

Conservation Districts in Manitoba

For over thirty years, Manitoba's Conservation Districts have been practicing sustainable development at the grass roots level. Today, there are sixteen Districts, covering over 60% of the agricultural portion of Manitoba. The program continues to grow.

Careful management of the natural resources around us is essential if we intend to have sustained economic growth in harmony with the environment. The Conservation Districts (CDs) Program is tailor-made to deal with the resource management challenges of today and tomorrow. Particular program strengths have made it a popular choice among rural municipalities.

- Local people are the “owner-operators”. Municipalities, farmers and other District residents work together toward common goals – goals that they themselves determine.
- A CD is able to deal with the entire range of resource management problems within a watershed and could be a vehicle for delivering programs for other agencies.



Is a Conservation District for you?

It's plain and simple...

Are you concerned about the ability of the resources in your area to continue to support your community?

If so, the CD Program may be just what you're looking for.

CDs are in the business of managing resources for the long term benefit of everyone within the watershed.

The ultimate goal is to manage the resources for our benefit today while ensuring that generations that follow will have the same resource management options that we enjoy today.

Consider establishing a CD, if:

- clean water, clean air and a healthy rural landscape are important to you and the people in your area.
- you can see an advantage of having a separate body accept the authority and responsibility from the rural municipality for resource management.
- the long term economic and environmental health of your community is a concern.

*The
program's
strengths
are in its
people...
... and in
their
vision lies
our future*

Program Strengths

1) “One-stop Conservation Shop”

The Program acts as a conservation program broker, providing a structure that may be used to deliver other conservation and sustainable development related programs. With an administrative and delivery system already in place, programs can be implemented quickly.

2) Local Control

The CD Program has succeeded because it puts the reins of control in the hands of local people – people who know their area, the people and local priorities. Member municipalities appoint councillors and ratepayers who, in turn, elect a Board to manage the affairs of the District.

3) Home-made Programs

Each program can be designed specifically to meet the needs of the individual District.

Examples include:

- water management
- small dams
- drainage
- soil conservation
- gully stabilization
- wildlife habitat
- shelterbelts
- erosion control
- forestry
- fish habitat
- eco-tourism
- water quality
- education
- nature trails
- demonstrations
- riparian projects

Patience is a necessity

A Conservation District Board cannot expect to accomplish all its goals at once. Progress will be made step by step. Patience to await the benefits of a Conservation District is a necessary virtue.



4) Economic Benefits

The long-term economic benefits of a healthy landscape and vibrant rural community will have a profound effect on the rural economy. But in terms of direct economic benefit, the Program has spent more than \$75 million in rural Manitoba over the past 32 years.

- More than 120 people are directly employed by Conservation Districts.
- Business is created for local contractors and businesses.
- Districts purchase local products such as grass seed, culverts, signs and fence posts.
- Estimates place the annual value of spin-offs benefits at \$15 to \$20 million.



5) Long Range Planning

One of the first tasks a CD Board undertakes is to develop an integrated resource management plan, outlining its programs, goals and priorities. As local priorities and attitudes change over time, the Board may amend its programs to reflect these changes.

The stability and continuity of the CD Program allows Boards to plan with confidence, knowing that the program will continue as long as local people want it to continue.

Annual baseline funding from provincial and municipal sources provides for program stability.



6) Partnerships

CDs are a partnership between the Province of Manitoba and the participating Municipalities. CDs also provide a vehicle for other Government/non-Government Departments and/or Agencies, as well as private conservation groups, to deliver land and soil based conservation programs. This team approach to developing sustainable solutions has been proven to be beneficial to all of the partners.



7) Credibility

Credibility is also a key element. Over the years the program has demonstrated that it can find ways to get things done cost effectively. The Province has expressed its confidence in the Program by continuing to expand the program annually.

8) Education

CDs place a very high priority on educating Manitoba's youth regarding the environment and sustainable development issues. School programs and other activities involving young people are an important part of a CD Program.



Funding the Program

Conservation District Programs are funded through a variety of sources.

- Provincial grants from Water Stewardship
- Municipal levies
- Land owner contributions
- Other resource management programs
- Partnerships with other Government/non-Government agencies/organizations

Manitoba's Conservation Districts (CDs)

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