

Cherokee County Soil Conservation District Annual Report for 1974

Foreword

This, the 1974 annual report actually is a report of accomplishments of the period of July 1, 1973 to June 30, 1974.

In 1973, the REAP cost-sharing program administered by the ASCS Office had been cancelled by President Nixon. To help fill the gap, the State of Iowa cost-sharing program was administered by the Soil Conservation District Commissioners. Fourteen thousand four hundred dollars was available for 50 percent cost-sharing on actual soil conservation practices available only to cooperators of the Soil Conservation District. In addition to the requirement that the farm be a cooperator, the landowner agrees to maintain the practice in a satisfactory manner.

In early 1974, the Supreme Court ruled that the action by President Nixon in impounding the REAP funds was unconstitutional. Therefore, the originally allocated 1973 funds plus approximately 60 percent of the 1974 allocation of funds became available.

Because of the lateness of making the federal funds available, landowners had no time to plan conservation measures until after harvest time. Therefore, through the use of the federal REAP funds, state cost-sharing and a flood prevention cost-sharing program on terraces, there was a considerable upswing of conservation practices applied since July 1, 1974. This coupled with nearly ideal weather for crop harvest and full construction work, kept conservation application at a high rate.

We the Commissioners of the Cherokee County Soil Conservation District look forward to another active year of sound conservation work with many farmers already signing up for conservation application in the spring of 1975.

Watershed Progress

A watershed in Soil Conservation District terms is an organized group of landowners from within a particular drainage course who have banded together to apply soil and water conservation measures on an accelerated basis with the idea of providing the needed land treatment to protect any proposed flood prevention structures which may be built through Soil Conservation Service administered small watershed program funds. Since the Cherokee County Soil Conservation District has been organized, 10 watersheds have been completed and three more are presently in the priority for land treatment phases prior to a completed study of structural programs.

The Railroad Creek Watershed north and west of Cherokee is presently in the hands of flood prevention engineers for a structure program study. Presently 54 percent of the watershed is adequately treated and protected with plans for treatment of another 11 percent of the land to be done in the next year. Because of the nature of most of the slopes in this watershed, the use of contouring and minimum tillage operations will adequately treat this watershed. Directors of this watershed are Harry Hull, Marvin Zoch and Ralph Patterson. Railroad Creek Watershed was organized in 1971 although attempts at organization have been made since 1957.

Four-mile Creek Watershed south of Quimby is going like a house afire. This watershed was organized in 1972. Because of the steeper topography in this watershed, a cropland terracing program is necessary. There were 40 miles of terraces in the watershed when organized in 1972. Presently, there are 55 miles of terraces and landowners have made plans for an additional 13 miles to be built in 1975 with more planning additional work. This watershed is presently 64 percent adequately treated. Seventy-five percent treatment is needed before structural work can take place. This watershed will be submitted for a structural study in 1975. Directors of the watershed are Verdean Bumann, Duane Hollenbeck and Bill Johnson.

Stratton Creek Watershed east of Washta was organized in 1971 and in the last couple years has stalemated but additional work in terracing is scheduled in 1975. Presently, there are 26 miles of terraces on the land with treatment nearly 40 percent of the entire watershed. Directors of this watershed are Jerry Peterson and Don Grefe.

A separate terrace cost-share program of 75 percent administered by the Soil Conservation Service is available in the watersheds. These funds are meant to be used to speed the application of the needed land treatment so future flood prevention measures are not filled with silt prematurely.

The Cherokee County Soil Conservation District Commissioners wish to take this opportunity to congratulate a neighboring organization, the ASCS Committee in Cherokee County, for their wise use in allocating the federal cost-share program funds in 1974. Of the total of over \$106,000 spent in cost-sharing, 97 percent was spent on permanent soil and water erosion practices rather than for short term production practices.

Following is a resume of the way the cost-share money was spent.

