

ANNUAL REPORT
Des Moines County Soil Conservation
District
Burlington, Ia.

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Burlington, Iowa
For Period Ending Dec. 31, 1946

The Des Moines County Soil Conservation District was organized during 1946, by the landowners of Des Moines County, Iowa. The general purpose was to give land owners and operators an opportunity to work together to meet their erosion control, drainage and land use problems.

Initial action was taken in 1945 as a part of the Extension-Farm Bureau program. After several meetings and hearings a referendum was held on January 26, 1946 at which time the formation of the district was approved and three commissioners elected to supervise the operations of the district. Noah Schrock was elected for a six year term, John Blaul for a four year term and Edwin Cling for a two year term. This group organized February 14th and appointed Walter B. Eyre, County Extension Director, to act as secretary.

The commissioners set up a program of action and set for the district definite plans and objectives. The Des Moines County Soil Conservation District, through its commissioners, desires to formulate a long range program and list of objectives in order to obtain aid from the various local, government and state agencies. As a major objective, we hope to bring about a better land use and the conservation of soil and water.

Many farmers are unaware of the seriousness of erosion and soil wastage. As a group they are unwilling to try new methods, unless proven to be sound and practical. It is our purpose to prove to them that such practices are sound and can be accomplished. In order to do this, we propose to use:

1. Demonstrations of practices such as contouring, terraces, ponds, strip cropping, fertility plots, proper rotations, etc.
2. Cooperation with business firms and individuals.
3. Cooperation with farm organizations, civic clubs, cooperatives, Chamber of Commerce, etc.
4. Cooperation with state and government agencies, such as Extension Service, AAA, Soil Conservation Service, FSA, State Conservation Commission, etc.
5. Cooperation with churches and schools.
6. Holding soil institutes, training schools, etc.
7. The help of newspapers, magazines, radio, etc.

It is our hope that this will reach not only the owners and operators of the farm land, but those living in the cities and towns as well so that their influence can be directed to the saving of our natural resources.

We want all farmers and land owners to use, in fact, to encourage them to seek information that not only will help for higher incomes by maintaining soil fertility but to build a more permanent community. The program is not to be compulsory; the owners or users of the land is to be the "jury" of his own particular problem. The commissioners and other agencies are to furnish suggestions and aid in the development and carrying out of sound farm plans.

It will be the objective of the district to promote cooperation between landlords and lending agencies with soil conservation, to execute leases that will encourage proper land use, to encourage loans for erosion control, fertilizer, ditches, dams and ponds. After all, a worn out farm is a poor security. We recommend for each particular farm a soil survey in order that the proper type of farming can be planned and carried out for the highest possible income. This may prevent expensive rehabilitation later by making low cost changes now.

It is our purpose to work with the Board of Supervisors and the Highway Commissioners. Large sums are spent annually for cleaning out ditches along roads due to sloughing of banks and the washing away of road grades. Damage often occurs to farm land both above and below a highway, due to faulty design or improper construction. If road plans were made in relation to the adjoining fields much erosion could be prevented.

Because drainage projects are often impaired by silt and debris, we will encourage soil erosion work by groups along the streams that empty onto these bottoms, thereby causing a more moderate flow of water. This will lower the cost of maintenance and give protection of the bottom lands.

Summing up the foregoing objectives the commissioners feel that in order to maintain a better standard of living, a fuller life, and to maintain our soil fertility we must and should practice good soil conservation. Land that is worn out affects the community from many standpoints. It tends to lower living standards of the whole neighborhood. The local tax base is lowered, affecting schools and roads and public improvements. Its wildlife is seriously affected. Birds, the great destroyers of insects, soon leave. Wasteful cutting of timber should be discouraged, especially in the rougher parts; tree planting should be encouraged where it will do real good.

The district got off to a late start in 1946 and had very little influence on practices during the past cropping season, however, during the year numerous educational activities were sponsored that should influence the future of the program.

A demonstration was held on terrace construction, using ordinary farm equipment. In addition, individual instruction was given to three other farmers.

Assistance was given to several farmers in application of other practices including contouring, strip cropping, pasture improvement, better rotations, construction of ponds, etc.

Two tours were held to show the effectiveness of conservation measures.

The district sponsored a display at the civic auditorium in Burlington in connection with the farm machinery exhibition which attracted several thousand people. Slides, moving pictures and grass-legume displays were used.

The district cooperated with the Burlington Chamber of Commerce in carrying out a soil conservation contest. During the year the district assisted this group and the Extension Service in two Farm Institutes, one in early spring for the announcement of awards for the 1945 contest and one in December for making awards in the 1946 contest. These contests and the accompanying Institutes attracted a lot of interest and represent an outstanding feature of the local educational program.

Additional educational work included discussions with 4-H clubs, township Farm Bureau meetings, rural teachers' meetings, schools, service clubs, young married groups, rural youth group, radio and news articles. The local assistance of agencies, groups and newspapers has been very good and the commissioners are confident that real progress is being made.

The commissioners believe that each farm should have a conservation plan and have adopted the group approach to farm planning. X

One hundred six farmers have made application to the district for assistance. Forty-five of these are located in one area and the commissioners have divided them into 3 planning groups giving them first priority for planning. Each group has held a meeting and selected a leader. Other groups are being organized among the balance of the applicants.

Two of the planning groups have been soil mapped and it is the intention to begin planning meetings during the first half of January.

In addition to the requests for assistance from individual farmers, a request has come to the district from Des Moines County Drainage District number 7 for assistance in meeting some of its drainage operation and maintenance problems. A technical study is being made of this area.

Respectfully submitted,

Des Moines County Soil Conservation District

/s/ Noah Schrock

Noah Schrock, Chairman

*many
admitted
Sandy Schrock*

Soil Conservation District

ANNUAL REPORT OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

DISTRICT Des Moines County
(Name)

Burlington Iowa
(Supervisor's Headquarters) (State)

Period Feb. 14, 1946 to Dec. 31, 1946

ACTIVITY		This Period	To Date
Educational Meetings	Number	22	22
	Attendance	750	750
Tours	Number	2	2
	Attendance	25	25
Demonstrations	Number	1	1
	Attendance	12	12
Training School Meetings	Number		
	Attendance		
Exhibits	Number	1	1
Radio Talks	Number	3	3
News Articles	Number	25	25
Commissioners Meetings	Number	9	9