

Conservation District Funding History

The original concept of the Conservation District in regards to financial support was that they would meet administrative expenses from monies to be appropriated by state and local governments, but as conservation problems became more complex it became increasingly clear the responsibility of coordination became more difficult. At first few districts had staff to assist the supervisors in their many tasks. Minutes from June 1955 indicated actions were taken to approach county commissioners for the purpose of obtaining an allotment to hire a part time secretary. The county commissioners did allow a "clerical fund" so the board hired a part time stenographer.

In 1963 funds for operations did not cover expenses so a bank loan of \$500 was secured with the endorsement of the supervisors to make ends meet until the 1964 funds were made available. In early 1964 a motion was made to prepare a budget to present to county commissioners for additional funding. In 1965 it was also recorded that state matching funds in the amount of \$2,500 was received. The district was now funded by county and state monies for the first time. Over time the county and state funds have increased. The district began to bring in enterprise funds through the sale of marking flags, grass seed, pipe, a drill and planter for rent. This fund is used to pay for activities that are not allowable under the operations fund, which accounts for the state and county monies. Without the enterprise funds it would not have been possible for the district to meet the demands of the Food Security Act and to facilitate the purchase of the necessary office automation and field equipment necessary to carry out the provisions of FSA and Conservation Reserve Programs.

On April 9, 2007 Governor Sebelius signed HB2048 which allowed state matching funds, or state aid to conservation districts as outlined in District Law to be increase to an amount not to exceed \$25,000 annually per conservation district. Franklin County District Manager Keri Harris played an active role in the process of gaining legislative support for HB2048 and SB60 during the winter of 2007. Ms. Harris traveled to Topeka in January 2007 at the invitation of Senator Derek Schmidt who had introduced SB60; Ms. Harris gave testimony to both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees along with other representatives from SCC and KACD in support of the bills to increase state aid to conservation districts.