



West Otero Timpas Conservation District

3-Year Plan 2023to 2025

For More Information Contact: Nancy Aschermann, District Manager
200 South 10th Street, Rocky Ford, CO 81067

719-254-7883; rockyfordcd@gmail.com

BACKGROUND

Organization of the West Otero Timpas Conservation District

Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of the State of Colorado –The authorities, powers, and structure are contained in Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 35, Article 70.

- West Otero Timpas Conservation District was organized under the Colorado Soil Conservation Act of 1937 as amended. Today’s District was originally two separate districts, West Otero and Timpas. The original West Otero District was established by a referendum held June 12, 1943. The Certificate of Organization was issued by the Colorado Secretary of State on June 23, 1943. The Timpas district was established by referendum and the certificate of organization was issued by the Colorado Secretary of State on September 24, 1942. The two districts consolidated after an election on February 8, 2000. The resolution to consolidate was passed on February 9, 2000.
- West Otero Timpas Conservation District occupies a large portion of Crowley and Otero Counties, but also has some land in Pueblo and Las Animas Counties.
- A Board of Supervisors composed of five landowners governs the District. Members of the Board are elected at a public election held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of May of even-numbered years (until 2023, when districts are switching to odd years). Each Supervisor serves a four-year term with 3 Supervisors elected at one election and 2 elected at the next election. The Board of Supervisors held a successful special election to remove voter mandated term limits on elected officials.
- On July 1, 2002, by an act of the Legislature the Colorado Conservation Districts and the State conservation Board removed the word “Soil” from their names to better reflect the current activities of the Districts.

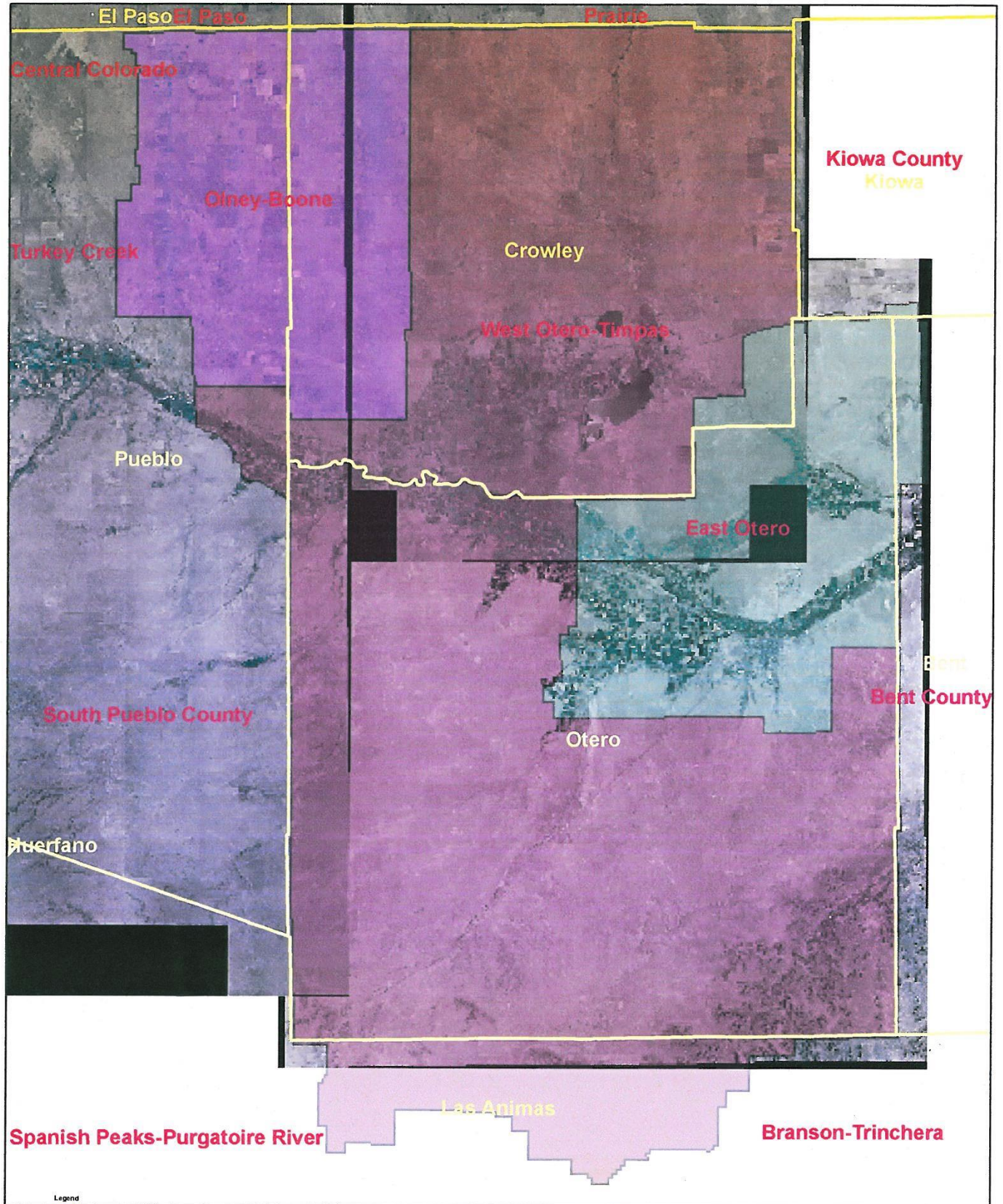
Function of the West Otero Timpas Conservation District

