

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

WEST POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Ia-SCD-39

Council Bluffs, Iowa.

We, the Commissioners of the West Pottawattamie County Soil Conservation District, E. H. Harms, Don Anderson and Wm. C. Strohbehn are hereby submitting our fourth annual report of the District activities and our further plans and needs, for your review and consideration.

ORGANIZATION

Eleven (11) regular monthly commissioners meetings were held during the year and ten (10) special meetings with all commissioners present at every meeting. We feel proud of the fact that since the District was organized in April 1944 that all commissioners have been at every meeting with 100 per cent attendance.

COMMUNITY GROUPS - FARM PLANNING AND APPLICATION

Our policy of working entirely with groups, which was formulated when the District was first organized has been adhered to with very good results. With the new groups organized in 1947 we now have a total of 26 farm planning groups. These groups were organized by the farmers who desired assistance on their farms with developing and applying soil and moisture conservation farm plans. Fifteen (15) groups have been planned to date comprising 206 farms. We feel that with eleven (11) groups comprising 182 farms that have requested technical assistance from the Soil Conservation Service Technicians to assist them with farm plans, we are definitely in need of more technical assistance from the Soil Conservation Service to assist these farmers with their planning and application. (See attached chart).

We also have other groups that will be formed this year that will be requesting assistance, in fact, we would like to get enough Soil Conservation Service assistance in our District so that we could assist all farmers in the District with the developing of a soil and moisture farm plan as soon as possible as we feel that is the only sound approach to good land use and other phases of soil and moisture conservation.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Nine (9) terrace building demonstrations were held during the year supervised by the District Soil Conservation Service technicians. Farm tractors and plows were used in all these demonstrations. Construction of grassed waterways and other practices was also emphasized at these demonstrations. The farmers in our District built 99 miles of terraces in 1947. This makes a total of 284 miles of farmer-built terraces in the District to date. We feel that demonstrations of this nature are very worthwhile with the actual showing of farmers how they can construct their own terraces and waterways. Individuals and groups of farmers in the District have purchased eighteen (18) terrace building machines, mainly disc tillers and whirlwind terracers.

EXPERIMENTAL WORK

We, as Commissioners, have requested and received assistance from the Soil Conservation Service and Experimental Station with several studies and experiments on seedbed preparation, grass and legume seedings, tillage operations, gully control and cover crops.

A large number of farmers have accepted the information which was secured through these experiments and of which are a valuable asset to the District and farmers. We are especially working with the grape growers and fruit growers

in the District on the using of cover crops in the vineyards and orchards. Through experimental work carried on, we also have a large acreage of Reed's Canary Grass in the District which has proved out very successful.

Through work carried on in the District in previous years, practically all farmers are now using an adapted strain of bromegrass in all their seedings. Many miles of fence row seedings with broms has been accomplished since the organization of the District and much roadbank improvement has been done.

WORK WITH SCHOOLS

Bulletins and other information has been furnished to the County Superintendent of Schools for use by all rural school teachers in the District in their school curriculum and a study course in soil and moisture conservation has also been furnished to the same group which is being used in the rural schools.

Some of the high schools in the county are also teaching soil and moisture conservation in their schools.

HORTICULTURE

This District is considered one of the best fruit and grape growing areas in the country and we are giving the fruit growers all the assistance available with the developing of soil and moisture conservation plans on their farms.

We are also fortunate in having the Western Iowa Horticulture Experimental Farm located in our District and we are assisting the Superintendent of this farm with the establishment of conservation practices on the farm previous to the planting of fruits.

CONTESTS

Commissioners sponsored the Second Annual Southwest Iowa Contour Plowing Contest which was attended by a large number of people in our area. There was twelve contestants that entered the contest and the winner entered the State Contest. We also sponsored the Fourth Annual Ten-Acre Corn Yield Contest having twenty contestants. Prizes were furnished by the Council Bluffs Nonpareil, Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce and the Farm Bureau. The Council Bluffs Rotary Club held a banquet for the contestants at which time the prizes were awarded.

WORLD-HERALD SOIL CONSERVATION RECOGNITION PROGRAM CONTEST

The West Pottawattamie Soil Conservation District was one of the Iowa winners in the World-Herald Soil Conservation Recognition Program Contest, winning an award of \$500 for the District of which we feel greatly honored.

We definitely want to congratulate the OmahaWorld-Herald for sponsoring this sort of a recognition program which will definitely assist us with promoting soil and moisture conservation in our District.

The Recognition Banquet was held at Quick, Iowa, December 1st. This banquet was for the purpose of presenting an award to the District and the farmers representing the District.

The three farmers that represented our District in this contest were: E. H. Harms, Owner and Operator; Wm. Strohhahn, Owner and Paul Brummer, Operator; Tillie Fahrenkrog, Owner and Louie Fahrenkrog, Operator.

SOIL CONSERVATION SURVEYS

17,010 acres were mapped in 1947 making a total of 70,220 acres that have been mapped to date in the District. This soil mapping consists of sim-

plified detailed soil conservation surveys. We request that the entire District be soil mapped as soon as possible.

