

## **SWCD Director Criteria Survey June 2020**

This survey is intended to be completed by Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and will be used to inform the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) and the Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) in deliberations and actions related to potential revisions to eligibility criteria for SWCD directors.

### **Background**

SWCD directors are elected in accordance Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) which can be accessed at [https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills\\_laws](https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws). The requirements in ORS 568.560 are summarized as follows:

- Boards consists of either 5 or 7 directors. Districts may choose to change their number of directors through a process implemented by the Oregon Department of Agriculture.
- All directors must be registered voters and reside within the district's boundaries.
- There are multiple pathways for being elected to a board seat:
  - Zone directors must be involved in active management of 10 or more acres of land in the zone that they are representing.
  - Zone directors without active management of 10 or more acres can qualify by residing in the zone and having served as an associate director or director for one year or more and having a conservation plan that is approved by the district board.
  - Each Board must have two at-large directors (i.e. no requirement for active management of property).

House Bill (HB) 2958 was introduced in the 2019 legislative session by Representative Nosse on behalf of an east Portland constituent. The bill would have required director position qualifications to be limited to voting registration and residing in district boundaries in counties with a population of 50,000 or more, removing the requirements to actively manage land. OACD and SWCC Chair Barbara Boyer met with the Representative and encouraged him to send the issue to a work group administered by the SWCC rather than taking legislative action. He and the legislative committee ultimately agreed to allow the SWCC to head a work group to further evaluate director eligibility criteria.

The Director Eligibility Work Group was formed and met five times in April and May 2020. The work group included members of the SWCC, OACD, district representatives and Representative Nosse. The committee vetted a wide range of issues and options but did not make recommendations on whether or not to change the existing criteria statutorily. The work group discussed whether legislation was needed or if some corrections could be formulated in rulemaking.

The desire to have diverse representation on Boards was also an important topic of discussion. The work group developed a white paper to summarize their discussion and the matter was referred back to the SWCC for continuing deliberation. Representative Nosse participated in the work group discussions and was willing to refrain from introducing legislation in the 2021 session to allow the SWCC time to continue deliberations.

At this time OACD and the SWCC need input on how SWCDs feel about the director eligibility criteria.

**Survey Instructions**

One compiled survey should be submitted per SWCD. Responses should be sent to Jan Lee, OACD Executive Director by August 20, 2020 at [jan.lee@oacd.org](mailto:jan.lee@oacd.org).

The survey should be placed on the SWCD board agenda for discussion. It is recommended that the survey be discussed as a group to facilitate thoughtful deliberations. Then each board member (excluding associate and emeritus directors) should complete the survey individually and the individual results should be compiled. This is done to provide information on the average views of each board along with the range of views by the different members.

The survey includes statements which are to be rated on a scale of 1 to 5 as follows:

- 1 = strongly disagree      2 = disagree      3 = neutral
- 4 = agree.      5 = strongly agree

Following is an example:

Statement: Thanksgiving is the best holiday of the year.

An individual Board member’s response might look like the following:

Stronger Agreement >>>>>					
Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion				X	

If 5 board members responded and there was one who assigned “2,” two who assigned “3,” and two who assigned “4.” The compiled results for the SWCD would be recorded as follows:

Stronger Agreement >>>>>					
Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion		1	2	2	

## SWCD Director Eligibility Survey

\_\_\_\_\_ SWCD

Check one:

\_\_\_\_\_ Completed by Board member \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Compiled results for the District

Statement 1: SWCD Board member eligibility should be open to all registered voters in the district and there should be no other requirements such as being actively involved in land management.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 2: SWCD board members should have qualifications that demonstrate knowledge about the business of SWCDs.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 3: Active management in 10 or more acres of land is a good criterion for a pathway to becoming a director.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 4: Professional education and experience in a field related to the business of SWCDs, such as natural resources conservation, public agency management, or education / outreach would make a good criterion for a pathway to becoming a director.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 5: Prior experience serving as an associate director or director is a good criterion for a pathway to becoming a director.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 6: Having a conservation plan that is approved by the district is a good criterion for a pathway to becoming a director.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 7: It is important to have some at-large director positions on each board.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 8: If actively managing land is retained as a criterion for being a director further definition of the types of land and management responsibilities should be developed.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 9: In an urban environment any requirement to actively manage land should have a reduced number of acres (less than 10).

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 10: It is important to have zone requirements for directors to make sure that board representation covers various parts of the district's service area.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 11: In districts with large urban populations it is important to have some directors representing urban areas.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 12: Board members should have term limits, and boards should have the ability to waive term limits in the event that there are no others interested in filling a position.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 13: Diversity, equity and inclusion criterion for boards should be set in State statute.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 14: Diversity, equity, and inclusion in board membership could benefit from statewide guidance, but individual boards should decide what is best for themselves.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 15: Our SWCD has a deliberate and effective program that promotes diversity, equity and inclusion on our board.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

Statement 16: Efforts to modify the criteria for director eligibility should be pursued.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion					

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Please provide any additional input here or on an additional page.

---



---



---