

OKLAHOMA
CONSERVATION

COMMISSION

Our Land • Our Heritage • Our Future

Conservation Commission

FY 2023 Budget Hearing Presentation

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Executive Director



The **Conservation Commission** serves as the agency responsible for administering programs and services that provide for the conservation of the renewable natural resources of this state.

Founded in 1937, this agency now encompasses the following divisions:

- **Field Services serves the needs of 84 Conservation Districts**
- **Conservation Programs administers the Small Watershed Flood Control Program and State Cost Share Program**
- **Abandoned Mine Lands reclaims abandoned coal mine sites**
- **Water Quality administers the State's EPA 319 non-point source pollution program and soil health program**
- **Office of Geographic Information and Technical Services houses the State Office of Geographic Information and maintains the agencies Geographic Information Systems operations and database**

Agency Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision: Responsible care of Oklahoma's renewable natural resources

Mission: To conserve, protect and restore Oklahoma's renewable natural resources, working in collaboration with the conservation districts and other partners, on behalf of the citizens of Oklahoma.

Core Values: Personal accountability and responsibility are two core values that are seen as critical for the employees as well as the governing body of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission. Those characteristics serve as the basis for the strength of our Agency. These values, coupled with integrity, give rise to the type of behavior we desire in our business environment.



Accomplishments & Challenges

Top accomplishments for FY 2021

- 1) Completed 2,107 dam safety inspections, performed maintenance on 639 dams, completed remedial repairs on 5 dams, completed flood damage repairs on 5 dams and responded to more than 19,500 Okie One-Call tickets to prevent damage.
- 2) Conservation Districts delivered the locally led cost-share program to 833 land managers, leveraging \$1.56 million in state funds against \$1.27 million in private funds to apply best management practices to improve soil health and water quality. Assisted USDA-NRCS in delivery of \$37.4 million of federal conservation assistance to Oklahoma landowners through Farm Bill Programs. OCC implemented monthly Microsoft Teams training sessions with conservation district staff.
- 3) Delisted 6 stream segments from the impaired streams list. Assessed the health of streams and rivers by maintaining 300 monitoring sites and collecting over 1000 water samples. Blue Thumb education programs reached 3,600 people and volunteers donated more than 4,750 hours of time to support education, monitoring and other water quality protection activities.
- 4) Partnered with conservation districts, NRCS, state agencies nonprofits, tribes and others to provide soil health education to Oklahoma citizens.
- 5) Executed construction contracts on 4 Abandoned Mine Reclamation sites, repaired and revegetated 5 sites, performed assessments and ranked public safety risk on 17 sites.

Challenges (current & upcoming years)

- 1) The need for 35% state match to USDA funds for continued repair of corrugated metal components on up to 400 upstream flood control dams and continued funding for field staff to deliver repairs.
- 2) Funding authority for the locally-led cost-share program expires in June 2022. Legislation to reauthorize is needed this session.
- 3) Access to federally shared office space. The current USDA Covid-19 policy restricts access to local service centers for conservation district staff and directors. This creates a challenge to deliver local cost-share programs, assist with Farm Bill delivery, as well as provide advice and consultation to the public on conservation issues and the ability to hold open public meetings of the Conservation District board.
- 4) Secure available resources to assist farmers and ranchers in implementing soil health practices until ecosystem is fully functional.
- 5) U.S. Department of Interior takeover of the Abandoned Mine Land Program and denial of access to federal trust funds.



Goals & Projects for FY 2023

Goals

- 1) Maintain the \$2 billion public infrastructure and sustain the \$96 million in annual benefits by continuing to perform the inspections, and operation and maintenance of the state's 2,107 flood control dams.
- 2) Increase conservation district effectiveness in delivering the locally led cost-share program; continue providing staff development opportunities for district staff utilizing available digital platforms; assist USDA in delivery of Farm Bill Programs.
- 3) Develop at least 5 nonpoint source success stories; collect >1,000 water quality samples; and educate more than 10,000 Oklahomans through Blue Thumb.
- 4) Soil Health Team will mentor at least 50 people; participate in at least 15 field days; and support soil health conservation on at least 1,000 new acres each year.
- 5) Restore \$3 million of federal funding for the state AML program; reclaim 2 sites and 107 acres.

