

“Drainage Districts provide an important role in keeping the drainage open..... not just important to farmers but to others as wells. “

–Max Armstrong, WGN Radio

Benefits of Good Drainage

- Absorbs Stormwater Runoff
- Reduces the chance of Water-borne diseases
- Inhibits water damage to public roads
- Good Drainage allows plant roots to receive enough oxygen to mature properly.
- Allows the soil to absorb and store more rainfall, which reduces runoff from the soil surface that causes soil erosion.
- Good Drainage increases the number of days available for planting & harvesting crops.
- Drainage can increase soil surface temperatures that help seeds germinate.
- Drainage helps plants grow their roots deeper into the soil so they can absorb more nutrients and water from the soil.



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DRAINAGE, AN ESSENTIAL UTILITY



DRAINAGE DISTRICTS, A FUNDAMENTAL FEDERATION

DRAINAGE DISTRICTS 101

Drainage History

In the 1800s, farmers dug man-made ditches for the sole purpose of turning unproductive swampland into lush, fertile farm ground. The same valuable farmland generations of agriculture producers have farmed to earn a living and feed the world.

These man-made ditches today serve the same purpose of draining storm runoff as they have for centuries. The only difference is some ditches drain acres of farmland and others drain miles of concrete.

Our ancestors understood that drainage is an essential utility. In 1879, two laws were passed to give landowners a means of securing proper drainage. These laws established drainage districts based on a system of assessments that permitted the districts to include only lands benefited. This principle remained untouched in 1956 when the Illinois Drainage Code was passed by legislatures. The Illinois Drainage Code still informs and governs the drainage districts today.

Approximately, 1, 700 Drainage Districts have been organized in Illinois.

Drainage Districts Facts

Drainage Districts are small units of local government created by petition or referendum and court approval. They have the power to construct and maintain drainage improvements and to pay for the improvements with assessments on the land within the district boundaries.

Three Commissioners who serve staggering 3-year terms govern Drainage Districts. Commissioners must be landowners who own property within the district's boundaries.

Commissioners are either elected or appointed. The procedure for commissioner selection was established when the district was formed.

Elected Commissioners are chosen by a special election in September held within the boundaries of the drainage district. Only Landowners within the district's boundaries may vote in the drainage election.

Appointed Commissioners may be approved by the County Board or Circuit Judge.

Commissioners have the authority to:

- Do all necessary work for construction, altering, enlarging, protecting, repairing, and maintaining any drainage, levee, or other work of the district.

- Go upon land within or without the district for examining the work of the district
- Keep the system in repair and to handle minor improvements.

With Court approval, Commissioners may:

- Construct additional drains, levees, or other work necessary for protections of the lands of the district.
- Alter, enlarge, extend, improve, deepen, widen, or straighten any drain, levee or other works of the district.
- Change the method of construction, route, size of capacity, termini or plans of any proposed drain.
- Purchase necessary equipment.
- Construct roads, right-of-way, level spoil, construct structures, and abandon any drain or levee.
- Acquire land through eminent domain.
- Levy Assessments only against benefited land.