103C.332 SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS; DUTIES AND SERVICES.

Subdivision 1. **Duties.** In addition to any other duty prescribed by law, soil and water conservation districts must:

(1) respond to and provide technical and financial assistance to landowners to maintain and improve the quality, quantity, distribution, and sustainability of natural resources, including surface water, groundwater, soil, and ecological resources;

(2) provide technical assistance in implementing the soil erosion law under sections 103F.401 to 103F.48;

(3) arrange for employees to serve on technical evaluation panels to implement the wetland laws as required under section 103G.2242;

(4) locally administer the reinvest in Minnesota reserve program under section 103F.515 and rules adopted thereunder, using knowledge of local resources to manage each easement to maximize environmental benefits;

(5) participate in administering the Wetland Conservation Act as provided under sections 103G.221 to 103G.2375, either in an advisory capacity or as the designated local government unit administering the program;

(6) participate in the local water management program under chapter 103B, either in an advisory capacity or as the designated local government unit administering the program;

(7) participate, as appropriate, in the comprehensive watershed management planning program under section 103B.801;

(8) participate in disaster response efforts as provided in chapter 12A;

(9) provide technical recommendations to the Department of Natural Resources on general permit applications under section 103G.301;

(10) provide technical assistance and local administration of the agricultural water quality certification program under sections 17.9891 to 17.993;

(11) provide technical assistance for the agricultural land preservation program under chapter 40A, where applicable;

(12) maintain compliance with section 15.99 for deadlines for agency action;

(13) coordinate with appropriate county officials on matters related to electing soil and water conservation district supervisors; and

(14) cooperate to the extent possible with federal, state, and local agencies and with private organizations to avoid duplicating and to enhance implementing public and private conservation initiatives within the jurisdiction of the district.

Subd. 2. **Services provided.** To carry out the duties under subdivision 1 and implement the soil and water conservation policy of the state as stated in section 103C.005, soil and water conservation districts provide a range of services, including but not limited to:

(1) performing administrative services, including comprehensive and annual work planning, administering grants, leveraging outside funding, establishing fiscal accountability measures, reporting accomplishments, human resources management, and staff and supervisor development;

(2) entering into cooperative agreements with the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other United States Department of Agriculture agencies to leverage federal technical and financial assistance;

(3) providing technical expertise, including knowledge of local resources, performing technical evaluations and certifications, assessing concerns, and providing oversight in surveying, designing, and constructing conservation practices;

(4) providing information and education outreach, including increasing landowner awareness and knowledge of soil and water conservation program opportunities to protect soil and water resources and publicizing the benefits of soil and water conservation to the general public;

(5) facilitating regulatory processes for impacted landowners and providing technical review and comment on regulatory permits and development plans for regulations relating to soil and water conservation;

(6) administering projects and programs, including but not limited to the nonpoint source pollution abatement program; reinvest in Minnesota reserve conservation easements program; disaster response; local water management and comprehensive watershed management planning programs; and projects related to floodplains, lakes, streams and ditches, wetlands, upland resources, and groundwater resources, to maintain and improve the quality, quantity, distribution, and sustainability of natural resources, including surface water, groundwater, soil, and ecological resources;

(7) monitoring and inventorying to collect data that provide a baseline understanding of resource conditions and changes to the resources over time and analyzing and interpreting the data to support program implementation; and

(8) maintaining a modern technology infrastructure that facilitates planning and projects, including geographic information systems, modeling software, mobile workstations, survey and design equipment and software, and other technology for linking landowners with conservation plans.

History: *1Sp2019 c 4 art 3 s 76; 2024 c 90 art 3 s 87*