



Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts Pg 1

The Conservation Partnership in Kentucky

Federal, State, and Local Collaboration

The partnership brings together agencies like the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Kentucky Division of Conservation, and 121 local conservation districts to deliver coordinated conservation efforts statewide.

Locally Led Conservation Efforts

Kentucky's 121 conservation districts identify community-specific resource concerns (soil, water, wildlife) and guide priorities, ensuring solutions are tailored to local needs.

Technical and Financial Assistance for Landowners

Programs such as EQIP and CSP provide farmers and landowners with funding and expert guidance to implement practices like cover crops, rotational grazing, and erosion control. Kentucky also has many producers that do not participate in Farm Bill cost share programs who depend on the Local Conservation Districts for general technical assistance. This is a very important component to the partnership.

Focus on Soil and Water Health

The partnership emphasizes improving soil productivity, protecting water quality, reducing erosion, and supporting long-term agricultural sustainability.

Education and Engagement

Through workshops, field days, and youth programs, partners promote conservation awareness and help build the next generation of conservation leaders. Kentucky is proud of our Junior Board Program for High School Youth. Many of our Districts also have Junior Board.

State and Local Leverage

Kentucky conservation districts leverage state and local funds for conservation partnership work in the Commonwealth. On average a total of \$30,710,145.00 is leveraged each year. 100% of the conservation districts administrative staff members are funded by state and local funds. Kentucky also administers a state cost share program that offers conservation practices that compliment NRCS Farm Bill work. Employees utilize all the programs available to form a polished conservation plan of action for producers. This also includes Local cost share options for many of our districts and a statewide program known as CAIP that also picks up important segments of conservation plans.

Annual Estimated Investments

Federal Conservation Investments	\$76,416,331.00
State Government Investments	\$16,207,575.00+
Local Government Investments	\$14,502,570.00+
Total Estimated Investments	\$107,126,476.00+

Annual Local Impacts

Locally Public Elected Officials	847
Conservation District Staff	200
Volunteers (Including Junior Conservation Boards)	500+
Homes purchased in flood prone areas due to Natural Disaster Flooding.	300 + Homes Purchased 900+ additional Applications
Acres Impacted	~12.4 Million Acres
Landowners Assisted	~15,000 annually
PL566 Flood Control Structures	200 Structures

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Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts Pg 2

Local Impact and Outcomes

Kentucky's Local Impact, Resource Concerns & Conservation Practices

Kentucky's conservation partnership—led locally by conservation districts and supported by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Kentucky Division of Conservation and local Conservation Districts—targets **priority natural resource concerns** with proven, on-the-ground practices that deliver measurable environmental outcomes.

1. Soil Health & Erosion Concerns → Reduced Soil Loss

Resource concerns: Sheet, rill, and gully erosion, Soil compaction and loss of organic matter.

Common Kentucky practices: No-till / reduced tillage, Cover crops, Grassed waterways,

Measured outcomes: Significant reductions in tons of soil loss per acre, Increased soil organic matter and improved soil structure, Higher infiltration rates and drought resilience

2. Water Quality Concerns → Cleaner Streams & Reduced Nutrients

Resource concerns: Excess nitrogen and phosphorus, Sediment and agricultural runoff
Pathogens entering waterways

Common Kentucky practices: Nutrient management planning, Riparian forest buffers
Filter strips, Livestock exclusion fencing, Heavy use area protection

Measured outcomes: Reduced nutrient (N & P) loading into waterways, Lower sediment and turbidity levels in streams, Improved aquatic habitat and drinking water quality

3. Water Quantity & Flooding Concerns → Improved Hydrology

Resource concerns: Excess runoff and flash flooding, Poor water retention and groundwater recharge

Common Kentucky practices: Water and sediment control basins, Farm watering systems, Streambank stabilization, Conservation cover

Measured outcomes: 200 watershed dams reduce peak storm flows and flooding risk, Increased water infiltration and groundwater recharge, Reduced downstream erosion and infrastructure damage

4. Plant & Wildlife Concerns → Habitat & Biodiversity Gains

Resource concerns: Declining wildlife habitat, Poor plant productivity, Invasive species

Common Kentucky practices: Native grass and pollinator plantings, prescribed grazing, Forest stand improvement, Early successional habitat development.

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