Unifying Outreach Across Alabama's Conservation Districts



ALABAMA
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS

Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Districts



Improved Communication

- Often hear....“We don’t do a very good job of telling our story or letting people know who we are or what we do.”
- In Alabama, that frustration was the catalyst for trying something new.



District-Focused

- Shifted emphasis to positioning districts as the “front door” for conservation in Alabama.
- Rebranding “Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Districts”
- Goal: Strengthen the visibility and credibility of the districts while creating unified messaging across the state.

Ready to Use

I’ll share how we built a district-focused campaign using Canva templates and outreach kits to equip districts with cohesive, ready-to-use messaging.

Challenges

1.

Capacity

DACs wear many hats, and some may not be strong communicators or may view communication as a lower priority among their daily responsibilities.

2.

Resources

Districts face challenges due to limited tools and expertise.

3.

Cohesive Messaging

Statewide messaging lacked consistency, making it harder to build a unified identity.

CANVA

One successful strategy for tackling these challenges was leveraging a simple but powerful tool: Canva

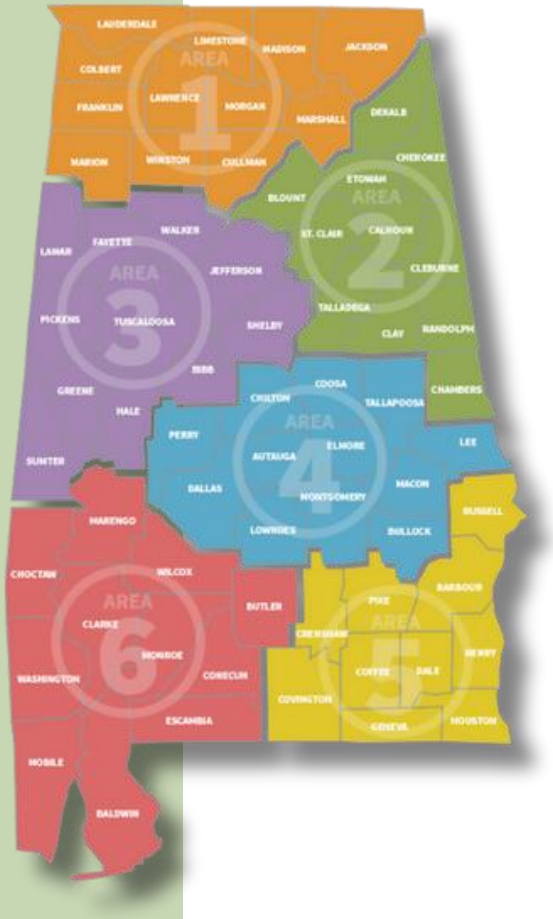
- Canva is an online graphic design platform.
- It allows people to create a wide range of visual content: Social media posts, Presentations, Flyers, Annual Reports, and more.
- It offers thousands of pre-made templates, stock images, fonts, icons, and design elements.
- No advanced design skills are needed.
- Exceptional platform for collaboration, design sharing and maintaining brand identity across all team-created content.

ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

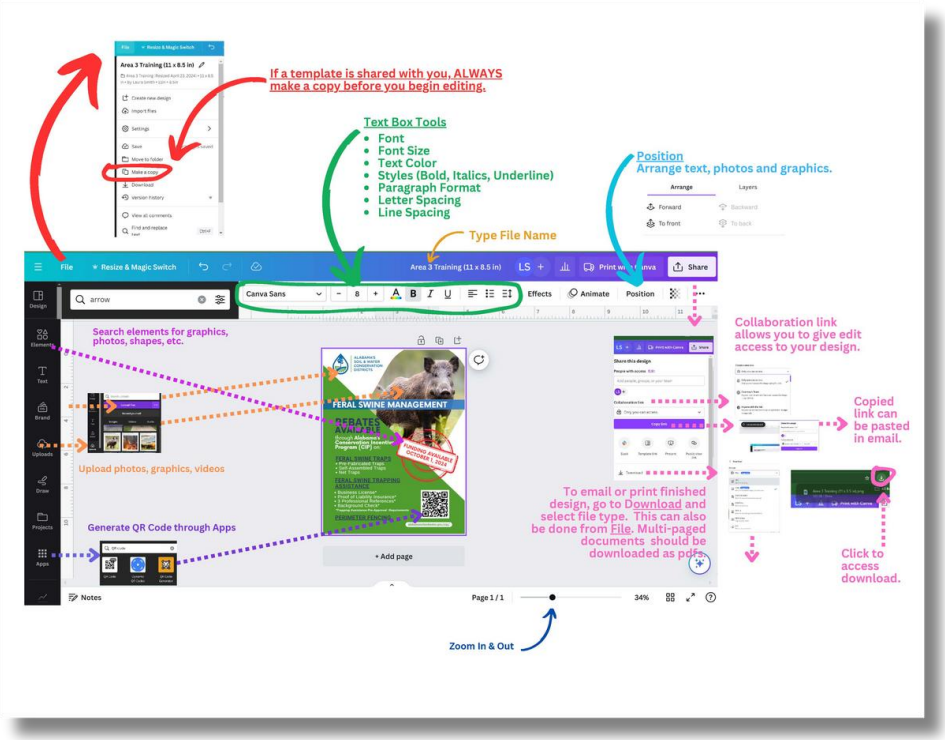
Partnering with Association

- AACD Canva Team established with association and state agency staff
- Nonprofit eligibility (via AACD's 501(c)(3) status) gave access to Canva's Nonprofit Team
- Benefit: 50 FREE Canva Pro accounts (application required)
- Offered to districts starting April 2024 and reached full 50 accounts by June 2025
- Expansion: Additional Canva Teams account created for districts ($100/year per member, 3-member minimum)

Roll Out



- 8 Trainings Throughout the State
- Provided Tips and Tricks Guides
- Some hand-holding/individual help, but rare



Custom Materials

Since August 2023, we've produced ready-to-use messaging:



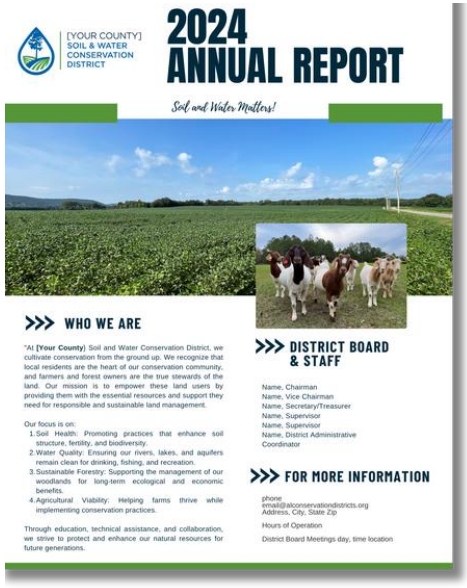
Customizable Templates

Social media posts, event notices, and flyers promoting our Conservation Incentive Program (state cost-share)



Generic Templates

For non-Canva users: Generic templates branded with the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Districts logo and a QR code linking to our district directory on the website.



Annual Report

A plug-and-play 4-page annual report template—districts just swap in their data and photos.

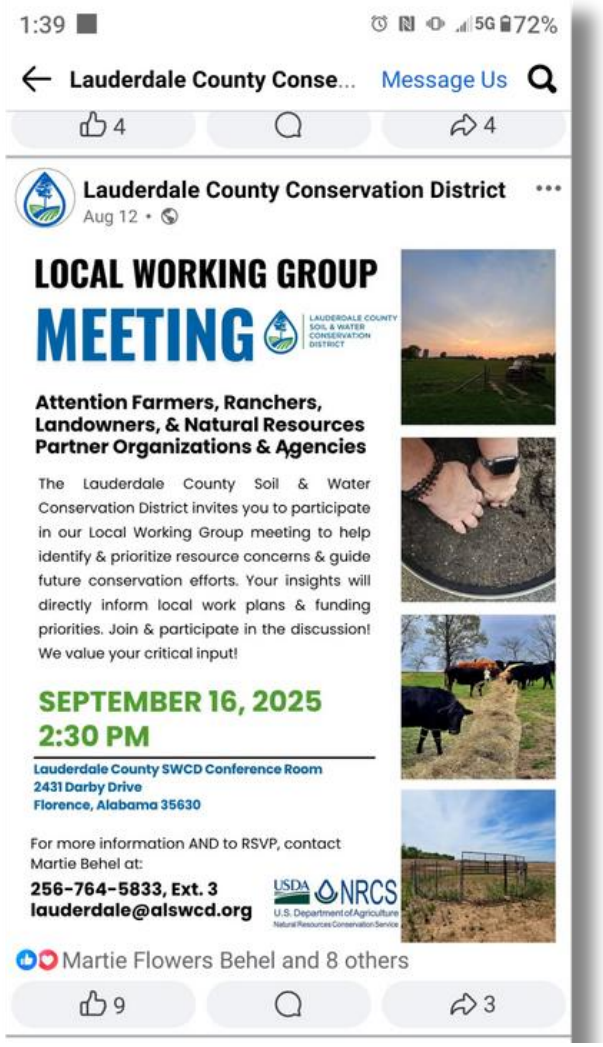


Outreach Kits

Example:
Alabama Irrigation Initiative (Middle Alabama River) Kit included press release, watershed map, producer questionnaire, social media posts and flyer.

