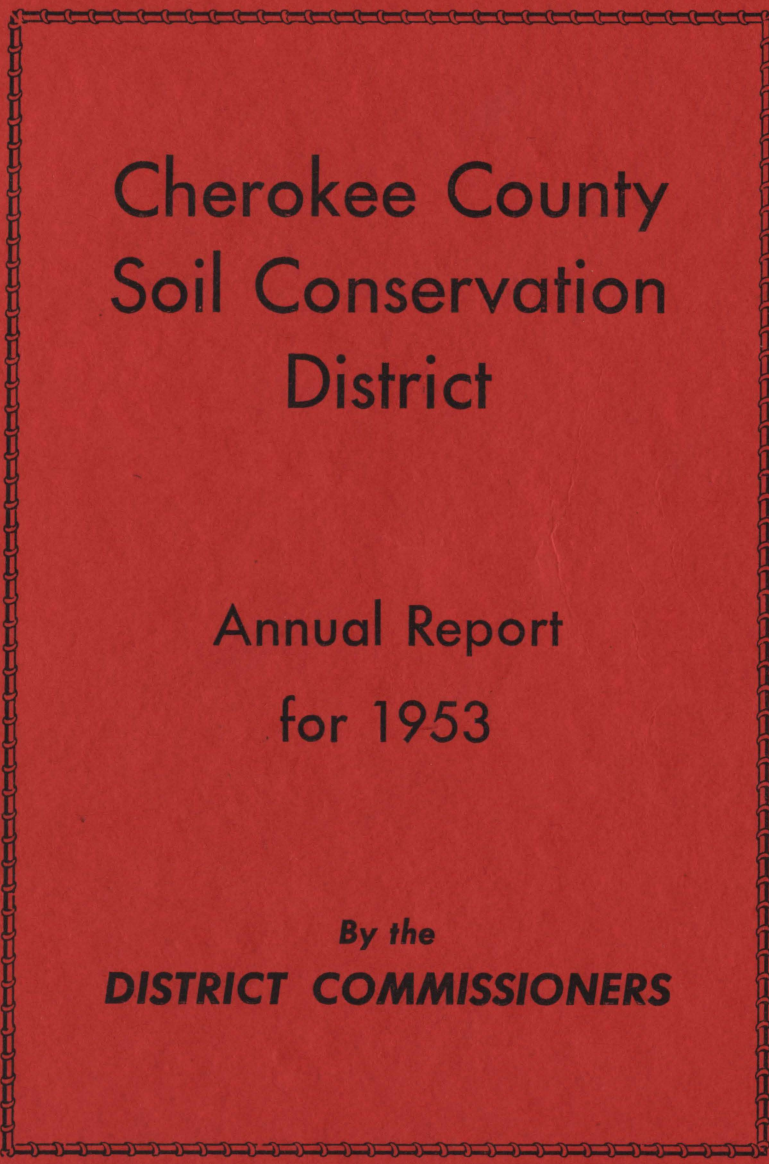




Cherokee County Soil Conservation District

Annual Report
for 1953

By the
DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

Introduction

"Economy" is a word we are all familiar with; it plays an important part in all our decisions and activities. We, as District Commissioners, along with Commissioners from other Districts have given much thought to this subject in connection with flood control work in the Little Sioux River watershed.

How can we get more flood control per dollar invested? During the past few years, we have watched the methods used in treating the small watersheds in the Little Sioux basin; we have consulted with many people in an effort to find answers to this question.

We have one answer (and a good one); that answer is **terraces**. Enough terraces in most drainage areas will make it possible to shape gullies into waterways and maintain them as such. Without the tremendous reduction in runoff effected by terraces the gullies would need stabilizing structures in a great many cases if they are to be controlled. With terraces the only structures that would need to be considered are those necessary to stabilize main channels and serve as water detention reservoirs.

