

Jones County Conservation District (No. 66)

History from 1969 publication:

Since its inception in 1955, the Jones County Conservation District encouraged landowners to participate in conservation stewardship through education and with technical and monetary assistance. Conservation development protects and promotes the health, safety and general welfare of the people of this State through judicious use of cost-share programs, partnerships, and grants to control and prevent soil erosion, minimize flood water and sediment damage, protect and conserve the natural resources, preserve wildlife, build and repair water distributional systems, and encourage grazing management on grassland and cropland.

Jones County is located in the vast ranching section of south central South Dakota. It is bordered on the north by Stanley County, on the west by Haakon and Jackson Counties, on the south by Mellette County and on the east by Lyman County. The County was created in 1916, but was settled when the railroad was extended west from Chamberlain.

The County is drained on the north by the Bad River and its tributaries and on the south by the White River and its tributaries. The divide roughly parallels US Highway 16. The topography is mostly rolling to undulating, with some steep areas along the rivers and creeks. The slopes are usually rather long and smooth on the undulating and rolling lands.

The soils of Jones County do not appear to be particularly complex. They are developed predominately from the Pierre shales. The dark gray beds give the rise to rather dense blocky soils of low permeability which show considerable gullyng in the draws, and on the more poorly drained areas developing hardpan soils with a rather scabby appearance. These beds appear to contain some bentonite material which is quite a detriment to weathering and permeability. The brown beds of the Pierre, while still clayey and rather dense, form more friable soils which are more permeable to water and air and are a little easier to work, except on steeper slopes and on the knobs of hills. Along the high terraces of the major streams, more friable and easier worked soils have developed. Locally small areas of soils occur that have been reworked by wind. These usually are associated with smoother slopes, have more friable profiles, and are more extensively cultivated. Along the river breaks, thin soils of variable texture and depth occur. In the stream bottoms, the soils are rather heavy except along the White River where some of the best soils of the county occur. These are often much lighter in texture and include loams and sands. Some of these have good potential for irrigation.

The grasses of the area are predominately western wheat grass, with some green needle grass, blue grass, little bluestem, threadleaf and needle sedges, and many minor varieties. On the more medium textured soils and the friable clays, the grass cover is fairly thick, but on the more dense soils it becomes considerably more sparse, and with a few areas of dense shale having little more than a scattering of forbs.

Wind erosion has taken place to some extent in all areas of the county but due to the small area broken up for cultivation, it is not very severe. Water erosion is more evident, especially on cropland of the steeper and longer slopes. When vegetative cover becomes low, either from grazing or cropping or during prolonged dry spells, runoff is very high and some severe gullyng has taken place.

The above conditions caused many farmers and ranchers to be concerned; concerned to the point that they were seeking control measures. They had seen the work done on similar land in

the U.S. Utilization Project in Jackson County and by the PMA Committee and they were ready for more information on the matter and so a sponsoring committee of farmers was set up on March 17th to conduct meetings and spread the information. They conducted twelve informational meetings during March and April 1955, and followed with news stories and informational letters. This resulted in the petitioning for a hearing. The hearing was held May 12, 1955, with most of the people asking for a vote on the matter. The referendum was held on June 22, 1955, with a vote of 271 for and 57 against.

As soon as possible after the referendum, the five supervisors were chosen, as follows: Everett Cressey, Murdo, Chairman; F. L. Frederickson, Draper, Vice-Chairman; Billy Graham, Okaton, Treasurer; Eugene Thomas, Murdo; Elton Buxcel, Okaton; and Melvin S. Argabright, Work Unit Conservationist, acting Secretary.

The Supervisors prepared and signed the necessary agreements with cooperating agencies and prepared their program plan of work.

The problems facing the Conservation District were: wind and water erosion had taken place, cattle numbers had increased beyond the carrying capacity in some areas of the county, and the cultivated land was beginning to show the effects of 10 or 12 years of high production.

