

## Clark County Conservation District (No. 45)

Clark County is located in eastern South Dakota, the third county west from the Minnesota line and the third south from the North Dakota line. It has a total land area of 619,578 acres. The general topography is from undulating to nearly level and well to moderately well drained. The drainage of the county is mostly to the south and southwest into the James River and into thousands of potholes and sloughs. The soils vary from silty clays to silty clay loams, silt loams and loams. Farming is the principal enterprise and soils are suited to general cash grains, potatoes, and livestock farming. Attention is given to erosion control, moisture conservation, maintenance of the supply of organic matter, and soil fertility.

Clark County was named after Newton Clark, a territorial legislator. It was established by an act of the Dakota Territorial Legislature in 1873 and organized in 1881. Prior to white settlement, various Native American tribes utilized the natural flora and fauna of the region. The first white settlers arrived in 1878 and settled in the area of Baileys Lake. The coming of the railroad in 1882 brought an influx of settlers. The towns of Garden City, Elrod, Bradley, Crocker, Naples, Vienna, Carpenter, and Willow Lake sprang up as the railroads were extended through the county. Vienna and Willow Lake are the only communities still currently served by the railroad.

The early settlers found lots of good, deep silt loam soils and an abundance of grass and water, but the area was subject to severe seasonal climatic conditions. After many years of heavy cropping, the land began to suffer from the loss of humus, resulting in wind and water erosion, poor crops, and low income. Weeds were becoming a menace to both croplands and pastures. Constant yields required greater input.

Interest in the conservation of the soil and moisture in Clark County dates back to the year 1940 when the principles of wise land use and proper treatment began to be accepted. Three townships—Richland, Fordham, and Logan—were made part of the Carpenter Soil Conservation District which was organized in 1941. In 1946, a series of meetings were held explaining the South Dakota Soil Conservation Districts Law, the procedure to establish a soil conservation district, and what assistance farmers might expect from it. Petitions were signed and a hearing was held in March of 1947. The referendum was conducted in November 1947 and carried by an 85% majority.

The Clark County Soil Conservation District included “all land in Clark County, not now within the boundaries of the organized Carpenter Soil Conservation District, and excluding town sites and federally owned land.” Arthur Frank, Everett Fletcher, Dale Tupper, Clarence Peterson, and Roy Hurlbert made up the Conservation District’s first board of supervisors. Colman H. Wagner, County Extension Agent, served as secretary. The problems they named facing farmers in their county were: wind and water erosion, poor drainage, lack of livestock water, soil depletion, and overgrazing of pastures and range lands. Proposals to solve these problems were: re-seeding of pastures; proper grazing of pastures and ranges; contours and terraces; stubble mulch tillage; planting trees for windbreaks and farmstead protection; building of stock water dams and dugouts; draining potholes; controlling weeds; and crop rotations including grass and legumes.

Others active in the promotion of the Soil Conservation District were: L. L. Lawrence, Yale; Mat J. Hofer, Carpenter; E. O. Graves, Carpenter; P. G. Glanzer, Carpenter; Joe D. Walter, Carpenter; Earl Arne, Carpenter; Louie J. Fjelland, Clark; Herb Evans, Garden City; Ed Wilson, Garden City; and Delbert Headley, Garden City.

The supervisors of the old Carpenter Soil Conservation District gave active support to the organization of the Clark County Conservation District. They were: Joshua J. Hofer, Carpenter; Nels Madsen, Carpenter; A. B. Bollerslev, Doland; Ralph Gilbert, Hitchcock; and Will Merback, Raymond.

1961 saw the inclusion of the Carpenter Soil Conservation District to the boundaries of the Clark County Soil Conservation District, and 1968 saw the inclusion of Federal lands and town sites. This comprised all of Clark County into the Clark County Conservation District that exists today.

The following is a list of past supervisors, together with the number of years served:

John Audus of Clark, 4 years	M. S. Hamre of Clark, 4 years
Delwin Bratland of Willow Lake, 10 years	Roy O. Hurlbert of Raymond, 11 years
Wallace R. Campbell of Clark, 15 years	Laird Larson of Clark, 12 years
Everett J. Fletcher of Garden City, 16 years	Clarence Lundholm of Bradley, 4 years
Levi Flora of Clark, 6 years	Leonard Mills of Raymond, 5 years
Fay Florey of Clark, 12 years	Clarence M. Peterson of Naples, 9 years
Delmer Foiles of Raymond, 12 years	Curtis Peterson of Naples, 12 years
Arthur J. Frank of Clark, 19 years	Harlan Spieker of Willow Lake, 3 years
Marlo Froke of Willow Lake, 4 years	Kenneth Tarbox of Bradley, 3 years
Richard Grann of Carpenter, 22 years	Delmer Tobey of Willow Lake, 3 years
Tom Graves of Clark, 2 years	Dale E. Tupper of Garden City, 19 years

2011 Clark County Conservation District Board of Supervisors and the date their terms began: Chairman Duane Peterson, Vienna, 11/06/1990; Vice Chairman Jeff Grann, Carpenter, 11/06/2002; Secretary/Treasurer Gerald Antony, Clark, 12/01/1987; James Paulson, Garden City, 01/01/1987; Glen Warkenthien, Clark, 02/09/2005. Steven F. Reppe was appointed to replace Antony upon his retirement from the board effective 12/06/2011.

The establishment of sheltering trees and shrubs has always been a priority of the Conservation District. Over 3,920,000 trees and shrubs totaling 7,774.5 acres have been planted from 1949 to 2011. Major conservation objectives now focus on: increasing tree planting and renovation of existing shelterbelts; promoting grassland management; reducing wind and water erosion on cropland; reducing noxious weed infestations, improving water quality; reducing soil depletion; and conservation education to adults and youth.



**Mission Statement:** *“To assist with the conservation of natural resources for present and future generations”*

*This Native Plant Demonstration Plot was created to provide an opportunity for people to view and compare native plant growth. The outdoor learning center was constructed by the Clark County Conservation District and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service through a State Conservation Commission grant.*