



2009 NYACD State Legislative Priorities

New York Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. (NYACD) is a nongovernmental, nonpartisan, volunteer organization with over 50 years of experience representing 58 soil & water conservation districts, including the five boroughs of New York City.



Soil & Water Conservation Districts in NY

What are Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)? SWCDs are authorized under state law as local natural resources management agencies. SWCDs coordinate and implement programs in cooperation with federal, state and local agencies. SWCDs serve urban, suburban and rural landowners and communities, across a variety of sectors – agriculture, recreation, forestry, municipal, student, developers/contractors, and many more!

How do SWCDs do it all? Professionally and economically, using scientifically-based information and practices to maintain, protect and conserve New York State's natural resources and communities.

New York State Support is Critical

- ✓ New York State investment level in SWCDs signals a strong message to county and local governments that soil, water and natural resources conservation is a state priority.
- ✓ New York State sponsored core and performance funds for SWCDs leverage county appropriations to SWCDs, and in turn other federal and private funds.
- ✓ SWCDs are an efficient use of NY funds which are invested in public infrastructure, urban and rural conservation, on-farm capital improvements, natural disaster response and environmental compliance.
- ✓ NY authorities granted to SWCDs promote intermunicipal cooperation through sharing provisions with local governments and other SWCDs to tackle local and regional problems.

Environmental Protection Fund

Action request – Support, Maintain & Protect

The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) is the primary, dedicated source of funds for SWCD activities, and the funding source for SWCD project partners across the state. It is imperative that the EPF remain intact and that borrowing from the EPF be minimal. Maintaining 2008-09 funding levels will insure that SWCDs sustain existing efforts, preserve the integrity of construction in progress, and provide for future conservation-based economic opportunities.

Requested funds – Total \$22.5 million; Source EPF.
\$3 million - SWCD core funding and performance funding (reimbursement-based)
\$13 million - agricultural nonpoint projects (cost-share)
\$6.5 million - community nonpoint source projects (cost-share)

Soil Water Conservation District Engineering and Training Services

Action Request – Support and Fund

The SWCD Technical Development Program is designed to provide vital and timely engineering design and approval for conservation-based construction projects of the successful Agricultural Environmental Management and Watershed Programs. Regional engineers will be dedicated to meeting SWCD engineering needs and training SWCD staff in proven technical conservation applications and practices.

There is an existing and future shortage of engineering assistance to maintain conservation project design/approvals; This is a specialized field requiring knowledge in agriculture and USDA design standards; There is increased pressure with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service pullback of engineering services due to federal staff and funding restrictions; An average, individual SWCD cannot afford to employ professional engineers with the prevailing SWCD funding levels.

Requested funds – \$900,000 for start-up and full implementation; Source EPF.

Stormwater Technical Assistance to State & Local Governments & Business

Action Request – Support and Fund

SWCDs provide stormwater management technical assistance to aid in economic development and flood protection in partnership with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Div. of Water's stormwater management program. SWCDs have provided local, direct services on behalf of the NYSDEC to aid in voluntary compliance for municipalities, developers, contractors and engineers. SWCD services included complaint investigations, water pollution prevention plan reviews, construction site inspections, and contractor certification.

The SWCD/NYSDEC partnership is an economical delivery vehicle to help New York meet its water quality, public health and safety goals. SWCDs are prepared to continue these vital services to communities and NYS agencies under a Stormwater Technical Assistance Program. Funding was previously provided via the NYS Agriculture and Markets Soil and Water Conservation Committee, therefore, the mechanism is in place to support local SWCDs for these important services.

Requested funds – \$3 million for SWCD-based Stormwater Technical Assistance Program; Source EPF and Stormwater Permits. -over-

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Federal, State, and Local Budgets in 2009

Why Soil & Water Conservation Districts Are the Best Investment in Tough Times

Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) were created in tough times in the 1930's, when drought was prevalent and food supplies were in jeopardy. Common-sense folks and science-based methods helped to revive the economy and preserve our natural resources.

That same work ethic is present today in SWCD leadership, management, employees and project partners. It is applied in program delivery and reaches into important work in every community sector.

State dollars are used to leverage other federal, municipal and landowner dollars to multiply the impact of the original investment. The beneficiaries are New York State communities, citizens, local governments, landowners, and our vast and varied environment.



Conservation Partners

SWCDs coordinate and cooperate routinely with many federal, state, and local government and community organizations across the state. SWCDs benefit from a memorandum memorializing the cooperative relations between the NY Associations of Conservation Districts, the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee, the NYS Conservation Employees Association and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service - NY.

*The New York Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. (NYACD) is a member of the **National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)** which represents 3,000 conservation districts across the USA and its territories. For more information:*



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*Thank you for your past and continued support of
New York's Soil & Water Conservation Districts,
And for the attention given to the
2009 NYACD State Legislative Priorities.*

*We look forward to your inquiries
And your requests for conservation assistance
Please contact the county offices in your area!*

New York's Environment is the Total Package of Our Economy, Infrastructure, Communities and Natural Systems

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) work everywhere to conserve, protect and enhance New York's Environment because the environment is everywhere! Successful and sustainable SWCD work depends on an understanding of natural systems and how our communities interact with those systems. You can find SWCDs and our partner agencies in a variety of settings addressing a variety of critical issues and areas. For example...

Farms and agribusiness – design and installation of on-farm stormwater management, waste management systems, crop soil conservation systems, livestock fencing; USDA Farm Bill program delivery assistance; farmland protection; community gardens and food systems

Infrastructure - bridge protection, stream bank erosion controls, culvert installation, flood prevention, green infrastructure such as urban forests

Economic Development – storm water permitting, inspection and design; subdivision drainage design; advisory to new business and industry; municipal planning

Flood prevention and disaster relief – assessments and inspections, stream debris removal, maintenance of flow control installations and stream banks

Forestry & Wildlife – woods and wetland management assistance, urban and community forests programs

Climate Change – bringing together air, water, soil and energy systems for sustainable energy development

Energy – biomass development, conservation, farm cogeneration projects

Great Lakes and coastal – partners in fresh and ocean water quality and quantity concerns and solutions

Invasive species – prevention and remediation of land and water nuisance species

Recreation – design and support for parks, preserves, trails, woodlands and beaches

Education – college and high school intern partner; sponsors of county, state and international Envirothon competition for high school students