To make available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources.

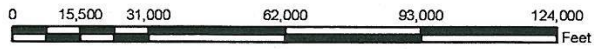
Mission of the West Otero Timpas Conservation District

The mission of the West Otero Timpas Conservation District is to provide agricultural producers, other private landowners, county and local governments, students, and the general public with a forum for assistance and education regarding sound natural resources conservation practices within, but not limited to, the District.

Conservation Districts



- Legend
- County Line
 - East Otero
 - Olney-Boone
 - West Otero-Timpas



RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

Natural Resource Data

The District is in Crowley, Pueblo, Otero, and Las Animas Counties with 2,372,096 total acres. Land use breaks out as follows: 1,962,403 acres of private land, 120,760 state, 163,223 federal, 44,440 acres of non-irrigated, 51,590 acres of irrigated land, 16,880 acres of recreational lands, and 12,800 acres of subdivision lands.

RESOURCE PLANNING

Trends Impacting Conservation in the West Otero Timpas Conservation District

Drought/water shortage: Southeast Colorado is subject to repeated droughts. Crowley and Otero Counties have been the hardest hit. In 2002 Crowley County documented 3 inches of annual precipitation. The drought, starting in the early 2000's, continues to effect production even though some years have more moisture than others.

Soil erosion: Wind erosion during 2002-2006 was documented at hundreds of tons. Many ranchers left the county and sold land for recreational use, taking land out of agricultural production.

Invasive species/Noxious weeds: Since 2000 Russian Knapweed, Tamarisk, and Canada thistle have taken over river bottom drainage. Weeds use up precious moisture; they can be toxic to animals; they take up needed space; and they are generally injurious to agriculture. Prairie Dogs compete with cattle for forage and damage grazing lands, reduce the annual forage production, and degrade the vegetation plant community.

Overgrazing on rangeland and on developed land: Overgrazing, during drought near water sources, led to noxious weed invasion and range deterioration.

Prioritized Natural Resource Issues & Goals

PRIORITY ISSUE: Water Quality and Quantity Management

Goal: Continue to support and educate stakeholders, encouraging them to protect and improve water quality and quantity.

Objective: Assist at least ten producers per year in the form of education and monetary assistance (if available) to implement more efficient water delivery systems such as sprinklers, drip tape, etc.

Objective: Work to implement best management practices that will positively affect water quality and quantity within the district.

Objective: Assist three producers to increase rangeland planning for water development and fencing.

This is a concern in our district because water is scarce, and it is essential for successful production.

PRIORITY ISSUE: Soil Health

Goal: Educate and support landowners within the district to participate in responsible soil health practices, thus improving soil health.

