

CHAPTER IX: ANNUAL REPORT

Section I: Topics

An annual report can serve as a useful device to explain Conservation District programs to the public. It is important to remember that the report should reach as many people as possible. When assembling items for the annual report, it is a good idea to refer to the District's annual business plan, since the annual report should reflect the goals outlined in this plan. The following outline may serve as a guide to prepare an annual report. Topics do not need to follow the same order nor should the list be considered complete.

History of the District

Establish that the District was organized as a unit of government under provisions of an Act of the Michigan Legislature. Provide a brief discussion of the reasons that led to the establishment of the District; illustrations of early land use problems could be included.

Facts about the Current Board of Directors

A picture of the current board of directors and a short article about their backgrounds should be included. This part of the report might also tell something about the District staff and their role in the District. The address of the District with telephone number and office hours should also be included.

Natural Resource Concerns

What are the current natural resource concerns of the District, as outlined in the Resource Assessment? What methods are being used to address these concerns? Mention should be made of the District's major accomplishments during the past year. Avoid using a list of accomplishments. Pictures and/or narrative descriptions of what has been done will be effective. Be concise.

Special Activities Carried Out by the District

Highlight any tours, meetings, or demonstrations sponsored by the District that enhanced public understanding of the importance of managing our natural resources. Mention might be made of educational material that was available for public distribution.

People Assisted and Practices Established

Describe practices that were established. Highlight new or much needed ones. Pictures of people and practices are very effective. Set up an article as a testimonial for a practice. Use an interview with a land user, for example.

Agency Cooperation and Partnerships

Discuss in what capacity various public and private agencies have cooperated with the District in carrying out its program responsibilities. These include:

- USDA-NRCS
- Michigan State University Extension
- Michigan Department of Agriculture
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources and
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- County board of commissioners
- Local land use organizations and others

There may have been occasions when public agencies needed and received support from the District meriting publicity.

Funding of District Programs

The report may include an explanation of what state funds are allocated to the District and for what purposes. If the District receives financial assistance from the county, it would be appropriate to express appreciation to the county board of commissioners and their support of the District's natural resource conservation activities.

Plans for Next Year

Discuss in some detail the natural resource problems as identified in the District's strategic plan that the District will address in the coming year. Also indicate what actions are recommended and the priority placed on each problem. The report might list other special program activities the District has planned.

Record of Receipts and Disbursements

A condensed financial statement showing revenues by type and expenses by activity which should be current to the end of the District's fiscal year. Would be appropriate to include a statement to the effect that records are subject to audit, if unaudited records are used.

Award Winners

This may include a picture story of the District cooperator of the year, winners of contests sponsored by the District, etc. The story of an award winner might be the featured article of the report.

District Director Candidates

The report should carry a background story and picture of each of the candidates to help voters make decisions in selecting District leadership. A brief overview of the District election procedure may also be included.

Other Suggestions

Avoid using various "in house" terms and acronyms, such as: D.C., cooperator, high priority goal, NRCS, CD, MDA, and others. These terms only create confusion. Avoid "loading" the report with articles written by state and federal agency people. Use articles of local importance and interest. Encourage agencies that partner with the District to discuss the cooperative activities undertaken with the District. This is not an agency accomplishment report. Remember good quality pictures are eye catching and provide an interesting way to present information in your annual report.