



# *Oklahoma Conservation Commission*

## District Directors' Responsibilities:

### A 10-Minute Guide Series

This is one in a continuing series of informational/discussion topics designed to help conservation district directors become more informed and knowledgeable about their responsibilities. It is suggested that board members review these guides before a board meeting and then have a ten minute discussion on them at a meeting.

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## *Guide No. 20 - Economics of Conservation*

Legislators and others may know about the many services and programs offered by local conservation districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, but they probably don't realize the economic benefits of conservation activities to the economy, both local and state. Having a conservation district office in a county, combined with the conservation programs and activities carried out by the office and NRCS, can total up to millions of dollars coming into the county each year. Conservation districts can use this information to help legislators and the public understand another major benefit of conservation activities.

### **How to Determine the Economics of Conservation**

Putting a dollar value to conservation activities will gain people's attention and show them another value of having conservation districts and NRCS offices in a community.

While it might seem difficult to put a value on conservation there are many activities where actual dollars are known, such as salaries, federal and state cost share programs, etc.

The following two pages contain a form that can be used to identify and total up the amount of money that comes into a conservation district in a set period of time. Activities will vary from district to district, but many of the activities are the same for all districts. Activities or programs can be added or removed from the form to adapt it to your conservation district.

Dollar amounts can be established for one year or it might be best to add up the amounts for 3-5 years and then average it out on an annual basis. This will allow capture of activities that might bring in large amounts of money, but be a one time occurrence, such as funds for the Emergency Watershed Program, grants, etc.

NRCS can supply dollar amounts for federal programs as well as the dollars that producers put into these program practices.

### **Tips on Using the Economic Information**

After totaling up the dollars related to conservation activities, districts need to use this information effectively.

1. Use the information in newsletters, fact sheets, displays, news releases and other informational media. You don't need to include the form with all the information listed, but you do need to keep the form readily available in case you are questioned on how you came up with the figures.
2. Develop a fact sheet on the economics of conservation in your conservation district. A sample fact sheet is included with this 10-Minute Guide.

Mail the fact sheet to your legislators and other key leaders and use it at conservation events.



Dollars

2004

2005

2006

2007

2008

**State**

OCC Allocated Funds (Operating Expenses  
(do not include employee salaries and benefits))

OK. Cost Share funds

Cost Share Funds (Producers Share)

Operation and Maintenance (flood control)

Rehabilitation of Aging Flood Control Dams

Priority Watershed Projects (water quality)

**County & District**

District Revenue from seeds, sprigging, etc.

Operation and maintenance for flood control dams  
(conservancy district and other local funds)

**Office Salaries**

(Both federal and conservation District employees)

**Other:** grants, money from county  
commissioners, etc.

**Total**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>State</b>					
OCC Allocated Funds (Operating Expenses (do not include employee salaries and benefits))					
OK. Cost Share funds					
Cost Share Funds (Producers Share)					
Operation and Maintenance (flood control)					
Rehabilitation of Aging Flood Control Dams					
Priority Watershed Projects (water quality)					
<b>County &amp; District</b>					
District Revenue from seeds, sprigging, etc.					
Operation and maintenance for flood control dams (conservancy district and other local funds)					
<b>Office Salaries</b>					
(Both federal and conservation District employees)					
<b>Other:</b> grants, money from county commissioners, etc.					
<b>Total</b>					

## Garfield County Conservation District Activities Benefit Local Economy by \$1.7 Million Annually

The Garfield County Conservation District and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provide technical assistance to land users to assist them to conserve and protect natural resources. They also administer conservation programs that provide financial assistance for the application of conservation practices.

But you may not know about another important benefit to the county that comes from this conservation partnership. That is the economic benefit to the county that conservation programs and activities generate. Over \$1.7 million comes into the local economy annually from having the conservation district and NRCS offices in Enid. This is an average annual dollar figure based upon the five-year period from 2004-2008.

It is difficult to put a total dollar figure that has come into the county due to conservation efforts since the Garfield County Conservation District came into existence in 1939, but the figure would certainly be in the millions of dollars.

Money comes into the local economy from the federal and state government and through funds earned locally by the conservation district from their sprigging operation, drill rentals and seed sales.

The \$1.7 million figure includes funds received for employee salaries, office rent and utilities, purchase of gasoline and supplies, and other related expenses. It includes federal conservation programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), etc., which averages over \$899,000 annually and is combined with over \$225,000 provided by landowners.

State allocations to the Garfield County Conservation District have averaged over \$80,000 annually for the past five years.



Application of new conservation practices or the maintenance and repair of existing ones such as flood control dams means income for contractors and businesses.

This includes money for salaries, benefits, and expenses for conservation district employees and the Oklahoma Conservation Cost Share Program.

Economists say that funds coming into a local economy multiply several times before leaving the community. For example, federal cost share dollars for conservation practices require landowners to provide part of the cost of applying the practices. Getting \$100,000 of federal cost share dollars in the county usually means landowners put in another \$30,000-\$40,000 to carry out the conservation work. This money goes to contractors and businesses that sell seed, fertilizer, gasoline, equipment, etc. This may allow these businesses to expand or buy more supplies and equipment that puts more money into the local economy.

Bottom line, the Garfield County Conservation District provides assistance to land users to help them protect and conserve our natural resources and as an additional benefit, conservation activities adds millions of dollars into the local and state economy.

For more information about the Garfield County Conservation District, come by our office at 1216 W. Willow Rd. Suite D in Enid.