

**CORONADO
SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
POLICY HANDBOOK**



**Adopted by the Board of Supervisors
Coronado Soil & Water Conservation District
October 1, 2013**

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PREFACE

The purpose of this handbook is to inform employees and the board of supervisors of standard operating policies and procedures by which the Coronado SWCD abides. Nothing contained in this handbook is intended to create a contract of employment and may be modified at the SWCD's discretion.

Although this handbook covers many topics, there may be situations that are not covered or included. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these topics or any other situations that may arise, please contact the Chairman to discuss your concerns.

Please read through the following policies and become familiar with them. Upon completion, please fill out and sign the next page. In doing so, you acknowledge you have read and understand Coronado SWCD's policy and procedure manual and will abide by it.



STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received a copy of the Coronado SWCD Policy Handbook and acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read and follow the policies, practices, rules, and regulations as a condition of my obligations as a Coronado SWCD Supervisor.

Signature

Date

To be signed and given to District Manager or Chairman for filing in official records.





ACRONYMS

NMDA – New Mexico Department of Agriculture
NMACD – New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts
NMCCD – New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts
SWCD – Soil and Water Conservation Districts
NRCS – Natural Resource Conservation Service
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
SWCC – Soil and Water Conservation Commission
NMSU – New Mexico State University
RC&D – Resource Conservation and Development
SWCD Act/ District Act – Soil and Water Conservation District Act
NMSA – New Mexico Statutes Annotated
FMLA – Family and Medical Leave Act
NMAC – New Mexico Administrative Code
NACD – National Association of Conservation Districts
NASCA – National Association of State Conservation Agencies
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency
NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act



HISTORY

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) were developed in response to the 1930s Dust Bowl. The “Dirty Thirties” was a period where dust storms filled the skies of the United States (U.S.). A decade of over plowing top soil and lack of proper soil management in the Great Plains along with severe drought conditions created the perfect habitat for extreme dust storms to exist. The lack of natural soil anchors allowed for the soil to be picked up and blown away; blackened skies were reported as far as the East Coast. The dust bowl not only caused major ecological damage but it also caused economic damage and displaced many families.

In 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt began to implement programs designed to conserve soil and bring ecological balance back to the U.S. The Soil Conservation Act was passed in 1935. Its purpose was to “control floods, prevent impairment of reservoirs and maintain the navigability of rivers and harbors, protect public health and public lands, and relieve unemployment.” The Soil Conservation Act allowed farmers to collect subsidies when they used ecologically friendly practices that promoted soil conservation and erosion prevention.

The development of conservation districts followed later. Conservation districts are aimed at enlisting the cooperation of landowners and land users in carrying out practices and policies listed in the act.

The Coronado SWCD

The Coronado SWCD was organized in the 1940’s. It covers eastern Sandoval County and includes the Town of Bernalillo, the Pueblos of Cochiti, Santa Ana, San Felipe, Santo Domingo, and Sandia, and the communities of Pena Blanca, Sile, Angostura, Algodones, Placitas, La Madera, San Pedro Estates, as well as outlying areas.

Mission Statement

The function of Coronado SWCD is to take available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so they meet the conservation needs of the local land user.

Goals of the Coronado SWCD:

- **Control and prevent soil erosion**
- **Prevent flood water and sediment damage**
- **Further the conservation, development, beneficial application, and proper disposal of water**
- **Promote the use of impounded water**
- **Conserve and develop the natural resources of the state**



CODE OF CONDUCT

Coronado SWCD Supervisors hold office for the benefit of the public. They are bound to uphold and abide by the District Act and to observe the highest standards in the exercise of the powers and duties of office. District Supervisors are to impartially carry out duties, to discharge faithfully the duties of the SWCD regardless of personal consideration or private interests, and to practice and teach soil and water conservation as the primary objective.

District Supervisors are to maintain high levels of honesty, integrity, and impartiality and conduct themselves in an overall professional manner. It is the District Supervisor's duty to help fulfill the mission of Coronado SWCD. The best way to achieve the goals is through cooperation with other SWCD Supervisors, and other organizations.

