

Hanson County Conservation District (No. 38)

History from 1969 publication:

The Hanson County Soil and Water Conservation District occupies all of Hanson County, which is the third county west from the eastern line of the state and the third county north from the Nebraska line. The first permanent white settlers came in 1871 when the area was rapidly settled and the county organized the same year.

These settlers found a lot of good grass, plenty of water, and a good and fertile soil well adapted to diversified farming and raising livestock. In the early days, it was mostly grain farming, but early in the 1900's, beef and dairy production became important enterprises. And soon after World War I, corn production began to replace some of the wheat acreage.

The James River passes through the southwestern part of the county and practically all of the drainage is into that river.

The general topography of the area is from undulating to nearly level and with a small amount of rough land on either side of the James River. The slowly moving James River meanders across a wide alluvial bottom that sometimes floods with the spring rains or snow melt. Native elm, ash, and scrub oak grow on the protective bottomlands and nearby ravines.

In general, Hanson County soils are deep and dark colored with abundant lime but often show by test and plant responses a low nitrogen and phosphorus content. Soil variations are due in large part to the effects of slop and drainage. Most of the soils are silty loams well adapted to the production of cash grains and livestock. However, attention needs to be given to the maintenance of the supply of organic matter, fertility, and the conservation of moisture.

During the 1930's, the operators experienced wind erosion problems and low income to the extent that many were going out of business. They realized that something must be done. Soon some of the nearby counties organized soil conservation districts and secured help from Soil Conservation Service. The people saw the work that was being done in those areas to protect their fields. The matter was talked about and in 1944 they held meetings to explain the program. These meetings resulted in a hearing on the matter April 15, 1945, at the court house in Alexandria. A referendum on January 25, 1946, resulted in a vote of 486 for and 37 against.

Ralph Dennis and MJ Curry were appointed supervisors on March 22, 1946, and proceeded to conduct an election for three more supervisors. Clayton Cox, John Buehler, and Julius Bertsch were chosen and were certified on June 1, 1946.

They then proceeded to organize the board and complete the organization details and prepare the Conservation District program. The original board of supervisors, and number of years served as supervisor, were Ralph Dennis, Canova, Chairman (23 yrs); John Buehler, Emery, Vice-chairman (17 yrs); M.J.Curry, Alexandria, (10 yrs); Julius Bertsch, Fulton, (10 years); Clayton Cox, Mitchell (11 yrs) and Verlen Hillesheim, Alexandria, County agent, secretary.

The supervisors then suggested their major problems as: wind erosion to cropland; water erosion at times of heavy rains; silt removed from uplands and deposited in drainage ways; gullies have formed in crop and grass lands; soil drifted into fences; insects, plant diseases, rodents, and noxious weeds are problems.

They proposed to meet those problems, in so far as possible, through the use of: contouring, terracing, crop residue management, crop rotations, planting grasses, planting shelterbelts, grassed waterways, building farm ponds, using drainage ditches; and hay and pasture land plantings, wildlife habitat development.

Updated information provided in 2012:

On May 6, 1968 a certificate was issued to Hanson County Soil and Water Conservation District for inclusion of additional territory with the SD seal and signed by Alma Larson, Secretary of State. The Conservation District was enhanced by planning in their monthly meetings, giving awards for Cleanest tree planting, Best Wildlife Habitat, speech contests, poster contests, and highlighted by their annual awards banquet with special entertainment and speakers.

By 1970 they were celebrating their 24th year of Conservation District on operations. It was then located in the Pitts Building on the west side at 430 Main St. in Alexandria. Accomplishments were 332 windbreaks, 332 Contour Furrow, 378 Farm Ponds, 412 Grassed waterways, 380 Farmstead Windbreaks, 602 Terraces 330 Contours. Grassed waterways were used to conserve soil and water erosion on sloping land.

1971 A 25th Anniversary banquet was held in the Alexandria Auditorium serving Hanson county buffalo meat.

1972 was a great year to be involved in conservation. District Cooperator Edward Fiala of Fulton and Supervisor Bert Terveen of Emery were among 106 national winners of the Goodyear Conservation Awards tour that included a fishing trip to the rubber reef, an artificial reef made of nearly 20,000 worn-out tires from the Marco Island, FL, inhabited by more than 33 species of fish. Award-winning conservationists took the Florida tour.

1971 Rural Environmental Assistance Program-over 100 SD farmers carried out measures to better manage animal waste. Interest increased by 1972. The rate of cost-sharing for these measures varies between 50 and 80 percent of the cost and the total payment limitation is \$2,500.

1972 Hanson Co was congratulated and certified Bovine Brucellosis Free. This is also the year Dutch Elm disease was prevalent in many areas.

Duane Butts, Hanson County received the National Assn. of County Agricultural Agents' highest honor - the Distinguished Service Award - at the NCAAA 57th annual meeting. Less than 2 percent of the Sssociation's 5000 plus membership are chosen for this high honor.

