

Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts  
Annual Meeting – January 13, 2009

# “Promises Made – Promises Kept” Idea Sharing Session

# Objective

- Participants receive new ideas and share ideas for use in their district on using plans and reports for successful district program implementation

# 6 Ideas for Implementation

## “Promises Made – Promises Kept”

1. The “Power” of Planning, Budgeting, Reporting
2. Utilizing Your “Conservation District Law”
3. Involving “Important People” & Organizations
4. Something to “Measure”
5. “Upgrade” Each Year
6. Sharing Plans & Accomplishments with Important People, Organizations & Media

# Function

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

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# The “Power” of Planning, Budgeting, Reporting

# Imagine When .....

- Key decision makers and partners know conservation districts well, and know that we are the best converters of time, money, and energy into conservation work completed, because....
- The report of accomplishments for conservation in the state was the combination of the incredible annual reports by conservation districts (built one district at a time), and.....

# Imagine When .....

- Your district's long-range business plan along with 91 other business plans....
- Was the basis for our state funding decision packets, budgets, staffing plans, programs, multi-year agreements and....
- Our data collected and shared is what local and state decision makers depended upon for natural resources decisions....

# Imagine When .....

- Annually the state conservation plan for private land conservation services was the combined annual plans of conservation districts, and...
- Key decision makers and partners know us so well because of 92 stories of accomplishment that.....
- Because we have the best planning and reporting system in America!!!

# Why Important

- Engaged in State Government Priorities Process
- Reflect Conservation District Needs and Priorities
- 92 – long range business plans will be reflected – decision packets, funding proposals, staffing into a state-wide long range plan
- 92 – annual plans into a state plan
- 92 – annual reports into a state report of accomplishment

# Effective Planning & Reporting

Long Range  
Business Planning &  
Natural Resource  
Inventory

Budgets, Personnel,  
Decision Packets

Annual Reporting of  
Accomplishments

Annual Planning

# Importance of Planning Starts with Long Range Plan

## **ARTICLE 32. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION**

### **-- Chapter 5. Powers and Duties of Districts**

- (8) Develop or participate in the development of comprehensive plans for the proper management of soil and water resources within the district that specify the acts, procedures, performances, and avoidances necessary or desirable for the effectuation of the plans.
- (9) Publish plans and information developed under subdivision (8) and bring the plans and information to the attention of land occupiers within the district.

# Long Range Business Plan Contents

- Organization & Background
- Function
- We Serve & Why
- Mission, Vision
- Values
- Natural Resource Priorities & Goals
- Critical Geographic Areas
- Natural Resource Data & Maps
- Information-Education Priorities & Goals
- District Operations Priorities & Goals
- Trends
- Strategies to Address Trends
- Staffing Needs
- Annual Budget Needs
- Key Decision Makers
- Priority Actions

# Natural Resource Inventory & Long Range Business Planning

- Natural resource conditions & needs
- Data sets from private, local, state, and federal sources
- Examples – existing data sets
  - Limited Factors Analysis
  - 303d water quality listings
  - Fecal coliform count data
  - Endangered & threatened species habitat
  - PM-10 air quality data
  - In-stream flow data
  - Land use issues & conversion data
  - Local Work Group priorities
  - Other

# Long Range Business Planning

- Linkage to Annual Plan & Annual Report formats
- Linkage to existing natural resource data sets in your district
- [Example](#)

# Annual Planning

- Uses for the Annual Plan
- Links long range goals & mission to the plans for the year
- Time and money estimates linked to budget and workload
- Flexible design – program areas unique each district
- [Example](#)

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# Utilizing Your “Conservation District Law”

# Indiana Code 14-32

## SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

- A district constitutes a governmental subdivision of the state and a public body corporate and politic exercising public powers.

