



Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District

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The Typical Conservation Planning Process

Pre-Approval

- Initial meeting with landowner to discuss goals and/or problems
- Develop plan map and cost estimate (TJSWCD Staff)
- Review plan map and cost estimate with landowner → Changes/Alterations
 - (a) Technical Committee approves application
 - (b) Technical Committee suggests changes/alterations
- Technical Committee approval, then Board approval. The TJ Board meets the last Wednesday of every month.
- Notifications to landowner (approval/disapproval/modifications to plan, etc.)

**Time frame from initial meeting with landowner to Board Approval is typically one to two months*

Post-Approval

- Receive an approval letter / 90 day start work period
- Project survey, design and calculations (TJSWCD staff)
- We recommend obtaining multiple bids for your project as contractor prices can vary greatly across the District. If an individual project component is greater than \$30,000, you are **required** to obtain a minimum of 3 bids for the project and submit them to the District.
- Preconstruction meeting with landowner and contractor to review details of plan and deliverables
 - Review designs and specifications
 - Stake project on the farm to insure infrastructure is installed in the correct location.

Construction

- Periodical construction progress checks by Staff
 - Ensures quality control, alleviates any confusion, answer questions, etc.
- Project inspection and checkout
 - Measure pipeline, fences, record “installed amounts”

Project Completion

- Bills & Receipts
 - Itemized invoices bills and material receipts. Contractor bill; Receipts for all materials used during project
 - Well driller completion reports, deliverables, copies of soil tests requiring fertilizer
- Signature on page III of Application & Conservation Plan
- Practice payment and completion letter
- **The cost share you receive is considered income. You will receive a 1099-G and will have to file this accordingly.**

**Time frame from the Board Approval/beginning construction until the payment is issued can vary based on the practice ~ from a few months, up to one year*

Project Lifespan and Operations/Maintenance

- Project Lifespan
 - Range from one year to ten years; The time the practice must be functioning for state to receive a “return on investment”
- Operations and Maintenance
 - Agreement that outlines responsibilities that landowner has for project lifespan
 - Maintain fencing, water systems, etc.

- **The applicant is responsible for maintain the infrastructure throughout the practice lifespan. If the practice is not maintain the practice, you may be responsible for repaying the full amount or a portion of the full amount to the District. This also applies if the land is sold and purchasers do not agree to transfer the practice into their name. There is a simple option to transfer the project to a new landowner or individual if the property is sold.**

Spot Checks

- There is a chance that your project will be inspected during its lifespan
 - Quality control measure to ensure that participants are compliant and performing maintenance on their practices
 - We will inform the landowner via mail and/or phone

District Responsibilities

- Ensure programmatic compliance
- Service contract with Board of Directors
- Perform mandatory reviews (Environmental Evaluation, T & E, etc.)
- Surveying, design work, and review
- Meet with contractors/landowner
- Construction progress checks
- Make sure practices are built to specifications
- Final check out and payment

Landowner Responsibilities

- Register with the Farm Service Agency if applicable
- Meet with District staff on farm and/or allow access to Staff before & during the project
- Review and finalize plan/cost estimate
- Obtain permits (“Miss Utility”/well permit)
- Hire contractor or obtain materials
- **Notify staff prior to construction and periodically during the process**

- This is very important if you require a quick “turnaround” time on payment
- Keep & submit all bills/receipts
- Operation and maintenance on project
- Comply with spot check process if needed

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When do I get paid? Who gets the check?

A: You will be paid by the District by check once all elements of the practice have been completed. This means that the fence and water systems must be installed and functioning. The District doesn't “pay as you go.” The person who signs the application and is responsible for the practice will receive the check. We don't pay the contractor directly.

Q: Do you pay for gates?

A: We certainly encourage participants to add gates (or wire gaps) where they feel they will be most needed or utilized. If you need to access a buffer for mowing or other purposes, plan ahead where gates would best be utilized. Gates are treated as fence. 1 gate for every 800' of fence is accounted for in TJSWCD's per foot rate.

Q: How do you come up with the cost estimate?

A: The cost estimate worksheet is based on what local contractors have historically charged for various services. The footages for pipeline and fence are computed using mapping programs. We always add 10% for fence/pipe to the cost estimate cover any minor changes to the plan.

Q: Can I make the concrete pad bigger than the standard 18” around the trough?

A: Absolutely. District Staff can show you pictures of various ways that other participants have done water trough pads. If you are interested in a larger pad please discuss this with the TJ field staff. Make sure the contractor excavates down at least six inches so that the concrete pad doesn't sit above the grade of the natural ground. TJSWCD allows for an increased cost share rate for a larger pad.

Q: Can I use living trees as posts and can I nail wire to trees?

A: No. You must use posts that are driven into the ground. You cannot nail/staple wire to trees or use trees as a brace post if the District is funding the project.

Staff Recommendations

- Keep a folder with all important information regarding this project
 - Correspondence/letters, cost estimates, designs, bills

- **The landowner is ultimately responsible for the work of the contractor.**

- Don't be hesitant to contact district staff with any issues. We are here to assist you with this process and to ensure contractors install things correctly.

- **1099 G – Cost share is considered income and will be taxed accordingly. Please read the front page of the application before signing.**

- TJSWCD staff; will provide you with a contractors list if requested. This is a general list maintained by the TJSWCD for the convenience of landowners/clients. It is not intended to be an endorsement of any one individual or company, and makes no assumptions for insurance or licensure of any listing. All contractors are eligible to be added to this list upon Completion of three successful projects with TJSWCD

- **If changes to the project are anticipated, please let Staff know as soon as possible.**