During 1974, the Great Plains Program developed rapidly. By July 1, 1975, eleven contracts were in effect. The Great Plains contracts allowed the farmer to apply conservation treatment to his land in an orderly year by year basis. Many of these included dugouts, dams, wells, tree plantings, tame and native grass plantings, terracing, cross fencing and a host of wildlife practices. It also contained a wonderful quote from William Jennings Bryan said to be the silver-tongued orator of the west. *"The great cities rest upon our broad and fertile plains. Burn down your cities and leave untouched your farms, and your cities will spring up again, as if by magic, but destroy your farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the nation. Rich topsoil, like a man's character, can erode so gradually you don't notice until it is gone."*

1976 Hanson water project signup continues requesting "Good Intention fees"; collected to obtain an engineer to design a rural water system to provide water to all interested rural people. Persons owning property that may be developed in the future were encouraged to sign up.

In 1978 a unique park was developed. It is unique in its purpose to help people learn. This park is called the Quarry Bridge Outdoor Classroom. It is located along the James River, 3 miles south and 4 miles east of Mitchell or 7 miles west of Alexandria. It was once an old rock quarry and also has one of the first bridges built across the James River.

March 1979: notice of Public Hearing on Ordinance for Erosion and Sediment Control in Hanson County. This ordinance, when adopted will set Conservation standards and soil loss limits for Hanson Co.

Hanson-Hutchinson 231 page soil survey released in book form with fold out pages Water development continues to be important as the U.S. Congress enacted the Clean Water Act of 1977. Locals were invited to learn more on how they could help in improving water quality. Hanson teamed with McCook County to sponsor Tillage demonstrations.

1980 a special study of the Lower James River Basin area has been authorized by the Soil Conservation Service. The study will identify soils that can be irrigated without damage to the soil resource. The study will include Aurora, Davison, Hanson, Hutchinson, Jerauld, Miner, Sanborn, and Yankton Counties.

Oct. 7, 1980 Hanson County Conservation District has announced the signing of a contract with the S. D. Dept. of Water and Natural Resources to develop a plan of action to improve water quality in Pierre Creek. This Pierre Creek Water Quality Project covers some 45,000 acres in Hanson County.

1981: Melvin Stevenson receives "Best Groomed Trees" award.

March 1982: Farmers were encouraged to plant less acreage. The program was crop specific. Only those who participated were eligible for target price protection and regular price supports or farmer-owned reserve loans. HCCD sponsors 3rd Annual Arbor day activities. Conservation District surplus trees were sold at 25 cents. Drill rates 3.50 per acre, \$25.00 minimum.

1984: A new building was constructed on Main St. in Alexandria to house offices for Soil Conservation Office, County Nurse and County Extension Office.

1985: The landscape southeast of Alexandria has changed dramatically due to Hanson Conservation District & RC&D covering an old dumpsite with 5600 cubic yards of soil, then 2,500 cubic yards of topsoil. Several similar projects are being planned in Hanson County to stop erosion of our soils and prevent sedimentation of our lakes and streams.

1986: Wind and soil erosion continue to be a concern. The new Ridge Tillage system is encouraged among Hanson County. This required continuous row crops using a special "ridger" to sweep approximately an inch of soil to make a ridge 8-10 inches high. This is used with a combination of chemicals and cultivation being built up on the previous year's plantings. The area where the seed is planted usually warms up faster than the area with the residue cover therefore the corn or soybeans germinate faster. The area where the seed is planted has the herbicide banded and the area between the rows is cultivated.

A grade stabilization project was completed in 1986 after a road was threatened due to wash-out from very heavy rains 2 years earlier. It was funded by Hanson County, SCS and RC&D. The damage was 25' deep, 40' wide and 125' long. After the earthwork was completed, it was seeded and mulched to prevent further erosion.

Aug. 1988 is the first meeting for repairs to dams and spillways at Lake Hanson and Lake Fulton. No funds were available at that time. Trees were planted at \$1.80 per rod row. HCCD purchased their first tree storage cooler with help of matching State funds.

In 1989 Board Members were: Don Pueppke, chairman; Bert Terveen, vice-chairman; Chuck Easton, Ray Barber, Ed Engelmeyer, supervisors; Marvin Nelson, Technician; Steve Vleiger, District conservationist; Judy Peterson, office manager. A public forum was held by the Extension Service and Hanson CCD. SDS had identified the Pierre Creek watershed and Lake Hanson as the primary target for the required Hydrologic Unit in the county. At the meeting 10 problem areas were identified by local farmers and businessmen.

1990: HCCD Board met Game Fish & Parks about predator control. Coyotes have increased in the area. Ray Barber received recognition for 15 years on Hanson County Weed Board.

1993: Hanson CD partnered with US Fish & Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited and North American Wetland Council for constructing embankment ponds. These are dual purpose earthen dams.

The embankment pond offers the livestock water, provides wildlife habitat, and decreases erosion by slowing the speed of run-off water. The ponds are generally deep enough to support a fish population, especially if the pond is fed by a spring. USFWS will pay 75% of the cost of qualifying ponds. Allen Tuschen is awarded "clean tree award" County Agent reports to Hanson County Soil Conservation District

1994: Office manager Myra Schleich is instructed to check on cost of first computer for office. Scott McManus was chosen as the Cooperator of the Year. Millbrook Colony was awarded the Clean Tree Award. Ryan Bell received first place in the local speech contest.