Objective: Participate in the Colorado Department of Agriculture S.T.A.R. Plus program. Five Producers will receive incentive payments to practice outlined soil health practices, technical assistance, guidance in filling out a STAR Field Form, and assistance in collecting a soil sample.

Objective: Host a field day showcasing the S.T.A.R. Plus program results.

Soil Health is a concern in WOTCD due to several factors: 1. The burn scar in Crowley County damaged the soil; 2. De-watered land has caused degrading of the soil; 3. Sever drought is a hazard to soil; 4. Healthy soil is more productive; and 5. Healthy soil conserves scarce water resources.

PRIORITY ISSUE: Rangeland Management

Goal: Educate and support landowners within the district to participate in responsible rangeland management; thus, improving rangeland health.

Objective: Encourage at least five producers per year to implement grazing rotation plans. Educate them regarding the assistance available through NRCS regarding these plans.

Objective: Continue to support at least five producers to implement best rangeland practices.

Objective: Continue to support producers in having at least 5000 acres contracted for rangeland health assessments with grazing recommendations.

Objective: Encourage at least 5 producers to participate in Grasslands CRP.

This is a concern for our district because the land in WOTCD is fragile and requires wise use.

PRIORITY ISSUE: Invasive Species

Goal: Educate and support landowner efforts to control invasive species.

Objective: Distribute Tamarisk beetles and gall wasps, when available, to help control Tamarisk and Russian Knapweed.

Objective: Write one newsletter/newspaper articles on weed identification and control each year.

Objective: Maintain *Rural Living Handbook* for our area. Have it available for small acreage farmers.

Objective: Continue working with Otero and Crowley County Land Use Administrators on identification and location of invasive species.

Objective: Continue to release knapweed gall wasps and tamarisk beetles, when available.

This is a concern in our district because noxious weeds are generally injurious to agriculture and can be hard to eradicate if not responded to in early stages of infestation.

Natural Resource Information /Education Priorities and Goals

Provide students conservation education to increase their awareness of natural resource issues.

- Support K-12 opportunities for students and staff such as Camp Rocky, Colorado Literacy Project for primary grades, Fourth Grade Arbor Day, Sixth Grade Poster Contest, FFA Rangeland Judging and teacher workshops.
- Support post-high school education opportunities for students such as the Otero College agriculture program and student scholarships.

Conservation District Operational Goals & Objectives

Goal: The West Otero Timpas Conservation District will continue to provide opportunities for Supervisors and staff to fulfill their duties and to effectively accomplish our mission.

- Maintain a five-member board that regularly attends meetings.
- Continue partnership with EOCD and OBCD to employ a DCT.
- Continue partnership with EOCD and OBCD to employ a district manager.
- Serve on ancillary boards that influence goals and objectives WOTCD has prioritized, i.e., ditch companies.

Staffing Needs

The annual objectives identified in the LRP can be accomplished by the part time District Manager (shared with EOCD and OBCD) and one full time District Conservation Technician (also shared with EOCD and OBCD) with the support of the Board of Supervisors.

Nancy Aschermann, District Manager

Jessica Hiebert, District Conservation Technician

Bill Gray, President

David Tomky, Vice-President

Scott Youker, Secretary/Treasurer

Tammy Ridennoure, Member

Dayla Pearl, Member

Acronyms Used:

Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA); Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS); West Otero Timpas Conservation District (WOTCD); East Otero Conservation District (EOCD); Olney Boone Conservation District (OBCD); Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB); Farm Service Agency (FSA); Colorado State University-Extension (CSU-EX); Colorado State University Research Center (CSU-RC); District Conservation Technician (DCT); Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); Targeted Conservation Proposal (TCP); Long Range Plan (LRP)

WEST OTERO TIMPAS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Natural Resource Goals & Objectives

Long Range Plan for: 2023 – 2025

Natural Resource priority: Water Quality and Quantity Management

Why is this a concern and what is the location: Drought years have historically seen inadequate water supply for irrigation agriculture production, and rangeland forage production. Water quality has also become an issue within the district.

Three Year Goal(s): Help at least fifteen producers per year to protect and improve water quality and quantity. Help by providing education, technical and monetary assistance when possible.

