



EAST OTERO CONSERVATION DISTRICT

3-Year Plan 2026 to 2028

For More Information Contact: Nancy Aschermann, District Manager
719-254-7883; rockyfordcd@gmail.com

BACKGROUND

Organization of the East Otero 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.

- The East Otero Conservation District was organized under the Colorado Soil conservation Act of 1937. The original district was established by a referendum of the landowners. The certificate of organization was issued by the Colorado Secretary of State on May 25, 1945. All incorporated municipalities and areas devoted exclusively to commercial or industrial uses, as they existed at the time the District was formed, are excluded from the District.
- East Otero is primarily in the northeast corner of Otero County with a small portion that laps into Bent County, Kiowa County, and Crowley County.
- 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 odd-numbered 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 East Otero 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 East Otero Conservation District

The East Otero Conservation District is an organization of private landowners who monitor and solve conservation needs, secure funding, provide education and promote research. Other services include providing direction and advice to various federal and state agencies. The District also influences legislation on conservation issues. These services are provided to the landowners and general public to preserve production of the land and conserve the natural resources.

RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

Natural Resource Data

The land ownership within East Otero Conservation District is as follows:

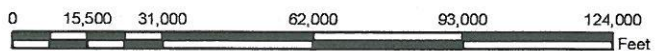
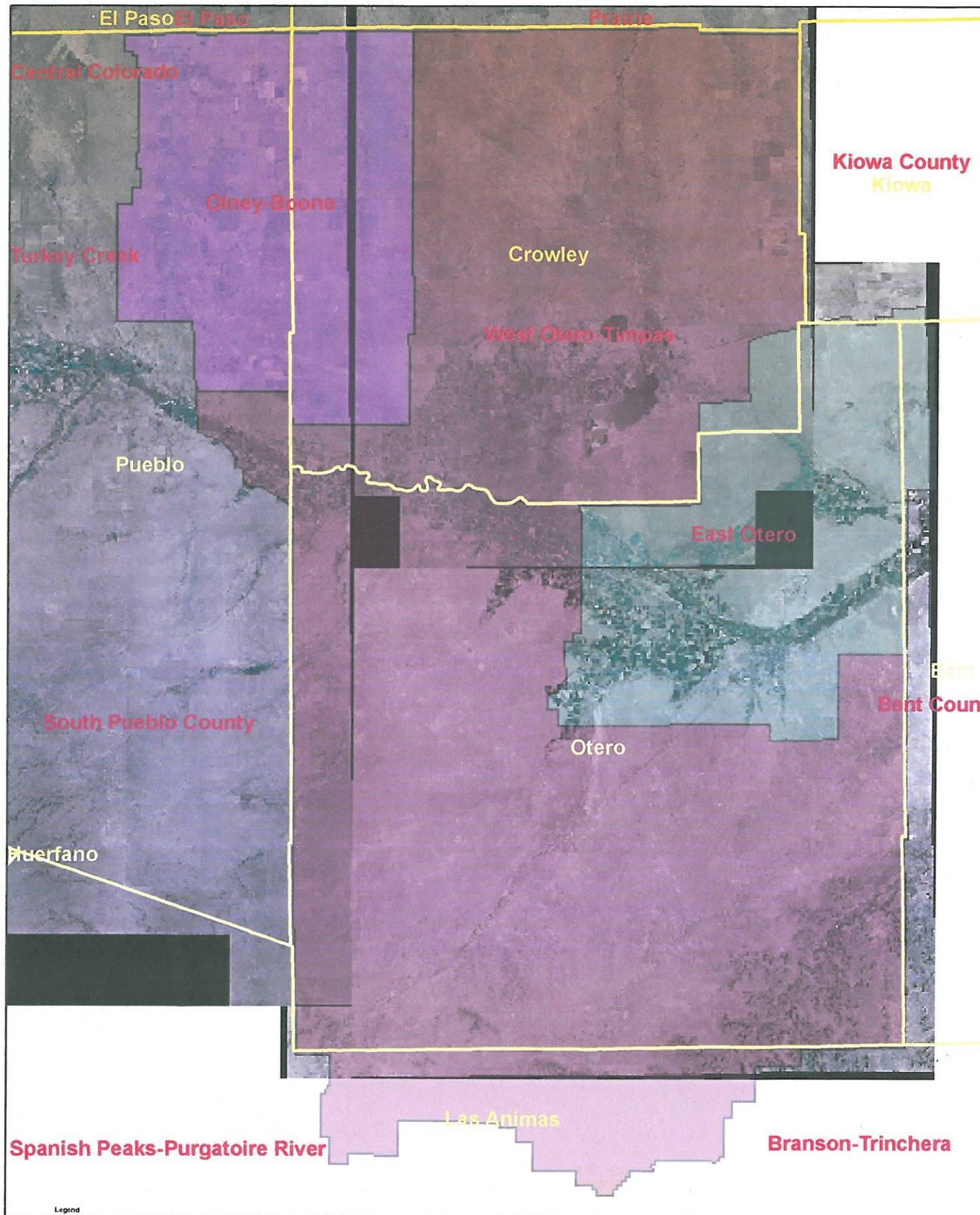
Private Land 132,341 acres

