

## Conservation District Organization and Operation

Organization: The South Dakota Conservation Districts Law was enacted by the 1937 Legislature and became effective July 1, 1937. By September, activity started to organize a conservation district and two conservation districts were organized before the year ended. By the close of 1968, the entire state was within conservation districts, except one county, one-half of another county, and a portion of a third. The final portions were added in 1972 to achieve complete statewide coverage by conservation districts.



The legislators which passed the South Dakota Soil Conservation Districts Enabling Act of 1937 were guests of the State Association on the 1957 twentieth anniversary of the Act's Passage.

Front row (left-right): Leo C. Weier, *Yankton*; Oscar C. Johnson, *Oldham*; Bernard E. Berg, *Stockholm*; Alfred Olson, *Clark*; John P. Kleinsasser, *Freeman*; Roy S. Glover, *Frederick*; Clarence H. Johnson, *Beresford*; F.G. Haven, *Mellette*; Harry Blair, *Sturgis*; H.J. Christianson, *Wilmot*; Loyal F. Hufferman, *Huron*; and F.L. Messner, *Brookings*.

Back row (left-right): Nathaniel S. Tiede, *Tripp*; M.E. Hafner, *Newell*; J.B. Painter, *Long Beach Calif.*; George Alt, *Faith*; A.C. Miller, *Kennebec*; Gus L. Scherer, *Winner*; Paul W. Opsahl, *Aberdeen*; George T. Mickelson, *Sioux Falls*; Guy Harding, *Pierre*; George M. Bradshaw, *Lennox*; K.J. Morgan, *Sioux Falls*; W.G. Douglas, *Clark*; Henry W. Seide, *Twin Brooks*; J.E. Lehman, *Scotland*; Ben Howe, *Salem*; and A.W. Odell, *Montrose*.

Below is a list of the districts by number and the year in which they were organized:

- 1937 01. Tri-County District
- 02. Brown Marshall
- 1938 03. Brule Buffalo
- 04. Clearfield-Kayapaha
- 05. American Creek

- 1939 06. Sanborn County (formerly Silver Creek)
- 07. BonHomme County (formerly Emanuel Chateau Creek)
- 1940 08. Clay County
- 09. Union County (formerly Sioux Brule)
- 10. Pennington
- 13. Custer County
- 30. Haakon County
- 1941 11. Carpenter (later discontinued and parts went to Beadle, Clark and Spink Counties)
- 12. Lawrence County (formerly Lawrence-Butte, but divided in 1948)
- 14. Elk Creek (later part of Meade County joined)
- 15. Lincoln County
- 16. Todd County (formerly Rosebud District)
- 17. Roberts County
- 18. Scotland (merged with Emanuel Chateau Creek to become BonHomme)
- 19. Fall River County
- 20. Spink County (including part of old Carpenter District)
- 21. Minnehaha County
- 22. Gregory County
- 23. Jackson-Washabaugh
- 1942 24. Codington County
- 25. Day County
- 26. Hamill
- 27. Hand County (formerly Elm Creek-Midland)
- 28. Turner County
- 29. Beadle County (formerly West Beadle)
- 1943 31. Jerauld County
- 32. Charles Mix County (formerly Academy)
- 1944 33. Yankton County
- 34. Marshall County
- 35. Moody County
- 36. Brookings County
- 1945 37. Hamlin County
- 1946 38. Hanson County
- 39. Eastern Pennington
- 1947 40. Deuel County
- 41. Kingsbury County
- 42. Grant County
- 43. Aurora County
- 44. Campbell County
- 45. Clark County
- 1948 46. McCook County
- 47. Butte County (formerly Lawrence-Butte)
- 1949 48. South Brown
- 49. Harding County

- 1951 50. East Corson (later discontinued and merged with West Corson)
- 51. Lake County
- 52. Corson County (formerly West Corson)
- 53. Hughes County
- 1952 54. Miner County
- 55. Davison County
- 56. Bennett County
- 57. Dewey County
- 1953 58. Hyde County
- 59. Shannon County
- 60. Ziebach County
- 1954 61. McPherson County
- 62. Potter County
- 63. Stanley County
- 64. Mellette County
- 1955 65. Perkins County
- 66. Jones County
- 67. Edmunds County
- 1956 68. Walworth County
- 69. Sully County
- 1961 70. Hutchinson County
- 1965 71. Douglas County
- 1967 72. Faulk County

Operations: During the early years, the conservation district supervisors had to look for assistance from the State Conservation Committee, the Soil Conservation Service, Extension Service, the State College, the Federal and State Experiment Stations, and the AAA (later ASC) Committees. With the cooperation of one or more of these agencies, the conservation districts were able to show the effectiveness of different conservation practices and other practices that had been established such as land leveling, tree plantings, different types of tillage, contouring and terracing, erosion control dams, strip cropping, grass seedings on pastures and ranges.

Many conservation districts set up demonstration farms where one or more practices were established on entire fields. The State and Federal Experiment Stations had established plots using crop rotations on several different types of tillage. All of these were instrumental in helping to tell the people what assistance was available to the operators in a district if and when they were ready to request it.

The practices named above are only a few of those that are being used by the operators in the conservation districts. Other practices include conservation crop rotations; the use of grass and legumes in rotations; weed control, dams, dugouts, and spring development for livestock water; diversion dams and ditches, grassed waterways; the use of irrigation and water spreading systems; controlled grazing; crop residue management; grassed waterways; wildlife plantings; water spreading; and many others.