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
1st Year	A. Assist at least 10 producers in the form of education and monetary assistance (if available) to implement more efficient water delivery systems such as sprinklers, drip tape, etc. B. Assist at least 3 producers to increase rangeland planning for water development and fencing. C. Apply for grant funding to improve water quality and quantity.	NRCS CSU Extension Supervisors DCT District Manager	100 Hrs. EQIP Matching Grant TCP	General Fund CSCB Grants EQIP
2nd Year	A. Assist at least 10 producers in the form of education and monetary assistance (if available) to implement more efficient water delivery systems such as sprinklers, drip tape, etc. B. Assist at least 3 producers to increase rangeland planning for water development and fencing. C. Apply for grant funding to improve water quality and quantity.	NRCS CSU Extension Supervisors DCT District Manager	100 Hrs. EQIP Matching Grant TCP	General Fund CSCB Grants EQIP
3rd Year	A. Assist at least 10 producers in the form of education and monetary assistance (if available) to implement more efficient water delivery systems such as sprinklers, drip tape, etc. B. Assist at least 3 producers to increase rangeland planning for water development and fencing. C. Apply for grant funding to improve water quality and quantity.	NRCS CSU Extension Supervisors DCT District Manager	100 Hrs. EQIP Matching Grant TCP	General Fund CSCB Grants EQIP

WEST OTERO TIMPAS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Natural Resource Goals & Objectives

Long Range Plan for: 2023 – 2025

Natural Resource priority: Soil Health

Why is this a concern and what is the location: Soil Health is a concern in WOTCD due to several factors: 1. The burn scar in Crowley County damaged the soil; 2. De-watered land has caused degrading of the soil; 3. Severe drought is a hazard to soil; 4. Healthy soil is more productive; and 5. Healthy soil conserves scarce water resources.

Three Year Goal(s): Work with five producers on the S.T.A.R. Plus program. Re-apply and work with five more producers.

Pro	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATINGCDA AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
1st Year	A. Continue to work with five producers on the STAR Plus Program.	CDA Soil Health Team NRCS DCT District Manager	100 Hrs. \$20,000 capacity support \$75/acre Producer incentive payments	CDA STAR Plus Program
2nd Year	A. Continue to work with five producers on the STAR Plus Program. B. Host a field day showcasing the S.T.A.R. Plus program results.	CDA Soil Health Team NRCS DCT District Manager	100 Hrs. \$3000/year ongoing capacity support \$75/acre Producer incentive payments	CDA STAR Plus Program

3rd Year	A. Re apply for STAR Plus Program.	CDA Soil Health Team NRCS DCT District Manager	100 Hrs. \$3000/year ongoing capacity support \$75/acre Producer incentive payments	CDA STAR Plus Program
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West Otero Timpas CONSERVATION DISTRICT

District Operational Goals & Objectives

Long Range Plan for: 2023– 2025

Operational Priority: Rangeland Management

Why is this a concern: Inferior management of rangeland and developed land during drought has led to noxious weed invasion and range deterioration. Without efficient management, resources are destroyed, and stockmen leave the area or go broke and are commonly replaced by wildlife hunting interests. These hunters have no rangeland priority.

Three Year Goal(s): Improve range conditions on at least five producers land each year.

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
1st Year	<p>A. Encourage at least five producers per year to plant annual ground cover on dewatered land to build soil conditions so perennial ground cover can be established.</p> <p>B. Encourage at least five producers per year to implement grazing rotation plans. Educate them regarding the assistance available through NRCS regarding these plans.</p> <p>C. Continue to support at least five producers to implement best rangeland practices through EQIP,</p> <p>D. Continue to support producers in having at least 5000 acres contracted for rangeland health assessments with grazing recommendations.</p> <p>E. Encourage 5 producers to participate in Grasslands CPR.</p>	<p>NRCS</p> <p>CSU-EX</p> <p>DCT</p> <p>District Manager</p>	<p>100 hours</p> <p>Matching Grant</p> <p>TCP</p> <p>EQIP</p>	<p>General Fund</p> <p>CSBC Grants</p> <p>EQIP</p>
2nd Year	<p>A. Encourage at least five producers per year to plant annual ground cover on dewatered land to build soil conditions so perennial ground cover can be established.</p> <p>B. Encourage at least five producers per year to implement grazing rotation plans. Educate them regarding the</p>	<p>NRCS</p> <p>CSU-EX</p> <p>DCT</p> <p>District Manager</p>	<p>100 hours</p> <p>Matching Grant</p> <p>TCP</p> <p>EQIP</p>	<p>General Fund</p> <p>CSBC Grants</p> <p>EQIP</p>

