

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2012-13 Performance Report

AGENCY NAME

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

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.

Adopted by the Conservation Commission at its regular board meeting on November 05, 2012 in conjunction with the agency's FY 2013-2018 Strategic Plan.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

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GOVERNANCE:

The Conservation Commission is governed by a five person board. Commissioners are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate to a five year term. Commissioners by statute must be a conservation district director. There are five statutorily designated commission areas in the state. The agency executive director is selected by the governing board. At the present time there are no standing committees or subgroups of the Commission. Commissioners as of January 2013 are:

- Area 1. Karl Jett
- Area 2. Mike Rooker
- Area 3. George Stunkard
- Area 4. Dan Lowrance
- Area 5. Jim Grego

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

Attached please find electronic copies of the minutes of the Conservation Commission from July 1, 2011 through December 31, 2012. The Commission does not have an attendance policy for commissioners.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

1. The Commission is working cooperatively with the Office of Enterprise and Management Services to utilize a myriad of their services including: preparation of agency payroll; construction contract management; mail; risk management for conservation districts; motorpool; state surplus property; office space leasing; and information technology management.
2. Continuing the use of Lidar photography to eliminate the need for on the ground surveying to prepare breach inundation maps for high hazard dams and also using this photography for design work to rehabilitate dams and reclaim abandoned mine land.
3. Continuing the implementation of a Dam Watch program to allow conservation districts to be automatically notified when rainfall events endanger dams.
4. Upgraded the agency's website and developed a social media policy in an effort to make agency information more accessible to a larger number of people.
5. Promoted the sharing of personnel resources between conservation districts in an effort to cover core conservation responsibilities in a downsizing environment. The best example of this is the hiring of watershed aides to assist with the operation and maintenance of upstream flood control dams in multiple conservation districts.

What steps has the agency taken to cut costs and/or eliminate waste?

1. For the past three budget cycles we have been reducing the number and costs of both Commission and Conservation District employees. This has been accomplished by combining job duties when positions become vacant and by converting some full-time benefitted positions to part-time positions without benefits.
2. Initiated the electronic transfer of funds to all vendors.
3. Expanded the outsourcing of engineering work for the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation division with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to include both construction management and project design.
4. Continued efforts to reduce agency travel expenses by reducing the vehicle fleet and limiting out of state travel.
5. Participated fully with the Office of Management and Enterprise Services to transfer agency information technology functions to their IT Division.

CORE MISSION:

What services are you required to provide which are outside of your core mission? None

Are any services you provide duplicated or replicated by another agency? No

Are there services which are core to your mission which you are unable to perform because of requirements to perform non-core services elsewhere? No.

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. Completed hazard assessments on 225 upstream flood control dams and the inspection of 2107 dams.
2. Performed operation and maintenance on 166 high hazard upstream flood control dams.
3. Completed the rehabilitation of seven high hazard upstream flood control dams.
4. Ranked first in the nation among state for the reported load reductions of Phosphorus and Nitrogen contaminants in Oklahoma's streams and rivers (EPA's nonpoint source pollution management program).
5. Delisted 11 stream segments from the EPA's impaired stream list.
6. Maintained over 300 water quality monitoring sites around the state and collected over 3,000 water samples. Conducted 181 fish collections including aquatic habitat assessments and conducted 250 invertebrate collections.
7. Continued to address hazards associated with abandoned coal mined lands by reclaiming 142 acres and completing one emergency underground mine project.
8. In cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the state's 87 conservation districts delivered 38 million dollars of federal financial conservation assistance through over 2000 contracts to Oklahoma landowners.

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

Are any of the services which are performed by the agency also performed in the private sector in Oklahoma? Yes, the operation, maintenance and repair of upstream flood control dams is a function that can be done both by agency and district personnel as well as by private sector companies.

In other states? In a few states some specialized conservation technical assistance is performed by the private sector.

Has the agency been approached by any foundation, for-profit or not-for-profit corporation with efforts to privatize some of the functions of the agency? No.