

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.

Overview

- OCC's Wetlands Program aims to improve the quantity, quality and biological diversity of Oklahoma wetlands through voluntary wetland conservation, technical assistance, outreach, and developing practical, data-driven tools. Financial assistance is offered through various programs to help with wetland restoration, creation, and enhancement. The Wetlands team consists of Dan Dvoretz, Sarah Gilmer, Hattie Largent, Maggie Woods, and Brooks Tramell.

The Basics

- Wetlands are locations where water covers or saturates the soil for a portion of the growing season. Wetlands have shallow water, hydric soils, and/or water adapted plants.
- Wetlands provide numerous benefits to Oklahomans including water quality improvement, flood reduction, aquifer recharge, and recreation.

FY 2026 ReNEW Program Projects

- Forty-three applications were received and scored.
- Five wetland restoration projects were selected through the application scoring process.
 - Projects in Alfalfa, Payne, Craig, Mayes, and Ottawa Counties.
- Project agreements have been initiated and designs are being finalized.
- The wetlands team will certify the completed projects and initiate reimbursement through the local districts.

FY 2027 Financial Assistance Opportunities

- OCC offers technical and financial assistance through several different cost-share programs that are funded by state, federal, and privately donated funds.
- **State Funds:** Restoring Natural Ecology in Wetlands (ReNEW)
 - Program is state-wide with all wetland types being eligible
 - \$100,000/ fiscal year from state legislature with an 80% cost share rate
 - Application period: 8/17/26 - 9/30/26
- **Federal Funds:** NFWF America's Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (AERI)
 - Must be located North Canadian, Cimarron, or Arkansas River watersheds for depressional wetland restoration.
 - \$1 million available for Oklahoma wetland restoration with a 90% cost-share rate
 - Projects require environmental compliance
 - Application period: 8/17/26 – until funding is expended
 - Grant ends 6/30/2029
- **Private Funds**
 - Cost-share and incentive payments for playa restoration and irrigation retirement in Cimarron, Texas, Beaver, and Harper Counties.

- Funds available for wetland restoration in NE Oklahoma near Tulsa, Mayes, Rogers, and Wagoner counties.
- Application period: 8/17/26 – until funding is expended

Wetlands Assistance Application

- One application for all cost-share opportunities!
- Available in Microsoft Form or printable PDF.
- 20 questions taking approximately 10 minutes to complete.
- Link, QR code, and additional instructions can be found on our website: wetlands.ok.gov
- Please email printed applications to wetlands@conservation.ok.gov

Summary and Action Items!

- Wetland restoration can benefit operations and financial assistance is available!
- Please direct all interested landowners to our Wetlands Assistance Application.
- Please add the district participation form to your September agenda and advertise the ReNEW Program.

Additional Resources

- OCC Wetlands website: <https://wetlands.ok.gov/>
- Wetlands email: wetlands@conservation.ok.gov
- Hattie Largent: 572-206-6206, hattie.largent@conservation.ok.gov
- Maggie Woods: 405-431-0958, maggie.woods@Conservation.ok.gov