The needed practices and the figures on the work completed as of 1968 were:

Grassed waterways in cropland	120	Acres
Water spreading on pasture and hay land	309	Acres
Water diversion and gully protection	36,000	Feet
Contouring and terracing where conditions warrant		
these practices - Contour	1,300	Acres
Terraces	54,000	L.F.
Stubble mulch farming, return of all crop residue to prevent loss of organic matter and improve soil structure	12,000	Acres
Improvement of range and pasture by –		
Proper stocking (base upon range condition and amount of forage produced)	200,000	Acres
Proper season of use (including deferred grazing or resting)	70,000	Acres
Seeding of adapted tame grass pastures to provide early spring grazing	20,000	Acres
Reseed marginal cropland to permanent cover for greater returns and to check runoff and soil loss	4,150	Acres
Reseeding rundown native pastures to the better native grasses where the pastures are in such low condition that natural reseeding would be slow	1,200	Acres
Farmstead tree plantings	400	Acres
Field shelterbelts	25,410	L.F.
Supplemental irrigations where feasible and practical	1,340	Acres
Stock water developments	3,289	

The members of the sponsoring committee were: Ben Dykstra, Murdo; Mr. and Mrs. Drew, Okaton; Albert Buxcel, Okaton; Everett Cressey, Murdo; F. C. Frederickson, Draper; A.W. Magnuson, Draper; Adolph Vik, Draper; Frank Seamans, Draper; Barnett Patterson, Murdo; Art Weber, Draper; and Eugene Thomas, Murdo.

Among those who have served as supervisors were: Ed Daum, Murdo; Dale Iverson, Murdo; Ken Kinsley, Murdo; William Nielsen, Draper; Louis Dowling, Draper; Gene Thomas, Murdo; Pete Daum, Okaton; G. Allen Iverson, Murdo; and Frank Seamans, Draper.

Since 1969 Jones County Conservation District has endured many changes, always encouraging good conservation practices for the soil and water resources of this State.

The 1969 Supervisors were: Dale Iverson, Murdo, Chairman; Richard Nix, Murdo, Vice-Chairman; Mike Cressy, Murdo, Treasurer; Edward Daum, Supervisor; Herman Hendricks, Jr., Murdo, Supervisor; Calvin Booth, Vivian, Assistant Supervisor; Eugene Thomas, Murdo, Assistant Supervisor; and Robert Edwards, Murdo, County Agent, Secretary.

Updated information provided in 2012:

Some highlights for the Conservation District in the 1970's were purchasing Grass Drills, initiating a soil survey of the county, planting trees and shrubs, promoting speech contests, sponsoring Range Youth Camp, cooperating with the Greater South Dakota Association (GSDA) to award the best conservationists in the Conservation District and setting Sediment and Erosion Standards for Jones County.

In 1970, a 12 foot John Deere drill and Donahue trailer were purchased for producers to rent for their planting needs.

In 1972, Robert Wilson was the winner of the annual GSDA contest, the Hurst Ranch was first runner up and Gothier Mink Inc. was second runner up. One hundred twenty dams were inventoried in Jones County.

In 1974, the South Dakota Conservation District Employees formed an organization. The Conservation District assisted with the seeding and irrigation of the football field. Art Weber was awarded first place of the GSDA tour and contest.

In 1975, CNV Ranch received first place in the GSDA tour and contest; runners-up were Dave Calhoun and Lloyd Rust. The Conservation District traded in the 12 foot John Deere drill and purchased a 14 foot John Deere drill, keeping the Donahue trailer to haul the drill in the County.

In 1976, Eldon and Esther Magnuson were awarded first place of the GSDA tour and contest; runners-up were Ray and Janice Pike and Sam and Pauline Smith. The City of Murdo water supply was in critical condition in the fall; technical assistance was provided for proposed shelterbelts around the North Dam to hold snow and increase the run-off during spring thaws.

In 1978, the Conservation District purchased two ten foot 9300 John Deere drills and a Donahue trailer, trading off the 14 foot John Deere drill and Donahue trailer.

In 1979, George Trapp, SCS, Soil Conservation Technician completed a detailed survey of 21 sections in Jones County. The survey involved measuring drainages and calculating erosion on the sections involved. Part of the information collected was included in a compiled report used by Congress to institute conservation programs.

