

The logo for the Oklahoma Conservation Commission is centered at the top. It features the word "OKLAHOMA" in a black serif font, "CONSERVATION" in a green serif font, and "COMMISSION" in a white serif font on a dark blue rectangular background. The text is separated by two wavy horizontal lines, one brown and one dark blue.

OKLAHOMA
CONSERVATION
COMMISSION

Oklahoma Conservation Commission

FY 2026 Budget Hearing Presentation

Submitted by: Trey Lam, Executive Director



Trey Lam

Executive Director

- The Conservation Commission serves as the agency responsible for administering programs and services that conserve, protect and restore Oklahoma's natural resources.
- Founded in 1971, this agency now encompasses the following divisions:
 - a) Administration
 - b) Conservation Programs
 - c) District Services
 - d) Land Management
 - e) Water Quality
 - f) The Office of Geographic Information Services
- The Conservation Commission administers its programs and services through 84 Conservation Districts. Partnering with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Conservation Commission and its Districts have proven to be an effective and efficient delivery system for locally led non-regulatory solutions to Oklahoma's most complex conservation challenges.

Agency Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision: Responsible care for Oklahoma's renewable natural resources

Mission: To conserve, protect and restore Oklahoma's 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

Top accomplishments for FY 2023 – FY 2024

- 1) CONSERVATION PROGRAMS** -- Completed remedial repairs on one dam. Partnered with 11 Conservation Districts to employ watershed aides that provide day to day O&M services to 26 Conservation Districts with 1,158 flood control dams. Inspected 2,107 dams and performed repairs and maintenance on 447 dams. Responded to 17,250 OKIE One-Call locate tickets to prevent damage to the \$2 billion public infrastructure of dams. Began modernizing easement data by digitizing watershed dam easements by converting the recorded paper documents into a format that can be processed by a computer.
- 2) DISTRICT SERVICES** -- Supports Conservation District Directors and Staff in all aspects of local delivery of conservation efforts to improve soil and water quality and mitigate drought impacts. Enabling districts in the effective distribution of over \$3 million of regular state cost-share funds and over \$29 million in Emergency Drought Assistance funds for implementation of over 8,000 practices, and, at the direction of the Emergency Drought Commission, districts will distribute an additional \$27 million in Emergency Drought Assistance over the coming 12 months. Assisted USDA-NRCS in delivery of over \$50 million of federal conservation assistance on over 590,000 acres to Oklahoma landowners through Farm Bill Programs.
- 3) LAND MANAGEMENT** -- Completed inventory of non-coal mines in 82 of 84 Conservation Districts. Carried on the statewide Unpaved Roads Program; continued our partnership with OSU-LTAP for course delivery statewide; updated and presented the training course for Oklahoma Unpaved Roads Course; hosted Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) trainings for unpaved roads; awarded 25 grants to counties; fulfilled grant obligations totaling \$1,890,251.30 Awarded grants to rural fire departments after completing the Fighting Fire with Fire trainings totaling \$265,000.00 and made payment to landowners for \$30,329.80 towards prescribed fire utilization on 2,271 acres within the Terry Peach Watershed Restoration Program area. Hired an additional 6 Conservation District cedar eradication technicians to create brush free zones within the program boundaries. Hard rock non-coal mine restoration completed the closure and restoration of 6 lead/zinc mine shafts for \$192,187.06 and is currently in construction phase for a copper mine strip pit totaling \$1,921,898.00 bid award.

