

Harding County Conservation District (No. 49)

History from 1969 publication:

Harding County is located in the extreme northwest corner of the state and is primarily a grassland area where cattle and sheep are produced in large numbers. There have been frequent years since the county was settled when the grasses were grazed too closely. This has resulted in the depletion or elimination of some of the desirable species, with the result the carrying capacity of the range has been reduced. Some grasses have been killed out and their place has been taken by less desirable plants. The topography of the land is such that there is excessive run-off from heavy rains, with the result that insufficient water penetrates into the soil for growing grasses and other crops.

There are insufficient stock watering places of a large size over the range area to meet the livestock needs. Wells are needed to increase the efficiency of the rangeland. More dams and dugouts are also needed.

The production of crops is not a major industry in the county, but it does supply the major income for a considerable number of farmers, and is quite risky. Consequently, it is necessary to handle the land carefully if the soils are to be held in place and productive. Tillage should be done with implements that leave trash on the surface. Strip cropping should be used where needed. Sloping land should be farmed on the contour or terraced. Waterways should be seeded to grass. Gullies should be filled, leveled, and seeded to grass. Crop residues should be returned to the land in the form of straw or manure. Sweet clover should be grown as a green manure crop. Some cropland should be seeded to adapted grasses or grass/legume mixtures.

Most of the grazing land has been pretty well managed during the recent years. However, some of it is being overgrazed quite frequently, which has resulted in a poor stand of grass and an increase in weeds. With years of low rainfall, this condition was aggravated. All of this indicates the need for increased adoption of improved grazing practices and more efficient uses of water on the range. The supervisors recommend that grazing be controlled and the range rotated in so far as possible; that overgrazed areas are rested for a few years to give the grasses an opportunity to re-establish themselves. Some of the land that has been broken out in recent years should be allowed to go back to grass or should be reseeded.

On the range, the livestock depend largely for their water on the rivers, creeks, springs, wells, and reservoirs. The number and distribution of these is often inadequate for proper use of the range. Favorable dam sites are not always available, but often times a properly constructed dugout will meet the need. Considerable water runs off from both cropland and grassland during flash floods. Some run-off is necessary to maintain the supply of water in the dams.

There is a great need for the construction of water spreading systems on the range and hay lands wherever conditions are favorable for building of such structures. Contour furrows may have some value on some of the steep range land. Contour tillage and subsurface tillage on cropland would reduce run-off.

Many draws have possibilities for storage of water that can be used for irrigating bottom lands. Such dams should be constructed.

Sufficient amounts of feed are not always available for winter feeding where and when needed. Ample supplies of hay should be provided in so far as possible; and range and hay corrals

should be protected with well maintained fireguards. Wherever possible, water spreading systems should be built to spread the run-off water over the alfalfa and grassland to increase the hay production. Part of the cultivated acres could be planted to forage sorghums in order to increase the feed supply. The livestock should be fenced out of such areas for safety purposes.

The Harding County District was organized in 1949 after a favorable referendum held May 31.

The original supervisors were: Veron McCoid, Harding, Chairman; Ward VanHorn, Buffalo, Vice Chairman; Carl Cornell, Buffalo; Preston Painter, Ladner, Treasurer; and James Thybo, Sorum. Others who helped promote the district organization were: Art Erdman, Ralph; Tom Travers, Buffalo; J.B. Cooper, Harding; Floyd Gilbert, Buffalo; and Claude Olson, Ludlow.

Others who served as supervisors are: Thornton Ames; Dewey Turbiville, Buffalo; Roscoe Tarter; Jack Buckmier; Lloyd Gilbert, Buffalo; Paul Evenson, Camp Crook; Vern Krinke; Leonard Nygaard, Gascoyne, ND; Dave Junek, Redig; Paul Painter, Ladner; Robert Elling, Reva; and Gary Tennant, Camp Crook.

The 1969 supervisors were: Dewey Turbiville, Buffalo, Chairman; Gary Tennant, Camp Crook, Vice Chairman; Leonard Nygaard, Gascoyne, ND, Supervisor; Robert Elling, Reva, Supervisor; Lores Njos, Buffalo, Supervisor; Farrol Thompson, Buffalo, Secretary.