Projects

- 1) Begin rehabilitation of one high hazard dam and complete construction of one new flood control dam.
- 2) Increase District Staff retention by 15%; conduct 12 training sessions for district employees; increase the ratio of funds obligated to funds spent in the cost-share program; continue seeking opportunities for districts to assist with the reduction of feral swine.
- 3) OCC and partners will develop solutions for at least 15 poultry operations and neighbors; transfer at least 30,000 tons of poultry litter to protect water quality; develop success stories for 5 streams delisted from OK's 303(d) list; and support at least five conservation districts and county commissioners to reduce erosion from unpaved roads.
- 4) OCC and partners will work with at least 50 producers; participate in at least 60 field days and education events; and will ensure new soil health conservation is added to more than 1,000 acres each year.
- 5) OGI will continue training NG911 users, manage the State NG911 Repository and operate OKMaps, the State Geospatial Clearinghouse.

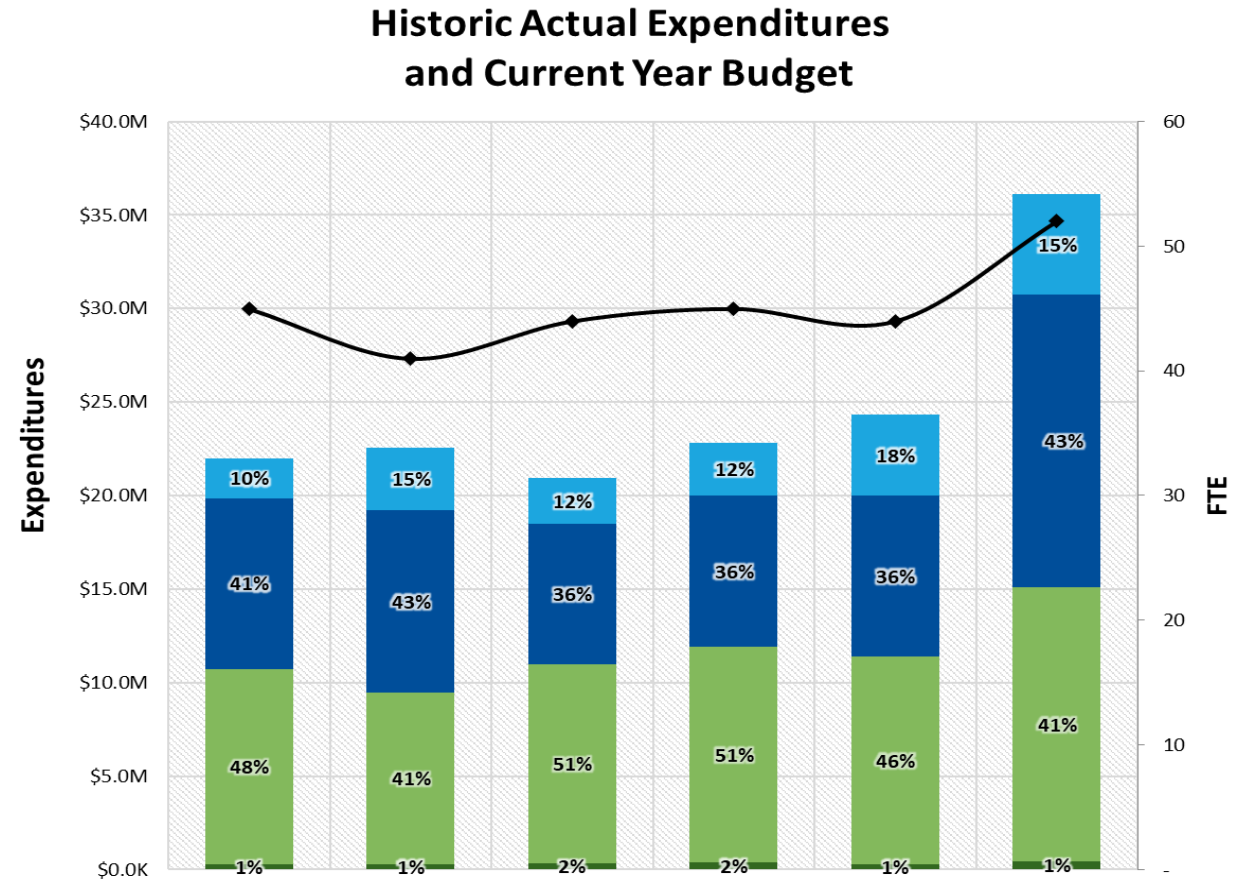


Savings & Efficiencies

1. Dam repair pilot project proposed by OCC accepted and implemented by USDA. Saved the State \$3,000,000 in repair costs on corrugated metal pipe components.
2. Continue to outsource financial and primary CPO functions to the Oklahoma Dept. of Ag Food and Forestry.
3. The Commission completed a redesign of the agency's website to increase user engagement and ease of use and continued to increase use of the website and social media to find new audiences and make agency information more accessible to a larger number of people.
4. Continued implementation of the sharing of personnel resources between conservation districts in an effort to cover core conservation responsibilities within fiscal limitations. The best examples of this are the watershed aide positions to assist with the operation and maintenance of upstream flood control dams in multiple conservation districts.
5. Continue working with state and federal partners to develop shared services agreements for jointly funded positions in conservation districts. Currently have over 20 shared positions between conservation districts and USDA - NRCS.