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Accomplishments (continued)

Top accomplishments for FY 2023 – FY 2024

- 4) **WATER QUALITY** -- De-listed 3 additional streams from Oklahoma's Impaired Waterbodies List (303(d)) list increasing the Oklahoma total to 100 streams, more than any other state in the nation; ranked in the top 5 nationally in combined nutrient load reductions for the 11th year in a row; maintained over 300 water quality monitoring sites around the state and collected over 1,000 water samples. Conducted more than 60 fish collections including aquatic habitat assessments and more than 240 invertebrate collections. Expanded Soil Health program in partnership with federal USDA programs; educated more than 12,000 people on the benefits of soil health in terms of water quality, economics, and sustainability. Supported volunteer teams of water quality monitors at 81 sites that would not have otherwise been sampled; educated more than 6,000 Oklahomans about water quality.
- 5) **OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY** – The development of the state's geospatial data clearinghouse OKMaps is made possible with several federal grants through the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security. During FY24, data downloads from OKMaps has continued to increase. Visits/month to the site increased 32% to 24,600 visits/month. The Office of Geographic Information provides various GIS related services to the 911 Management Authority to support the implementation of the statewide Next Generation 911 system in addition to operating the NG911 State Repository. Over the past year the Office of Geographic Information worked with the Oklahoma 911 Management Authority to assist in the apportionment of the Cellular Tax collected by the Tax Commission to the 132 Public Service Answering Points (PSAP's) and determining the amount of tax revenue available for each PSAP.



Analysis of Agency Challenges

	Challenge	Current Actions (Briefly describe how the agency is currently addressing the challenge.)	Planned Actions (Briefly describe how the agency plans to address the challenge going forward.)
1	Increasing demand for assistance in restoring soil and water quality.	Providing technical assistance to citizens in pasture, cropland and urban landscapes. Testing of soil and water creating a maintaining a state database.	Find resources to meet the increasing backlog in demand. Share staff funding with NRCS, NACD, private corporations and NGOs. Access grant funding.
2	Attract and retain professional staff in competitive economic environment.	Providing more regular compensation advancement opportunities. Provide work life balance by creating positive environment.	Continue emphasis on staff input into goal setting and program delivery for the agency. Prioritize the Human Resource.
3	High inflation in construction costs for repairs on flood control dams.	Utilizing Conservation District watershed aides and equipment to perform minor repairs. Prioritizing critical larger repairs on 2,107 dams.	Find resources, both state and federal funds, to cover costs of large repair projects.
4	Water shortages and wildfire threats across Oklahoma.	Working in the watershed areas of the Cimarron, North Canadian, and South Canadian Rivers to create brush free zones around communities and increase use of prescribed fire to reduce fuel loads.	Expand woody invasive species eradication program statewide to address geographic specific issues.
5			



Savings & Efficiencies (Current or Planned)

Savings or Efficiency Name	Brief description of how savings were achieved	Savings in Unit of Measurement*	FY 2024 (Actual \$ Savings)	FY 2025 (Projected \$ Savings)	FY 2026 (Projected \$ Savings)
Vehicles and Heavy Equipment	Canceled existing vehicle leases; negotiated purchase prices of passenger vehicles, trucks, trailers, heavy equipment in lieu of rental/lease	Cost Savings, purchase vs lease	64,060	80,000	80,000
Office Space Efficient Utilization	Square footage remains same while planning for housing additional staff, utilizing existing furnishings	3 additional staff in FY24 and 2 additional staff in FY25 accommodated in same square footage	7,500	12,500	12,500

* Hours, FTE, square feet, etc.



Agency Goals and Key Performance Metrics

Goal		Metric	FY 24 Target*	FY 24 Actuals	FY 25 Target	FY 29 Target
1	Provide flood prevention and mitigation, or water quantity protection, agricultural water management, municipal water supply management, fish and wildlife habitat protection and public recreation development.	The 2,107 small upstream watershed flood control structures throughout the state will be inspected, operated, maintained and modified to extend the operational life, prevent and mitigate flooding and capture rainfall runoff for water supply determined by number of structures	2,107	2,107	2,107	2,108
2	Improve water quality of Oklahoma streams through voluntary non regulatory programs.	Develop at least five EPA Success Stories each year that detail stream segment/parameter de-listings from the 303d list.	4	4	5	5
3	Improve local conservation delivery system while assuring responsible use of state financial resources.	Number of Districts implementing 75% of actions and strategies outlined in their Long-Range Plan.	60%	65%	70%	85%
4	Eliminate public safety and environmental hazards from abandon hard rock mines.	Working with conservation districts and others to restore abandoned hard rock mine sites that are hazardous to the public and/or degrading the environment determined by # of Projects / acres restored..	3/150	2/210	3/150	3/150
5	Increase production of agricultural land through locally-led, voluntary programs to assist landowners and managers in the conservation of soil, water, and other valuable natural resources.	Reduce erosion and improve water and soil health by increasing the # of participants & the # of best management practices implemented through state supported cost share programs. (# participants / # practices)	650/750	596/745	700/850	750/1,000
6	Ensure proper management of state and local resources by developing citizen led local boards.	Provide the knowledge base and enhance skills that district directors need to properly perform public duties.	420	225	420	420