Increased use of terraces in watershed control would serve two purposes. It would reduce costs and, at the same time, improve the total soil conservation job. Studies indicate that \$13,500 invested in terraces and their fertilization will replace about \$48,000 worth of structures. We are going to have to make more extensive use of terraces if the flood control program in the Little Sioux is to be carried to a successful conclusion.

We, as commissioners of the Cherokee County Soil Conservation District, are now recommending that no minor watershed in the Cherokee District be considered for flood control assistance unless the landowners in the minor watershed are agreeable to the construction of terraces in sufficient quantity to hold the need for permanent structures or dams to the very minimum.

Little Sioux Flood Control Program

The following small watersheds received assistance in the form of gully and water detention structures installed with flood control funds: (during 1953)

Walling Watershed in Woodbury County.

Habinck Watershed in Monona & Woodbury Counties.

East Aldrich Creek Watershed in Ida County.

Fee Watershed in Cherokee County.

The minor watershed in Cherokee County is located southwest of Quimby, Iowa and includes land owned by John Hodgdon, Mrs. Elsie Conley, D. P. McGregor, Duane Fee, Clifford Conley, Mrs. Clara Kissinger, James Fee, Jud Miller and Peter Carstens. Work was started in the fall of 1953 and will be completed in the spring of 1954.

The work in this minor watershed consists of the construction of terraces, blading of gullies so they may be seeded and maintained as crossable waterways and the construction of two earth fills (with drop inlet spillways) to serve as water detention reservoirs.

The control work in this watershed is typical of the work now being done under the Little Sioux Flood Control program; more emphasis is being placed on the use of soil conservation measures (especially terraces) so as to reduce the number of structures needed for adequate control. In this watershed, six structures were originally planned; then the landowners agreed to construct enough terraces so that four of the structures could be eliminated. As a result, the final plan called for only two structures plus the grading in of gullies and terraces above (the terraces to reduce the amount of runoff these newly established waterways would be required to carry and thus insure their successful establishment). Approximately 200 acres of land can be completely terraced at the same cost of an 8,000 cubic yard earth fill with pipe drop inlet spillway.

Runoff data accumulated in the designing of the control program for this minor watershed shows that the capacity of the main creek past the buildings on the John Hodgdon farm (at the lower end of the watershed) is greater than the computed runoff of a 50 year frequency rain with all control measures installed. Without the control measures the computed runoff would exceed the capacity of the channel on a frequency of once every 2 years.

District Cooperators

446 farmers were cooperating with the District in applying conservation practices on their farms at the close of 1953; a total of 86,720 acres. Of this total, 392 have worked out complete conservation plans for their farms; their distribution, by townships, is as follows:

Marcus Township	4
Liberty Township	13
Cedar Township	11
Spring Township	21
Amherst Township	13
Sheridan Township	13
Cherokee Township	29
Afton Township	18
Tilden Township	25
Rock Township	33
Pilot Township	40
Pitcher Township	26
Grand Meadow Township	34
Willow Township	47
Silver Township	51
Diamond Township	14

A check with Cherokee County Production and Marketing Administration officials shows that an additional 126 farmers are contouring some or all of their row crops. Approximately 35,000 acres of row crop was contoured in Cherokee County during 1953. There are 193,000 acres of land in Cherokee County that would benefit from contouring and it is estimated that about half of this acreage was in row crop during 1953; this would mean that about 36% of the row crop on rolling land was planted on the contour.

Major Conservation Practices

ESTABLISHED BY CHEROKEE COUNTY FARMERS
DURING 1953
WITH DISTRICT ASSISTANCE

Practice	Amount
1. Guide lines established for contouring of row crops on -----	7,981 acres
2. Contour field divisions laid out to re-arrange fields and facilitate contour operations -----	12,250 rods
3. Terraces constructed -----	13 miles
4. Grassed headlands established -----	50 acres
5. Tile drainage -----	113,424 lineal feet
6. Contour fence built -----	218 rods
7. Designed and supervised construction of one earth fill w/drop inlet spillway -----	8,000 cubic yards
8. Number of farms assisted by technicians assigned to the Cherokee District during 1953 -----	331

The establishment of grassed waterways has become an accepted practice among Cherokee County farmers and have become a common sight throughout the area of the District.