Coronado SWCD promotes a safe environment where all District Supervisors can engage and participate in meetings, events, and projects without compromising health, safety, or wellness. It is the SWCD's policy and duty to prohibit acts that constitute bullying, threatening, or other hostile misconduct, as well as retaliation against persons who report such actions. In the event an incident is reported, it will be investigated. If such an incident or action is substantiated, appropriate corrective or disciplinary action will be taken.

- District Supervisors should participate in district board meetings and actions.
- District Supervisors should keep well-informed about developments relevant to issues that may come before the district board.
- District Supervisors should recognize that all authority is vested in the full district board only when it meets in legal sessions.
- District Supervisors should respect and support majority decisions of the district board.
- District Supervisors should not discuss the confidential proceedings of the district board outside of board meetings.
- District Supervisors should represent all those whom the district serves, not just a particular geographic area or interest group.
- District Supervisors should bring to the attention of the district board any issues that they believe will have an adverse effect on the district or those that the district serves.
- District Supervisors should declare conflicts of interest between personal life and their position on the district board, and abstain from voting or discussion when appropriate.
- District Supervisors should refer complaints to the proper level on the chain of command.
- District Supervisors should consider themselves a “trustee” of the district and do their best to ensure that it is well-maintained, financially secure, growing, and always operating in the best interests of those whom the district serves.
- District Supervisors should always work on how to do their jobs better.



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Office Hours of Operation

At this time regular office hours are not maintained. The office is open as is necessary. A regular board meeting will be held on the first Tuesday and the third Thursday of the month at 9:00 a.m. or at a time set by the board, located at 1500 Idalia Rd., Bldg. C, Bernalillo, New Mexico.

Disciplinary Procedures – District Supervisors

Ethical principles of public service are incorporated in the Code of Conduct [10-16-3 NMSA 1978].

A district supervisor may be removed from office by the Soil and Water Commission if it appears to the Commission, after reasonable notice and impartial hearing, that the supervisor is guilty of misfeasance or malfeasance in office [73-20-42 NMSA 1978].

A state agency may prescribe standards, in addition to those set forth in the Government Conduct Act and the general codes of conduct, that are appropriate to the function for which the agency was created [10-16-11.C. and 10-16-11.1 NMSA 1978].

The separate codes govern the conduct of the public officers and employees of that agency and shall, if violated, constitute cause for dismissal, demotion or suspension [10-16-11.C NMSA 1978].

Any county, precinct, district, city, town or village officer elected by the people, and any officer appointed to fill out the unexpired term of any such officer, may be removed from office on any of the grounds mentioned in Chapter 10. [10-4-1 NMSA 1978].

Discrimination/Sexual Harassment

Coronado SWCD provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and training.

Coronado SWCD expressly prohibits any form of unlawful employee or District Supervisor harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status.

Individuals reporting complaints, providing information, or cooperating with an investigation on any incident in good faith will not be retaliated against for their participation.



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Drug Free Workplace

The unlawful use, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol on Coronado SWCD property or while acting as an agent of the district is strictly prohibited. District Supervisors violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Timekeeping

Supervisors should report hours spent on District work to the District Manager for in-kind requirements.

Travel - Per Diem and Mileage Act

District Supervisors are reimbursed in accordance with the New Mexico Per Diem and Mileage Act [10-8-1 NMSA 1978].

Travel

All travel must be approved prior to travel date. Fill out and complete the travel approval form and submit to the SWCD board.

Violence in the Workplace

Coronado SWCD is committed to providing a safe and violence-free work place. District Supervisors should immediately report any acts of violence as well as potential threats from coworkers, members of the public, District Supervisors, or any other person to their supervisor or other District Supervisor. District Supervisors who engage in any act of violence or make any type of threat (verbal, physical, or other) will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. See [73-20-42 NMSA 1978].

Examples of bullying, violence, and other hostile misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Name calling or graphic statements, which may be transmitted via e-mail, cell phone, or written statements
- Threats of harm, both physical and emotional, or actual harm or humiliation
- Physical abuse: hitting, shoving, slapping, etc.
- Yelling, screaming, or use of demeaning or derogatory names or terms
- Threats aimed at family or other closely related persons

Although situations will arise where there is disagreement, it is expected that individuals will conduct themselves in a professional manner.



SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Brief Overview: Open Meetings Act [Chapter 10, Article 15, NMSA 1978]

District meetings are “open” so the public can know (a) what actions are taken and decisions made, and (b) the information and bases on which decisions are made.

Recommended Notice Times for Meetings:

Regular Meeting – 10 days

Special Meeting – 3 days

Emergency Meeting – 24 hours

If a public body meets regularly on a specific date, time, and place 10 days advance notice is not required, as long as the information is included in the notice resolution and the resolution is made available to the public.

Meeting notices shall include an agenda (or information on how to obtain an agenda) listing specific business items. The agenda must be available to the public 72 hours prior to the meeting; items added later can be discussed but not voted on.

Closed/Executive Sessions:

- Require a roll call vote to close the session
- Motion must state the exception to the Open Meetings Act that allows the closed session
- Only the subjects announced in the motion may be discussed
- Subjects that may be discussed during a closed/executive session are limited to:
 1. Section 10-15-1 (H) (2) for limited personnel matters, meaning the discussion of hiring, promotion, demotion, dismissal, assignment or resignation of or the investigation or consideration of complaints or charges against any public employee.
 2. Section 10-15-1(H) (6) for the Board to discuss the contents of competitive sealed proposals solicited pursuant to the Procurement Code (state the RFP)
 3. Section 10-15-1 (H) (7) for the District supervisors to discuss pending litigation and involving communications between the Board and an attorney.
 4. Section 10-15-1 (H) (8) for the Board to discuss the purchase, acquisition, or disposal of real property or water right by the board (Then state name of the topic to be discussed)
- Minutes are not taken in closed session
- A vote can't be taken in closed session. Actions must be made during open session.



SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Chairing Meetings

The chair has inherent, often legally-defined authority during district meetings to:

- Keep order.
- Impose reasonable restrictions on debate and participation and set time limits.
- Regulate or disallow public input.
- Remove disruptive persons, including district officials.
- Enforce "ground rules" or Robert's Rules of Order, when necessary.
- Enforce district meeting policies.

Open Meetings Act Requirements For Minutes

- How every district official voted must be recorded in the minutes. Individual names need not be given each time if it is obvious how each voted by how the minutes are written. For example, if five members are cited as present at the meeting, and all five vote the same way, the vote can be recorded as "unanimous."
- Meeting minutes are not transcripts of "he said, she said." Detailed dialogue may be necessary only when essential to understanding an issue. Minutes should be as short as possible, primarily recording official actions taken.
- A draft copy of the minutes is required to be prepared within 10 working days of the meeting. Draft copies must be available for public inspection and should clearly indicate that they are not the official minutes and are subject to approval.

Other Meetings Rules

- The chair should prepare the proposed agenda. Changes can be made up until it is approved but items added within 24 hours of the meeting will be for discussion only.
- All actions require a vote. Consensus is not allowed. Voting must be open, visible, and audible (never in secret). Exceptions exist for executive sessions.
- The chair **should vote**. Chairs can also make motions and participate in discussion, i.e., generally participate as any other district official.

Quorum: majority of the members

- No quorum = no action can be taken, only discussion. As a committee it is not subject to the Open Meetings Act requirements.
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SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Procurement Code [Chapter 13 NMSA 1978, and Title 1, Chapter 4 NMAC]

Purchasing Tangible Items:

- Less than \$20,000 Obtain the best price
- \$20,001 - \$60,000 Three written quotes
- More than \$60,000 Formal sealed proposals

Request for proposals:

- Professional services
 - Less than \$60,000 Three written quotes
 - \$60,001 or more Formal sealed proposals
- Regular services
 - Less than \$20,000 Best price
 - \$20,001 or more Sealed proposals
- Landscape or surveying services
 - Less than \$10,000 Three written quotes
 - \$10,001 or more Formal sealed proposals

In addition, there are rules to prevent fraud on how property owned by a SWCD may be sold or otherwise disposed of.