Agency Goals and Key Performance Metrics

Goal		Metric	FY 24 Target*	FY 24 Actuals	FY 25 Target	FY 29 Target
7	Reduce threat of wildfire and increase water supplies by controlling invasive woody species.	Acres of woody encroachment eliminated and communities protected.	N/A	370/8	10,000/15	20,000/25
8	Create a better unpaved county road system with a reduced negative environmental impact on priority water resources in Oklahoma	Number of grants awarded to County Commissioner Districts	13	20	26	26
9	Regenerate Oklahoma’s agricultural and urban soils and landscapes through voluntary programs to improve soil health, increase productivity, increase water infiltration and reduce downstream flooding risks.	Number of consultations provided to Oklahoma citizens and acres of improved soil health resulting	500/500	785/63,821	500/55,000	500/55,000
10	Increase the number of visits each month to OKMaps	Increase the number of visits by 10%	18,240	21,600	23,800	34,800



Note: Include the FY 2024 target metrics from the Strategic Plan submitted in 2022.

Projects for FY 2025

- 1) Continued implementation of the Terry Peach North Canadian River Restoration Project to include the Cimarron River and South Canadian River watersheds. Conservation Districts will hire and equip 6 additional Technicians to service at least two counties each. RFD and PBA training will expand to 20 additional counties. Clearing of research project area will be completed and data gathered.
- 2) Expansion of the Unpaved Roads Program to increase trainings across the state. Fifteen additional unpaved road erosion project repairs will be designed and constructed.
- 3) Maintain the \$2 billion public infrastructure and sustain the \$96 million in annual benefits by continuing to perform the inspections, operation and maintenance of the state's 2,107 upstream flood control dams. Top 10 prioritized large dam repair projects will be completed.
- 4) Administration of the \$27 million Emergency Drought Relief and Locally Led Cost Share programs.
- 5) Obtain high-resolution, leaf-off, full color aerial photography, a key element of modernizing the state's digital infrastructure.



Projects for FY 2026

- 1) Continued implementation and expansion of the Terry Peach North Canadian River Restoration Project to the watersheds of the Salt Fork and Washita Rivers. Conservation Districts will hire and equip 10 additional Technicians to service at least 2 counties each. RFD and PBA training will expand to 30 additional counties. Clearing of research project area will be completed and data gathered.
- 2) Deliver the Unpaved Roads Program to increase trainings across the state. 30 unpaved road erosion project repairs will be designed and constructed.
- 3) Maintain the \$2 billion public infrastructure and sustain the \$96 million in annual benefits by continuing to perform the inspections, operation and maintenance of the state's 2,107 upstream flood control dams. Top 10 prioritized large dam repair projects will be completed.
- 4) Administration of the \$27 million Emergency Drought and \$3 million Locally Led Cost Share programs.
- 5) Obtain high-resolution, leaf-off, full color aerial photography, a key element of modernizing the state's digital infrastructure.

