

You've seen the conservation district commissioner candidates on the general election ballot, but do you know, what is the Story County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)? In a nutshell, it's a division of the government-locally based and locally led- responsible for protecting and maintaining the wise use of our most valuable and vital resources. Relying on the voluntary efforts of private citizens, the SWCD provides technical and financial assistance to promote both urban and rural conservation practices. The District develops conservation and land management plans, conducts research on erosion prevention, encourages conservation education, and financially supports local conservation efforts.

The predecessors of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts were born in the 1930's, a time of serious abuse of our agricultural lands. Soil conservation was a national emergency; erosion was declared a "menace to the national welfare". It was quickly realized that conservation efforts needed to be locally led, with local people assessing their own natural resources and resource needs. The Story County district was formed in 1947; at first it was only the Soil Conservation District, the "water" was added in 1987. Today's Soil and Water Conservation Districts are a cooperative venture between the federal, state, and county governments. They also partner with private and non-profit organizations that share their conservation goals.

The Story County SWCD provides cost-share funding and technical assistance for a variety of conservation practices. They offer comprehensive conservation planning for practices such as the use of filter strips and riparian buffers, conservation reserve plantings, manure and nutrient management, and prairie restoration. Interested landowners can contact the SWCD or visit the office in Nevada; stop in anytime to chat with the staff conservationists or to look through their collection of written materials. Some basic information on conservation in your backyard can be found on their website: www.story-swcd.org

Whether you're a private landowner or a conservation-minded citizen, next time you place your vote for district commissioner candidates you'll know you're voting for a neighbor with the goal of protecting our natural resources.