



Conservancy Districts Not Conservation Districts Training Takeaways

April 2026

This training resource is designed to help conservation district directors and employees stay informed of key points discussed in recent web-based training. The document should be listed on the district's meeting agenda for discussion and review.

Conservancy Districts the Basics

- Separate entities from Conservation Districts
- Some still exist, but most do not and are defunct
- They have different rules than Conservation Districts
- Can tax landowners (assessments) that were protected by Flood Control Structures

What is a Conservancy District

- Purpose: preventing floods, regulating stream channels, providing irrigation, reclaiming or filling of wetlands, regulating stream flows, and diverting water flows.
- In certain areas anyone that wanted to use water in a Conservancy District had to apply to the district for the right to use water.
- Water rights given to those with the greatest need and most reasonable use requests
- Have the power to tax

Powers of Conservancy Districts

- Preventing floods
- Regulating Stream Channels
- Providing for irrigation
- Reclaiming or filling of wetlands
- Regulating stream flows
- Diverting water flows
- Developing and providing water for domestic, industrial and agricultural requirements, and to persons within the territory of the district.
 - This also may include the construction, operation and maintenance of storage, distribution, treatment, supply and other works, installation, improvements and facilities necessary.

Conservancy Districts & Conservation Districts Shared Responsibilities

- Sponsored NRCS flood control dams – have responsibility for operation and maintenance.
- Built their own flood control dams and performed operation and maintenance
- **NOTABLY** – Conservancy Districts and Conservation Districts are **NOT** the same.

What happened to Conservancy Districts?

- Over time most Conservancy Districts stopped functioning – board members did not appoint new board members to replace them and existing board members passed away, leaving them inoperable and defunct.

YES! - Some Examples of Conservancy Districts that Still Exist

- Lake Thunderbird Master Conservancy District
- Payne County Conservancy District #16 – Payne County
- Red Rock Conservancy District – Noble County
- Black Bear Conservancy District – Garfield County, Noble County and Pawnee County
- Turkey Creek Conservancy District – Garfield County

- Lost Duck Creek Conservancy District – Kay County
- Fourche Maline Creek #10 – Latimer County

Easements held only by Conservancy Districts

Some operation and maintenance easements are only held by Conservancy Districts. Janet and Stephanie are working to find solutions to transfer these easements.

Phone Calls

- Typically, callers are Title Companies
- Callers typically want to know if property being sold will be taxed by the Conservancy District
 - Callers will ask for an “assessment letter,” this means they are asking for a written statement about Conservancy District taxes.
- Ask local NRCS office for information about local Conservancy District status
- Long-serving NRCS personnel may have knowledge of Conservancy Districts from decades ago
- Ask other Conservation personnel in your District office if they have information about Conservancy District status
- If you are aware of Conservancy District activity – refer caller to appropriate Conservancy District contact person
- If you are not aware of Conservancy District, give caller information to Janet Stewart & Stephanie Acquario, attorneys

Conservation District Receiving Conservancy District

- Conservancy Districts & Conservation Districts are **SEPARATE ENTITIES**
- Districts that receive Conservancy District bank statements may only receive them because the two districts shared a board member, or shared an employee
- Bank accounts for Conservancy Districts **ARE NOT CONSERVATION DISTRICT FUNDS**
 - Therefore, they should not be included in audits or compilations
 - Your accountant may not know this!

Finding Information about local, defunct Conservancy Districts

- Ask county treasurer employees about Conservancy district records, or assessments completed (taxes on properties)
- Ask County Court Clerk about Conservancy District petition and filing of a map
- General detective work... ask around town if anyone has heard of “X Creek Conservancy District No. 31” who were the last board members? Did they pass away without a successor?

Additional Resources

- OCC General Counsel (Janet Stewart & Stephanie Acquario)
- County Clerk’s Office
- Local NRCS personnel