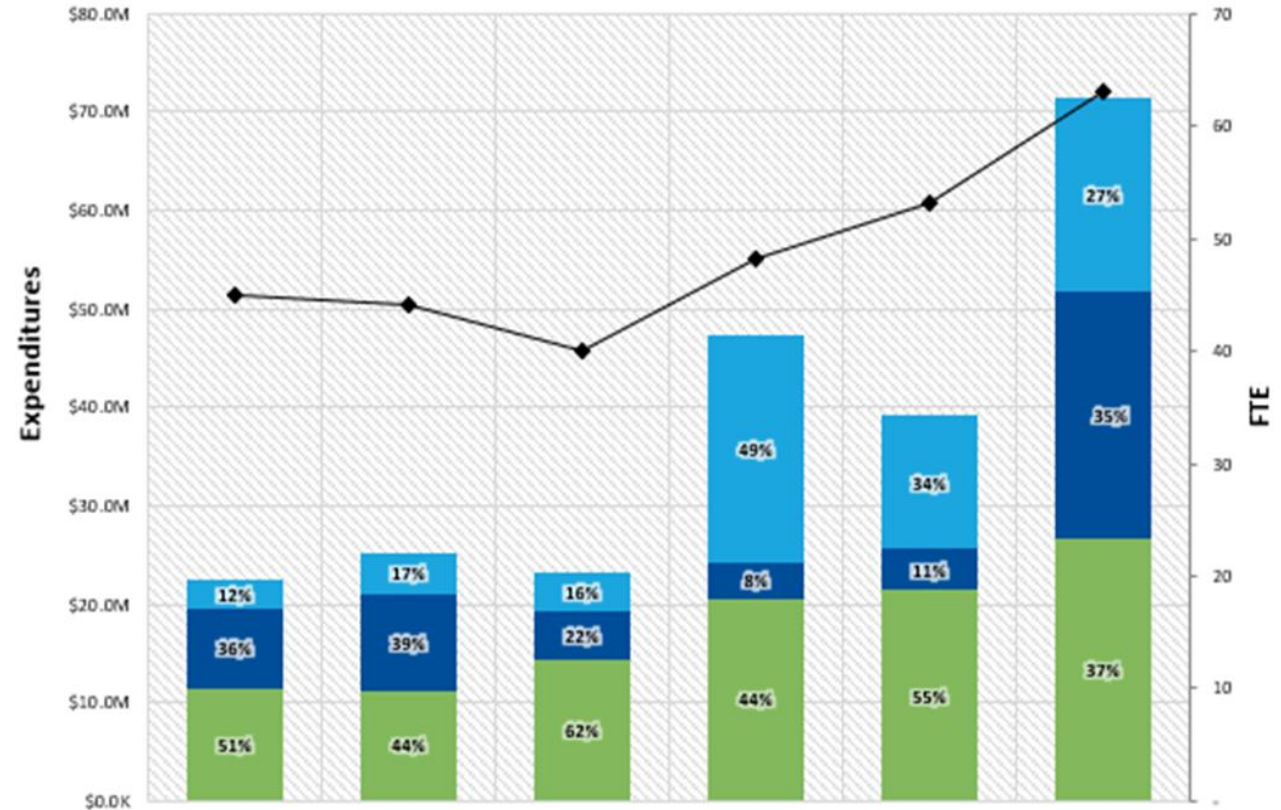


Total Historic Actual Expenditures (FY 2020-24) and Current Year Budget (FY 2025)

Explanation of Changes and Trends

- FY 2020-24 saw a significant increase in state appropriations.
- \$3,000,000 to the Land Management Program to reclaim hard rock mines abandon across the state.
- \$2,000,000 for critical flood control dam repairs.
- Office of Geographic Information funded for the first time in over 20 years. Supports development and implementation of Next Generation 911 System.
- FY 2025 funding of \$1,500,000 for statewide aerial leaf-off photography as well as equipment for invasive woody species eradication of \$1,000,000.
- Federal funds vary due to the scheduling of large dam rehabilitation and land restoration projects.
- Largest budget increases have come in federal and revolving funds.

