



**Expanded Collaboration Toolkit
Now Includes How to Work with Conservation Districts**

Visit: <http://www.sourcewatercollaborative.com/swp-conservation-partners-toolkit/>

Goals of the SWC Collaboration Toolkit

- Promote source water protection through agriculture conservation practices, stormwater and forest management
- Help connect those working on state/local drinking water protection projects with conservation districts

Easy-to-Follow Steps

Each insightful tip is based on advice the Source Water Collaborative received from the National Association of Conservation Districts, and from state and regional source water partners who recently fostered effective partnerships with conservation districts.

The toolkit is designed for a variety of audiences – from those who have never worked with their conservation district, to those who have attempted but without success, to those who would like to enhance their current efforts. Key sections of the toolkit are designed to meet the needs of those working at the local and state levels.

- Step 1 outlines the basics you need to understand about what conservation districts do and provides an easy link to find your local or state office.
- Step 2 outlines what you should know before contacting them. It includes an infographic (also on back side of this handout) that explains the conservation district's role and what can be accomplished through collaboration.
- Step 3 gives recommended local and state-specific staff contacts, preparation tips and suggested meeting approaches to be more successful in collaborating with the conservation district.
- Step 4 lists conservation districts' key funding sources.
- Step 5 lists an array of partners who conservation districts often work with that might be useful connections for your efforts.

Additional resources include:

- Success stories from your peers who worked with conservation districts to protect drinking water sources.
- Tips for getting involved in the NRCS State Technical Committee meeting and connecting with conservation district participants.
- Specific advice on what to bring to meetings, talking points, and alternative approaches to effectively setting up your initial meeting.

See the reverse side of this handout for an infographic that highlights what Conservation District and Source Water partners can each bring to a collaborative effort to protect sources of drinking water.

COLLABORATION CAN PROTECT SOURCES OF DRINKING WATER

TOGETHER WE CAN

- Align our work for mutual benefits
- Leverage and share funding
- Measure progress

SOURCE WATER PARTNER

- Shares data and information on delineated source water protection areas, priority contaminants, sources of contamination, and water quality monitoring results
- Helps leverage potential funding sources
- Assists with implementation and helps target USDA initiatives (e.g., identifying priority areas, potential benefits of conservation practices to drinking water)
- Partners in conducting outreach to private landowners and operators



CONSERVATION DISTRICT PARTNER

- Offers a direct link and is a trusted resource to landowners and managers and agricultural stakeholders
- Helps landowners and operators participate in priority projects that can implement best conservation practices
- Has agreements with partners (such as state agriculture departments, USDA)
- May have dedicated funding or provide technical assistance for conservation projects
- Creates annual workplan that can help protect drinking water sources; and shares results in their annual reports

OUR COMMON GROUND

- Voluntary (non-regulatory) approach to landowners and managers
- Focus on protecting soil, water quality, and health
- Help assure health and vitality of communities
- Achieve and demonstrate water quality results in priority areas

***Note:** Many groups are invested in protecting the public's sources of drinking water. Depending on your area, your Source Water Partner might include water utilities, local watershed groups, technical assistance providers, non-governmental organizations, or local governments, e.g. planning commissions. Every state has a source water and drinking water program that can share important data and information. Click here to find your state's contact: www.asdwa.org/sourcewatercontacts or here to see your state's source water and drinking water website: <http://www.asdwa.org/sourcewaterlinks>.