State Land 40,000 acres

The various land uses within the District are as follows:

Irrigated cropland	52,000 acres	CRP General	2647.31 acres
Rangeland	115,841 acres	CRP Grasslands	7,818.13 acres
Other lands	4,500 acres		

Conservation Districts



RESOURCE PLANNING

Trends Impacting Conservation in the East Otero Conservation District

- Drought: Southeast Colorado is subject to repeated droughts. Crowley and Otero Counties have been the hardest hit. The drought starting in the early 2000's continues to effect production even though some years have had moisture.
- Noxious weeds: Weeds use up precious moisture; they can be toxic to animals; they take up needed space; and they are generally injurious to agriculture. Since 2000 Russian Knapweed, Canada Thistle, and Tamarisk have taken over river bottom drainages.
- Changing practices: Due to drought and wind erosion producers are trying to disturb the soil less through no-till farming and are saving water through advanced irrigation practices.
- Economics: The economics of agriculture production get tighter and tighter every year. Besides that, Otero County is one of the poorest counties in the state with a median household income of \$34,142.

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:

1. Assist at least 10 producers to implement more efficient water delivery systems such as irrigation pipelines, gated pipe, land leveling, drip tape, etc.
2. Work to identify feasible management practices that will positively affect water quality and quantity within the district.
3. Serve on canal boards

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

PRIORITY ISSUE: Control of Noxious Weeds

Goal: Educate producers and realtors on the need and means for weed control.

Objectives:

1. Write three newsletter/newspaper articles on weed identification and control each year.
2. Maintain *Rural Living Handbook* for our area, have it available for small acreage farmers.
3. Refer farmers to the NRCS Small Acreage Website.
4. Continue working with Otero Land Use Administrators on an as needed basis.

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.

PRIORITY ISSUE: Soil Health

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

Objectives:

1. Assist producers to implement soil health practices.
2. Assist producers interested in testing their soil for insight into its composition.
3. Assist producers monitor their soil moisture and temperature with the installed device.

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 students, Fourth Grade Arbor Day, Sixth Grade Poster Contest, intermediate grades River Trailer, 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 East Otero 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 to employ a DCT in partnership with WOTCD and OBCD.
- Continued partnership with WOTCD and OBCD to employ a district manager.
- Continued partnership with OBCD to own and operate the Service Center Building.
- Serve on ancillary boards that influence goals and objectives EOCD 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 WOTCD and OBCD) and one full time District Conservation Technician with the support of the Board of Supervisors.