Historic Total Actual Expenditures and Current Year Budget



	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025 YTD Budget
Appropriated	\$11.5M	\$11.2M	\$14.3M	\$20.6M	\$21.5M	\$26.7M
Revolving	\$2.8M	\$4.2M	\$3.8M	\$23.0M	\$13.4M	\$19.6M
Federal	\$8.1M	\$9.8M	\$5.0M	\$3.7M	\$4.2M	\$25.1M
Total	\$22.4M	\$25.2M	\$23.1M	\$47.3M	\$39.1M	\$71.4M
FTE	45	44	40	48	53	63



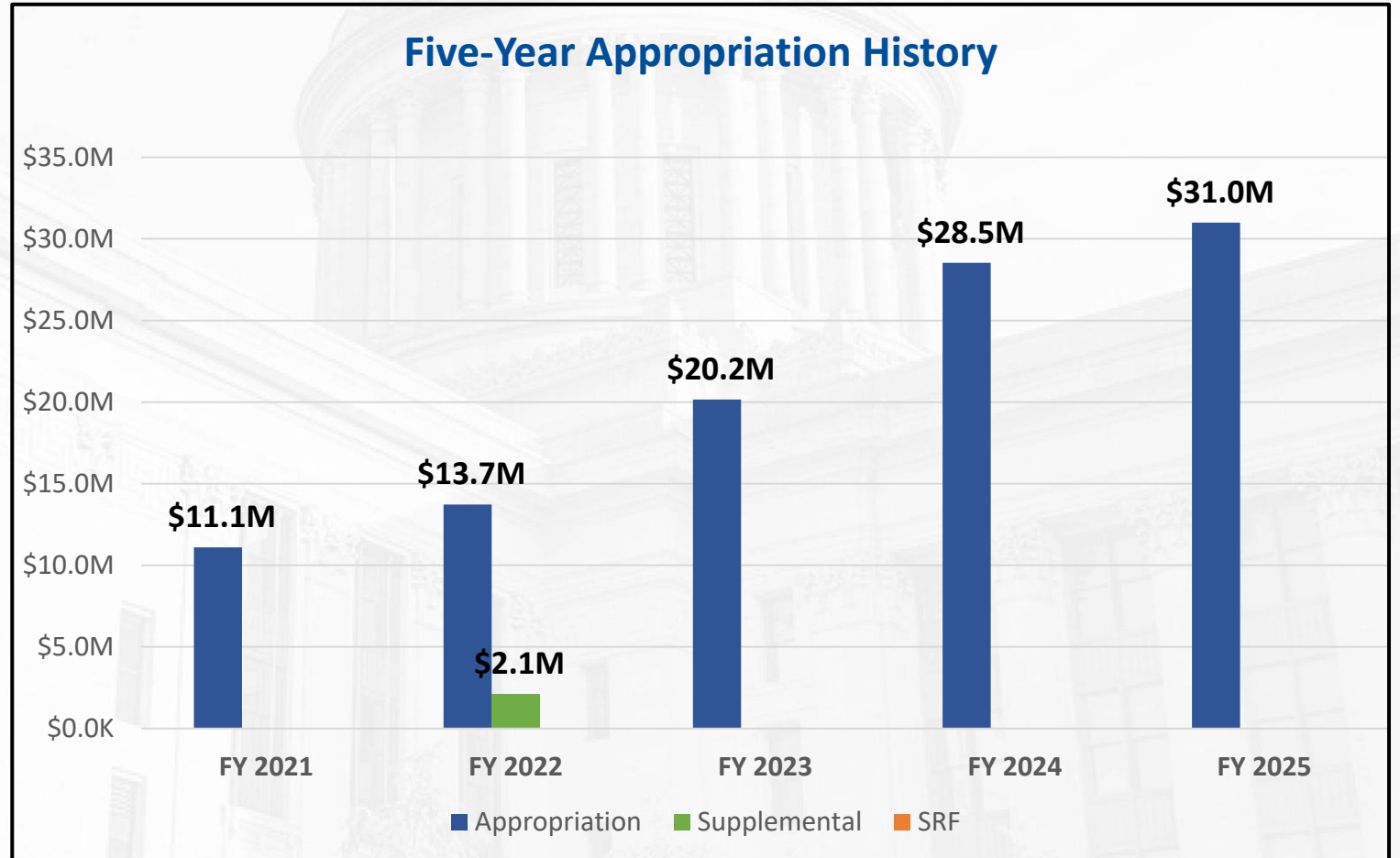


FY 2025 Budgeted Full Time Equivalents (FTE)