Updated information provided in 2012:

The Harding County Conservation District is going strong since it was organized in 1949.

The first Harding County Conservation District Long Range Plan was written in 1966 with revisions done in 1982, 1984, 1985 and 1992. The Annual Work Plan has been written every year since 1952.

From the late 1960's through 2011 others serving as supervisors on the Harding County Conservation District Board were Jack Buckmier, Gascoyne; Floyd R Davis, Camp Crook; Rueben Olson, Reva; Ken Nelson, Ladner; Charles Verhulst, Reva; Bob Kriege, Buffalo; Don Thompson, Buffalo; Ty Fowler, Buffalo; Peder Tenold, Reva; Ray Sperle, Buffalo; Greg Juelfs, Buffalo; Terry Goehring, Buffalo; Yvonne Yoder, Camp Crook; and Roy Dahl, Camp Crook.

Leonard Nygaard served as an Area SDACD Director in the late 1980's and early 1990's. In 1992 Leonard Nygaard received the SDACD District Official Award. Leonard Nygaard was honored in 2011 for serving as a HCCD supervisor for 50 years.

The SCS/NRCS District Conservationists through the years have been Mel Akin, Daniel Meyer, Dennie Simonson, Kim Whipple and Jerry Nelson. Jerry Nelson received the SDACD Professional Service Award in 2010.

Through the decades the County Extension Agents assisting HCCD were Joe Minyard, Lyndell Peterson, Bill Clanton, Kenneth W. Nelson, Roger Moul, Ken M. Nelson and Robin Salverson.

Harding County Conservation District Administrative Secretaries throughout the years have been: Barbara Wilson, Shirley Mackey, Marion Norton, Farrol Thompson, Sandy Lyons, Viola Chapman, Clarice Price, Becky Brengle, Dorothy Schweigert and Linda Matthews.

In 2006, Linda Matthews received the SDACD District Employee Award of Excellence. Linda Matthews has served as a NW/Hills Area Director; SDACDE Area Director; SDACDE Vice President and SDACDE President. She served on the SDACD Database Committee; Records Retention Project Committee; SDACD Workload Analysis Committee and represented SDACD on the SD Ag in the Classroom Board. Linda Matthews was honored with the 2009 SDACD Endowment Fund President's Club Award. She received the 2011 SDACDE Service Award.



In 1961 the first livestock pipeline was completed in the county measuring 200 ft. Decades later there has been 4,397,968 ft or 833 miles of pipeline constructed throughout Harding County. The pipelines have proven to be a valuable and dependable water source for the livestock. Over 500 miles of pipeline were installed in the last ten years.

In 1985, the supervisors started the Harding County Conservation Award. The award is given out yearly to a deserving producer. In 1992 the HCCD Conservation Tours began highlighting the award winner's ranch/farm

and the practices they have implemented. This has been a very successful undertaking by HCCD.

Harding County Conservation District started to publish a quarterly newsletter in January 1992. The newsletter has a mailing of over 600. It has been a very effective tool to inform the public of current and upcoming programs, upcoming events, information and photos of practices implemented. The newsletter was chosen as the SDACD Newsletter Award Winner in 1994.

From the 1950's through 2011, there have been 1,479,639 trees planted in Harding County. The largest plantings were in the decades of the 1980's and 1990's. The windbreaks have been very effective in protecting livestock and farmsteads from adverse weather conditions. The district started to install fabric weed barrier around the young trees in 1993. This service has greatly increased the tree survival in the county. There has been 1,005,985 ft or 191 miles of fabric weed barrier installed through 2011.

The current supervisors are Leonard Nygaard, Peder Tenold, Terry Goehring, Yvonne Yoder and Roy Dahl; Linda Matthews, HCCD Administrative Secretary and Jerry Nelson, NRCS District Conservationist.

Harding County Conservation District plans to be strong and effective for the next 61 years.