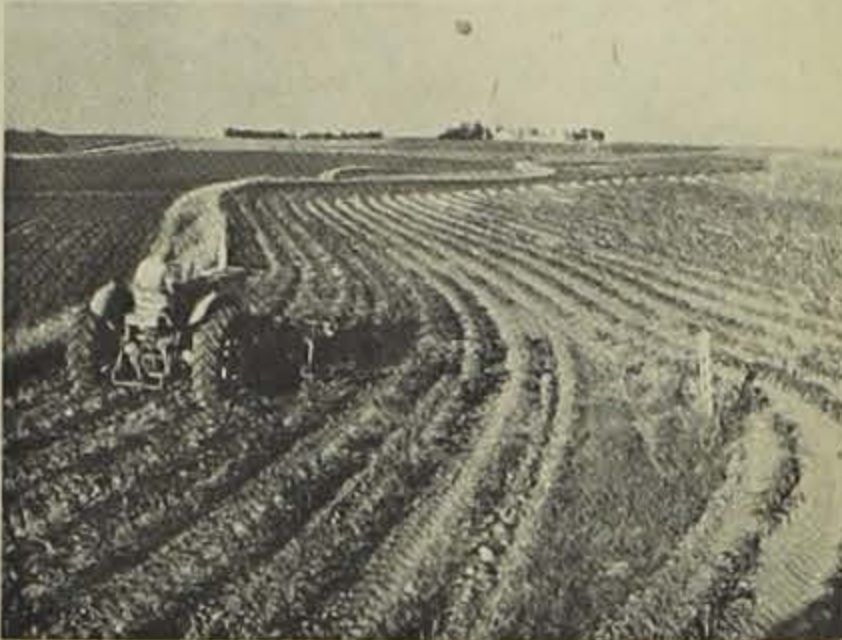
7 water impoundment structures	\$ 15,908
19 terrace systems	\$ 20,660
4 erosion control structures (concrete)	\$ 3,819
51 sod waterways	\$ 58,280
1 animal waste storage facility	\$ 900
3 Wildlife habitats	\$ 1,422
1 conservation tillage practice	\$ 209
3 permanent vegetative cover	\$ 3,002
7 facilities for livestock watering	\$ 1,767
1 application for lime	\$ 67

\$106,034

This reflects a program change that shows a growing awareness for sound soil and water conservation. Again we thank you for this record.

Conservation Education Committee

Serving in 1974 on the above committee were Mrs. Beverly Radke, teacher at Garfield Elementary School; John Klever, vocational Agriculture teacher in Aurelia; and Mildred Smith, reporter for the Cherokee Daily Times, who resigned in June 1974 due to leaving our area. In the fall of 1974, the commissioners appointed Mrs. Ruby Peterson, reporter at the Cherokee Daily Times, to the post vacated by Mrs. Smith. These people will again serve on this committee in 1975.



Parallel grassed backslope terraces with tile intakes on the farm owned by Catherine Duncan and operated by Chris Kiertzner in the Four Mile Creek Watershed.

Three Watersheds

Three watersheds in Cherokee County have been organized since 1971 with varying progress in work.

Railroad Creek Watershed north of Cherokee has had fairly extensive study with proposed structure sites now under further study for feasibility and success of needed land treatment above each proposal site being determined. This winter, all the landowners in the watershed have been contacted to determine present degree of land treatment and planned treatment.

In all cases, 75 percent of the land above each structure slated for construction must have adequate conservation to prevent premature siltation of the structure.

Four Mile Creek Watershed south of Quimby was organized in 1972 and the landowners are making good progress in needed land treatment. This watershed shows a greater need for terracing because of the sloping land and intensive row cropping.

In 1974, nearly ten miles of terraces were built in this watershed with nearly eleven miles planned to date for 1975 construction. Over fifty-five miles of terraces are now on the land in this watershed and total land treatment of this watershed is over 60 percent.

This watershed will be submitted for a higher priority toward construction when the Little Sioux River Watershed Committee meets again in June.



Detention Structure on the Walter Mortenson Farm in the completed Mortenson Watershed.

Tax Exemption For Impoundment

The 65th General Assembly in 1974 enacted legislation which would provide a tax exemption for agricultural land upon which a man made water impoundment and dam are situated.

There are over 120 water impoundment structures and farm ponds in Cherokee County. Before you rush in to apply for your tax exempt status, there are certain conditions which must be met however.

First of all, the water impoundment must have a designed storage at construction time of at least 18 acre feet of water and sediment storage. This rules out 90 percent of the farm ponds as they do not meet the size requirement.

Of the thirty-one flood prevention dams built in the Little Sioux Flood Prevention Program in Cherokee County, only seventeen are large enough to qualify for the exemption. So it stands to reason that the above average farm pond will not meet size requirements. Of the seventeen watershed dams that do meet size requirements, the smallest pond is four acres in size.

Area of the pond, however, is not the single determining factor to meet minimum size. It must have a combination of depth and size to make 18 acre feet.