	FY 2025 Budgeted FTE
Total FTE	63
Supervisor FTE	17
Supervisors to Total FTE Ratio (%)	0.2698%
Current Budgeted but Unfilled FTE	6

Appropriation History

Fiscal Year	Legislated Appropriation (\$) <i>(Includes supplementals and SRF/ARPA if applicable.)</i>
FY 2021	\$11,195,187
FY 2022	\$15,826,932
FY 2023	\$20,162,988
FY 2024	\$28,527,454
FY 2025	\$30,995,464



Financial Resource Analysis

Carryover	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Total appropriated carryover amount expended (\$)	\$0	\$2,382,825	\$3,196,920	\$1,503,471

Historical Cash Balances	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Year End Revolving Fund Cash Balances <i>(All Revolving Funds)</i>	\$6,813,417	\$6,036,066	\$5,673,761	\$6,502,887

Revolving Class Fund # <i>(Unrestricted only)</i>	Revolving Class Fund Name <i>(Unrestricted only)</i>	Current cash balance (\$)	Projected FY 2025 year-end cash balance (\$)
	NONE	\$	\$
		\$	\$
		\$	\$
		\$	\$
		\$	\$
		\$	\$
		\$	\$
	Total Unrestricted Revolving Fund Cash balance:	\$	\$



Unrestricted funds are those that are not limited by state or federal law, rule, regulation, other legally binding method, or donor restriction.

FY 2023 – 2024 Appropriation Change Review

<i>Purpose of appropriation increase or decrease</i>	<i>Amount FY 2023</i>	<i>Amount FY 2024</i>	<i>Total amount received FY 2023 - 24</i>	<i>Total amount expended by 11/1/2024</i>	<i>Included in FY 2025 approp? (Yes/No)</i>	<i>If not expended fully, please explain.</i>
Net OCIA Lease Payments Adjustment	\$111,999	1,206,806	1,318,805	\$1,318,805	Yes	
Logjam Remediation Funding	-250,000	250,000	0	250,000	No	
Dam Safety Upstream Flood control	2,000,000	2,000,000	4,000,000	1,285,947	Yes	Encumbered for construction and project costs this fiscal year
Conservation District Staffing and Salary	730,000	0	730,000	730,000	Yes	
Unpaved Roads/Roadside Erosion Program	400,000	600,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	Yes	
Operations Funding for State Office of Geographic Information Systems	444,988	42,660	487,648	487,648	Yes	
Land Reclamation Program	3,000,000	0	3,000,000	912,000	Yes	Encumbered for construction and project costs this fiscal year
Soil Health Program	0	985,000	985,000	985,000	Yes	
Terry Peach Watershed Program	0	3,280,000	3,280,000	2,268,427	Yes	Encumbered for construction and project costs this fiscal year
Totals	6,436,987	8,364,466	14,801,453	9,237,827		



**Do not include SRF / ARPA appropriation increases.*

FY 2025 Appropriation Change Review

<i>Purpose of appropriation increase or decrease</i>	<i>Amount of increase or decrease (\$)</i>	<i>Does this need to be included in your FY 2026 appropriation? (Yes/No)</i>	<i>If yes, included in appropriation for same purpose? (Yes/No)</i>	<i>If not included for same purpose, please explain.</i>
Agency Staff Salary Adjustment	417,808	Yes	Yes	
Enhanced Aerial Photography	1,500,000	No		
Debt Service Annual Adjustment	-2,202,793	No		
Conservation District Staffing and Salary Adjustments	\$778,000	Yes	Yes	
One-Time removals, log jam, Terry Peach, dams	-250,000	No		
Unpaved Roads Projects	1,125,000	Yes	Yes	
Terry Peach Expansion - Equipment	700,000	Yes	Yes	
Terry Peach Expansion – Recurring	300,000	Yes	Yes	
WETLANDS – 1 FTE and equipment	100,000	Yes	Yes	
Total Adjustment	2,468,015			