1995: Rhonda Henglefeld is new office manager. Curtis Pueppke received the "Clean Tree Award". Bruce Terveen received the Cooperator of the Year award. Jessica Williams received first place in the speech contest.

1997: Robert and Joyce Smetana were chosen Cooperator of the Year. Loren Huber received the Clean Tree Award. Brandy Repp received first place in the local and 3rd in the State speech Contest.

1998: Darrell Riggs received the Clean Tree Award for large planting and Scott McManus for the small planting. Art Jarding Jr. Family received the Cooperator of the Year award. Elizabeth Jarding received first place in local and 3rd in the State Speech Contest. Lee Lassegard received Wildlife Cooperator of the Year award.

1999: Joe Bartscher, Cedar Lane Farms and Bob Raatz all received clean tree awards. Elizabeth Jarding received first place in local, second in Area and 4th in State Speech contest. Randy Musick received Wildlife Cooperator of the Year.

2000: Ed Miller, Dave Jansen and Jeff McEntee received Clean Tree Awards. Jim Marquardt received the Wildlife Cooperator of the year.

2001: Loren Huber and Dusty Rhodes received the Clean Tree Award. Gary Jarding and Curt Hart received Clean Tree Award with Fabric. Paul Iburg received Wildlife Cooperator of the Year. Greg Roskens received Conservation Farmer of the Year.

2002: Governor William Janklow declared April 26, 2002, Clarence "Ike" Kewley Day. Clarence was our equipment operator/tree planter for many years. Clean Tree awards were given to David Moe, Harold Wolf and John Scheuren.

2003: HCCD purchased land for a new building site February. The land needed to be filled in. Dan Allen received the Clean Tree Award. Dennis and Robin Brakke received the Wildlife Cooperator of the Year award. Lynn Schulz assumes Lake Hanson Project coordinator position. The Lake Hanson Board was formed under the supervision of HCCD comprised of: Tom Bell, Steve Pociask, Ed Henningsen, Jim Bridge, Marie Hanson and Rod Wolforth.

2004: Meetings continue on Lake Hanson Restoration Project with the Lake Hanson Association continuing to raise funds. Community Park Project has begun. A wide variety of trees, shrubs and garden perennials with a winding cement sidewalk now enhances our city center. American Legion donated a flag. Nathan Kafer is our new Service Forester in our area. Awards continue yearly for Wildlife Cooperator of the Year, Farmer of the Year and Clean Tree Award, as well as Soil & Moisture Clinics. Emerald Ash borer thought to be brought to Detroit on wood pallets from China is a looming threat. The new infestation started in central Indiana and was likely transferred on firewood to other states

2005: Janette Adams is the new General Manager Our new building construction and cement pouring is underway with many helpers from both our county colony members and county highway department. Our office is now located in our new building at 260 10th St. on the north end of Alexandria and we have two tree coolers. Put fabric on 59.8 acres of trees, machine planted 63.2 acres of trees on 20 farms, planted 24,019 trees and planted grass on 567.9 acres

2008: Tony Cole is the new Manager

2009: Board agrees to sell off 1999 6' Tiller. Lake Hanson/Pierre Creek Restoration Project: project officer, Jeremy Schelhaas; Coordinator, Curt Hart. Election of Officers January 21, 2009:

Greg Roskens, Chairman; Steve Pociask, Treasurer; Don Wenande, Vice-Chairman; Don Pueppke, Supervisor; Dennis Brakke, Supervisor; Nancy Roskens, Office Manager; Doug Burmeister, Technical Assistant and Sandy Bartsher as Technical Assistant in 2010-11.

2011 – Barb Stork, office manager/technical assistant. With the help of donations from Agronomy Plus, Dakota Crop Insurance, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited and National Wild Turkey Federation, we were able to obtain a new Great Plains Grass drill. In our first year we have sown 1,130 plus acres.

We have many, many people who have helped to build and form our beautiful county with countless hours and sweat. For this we are thankful. I don't have all the names, but would like to thank ALL who have contributed to the betterment of our county and world. Thank You!

Hanson County Supervisors 1946-2012:

Ralph Dennis	1946-1980	Charles Easton	1983-1994
John Buehler	1946-1969	Bill Lingeman	1985-1988
M.J. Curry	1946-1956	Bert Terveen	1985-1996
Julius Bertsch	1946-1956	Ed Engelmeyer	1989-2004
Clayton Cox	1946-1957	Leonard Berg	1991-1992
Ronald Michaels	1957-1962	Harold Leitheiser	1993-2008
Raymond Barber	1957-1990	Scott McManus	1995-2000
Herb Watson	1960-1969	Steve Pociask	1997-2012
L. N. Arend	1963-1980	Greg Roskens	2000-2011
Bert Terveen	1967-1984	Richard Waldera	2005-2007
Bruce Lyman	1974-1982	Don Wenande	2008-2012
Don Pueppke	1981-2012	Dennis Brakke	2008-2012
John Janssen	1981-1984	Gary Schoenrock	2011-2012