Historic Actual Expenditures (FY 17-21) and Current Year Budget (FY 22)



	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022 Budget
Appropriated	\$10.5M	\$9.2M	\$10.6M	\$11.5M	\$11.1M	\$14.6M
Revolving	\$2.1M	\$3.3M	\$2.4M	\$2.8M	\$4.3M	\$5.4M
Federal	\$9.1M	\$9.8M	\$7.5M	\$8.1M	\$8.6M	\$15.7M
Agency Special Accounts	\$275.8K	\$300.0K	\$347.6K	\$392.1K	\$295.5K	\$450.0K
Total	\$22.0M	\$22.6M	\$20.9M	\$22.8M	\$24.3M	\$36.1M
FTE	45	41	44	45	44	52



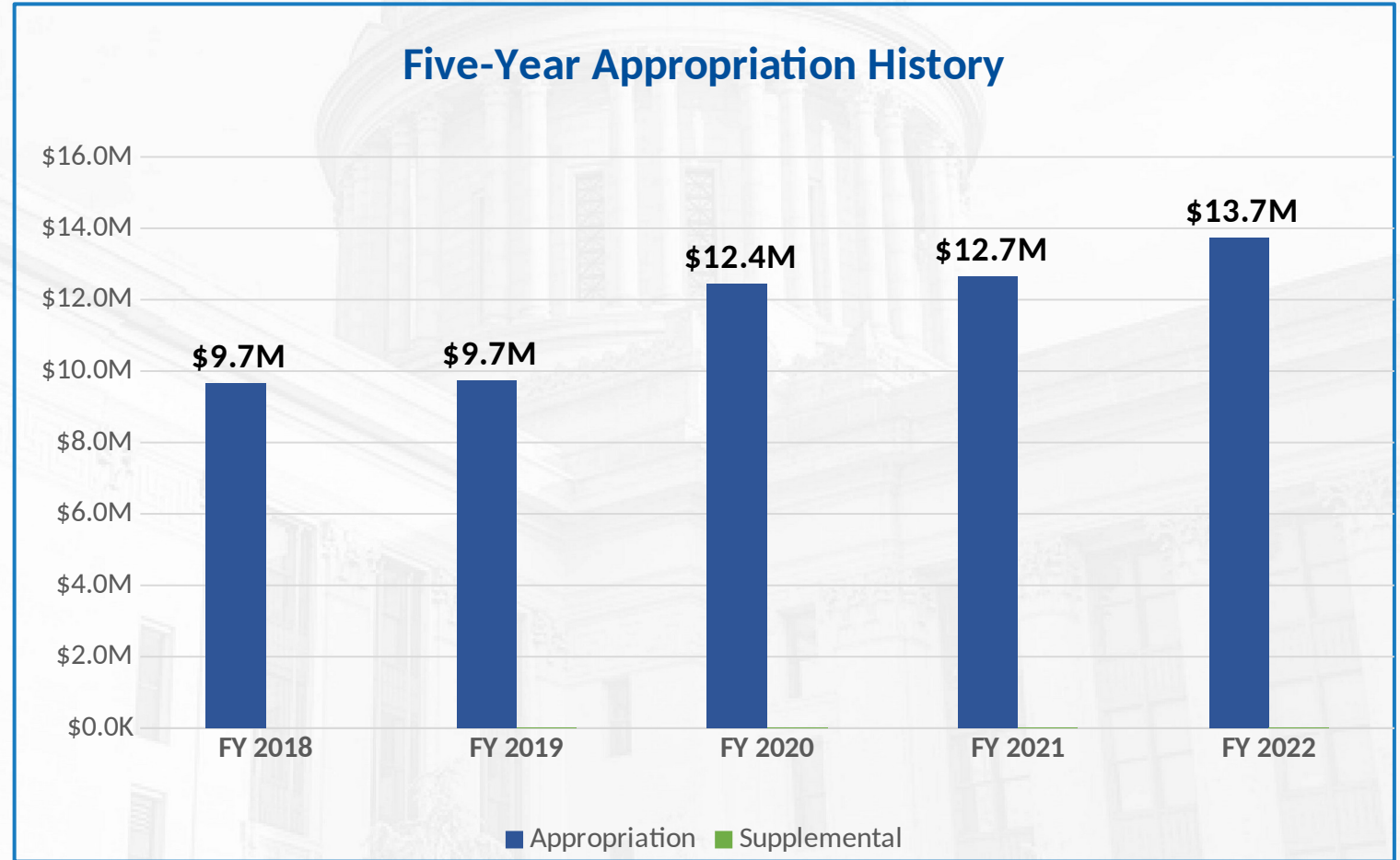


FY 2022 Budgeted Full Time Equivalents (FTE)

	FY 2022 Budgeted FTE
Total FTE	52
Supervisor FTE	13
Supervisors to Total FTE Ratio (%)	25%

Appropriation History

Fiscal Year	Appropriation (\$) <i>(include supplemental if applicable)</i>
FY 2018	\$9,656,845
FY 2019	\$9,725,596
FY 2020	\$12,437,815
FY 2021	\$12,658,644
FY 2022	\$13,726,001



Appropriated Carryover History and Justification

	FY 2017 (Actuals)	FY 2018 (Actuals)	FY 2019 (Actuals)	FY 2020 (Actuals)	FY 2021 (Actuals)	FY 2022 (Planned)
Total appropriated carryover amount expended (\$)						\$956,654

Fiscal Year of the original appropriation	Projected amount carried over to FY 2023 (\$)	Describe how projected carryover will be used in FY 2023
FY 2022	\$0.00	
FY 2021	\$0.00	
Total projected FY 23 Carryover (\$)	\$0.00	



Available Cash Description and Justification

Class Fund #	Available Cash amount (\$)
400 -Federal (restricted)	Obligated
Revolving (restricted)	Obligated
Total Available Cash:	\$0.00

Fiscal Year	Agency's plan to deploy available cash (include amounts):
FY 2023	The agency plans to expend \$3 million from revolving funds and \$5 million in federal funds for locally led cost-share, watershed rehabilitation, RCCP Poultry Project and Feral Swine Eradication.
FY 2024	The agency plans to expend \$1 million from revolving funds and \$2 million in federal funds for locally led cost-share, watershed rehabilitation, RCCP Poultry Project and Feral Swine Eradication.
FY 2025	



Agency Key Performance Metrics

Metric		Goal	FY 20 Actuals	FY 21 Actuals	FY 22 Target	FY 23 Target