The use of lime and phosphate have become established practices; the use and rate per acre are both increasing rapidly. These practices are now established to the point where they will continue to grow without special promotional emphasis. It points to an increasing awareness of the need for soil building.

The District also worked with the State Conservation Commission representatives and the local gun clubs in establishing wildlife plantings on 8 cooperating farms.

Other District Activities

1. Technicians assigned to the District assisted with the following activities during 1953:
 - Demonstrations—5 contour layout and waterway shaping demonstrations were held during the year.
 - Information Meetings—5 meetings, to explain district program, were held during the year (with Agricultural classes and watershed groups).
 - Soil Conservation Week—2 programs were broadcast over the Cherokee Radio Station and local newspapers carried special articles on soil conservation.
 - Local newspapers and the local radio station have been very helpful and cooperative during 1953; as they have in past years.

Extension Activities

2. Pilot Rock Plowing Match

During August of 1953, the Pilot Rock Plowing Match Association again sponsored their annual event. Competition was held in both level and contour plowing this year with both junior and senior events. District technicians again assisted with the staging of this event.

3. Sioux City Program for Permanent Agriculture

The Cherokee District again participated in this event. Local winners (for outstanding conservation programs on their farms) were Marion Hackett of Cherokee, Robert Rawson and Walter Bates of Pierson. Clyde Petty of Cherokee was selected as the farmer making the most progress in a conservation program during 1953.

4. State Conservation Commission

Seven wildlife areas have been established on District cooperators farms under the sponsorship of the state conservation commission. Extra assistance in establishing these areas was given cooperating farmers. Frank Starr, conservation officer for Buena Vista and Cherokee Counties, handled arrangements for this program. Frank is a strong booster for the District's program for, as he says, a good conservation program on our farms creates a better habitat for wildlife.

Soil Conservation Service

During 1953, the Soil Conservation Service provided the Cherokee County Soil Conservation District with the following technical assistance:

- 1 Planning Technician (12 months)—Harvey Lindberg
- 1 Planning Technician (12 months)—Dale C. Barker
- 1 Conservation Aid (12 months)—Glen Craft
- 1 Conservation Aid (6 months)—Glen Berglund

In addition to the above, the District received part time assistance from an Area Conservationist, a Soil Scientist, an engineering specialist and the staff of the flood control section of the Soil Conservation Service.

It is expected, during 1954, that the District will have the service of 2 planning technicians and 2 conservation aids.

Information on soil and water observation was presented to all 4-H Clubs during 1953. Slides, which were developed locally, were shown to each club. These slides emphasize the damages caused by severe rainstorms and show how they can be reduced. A soil conservation "stop" was made on eight of the nine 4-H Club tours. These stops were made to point out the various conservation practices being used and to discuss their value.

Soil conservation reference material was organized and turned over to the Grand Meadow school at the request of its science teacher. The Extension youth assistant presented some of the first class meeting for the course taught by the Grand Meadow science instructor.

County Superintendent Earl Berkler informs us that county elementary schools are continuing to use the soil conservation work book worked out with the assistance of the Extension Service and the Cherokee District. This work book has recently been revised for more effective use.

Two radio programs are presented weekly through the courtesy of the local radio station. Soil conservation information is included in these programs; especially during "Soil Conservation" week.

The County Extension Director, along with the District Commissioners and the local Soil Conservation Service representative, met with County and Township Committeemen of the P. M. A. to develop recommendations for the 1954 County Agricultural Conservation Program.