Approximately 290 acres of trees and shrubs were planted in the 1970's. Planting trees for the Conservation District in the 1970's were Carl Palander and Ben Ahrendt.

Supervisors who served during the 1970's were Dale Iversen, Richard Nix, Ron Louder, Edward Daum, Herman Hendricks, Jr.; Supervisor Assistants were Calvin Booth and Orville Fuoss. Joyce Stotts served as Administrative Secretary until 1976 at which time Cheryl McMillan took over the duties of Administrative Secretary. Also assisting the Conservation District were Dave Steffen DC, SCS; George Trapp, SCT, SCS; Bob Edwards, Extension Agent.

Some highlights for the 1980's included publishing the Long Range Plan for Jones County, enrolling over 9,000 acres into Conservation Reserve Program, promoting the Great Plains Conservation Program, encouraging a soil survey of Jones County and purchasing the Terrace Park Cooler. Four Supervisors were awarded 20 year certificates. Jones County was included in a nationally designated target area. Jones County farmers and ranchers participated in the Conservation Reserve Program. A new grass drill and a new tree planter were purchased.

In 1980, the Conservation District published their Long Range Plan. Senators, Representatives, and the Governor received letters promoting the Great Plains Conservation Program.

In 1981, LeMoyne Nichols was awarded first place of the GSDA tour and contest; runners-up were Paul Patterson and Gregg Boyle. A tree planting workshop was held in Murdo.

In 1982, a public meeting was held to promote the Soil Survey of Jones County. The Conservation District purchased the Terrace Park cooler in the spring for tree storage.

In 1983, Supervisors Dale Iversen and Ed Daum were awarded 20 year certificates. Jones County was included in a nationally designated target area for increased technical assistance and funding to accelerate land treatment to solve wind and water erosion problems.

In 1986, the Conservation District purchased a 10 foot Tye grass drill. Farmers and Ranchers planted approximately 2,254 acres of farmland under the Conservation Reserve Program.

In 1988, the Conservation District purchased a 20' Haybuster drill. The three Conservation District drills seeded approximately 7,000 acres of grass in the fall of 1987 through the spring of 1988; most of the acres were enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. Chairman Richard Nix and Supervisor Herman Hendricks were presented their 20-year certificates.

In 1989, the Conservation District purchased a new tree planter; 93 acres of trees and shrubs were planted. The 10 foot Tye drill was traded in on a new Great Plains Drill.

Approximately 279.5 acres of trees and shrubs were planted in the 1980's. Planting trees for the Conservation District in the 1980's were Lawrence and Evelyn Roghair, Angie Kinsley, Gus Sharp, Sam Seymour, Douglas Vik, Mike and Miles McMillan.

Supervisors who served during the 1980's were Dale Iversen, Richard Nix, Ronald Louder, Edward Daum, Herman Hendricks Jr.; Supervisor Assistants were Calvin Booth and Paul Thomas. Serving as Administrative Secretaries were, Cheryl McMillan from 1976 to 1983; Kay Keever from 1983 to 1984; Valerie Moore from 1984 to 1986; Christine Peters from 1986 to 1993. Working partners with the Conservation District were Dave Steffen, Douglas Farrand, Jeff Stewart and Steve Meyer DC, SCS; George Trapp and Doug Vik, SCT, SCS; Allen Faulkner, Ken Heil, SS, SCS; Roger Mueller, SC, SCS; Gary Erickson, Extension Agent.

Highlights for the 1990's were: Public meetings held for the development of the Hydrologic Unit Plan for Jones County, completion of the Soil Survey in Jones County, tree fabric introduced in

Jones County, personnel hired to help with wetlands and field residue checks, and the formation of South Central Resource and Conservation Development Council, Inc. (South Central RC&D).

In 1990, Darrell Daum and Greg Hauptman operated the Great Plains and Haybuster drills to seed 3,837 acres for the Conservation Reserve Program. Darrell Daum was recognized for Outstanding Service to Conservation. Carma Nix and Tonia Buxcel were hired as temporary staff to assist with Compliance, CRP, and Wetlands. Winners of the Conservation District awards were George Trapp for Outstanding Technician, Gary Erickson for Outstanding County Agent, and Murdo Coyote for Outstanding News Media. Chris Peters, Carma Nix and Tonia Buxcel received spot awards for their work in completion of data input.