If you feel your pond may be eligible, come in to the Soil Conservation District Office in Cherokee and your file copy of the plans can be checked. If it is large enough, apply at the County Assessor's Office for an application form, bring it to the Soil Conservation Office for verification and a photo copy of the plans and return to the Assessor's office by June 30.

After the initial exemption has been filed, the landowner must re-apply each year for the exemption the same as he does for homestead and veterans exemption.

We, the Commissioners, staff and conservation friends wish to honor the memory of Charles C. Martin. Mr. Martin was one of the original commissioners of the Cherokee County Soil Conservation District, taking office in 1944 and serving as Chairman until June 1962.

Mr. Martin was very active in soil and water conservation work. In the early days when a farmer wanted contour lines laid out, Charles, likely as not, was out in the field laying in the contour lines as fast as the farmer could follow him on a tractor and plow.

Mr. Martin passed away February 21, 1974.

Beginning in July, 1973, the State of Iowa cost-share program for soil and water conservation practices was started. It was originally begun to do something toward replacing the REAP program that was cancelled.

When the Supreme Court ruled that the cancellation was unconstitutional and the 1973 REAP funds administered by the ASCS Office again became available in 1974, the state cost-sharing money was used to supplement the Federal REAP funds.

The Cherokee County Soil Conservation District Commissioners are responsible for approving the state cost-share monies and they also select the practices eligible for cost-sharing.

Originally in 1973, the practices approved included terraces, waterways, dams and erosion control structures, tree planting, and critical area seeding. After a year of operation, it was apparent the money allocated for use would not be sufficient, so the commissioners decided after July 1, 1974, the state cost-share money would be used for terraces only.

Allocation of money from the state cost-share program is by fiscal year from July 1 to June 30. The original allocation received in Cherokee County amounted to \$14,400 in 1973 with additional funds allocated later and \$20,300 in 1974. These allocations are reflected in the 3-M expenditures in the treasurer's report found elsewhere in this publication.

District Accomplishments

	Unit	Fiscal Year	To Date
District Cooperators	No.	53	1005
Conservation Plans	No.	33	791
Terraces	Ft.	74,409	2,299,379
Waterways	Ac.	36.9	1,691
Diversions	Ft.	500	64,589
Structures and Ponds	No.	0	239
		(thru 6-30-74)	
Tile	Ft.	42,369	2,495,947
Contour	Ac.	323	—
Farms Applying one or more Practices	No.	100	—

District Activities

Commissioners held twelve monthly meetings, eight special meetings and two watershed meetings.

Two regional commissioners meetings were attended.

The Little Sioux Works Committee meetings were attended by the District's Representative, Donald DeWitt.

Annual watershed inspection on the ten completed watersheds was performed.

Meeting on County Soil Survey with Board of Supervisors was held.

Meeting on County Soil Survey with County Conference Board on Soil Survey was held.

Elections held in June, 1974 resulted in the two incumbent commissioners, Joe Dessel and Donald DeWitt, being elected for six-year terms.

Annual report printed and distributed.

Trees and shrubs sold and delivered in April.

Stewardship Week was observed and booklets sent to all county ministers.

School Field Days for the 5th and 6th graders was held in May.

District sponsored a booth at the Fair in July.

The District again entered the Iowa Soil Conservation Achievement Awards Program with District winners being: Division I, Calvin Husman of Quimby; Division II, Clara Kissinger Estate by Peggy McClintock, tenant-Robert Carstens of Quimby; and Division III, Harold Kludas of Cherokee.

The District also entered The Marc Cox Agriculture Conservation Program with the three county winners also being judged area winners for 1974. These farmers were: Calvin Husman of Quimby; John Dale Jenness of Quimby; and Paul Peterson of Cherokee and Jerry Peterson of Washta.

The district Clerk attended the 1974 Annual Conference held in Fort Dodge in September.

FINANCIAL REPORT

July 1, 1973 - June 30, 1974

The 1-M, 2-M and 3-M Budgets are provided by the State of Iowa

1-M Budget Allocation	\$1,200.00	
Expenses:		
Commissioners Expenses	\$ 256.82	
Office Supplies	172.85	
Printing	93.00	
Meeting Hall Rental	28.00	
Demonstration Materials	35.00	
Office Expense	117.91	
Released to Dept. of Soil Conservation	496.42	
	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00

2-M Budget Allocation	\$6,896.57	
Clerical Salary, FICA, IPERS, Travel and Insurance	\$6,781.45	
Equipment	72.57	
Released to Dept. of Soil Conservation	42.55	
	\$6,896.57	\$6,896.57