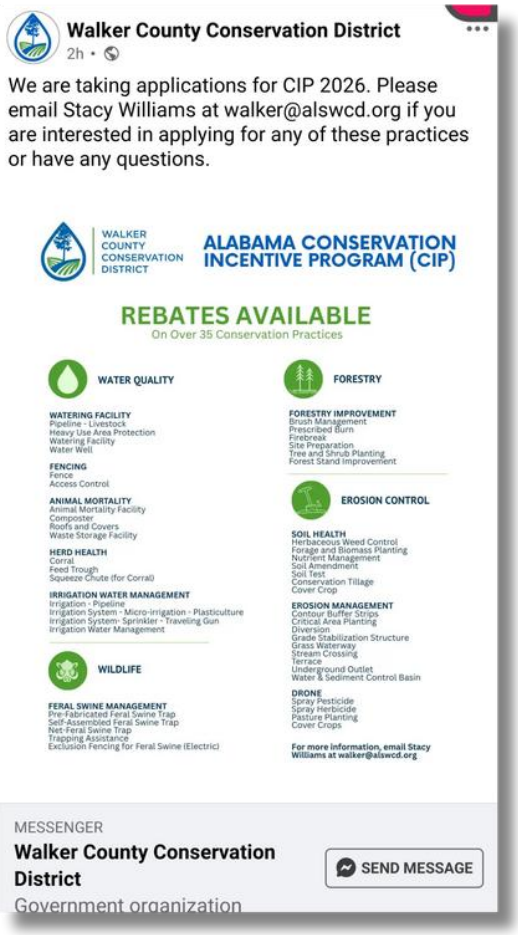
Templates in Use

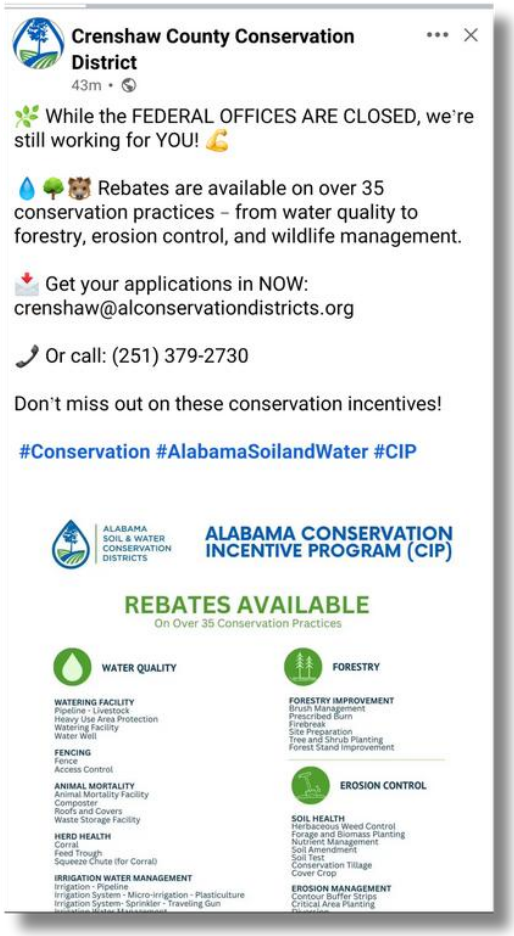




Templates In Use







Results and Impact

1.

Adoption Stats

Today, 63% of our 67 districts (that's 42 teams) have active Canva Pro accounts—a testament to the tool's accessibility and our efforts to encourage adoption.

2.

Shift in Content Creation

Districts are now producing original, tailored content instead of recycling generic shares. This has boosted engagement, with more cohesive branding.

3.

Broader Benefits

DAC confidence in outreach and communications; easier collaboration between districts and state office; and a measurable uptick in outreach and landowner engagement.

ALABAMA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Take Away

- Leveraging a tool like Canva turns communication challenges into district empowerment—driving cohesive, local-first messaging.
- Make training available as needed.
- Work with your state association to unlock 50 free Pro accounts.

Questions?

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