ACTIVITIES OF DISTRICT GOVERNING BODY

We, as Commissioners, feel definitely that we have made considerable progress towards our goal, that is, a soil and moisture conservation plan in operation on every farm in the District. We, as commissioners, have spent considerable amount of our time, besides attending our regular and special commissioners meetings with the promoting of soil and moisture conservation in our district as well as over the State of Iowa. We have been on six (6) radio broadcasts during the year informing the people of our activities and also attending state meetings and district meetings. Mr. Strohbehn took the air tour, which was held last summer, of Iowa and brought back valuable information relative to the importance of soil conservation and erosion control and also what is being done in other Districts.

Mr. Anderson was elected as a Director of the Iowa State Soil Conservation District Association and spent a considerable amount of his time in this new position.

We also attended the field day at the Western Iowa Experimental Farm at Castana, Iowa and the field day at the Experimental Farm at Clarinda, Iowa. A good number of other farmers and businessmen also attended some of these field days. Other Field Days and meetings attended by one or more of the District Commissioners: Field Day at Albia; Field Day, Bellman farm; Flood Control Meeting at Kansas City and Sioux City; National Soil Conservation Society meeting in Omaha and state meetings. Don Anderson also testified at the Agricultural Hearing at Kansas City. A soil and moisture conservation

exhibit was set up at the Frontier Days Celebration at Council Bluffs which was attended by one of the Commissioners each day.

Exhibits of soil and moisture conservation activities has also been maintained throughout the year in the lobby of the county courthouse. We sponsored a farmer-conservationist training school last winter consisting of five full days. We selected two leaders from each township making a total of twenty-six (26) farmers that were invited and we were very happy that of these farmers invited, twenty (20) of them attended all meetings. We had an average attendance of twenty-four (24) at each meeting. We gave these farmers a rather complete picture of the soil and moisture conservation program as we see it and farmers reports which we received following this training school were favorable as the farmers felt that they were better fortified to go out into their community and assist other farmers with doing a better job of controlling erosion. We feel that by this method of conducting training schools for farmers we are getting more and better farmer-conservationists in the District.

We have a number of contractors doing a fairly good job on erosion control in the District and we held a training school last winter for contractors which was attended by fifteen (15) contractors.

The City of Council Bluffs requested our assistance with the determining of the best procedure to control the heavy siltation problem and damage caused by the overflow of Indian Creek which runs completely through the City of Council Bluffs causing the city thousands of dollars each year to clean out and maintain. We recommended to the city that the proper place to control this damage and siltation problem was in the upper watershed. By controlling the erosion in the upper Indian Creek Watershed area which comprises approx-

imately 5,000 acres. We recommended that this area be put in the flood control area of which the preliminary report has been completed.

We have a flood control Section of the United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service located in Council Bluffs to work in the Districts cooperating with the Army Engineers and the farmers involved in the agricultural levee along the Missouri River.

ADDITIONAL HELP - FROM SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

We, as commissioners, feel that during the year 1947, we have made as much progress as was possible with the limited amount of technical assistance available. Our biggest problem at the present time is that we do not have enough farm planners to keep up with the requests. If technical assistance were made available we think that 90 per cent of the cropland in the District would be covered with farm plans, on a strictly voluntary basis within the next five years.

We appreciate very much the help and support we have received from the Soil Conservation Service, State Soil Conservation Committee and the District Conservationist. We wish especially to commend R. G. Bullard, our former District Technician, now with the Flood control Division for the fine work he has done in our District from the time it was organized until the time he was transferred from our District. We feel that his work has been a great help in getting our District started in the right direction toward our goal -- a soil conservation plan in operation on every farm in the District. We wish him luck and success in his new job.

We also wish to express our appreciation to the other governmental agencies; The Extension Service, A.A.A. for their support and cooperation

and to the County Board of Supervisors for supplying office space for the District office.

We appreciate the fine publicity we have received in the Council Bluffs Nonpareil and other papers in the District.

We wish to thank our city friends: The Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs for their interest and support during the year.

We wish to thank our farmer cooperators for their support and we hope 1948 will see even more progress on the road to soil conservation.

Signed: /s/ E. H. Harms
E. H. Harms, Chairman, District
Governing Body

Date: January 5th, 1948.

TOTAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE DISTRICT - 1947

<u>PRACTICE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>TOTAL 1947</u>	<u>TOTAL TO DATE</u>
Contour Intertilled crops	Acre	48,000	
Grassed Waterways	Mile	7	150
Terraces	Mile	99	284
Diversions	Mile	1.5	
Brome-legume	Acre	6,000	16,000
Reed's Canary Grass	Acre	50	80
Southern Brome Harvested	Lb.	24,000	
Open Ditch Established	Mile	2	
Soil Saving Dams	No.	68	112
Permanent Structures	No.	7	
Interest or Group Meetings	No.	13	
Planning with Group Meetings	No.	5	
Farm Plans Written	No.	54	210
Requests for Farm Plans on File and approved by District Commissioners on December 31st, 1947.	No.	198	

Goals for 1948:

We would like to get at least 200 new farm plans developed and applied and could do so very easily if we had enough Soil Conservation Service Technicians available.