3-M Budget		
73-74 Allocation (as of 6-30-74)	\$20,000.00	
Funds Obligated and Paid	\$19,898.24	
Unobligated balance 6-30-74	\$ 401.76	

74-75 Allocation (as of 6-30-74)	\$14,300.00	
LTA Allocation	6,000.00	

TOTAL	\$20,300.00	
Funds Obligated (as of 6-30-74)	3,931.06	

Unobligated balance 6-30-74	\$16,368.94	
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District Watershed Maintenance Fund		
Balance on Hand 7-1-73	\$40,020.73	
Watershed Maintenance Payments	725.04	
Interest	2,083.18	

Total	\$42,828.95	
Expenses	2.75	

Balance on Hand 6-30-74	\$42,826.20	
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District General Fund		
Balance on Hand 7-1-73	\$1,098.95	
Income	1,015.95	

Total	\$2,114.90	
Expenses	921.78	

Balance on Hand 6-3-74	\$1,193.12	
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Joe V. Dessel, Treasurer

We, the Cherokee County Soil Conservation District Commissioners, wish to close this annual report by thanking the Soil Conservation Service, FHA, Extension Service, ASCS, Little Sioux Wildlife Association, FCIC, Cherokee County Board of Supervisors, County Conservation Board, Radio Station KCHE, Cherokee County Newspapers, State Conservation Commission and particularly the conservation minded landowners of the county who make the progress available to report.



View showing the snow bank held on the Elmer Brehmer farm. As a result, the cattle yards immediately downwind were free of drifts.

A properly planted windbreak with shrubs, such as honeysuckle, can save a lot of snow removal worries and expense. Shrubs planted in a double row will stop the snow dead in its tracks and prevent the drift that would and does pile up in front of the garage, barn or machine shed in which the tractor and snow bucket are housed.

Long time studies of the value of windbreaks in fuel savings show up to 20 percent reduction in fuel costs as the result of a good shelter belt type of windbreak. Not only is there a savings of costly fuel for a farm home, but livestock fuel efficiency is much greater if the animal is not under stress through the winter.

With the cost of fuel going up and feed prices going up, the cost of the land diverted to a good windbreak is more and more a good bargain.

The Cherokee County Soil Conservation District has seedling trees and shrubs available at modest cost. These trees are from a commercial nursery in Fremont, Nebraska.

Remember, a windbreak is not something you can buy at the time of need, but something that must be planned, planted and nurtured.



Tom Neal, Wildlife Biologist, stationed at Cherokee.

Soil Conservation Benefits Wildlife

Wildlife is a crop of the soil just as corn and cattle are crops. Good wildlife production depends on protection of the soil resource on which these animals depend.

Good conservation also protects stream-dwelling fish and wildlife from the dangers of pollution by silt, herbicides or insecticides. Clear streams support much more varied wildlife than polluted streams. Prevention of wind erosion protects valuable wildlife habitat along roadsides and ditches and also cuts down the expense of keeping these areas cleaned out and functional.

Wildlife also benefits from conservation practices such as grass waterways and grass backslope terraces. These strips of grass provide nesting cover and places for pheasants and other wildlife to rear their young. Improving farm windbreaks by planting trees and shrubs is a direct benefit to wildlife by providing them protection from winter storms.

Farm ponds provide resting areas for waterfowl and drinking water for other wildlife. If the pond area is not grazed by livestock, it makes an ideal place for wild animals to raise their young. In short, good conservation farming saves not only the soil, but the wildlife as well.

PERSONNEL

THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

Vere Corrington	Cherokee, Iowa
Max Dugge, Vice-Chairman	Cleghorn, Iowa
Joe Dessel, Treasurer	Cherokee, Iowa
Donald DeWitt	
Little Sioux Representative	Washta, Iowa
Elmer Brehmer, Member	Aurelia, Iowa

OFFICE PERSONNEL

Bernard Braband	District Conservationist USDA
Monas Nixon	Conservation Technician USDA
Duane Hollenbeck	WAE (Part-time) USDA
Gladys Schroeder	Clerk and Secretary State

AREA PERSONNEL — USDA

Wallis R. Tonsfeldt	Area Conservationist
Dick Hall	Civil Engineer
Wayne Eberly	Civil Engineer Technician
Guy H. Hempay	Civil Engineer Technician
Margaret Walker	Clerk

IOWA CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tom Neal	Wildlife Biologist
Duane Bedford	District Forester