Dennis Caldwell, President

Ross Nielsen, Secretary/Treasurer

Kenneth Maier, Member

Chris Tomky, Member

Kyle Hirakata, Member

Nancy Aschermann, District Manager

Jill Taylor, DCT

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); Best Management Practices (BMP); District Conservation Technician (DCT)

EAST OTERO CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Natural Resource Goals & Objectives

Long Range Plan for: 2026 – 2028

Natural Resource priority: Water Quality and Quantity Management

Why this is a concern and what is the location: Southeast Colorado is subject to repeated droughts. Crowley and Otero counties have been the hardest hit. The drought starting in the early 2000's continues to effect production even though some years have had moisture. Livelihoods are made from agriculture practices and thus, water quality and quantity is important to producers. They strive to implement Best Management Practices (BMP).

Three Year Goal(s): Help at least 10 producers per year to protect and improve water quality and quantity. Help them by providing education, technical, and monetary assistance (when available).

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
1 st Year	A. Assist at least ten producers to implement more efficient water delivery system such as sprinklers, drip tape, etc. B. Work to identify feasible best management practices that will positively affect water quality and quantity within the district. C. Serve on canal boards D. Write for grant funds to support water quality and quantity management in EOCD. E. Provide matching grants using income from ownership of Service Center Building, as available.	NRCS CSCB CSU Research Center OBCD Lower Arkansas Water Conservancy District CSU Extension	75 hrs. EQIP 75 hrs. \$25,000 Matching Grant	General Fund EQIP CSCB Grants Rental income from building ownership
2 nd Year	A. Assist at least ten producers to implement more efficient water delivery system such as sprinklers, drip tape, etc. B. Work to identify feasible best management practices that will positively affect water quality and quantity within the district. C. Serve on canal boards D. Write for grant funds to support water quality and quantity management in EOCD. E. Implement grant funds received. F. Provide matching grants using income from ownership of Service Center Building, as available.	NRCS CSCB CSU Research Center OBCD	75 hrs. EQIP 75 hrs. \$25,000 Matching Grant	General Fund EQIP CSCB Grants Rental income from building ownership

3rd Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Assist at least ten producers to implement more efficient water delivery system such as sprinklers, drip tape, etc. B. Work to identify feasible management practices that will positively affect water quality and quantity within the district. C. Serve on canal boards D. Write for grant funds to support water quality and quantity management in EOCD. E. Implement grant funds received. F. Provide matching grants using income from ownership of Service Center Building, as available. 	NRCS CSCB CSU Research Center OBCD	75 hrs. EQIP 75 hrs. \$25,000 Matching Grant	General Fund EQIP CSCB Grants Rental income from building ownership
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EAST OTERO CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Natural Resource Goals & Objectives

Long Range Plan for: 2023 – 2025

Natural Resource priority: Control of Noxious Weeds

Why this is a concern and what is the location: Weeds use up precious moisture; they can be toxic to animals; they take up needed space; and they are generally injurious to agriculture. Since 2000 Russian knapweed, Canada thistle, and tamarisk have taken over river bottom drainages.

Three Year Goal(s): Provide educational opportunities to raise awareness / treatment options for noxious weed issues to 100 plus producers.

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
1 st Year	A. Write at least three newsletter/newspaper articles on weed identification and control each year. B. Provide Rural Living Handbook that is specific to our area, on an as needed basis. C. Refer producers to NRCS Small Acreage Web site, on an as needed basis. D. Work with Otero County Land Use Administrator on an as needed basis.	NRCS Otero County Land Use Administrator	10 hrs.	General Fund
2 nd Year	A. Write at least three newsletter/newspaper articles on weed identification and control each year. B. Provide Rural Living Handbook that is specific to our area, on an as needed basis. C. Refer producers to NRCS Small Acreage Web site, on an as needed basis. D. Work with Otero County Land Use Administrator on an as needed basis.	NRCS Otero County Land Use Administrator	10 hours	General Fund
3 rd Year	A. Write at least three newsletter/newspaper articles on weed identification and control each year. B. Provide Rural Living Handbook that is specific to our area, on an as needed basis. C. Refer producers to NRCS Small Acreage Web site, on an as needed basis. D. Work with Otero County Land Use Administrator on an as needed basis.	NRCS Otero County Land Use Administrator	10 hours	General Fund

