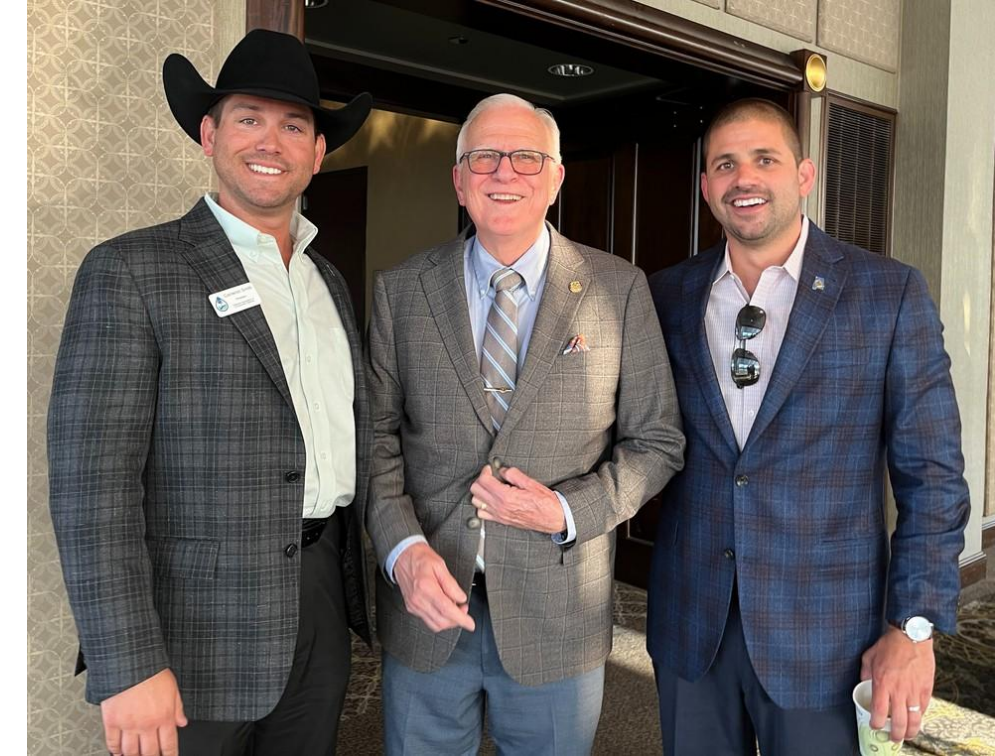
Best Management Practices:

- Use ALSWCC-approved performance review worksheet
- Conduct and document reviews annually
- Set clear performance standards
- Compensation aligned with performance
- All pay actions documented in board minutes

Results:

- Ensures fair, consistent, and documented employee evaluations
- Clarifies performance expectations and accountability
- Encourages improved performance and employee development
- Rewards productivity
- Strengthens transparency, compliance, and board oversight





INFORMED & ENGAGED DECISION MAKERS

KEY POINT:
VISIBILITY BUILDS SUPPORT

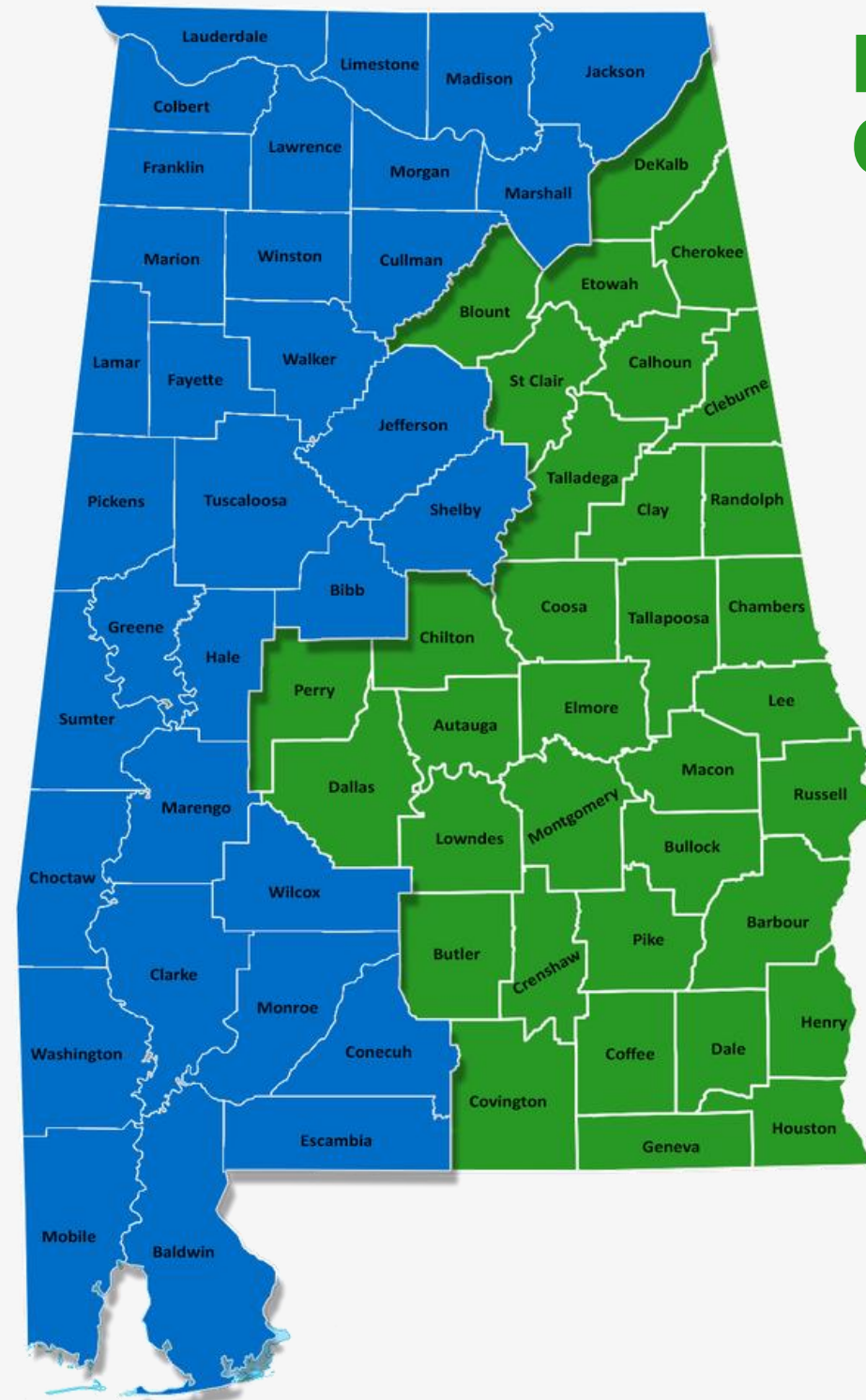
Build relationships with elected officials at all levels.

Keep legislators informed about local conservation successes and needs.

Invite decision makers to field days and events to see conservation in action

QUESTIONS?

West Region (Areas 1, 3 & 6)
Rhonda Bryars



East Region (Areas 2, 4 & 5)
CASSANDRA GUILFORD

STATE STAFF
DIRECTORY