# Powers & Duties of Districts

- Soil Erosion & Water Runoff Projects
- Structures
- Agreements & Financial or Other Aid
- Real or Personal Property
- Materials, Equipment for Land Occupiers
- Comprehensive Plans
- Administer Projects
- Manage Projects
- Accept Donations, Contributions

# Powers & Duties of Districts

- Sue or be sued
- Perpetual Succession
- Contracts
- Rules & Regulations
- Occupier of Land Services, Contributions
- Cooperate with State
- Serve a Management Agency
- Landfills

# May NOTs

- Eminent Domain
- Incur Indebtedness
- Issue Bonds
- Contributions by Exactions or Persuasions
- Engage in Marketing Farm Products, Buy & Sell Farm Supplies (other than conservation)
- Engage in Agricultural Research or Extension Teaching (unless with Purdue)

# Examples



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# Involving “Important People” & Organizations

# Definition of Public Relations

- The process by which an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other.

# Guiding Principles for PR

- People support messages that affect them personally. Make it relevant.
- People buy ideas that improve their situation. Ask them to do something.
- People respond to practical, clear ideas. Focus on one idea.
- People form opinions more on events than by words. Hold an event.

# Ideas for Involving Important People

- Identify & List the Important Decision Makers in your district impacting conservation work
- Focus question “If we could involve only one important person, who would it be, then another, ....”

# Ideas for Involving Important People

- Host an event where key people / organizations are invited to plan with your district
  - Identify Natural Resource Conservation Priorities
  - Identify Geographic Area Priorities
  - Identify Potential Projects
- Utilize the information to upgrade your long range business plan, annual plan
- Share accomplishments with this group annually & get input again...

# Benefits from Involving Important People



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# Something to “Measure”

# Statements of Intent

- By {date} the {natural resource measurable outcome}
  - xx conservation plans developed
  - xx acres with conservation systems implemented
  - xx sediment reduced

# Benefits for Measurables

- District board members and staff establish what to measure
- Establishes a “threshold” by district board
- Gives clarity for potential funders, partners & “important people”
- Utilize as a tool for organizing board meetings
- Basis for Annual Budgets
- Makes evaluations more effective

# Considerations

- Use existing resource data sets
- Set accomplishable goals – plus a “little” more
- Measurements will get better and more meaningful each year – annual upgrade
- Tie to performance measures, compensation, reporting
- “Promises Made – Promises Kept”

# Budgeting

- Utilize the measurables included in long range and annual plans as a basis for annual budgets submitted to potential funders
  - xx conservation plans developed – xx hours times employee composite rate plus related expenses = \$xx
  - xx acres with conservation systems implemented – xx hours times employee composite rate plus related expenses = \$xx
  - xx sediment reduced – xx hours times employee composite rate plus related expenses = \$xx

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# “Upgrade” Each Year

# Annual Planning Day

- Host an annual planning / evaluation work session (3 hours) for important people in the district for reporting progress, and receiving input on district program and priorities for the upcoming year
- Input to be used during district board and staff planning meeting (full day)

# District Evaluation / Planning Day - Annually

- Set aside one full day per year for district program evaluation, upgrading the long range business plan, and developing ideas for the annual plan of work and annual budget
- Expect to draft ideas on the work day – brought forward by staff at the next board meeting for review and/or approval
- Use each meeting for updates on progress using the measures selected by the district board

# Budgeting

- Utilize the measurable annual plans as a basis for annual budgets submitted to potential funders
  - xx conservation plans developed – xx hours times employee composite rate plus related expenses = \$xx
  - xx acres with conservation systems implemented – xx hours times employee composite rate plus related expenses = \$xx
  - xx sediment reduced – xx hours times employee composite rate plus related expenses = \$xx

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# Sharing Plans & Accomplishments with Important People, Organizations & Media

# Public Outreach

“90 percent of good public relations is doing the job right; the other 10 percent is telling people about it.”

# Plans Shared

- Using your listing of important people / organizations – send your long range business plan for information & a request
- “What will you do to help our district achieve the important conservation work in our plan”
- Send to all levels of the organizations / agencies

# Annual Reporting

- Accomplishments on the Landscape
- Brief format – 2 page
- [Example](#)

# Ideas to Implement in Our District

- Small group discussion, sharing and listing ideas to be implemented by each district.

# Board Works by Ledgerwood

## Ray Ledgerwood

Owner

1260 SE Harvest Drive

Pullman, WA 99163

Telephone 509.332.2218

Cell 208.301.4728

Email [rayledgerwood@msn.com](mailto:rayledgerwood@msn.com)