1	Small upstream flood control structures will be inspected to extend the operational life, reduce flooding and capture rainfall runoff for water supply.	Support and encourage the conservation and responsible management of Oklahoma's renewable natural resources to improve the quality of life for current and future generations.	2,107 dams inspected	2,107 dams inspected	2,107 dams inspected	2,107 dams inspected
2	Stream segment / waterbody pairs removed from the EPA 303(d) list for nonpoint source related causes and published in EPA accepted success summaries.	Support and encourage the conservation and responsible management of Oklahoma's renewable natural resources to improve the quality of life for current and future generations.	4 success stories	5 success stories	5 success stories	5 success stories
3	Number of districts implementing 75% of actions and strategies outlined in their Long-Range Plan.	Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Oklahoma's grassroots conservation delivery system.	N/A	N/A	50%	55%
4	Reduce erosion and improve soil health by increasing the number of participants and the number of Best Management Practices through the state cost-share program.	Support and encourage the conservation and responsible management of Oklahoma's renewable natural resources to improve the quality of life for current and future generations.	741 participants / 806 practices	650 participants / 750 practices	650 participants / 750 practices	650 participants / 750 practices
5	Average monthly download of data in GB	Increase the usage of the State Geospatial Clearinghouse, OKMaps by providing up to	87 GB	102 GB	112 GB	123 GB



Budget & Supplemental Request Summary

	Request Name	FY 23 Appropriated Request Amount (\$)	Type of Request: Operating, One-time, or Supplemental
1	Abandoned Mine Land - Operations Funding	\$2,100,931	Supplemental
2	Upstream Flood Control Infrastructure - Dam Safety	\$2,000,000	One-time - repeated for 3 years
3	Critical Needs - Conservation District Services	\$730,000	Operating - Ongoing
4	Unpaved Roads / Roadside Erosion Training and Grant Program	\$400,000	Operating - Ongoing
5	State Office of Geographic Information - Operations funding	\$444,988	Operating - Ongoing