EAST OTERO CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Natural Resource Goals & Objectives

Long Range Plan for: 2026 – 2028

Natural Resource priority: Soil Health

Why this is a concern and what is the location: Soil is important because it is the foundation of agriculture and our food system. Healthy soil is a living ecosystem that provides nutrients, water, oxygen, and root support for plants, and converts dead and decaying matter into plant nutrients. Healthy soil also helps regulate, store, and filter water, and supports biodiversity.

Three Year Goal(s): Help eight producers improve their soil health.

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
1 st Year	a. Continue to assist eight producers to implement soil health practices. b. Assist eight producers to monitor their soil moisture and temperature. c. Encourage producers to sample their soil composition.	CDA Soil Health Team NRCS DCT	20 hours	General Fund
2 nd Year	d. Continue to assist eight producers to implement soil health practices. e. Assist eight producers to monitor their soil moisture and temperature. f. Encourage producers to sample their soil composition.	CDA Soil Health Team NRCS DCT	20 hours	General Fund
3 rd Year	g. Continue to assist eight producers to implement soil health practices. h. Assist eight producers to monitor their soil moisture and temperature. i. Encourage producers to sample their soil composition.	CDA Soil Health Team NRCS DCT	20 hours	General Fund

EAST OTERO CONSERVATION DISTRICT

District Operational Goals & Objectives

Long Range Plan for: 2026 – 2028

Operational Priority: Empowered Board

Why this is a concern: The role of conservation districts is to empower local producers to lead their peers in conservation practices. It is a continuing challenge to find strong participating board members who actively engage in the process.

Three Year Goal(s): The East Otero Conservation District will continue to provide opportunities for Supervisors and staff to fulfill their duties and to effectively accomplish our mission.

PROGRAM YEAR	MEASURABLE ANNUAL OBJECTIVES	COOPERATING AGENCY/GROUP	TIME AND FUNDING NEEDED	SOURCE OF FUNDING
Example 1 st Year	A. Maintain a five-member board that regularly attends at least 9 meetings. B. Continue partnership with OBCD and WOTCD to employ a DCT. C. Continue partnership with OBCD and WOTCD to employ a district manager. D. Continue partnership with OBCD to own and operate the Service Center Building.	OBCD WOTCD Board	50 hours	General Fund CSCB Direct Assistance Grant Rental Income
Example 2 nd Year	A. Maintain a five-member board that regularly attends at least 9 meetings. B. Continue partnership with OBCD and WOTCD to employ a DCT. C. Continue partnership with OBCD and WOTCD to employ a district manager. D. Continue partnership with OBCD to own and operate the Service Center Building.	OBCD WOTCD Board	50 hours	General Fund CSCB Direct Assistance Grant Rental Income
Example 3 rd Year	A. Maintain a five-member board that regularly attends at least 9 meetings. B. Continue partnership with OBCD and WOTCD to employ a DCT. C. Continue partnership with OBCD and WOTCD to employ a district manager. D. Continue partnership with OBCD to own and operate the	OBCD WOTCD Board	50 hours	General Fund CSCB Direct Assistance Grant Rental Income

	Service Center Building.			
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RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

THEREFORE, Be It Resolved that this Long Range Program of the East Otero Conservation District be adopted as the official program of the District as of this second day of December, 2025.

Dennis Caldwell, President

Chris Tomky, Member

Ross Nielsen, Secretary

Kyle Hirakata, Member

Kenneth Maier, Member

Reviewed by the Colorado State Conservation Board

Dennis Caldwell, President

Nikki Bensen, Program Manager

Date