Agricultural Conservation Program

UNDER THE PRODUCTION & MARKETING ADMINISTRATION

During 1953, Soil Conservation Service technicians again had the responsibility of assisting ACP program cooperators in carrying out permanent type conservation practices. This, again, included a finding by SCS that the work contemplated by the farmer was needed and practical on the farm, all necessary planning, site selection and layout of practices, needed supervision of installation and a certification that the work was done and met technical specifications of the ACP.

Soil Conservation Service technicians assigned to the Cherokee District spent 162½ man days and drove 8,529 miles carrying out their responsibilities under this program. Cherokee County ACP funds to the extent of \$3344.85 were allocated to re-imburse the Soil Conservation Service for technicians time and travel used in carrying out this assignment.

649 requests for permanent type practices were referred to local technicians by the Cherokee County PMA Committee. Of these 649, 296 were District cooperators and 353 were not.

Local technicians assisted ACP cooperators by laying out 47,050 lineal feet of tile, guide lines for 5,853 acres of contouring and 2 miles of terraces, an additional 19,176 acres of contouring met specifications.

Of the 649 requests received, local technicians certified that 451 farmers completed their practices in accordance with ACP specifications; 20 completed their practices but not in accordance with ACP specifications; 178 did not carry out the practices for which they signed up.

The Cherokee County PMA Committee has also approved giving extra assistance to farmers, on a watershed basis, to help get needed conservation practices installed (especially terraces). This was done in one small watershed during 1953; the purpose being to help speed up work of the Little Sioux Flood Control Program.

We, as district commissioners, appreciate the real cooperation given us by Cherokee County and Township Committeemen.

State Soil Conservation Committee

In addition to the technical aid furnished the District by the Soil Conservation Service (from Federal funds) the District receives funds from the State of Iowa for the operation of its program. The funds appropriated by the Iowa State Legislature are administered by the State Soil Conservation Committee. They allot funds to the individual districts on the basis of need. District commissioners of each district submit a budget of needs each year; the money allotted to the district is spent only for items budgeted and only with the approval of the commissioners.

The Cherokee District budget for use of state supplied funds, as submitted by the Commissioners and approved, includes the following items for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1953:

Clerical Assistance	\$1,733.55
Commissioner's Expense	185.00
Office Supplies	100.00
Printing	90.00
Prizes	75.00
Rentals	20.00
Demonstration & Exhibit Material	25.00
Total	\$2,228.55

Report of the Treasurer

CHEROKEE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT DECEMBER 31, 1953

GENERAL FUND

Cash Balance on January 1, 1953 -----	\$ 260.08	
Paid out During 1953 (for stamps, platbook and treasurer's bond) -----		\$ 50.40
Received from State Soil Conservation Committee -----	\$ 47.66	
Balance on Hand December 31, 1953 -----		\$ 257.34
	<u>\$ 307.74</u>	<u>\$ 307.74</u>

MAINTENANCE FUND

Cash Balance on January 1, 1953 -----	\$3,257.30	
(from landowners in Mortenson, Fee and Simonsen Watersheds)		
Paid in During 1953 (from landowners in Mor- tenson Watershed) -----	\$ 300.00	
Balance on Hand December 31, 1953 -----		\$3,557.30
	<u>\$3,557.30</u>	<u>\$3,557.30</u>

NOTE: Money in "general fund" is prize money awarded the Cherokee District by the Sioux City Program for Permanent Agriculture. Money in "maintenance" fund is received from landowners in small watersheds where flood control measures have been installed under the Little Sioux Flood Control program; this money can be used only for repair of flood control installations.

This report of the activities of the Cherokee County Soil Conservation District during 1953, was prepared for the information of our cooperators, the State Soil Conservation Committee, and cooperating agencies.

Your commissioners would like to take this opportunity to invite any suggestions you may have for the improvement of the District's conservation program.

J. F. Ralston
Chairman & Commissioner

Louis C. Bengtson
Commissioner

Arthur J. Dorr
Commissioner