**Do not include SRF / ARPA appropriation increases.*

Budget & Supplemental Incremental Request Summary

	Request Name	FY 2026 Incremental Appropriation Request Amount (\$) {or FY 2025 for Supplementals}	Type of Request: Recurring, One-time, or Supplemental
1	Expansion of the Invasive Woody Species Eradication Program including salary and equipment for 6 fully outfitted technicians to cover 12 Conservation Districts	2,355,000	Recurring
2	Upstream Flood Control Repairs	3,000,000	Recurring
3a	Salary Market Adjustment for Agency Staff	263,000	Recurring
3b	Salary Market Adjustment for Conservation District Staff	840,000	Recurring
4	Unpaved Roads Program	1,125,000	Recurring



(1) Incremental Budget Request

Expansion of the Invasive Woody Species Eradication Program including salary and equipment for 6 fully outfitted technicians to cover 12 Conservation Districts

Recurring

\$2,355,000

Additional \$2,000,000 for program cost plus \$355,000 for salaries and equipment for additional 6 fully outfitted cedar technicians, to cover 12 Conservation districts to extend the control and eradication efforts of invasive woody vegetation in Oklahoma watersheds. Technicians will be employees of Conservation Districts and will not add to agency FTEs. By reducing woody invasive species, the Commission will help to reduce wildfire risk to Oklahoma citizens. In addition, these efforts will protect Oklahoma's water supply and improve grazing lands and wildlife habitat. Short / Long term cost effectiveness can be measured by the reduction in property damage cause by wildfire.



(2) Incremental Budget Request

Upstream Flood Control Repairs	
Recurring	\$3,000,000
<p>\$3,000,000 for continued maintenance and repairs on 2107 dams. This amount will work to reduce the \$4 million of documented backlogged necessary maintenance and repairs such as mechanical brush removal, repair/replacement of principle spillway towers and outlet pipes and repair of erosion caused by vehicles and cattle. Locally based aides and district employees make repairs and do required maintenance promptly, keeping small problems from growing into major issues. The \$3,000,000 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. The agency has opportunity to take advantage of a \$3 million Federal Pilot Repair Project if state match can be acquired. This would result in a \$1.8 million savings.</p>	



(3) Incremental Budget Request

Salary Market Adjustment for Conservation District and Agency Staff

Recurring

\$1,103,000

Market and cost of living adjustment for Conservation District and agency staff for successful retention of staff with highly specialized knowledge, skill and experience. Tenured experienced and skilled workers are very productive and also provide a natural transfer of their knowledge and expertise to less experienced coworkers resulting in continuous improvement. The cost effectiveness of retaining highly skilled workers for accomplishing the duties of the Conservation Commission is undeniable. Providing fair compensation is key to worker retention for continued workforce development.



(4) Incremental Budget Request

Unpaved Roads Program	
Recurring	\$1,125,000
<p>The agency's current base funding includes \$1,000,000 appropriated funds for Unpaved Roads. FY23 funding of a pilot program was \$400,000 and FY24 funding added \$600,000 to take the program statewide. FY25 one-time funding added \$1.25 million, making the total program \$2,125,000. We believe this level of funding should be recurring and ongoing to achieve the program goals of funding safe, efficient and environmentally sound projects for the maintenance of unpaved roads which have been identified as contributors of sediment in Oklahoma streams and of providing training on techniques of unpaved road maintenance to minimize negative impacts to water and air quality. By partnering with the 77 counties in Oklahoma via the County Commissioners and their road maintenance programs, our agency brings cost savings to the citizens and taxpayers of Oklahoma by reducing unpaved road maintenance costs and by keeping drinking water supplies cleaner.</p>	