	<p>assistance available through NRCS regarding these plans.</p> <p>C. Continue to support at least five producers to implement best rangeland practices through EQIP,</p> <p>D. Continue to support producers in having at least 5000 acres contracted for rangeland health assessments with grazing recommendations.</p> <p>E. Encourage 5 producers to participate in Grasslands CPR.</p>			
3rd Year	<p>A. Encourage at least five producers per year to plant annual ground cover on dewatered land to build soil conditions so perennial ground cover can be established.</p> <p>B. Encourage at least five producers per year to implement grazing rotation plans. Educate them regarding the assistance available through NRCS regarding these plans.</p> <p>C. Continue to support at least five producers to implement best rangeland practices through EQIP,</p> <p>D. Continue to support producers in having at least 5000 acres contracted for rangeland health assessments with grazing recommendations.</p> <p>E. Encourage 5 producers to participate in Grasslands CPR.</p>	<p>NRCS</p> <p>CSU-EX</p> <p>DCT</p> <p>District Manager</p>	<p>100 hours</p> <p>Matching Grant</p> <p>TCP</p> <p>EQIP</p>	<p>General Fund</p> <p>CSBC Grants</p> <p>EQIP</p>

West Otero Timpas CONSERVATION DISTRICT

District Operational Goals & Objectives

Long Range Plan for: 2023 – 2025

Operational Priority: Noxious Weeds

Why is this a concern: Since 2000 Russian Knapweed, Tamarisks, and Canada Thistle have taken over river bottom drainage. Weeds use up precious moisture; they can be toxic to animals; they take up needed space, and they are generally injurious to agriculture.

Three Year Goal(s): Educate producers, small landowners, and realtors on the need and means for weed control.

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
1 st Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Work with Palisade Insectary to distribute tamarisk beetles and gall wasps, when available. B. Write a newsletter/newspaper/Facebook article on weed identification and control each year. C. Maintain the <i>Rural Living Handbook</i> specific to our area, on an as-needed basis. D. Work with Crowley and Otero County Land Use Administrators on identification and location of noxious weeds. 	NRCS Crowley & Otero County Land Use Administrators	10 hours	General Fund
2 nd Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Work with Palisade Insectary to distribute tamarisk beetles and gall wasps, when available. B. Write a newsletter/newspaper/Facebook article on weed identification and control each year. C. Maintain the <i>Rural Living Handbook</i> specific to our area, on an as-needed basis. D. Work with Crowley and Otero County Land Use Administrators on identification and location of noxious weeds. 	NRCS Crowley & Otero County Land Use Administrators	10 hours	General Fund

<p>3rd Year</p>	<p>A. Work with Palisade Insectary to distribute tamarisk beetles and gall wasps, when available.</p> <p>B. Write a newsletter/newspaper/Facebook article on weed identification and control each year.</p> <p>C. Maintain the <i>Rural Living Handbook</i> specific to our area, on an as-needed basis.</p> <p>D. Work with Crowley and Otero County Land Use Administrators on identification and location of noxious weeds.</p>	<p>NRCS</p> <p>Crowley & Otero County Land Use Administrators</p>	<p>10 hours</p>	<p>General Fund</p>
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RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

THEREFORE, Be It Resolved that this Long-Range Program of the West Otero Timpas Conservation District be adopted as the official program of the District as of this fifth day of December 2023.

Bill Gray, President

David Tomky, Vice President

Scott Youker, Secretary/Treasurer

Tammy Ridenoure, Member

Dayla Pearl, Member

Reviewed by the Colorado State Conservation Board

Colorado State Conservation Board, President

Cindy Lair, Program Manager

Date