WHY PAY DUES?

A LOOK BACK AT 2018-2020 WITH OACD
August 21, 2020

To: All Conservation Districts
RE: Why Pay Dues?

Dear Oklahoma Conservation Districts,

Thank you for your continued hard work for the conservation of Oklahoma’s natural resources. Upon request, we have compiled a list of financial and non-financial benefits that the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts has achieved over the past two years. We are excited to report that in exchange for the total investment of $89,000 from conservation districts or $44,500 per year, districts have received $34,637,049. That is a return on investment of 38,000%.

As always, OACD is driven by the directors of conservation districts and those that serve on the OACD board of directors. All action that is undertaken by OACD is decided upon by the board of directors. If there is a conservation issue that you would like to see addressed – whether in the state legislature or congress – please let your OACD Area Director, OACD Executive Committee, or myself know. The process for making those requests is through the Resolutions Committees and an OACD board member or myself can direct you on how to begin that process.

The last two years in OACD history have been the most financially successful in the association’s 80 year history. I welcome you to celebrate in that progress with us. It is a great time to be a member of the Association. You should be proud of what we have accomplished together. I look forward to continuing to work for you in conserving this great state’s natural resources.

Sincerely,

Sarah Blaney
Executive Director

Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts, PO Box 2775, Oklahoma City, OK 73101-2775
Financial Overview of the Value of OACD to Members

Oklahoma State Legislative Accomplishments

2020 Legislative Session
- $17.5 million was secured from the state legislature for flood control structure repair. This was completed through the work of OACD lobbyists, staff, and partners.

- $187,000 was secured from the drought relief fund

- The Oklahoma Conservation Commission received a 2% budget increase. The average for state agencies was a 4% decrease. This is a difference of $750,000 in secured funding.

2019 Legislative Session
- $600 - $1,500 for each conservation district employee. Conservation District employees were NOT originally included in House Bill 2771, therefore, staff and lobbyists went to work and advocated for our employees to be included. We were successful in this effort. This is $63,000 - $157,000 in additional funding for district employees.

- The Gross Production Tax which funds both conservation district employees salaries AND the state cost share program was set to end in 2019. OACD effectively worked with legislators to extend that funding for an additional two years through 2021. This is approximately $5.2 million in funding.

- The Oklahoma Conservation Commission received additional one time funding including $500,000 for clean water efforts in Northeast Oklahoma AND $1.5 million for upstream flood control structures. Total value $2 million

2018 Legislative Session
- $5.1 million for the purpose of rehabilitation of upstream flood control structures. This had been a legislative goal since 2014.

- $750 - $2,000 for each conservation district employee. Conservation District employees were NOT originally included in House Bill 1024xx, therefore, staff and lobbyists went to work and advocated for our employees to be included. We were successful in this effort. This is $78,750 - $210,000 for district employees.

Total Value of OACD Legislative Services to Conservation Districts from 2018 - 2020: $31,104,000
OACD Grants Secured for Conservation Districts 2018 - 2020

2020 Grants
• $1.9 million for the Conservation and Agriculture Reach Everyone Project through USDA-NRCS Conservation Collaboration program.

• $6,500 for the Yard by Yard program for the Oklahoma County Conservation District from the Kirkpatrick Foundation

2020 Grants submitted and awaiting notification of funding:
• Farm to Food Bank Project with the University of California @ Berkeley to study nutrient density and soil improvements on small acre multi-species cover crop plots. Potential funding: $280,000

• Farm to Food Bank Project grant submitted to the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust. Potential funding: $120,000

2019 Grants
• $1 million pledge from the Nature Conservancy for pollinator habitat, no-till drills, staff, and outreach and education services. $100,000 has been received so far. OACD has expended $16,500 to districts for the pollinator mini-grant projects. The rest is being held until the pledge is fulfilled and the project can be fully launched.

• $250,000 for the Conservation and Agriculture Reach Everyone Project

2018 Grants
• $250,000 for the Conservation and Agriculture Reach Everyone Project

2020 Grants that OACD assisted the Conservation Commission with writing/editing/submitting:
• Regional Conservation Partnership Program - Neighbors Solving Natural Resource Concerns

• The Nature Conservancy U.S. National Climate Solutions Accelerator Grant
The Conservation Innovation Grant - Advancing the Suite of Soil Health Principles in the Southern Plains

Total Value of OACD Grants Secured for Conservation Districts from 2018 - 2020: $3,406,500
Annual Awards, Youth Contest Awards 2020 - 2018

Each year, OACD awards cash prizes of $4,500 to local districts, producers, and cooperators through the annual awards program. We secure these contributions from the Noble Research Institute, the Nature Conservancy and individual donors.

Total Value of OACD Annual Awards to Conservation Districts from 2018 - 2020: $13,500

Each year, OACD awards cash prizes, plaques, and medals to youth contestant winners at the area and state level. Since 2018, OACD has spent $25,049 on these.

Total Value of OACD Youth Contest Awards to Conservation Districts from 2018 - 2020: $25,049

Value of All contest to conservation districts from 2018 -2020: $38,549

Continuing Education of Conservation District Directors

OACD provides continuing education service to district directors through the Conservation Leadership Class, OACD Board Members attending regional and national conferences, and bringing educational speakers to Oklahoma for conservation education. The total amount spent on continuing education for district directors for 2018 -2020 was $52,000.

Total Value of Direct Expenses for Director Continuing Education $52,000

Total Financial Value that oacd has provided to districts from 2018 -2020 $34,637,049

Total money that has been paid to OACD from districts: $89,000
Non-Financial Membership Benefits

Advocacy - In addition to the advocacy work that is completed at the state capitol, OACD serves as a voice for conservation districts with public and private partners on a daily basis. From outreach and collaboration with private organizations looking to expand into conservation to public entities interested in reaching landowners, OACD serves as a connection for statewide entities and the local district. An example of this, is OACD board members serving on the National Watershed Coalition board representing districts.

Communications - OACD manages a robust website with a full calendar of conservation events around the state and nation. From webinars to field days to conferences and USDA deadlines, it’s all listed on okconservation.org/events. OACD also regularly assists with amplifying the message of conservation districts through traditional and social media, as well as, emails on important conservation happenings.

Representation - OACD represents individual districts at the national level. At the National Association of Conservation Districts, OACD board members serve on committees and resource policy groups. OACD brings resolutions from the local, area, and state level to the national level for consideration.

Support - OACD provides support to the individual districts and partners by staff and board members serving on committees, assisting with the creation, implementation of special projects, recruitment of local board members, recruitment of state, regional, and national partners, recruitment of local cooperators to seek out conservation district programs.
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