(1) Supplemental Budget Request

Abandoned Mine Land - Operations Funding

Type: Supplemental

\$2,100,931

The funding change is to provide necessary funding for the operation of the State Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation (AML) Program as a result of withheld federal funding due to a federal interpretation of the McGirt Ruling for which there is pending litigation. Intend to accomplish: (A) Fund 7 FTE's for one year; (B) Complete contracted construction on 4 projects; (C) Provide required vegetation on 4 projects; (D) Manage and maintain 10 - 15 completed projects as required; (E) Continue routine operations to maintain a viable AML Program pending outcome of litigation. Month Funds Needed: Immediately.



(2) Budget Request

Upstream Flood Control Infrastructure – Dam Safety

Type: One-time repeated over 3 years

\$2,000,000

Currently over \$4,000,000 in documented backlogged repairs needed on 2107 dams in Oklahoma. These dams average nearly 50 years in age. New repairs and maintenance issues arise daily with rapidly escalating construction costs. Having state funds available allows access to potential federal match of 65 to 80 %.

Locally based watershed aides and district employees make repairs and do required maintenance promptly, keeping small problems from growing into major issues. The \$2,000,000 investment for maintenance and repairs would prevent multiple potential dam failures, any one of which could cost the state in excess of \$5,000,000 to rebuild; not to mention the potential for loss of life. By addressing these needs now, Oklahoma will be protecting a \$2 billion infrastructure that provide \$90 million annual benefits by protecting lives, homes, bridges, roads and railroads.



(3) Budget Request

Critical Needs – Conservation District Services

Type: Operating - Ongoing

\$ 730,000

To fill positions in order to provide staff in each of the 84 conservation districts and provide a 10% cost of living salary increase to current district employees. Protecting and conserving Oklahoma's natural resources requires a local work force to deliver conservation programs in partnership with USDA -NRCS. Through agreement with OCC, the federal agency provides financial support to staff offices in every county. In order to keep quality staff, it is imperative to provide a living wage. A 10% cost of living increase will help the districts become more competitive in the local job market.



(4) Budget Request

Unpaved Roads / Roadside Erosion Training and Grant Program

Type: Operating - Ongoing

\$ 400,000

This funding will support development of a program to train and support county commissioners to address recurring erosion problems on county roads. With more than 50,000 miles or at least 61 percent of county roads in Oklahoma unpaved (or 21 percent of total road miles in Oklahoma), county commissioners are challenged to maintain serviceable conditions in these systems. Much of our rural industries and a significant portion of our petroleum and other industries rely on these systems to transport and maintain their products. Traffic and climate patterns, subsurface soils and topography all affect the road and result in erosion of road surfaces and adjacent ditches, which threatens the road itself and sends sediment and other pollutants downstream to water supplies and other water resources.

Working in partnership with the association of county commissioners, counties, the OK Dept. of Transportation, universities, the OK Dept. of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry Division, the U.S. Forest Service and other partners, the OCC would offer a minimum of two training sessions to commissioners and their staff, but also provide a series of small grants (up to \$50,000 in scope, requiring a 50% cost-share) to help county commissioners address problem unpaved road sites that directly impact a water resource.



(5) Budget Request

State Office of Geographic Information – Operations funding

Type: Operating - Ongoing

\$ 444,988

The Conservation Commission houses this important state service but has never received any state appropriations to fund its operation. The OGI provides an open-source data base used by public and private groups for emergency services, economic development and basic governmental services. With funding reductions at the state level OCC has found it more and more difficult to provide this statewide service that benefits customers that are not traditional ones that OCC serves. With this new funding OGI's goal is to increase geospatial services to state agencies while saving the state money in the short and long term. The OGI will be managing the new State NG911 Repository that was developed last year to support the statewide NG911 system that is continuing development. This funding will also allow OGI to directly support state agencies that do not have dedicated GIS professionals to aid agency management in their day-to-day decision-making.



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Appendix

A Year of Conservation Successes

Flood Control



District Activity



AML



OGI - 911

GIS TRAINING GROUP

- 📍 Creating a statewide GIS repository for NG9-1-1
- 📍 Providing 9-1-1 GIS stakeholder training at no cost
- 📍 Supplying grants to improve and maintain your 9-1-1 GIS data



Water Quality Successes



Coming Attractions in Conservation

Districts Cost Share Delivery



Unpaved Road Erosion



Dams & Corrugated Pipes



Poultry Neighbor to Neighbor



Feral Hogs