In 1991, Lori Waldron was hired to assist with wetlands. Bernard Noldner received Excellence of Grazing Management Award by the South Dakota Range Management Society. Two public meetings were held on Hydrologic Unit Planning. Preliminary soil mapping was completed for all land in Jones County.

In 1992, Edyth Noldner was awarded a plaque for Senior Conservationist by the Soil and Water Conservation Society. The Conservation District worked with United States Fish and Wildlife Service on building or repairing dams/dugouts for wildlife purposes. The Conservation District hired Barb Halligan to assist with checking and measuring field residue. South Central Resource and Conservation Development Council, Inc. (South Central RC&D) was formed to assist communities with projects and promote conservation and development of natural and human resources within Jones, Mellette, Todd and Tripp counties.

In 1993, the Conservation District continued to work with United States Fish and Wildlife Service on building or repairing wildlife dugouts. They received a grant from the South Dakota Conservation Commission, Ducks Unlimited, and the North American Wetlands Council that helped fund the completion of ten ponds. The Conservation District paid tribute to George Trapp, Soil Conservation Technician. George assisted many producers over his years of service and made a great contribution to the conservation efforts in Jones County.

In 1994, Paul Thomas was nominated for Wildlife Cooperator of the year for Jones County. The Conservation District traded in the Haybuster drills and purchased a 750 John Deere No-Till drill. Conservation Award nominees were Henry Roghair for Senior Conservationist; Andy Rankin for Junior Conservationist; Ed Daum for Outstanding Conservation District Official; Mike McKernan for Service to Conservation; Jason Miller for Professional Service; and Bob Fuoss for Conservation Farm. A tour was held at the Bob Fuoss farm which won the "Take Pride In America" award.

In 1995, Paul Thomas was appointed to the Board as a Supervisor. The Conservation District received two Conservation Commission grants totaling approximately \$52,000.00 to implement no-till projects in Jones County. Twelve producers enrolled a total of 600 acres in these projects. Dianne Hendricks was appointed to the board as a Supervisor. The Conservation District cooperated with the Jackson County Conservation District to implement the Upper Bad River Water Quality demonstration project. The Board paid tribute to former Supervisor Herman (Bud) Hendricks. Bud made a great contribution to the conservation effort during the 26 years that he served as a Conservation District Supervisor.

In 1996, local farmers toured no-till sites as part of the Conservation District's no-till demonstration project. Also the Conservation District hosted a meeting with the South Central Resource Conservation and Development, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Upper Bad

River Demonstration Project, Corp of Engineers, DENR, other agencies and landowners along the White River to discuss stream bank erosion. The Conservation District became a member of the White River Watershed Group.

In 1997, Lawrence Stirling and Ross Nielsen were interviewed and were featured in a pamphlet highlighting producers participating in the Upper Bad River Demonstration Project

In 1999, Donna Roghair won first place in the local Speech Contest and placed third in the Area Speech Contest. Lawrence and Maxine Stirling received the Excellence in Grazing Management Award from South Dakota Society for Range Management.

In 1998, the Conservation District purchased a second Great Plains drill, trading in two 9300 John Deere drills and a Donahue trailer.

Approximately 124.9 acres of trees and shrubs were planted in the 1990's. Planting trees for the Conservation District in the 1990's were Lon Peters, Wanda Larson, Caroline Gleason, Deb Hall, Julie Hurst, Matt Magnulis, Edwin and Beulah Aske, and Wayne Hunt.

Supervisors who served during the 1990's were Richard Nix, Dale Iversen, Ronald Louder, Edward Daum, Herman Hendricks Jr., Paul Thomas and Darrell Daum; Supervisor Assistants were Paul Thomas, Darrell Daum, Dianne Hendricks, and Ed Daum. Serving as Administrative Secretaries were, Christine Peters from 1986 to 1993; Deborah Hall 1993 to 1994; Serving as Conservation District Managers were Brenda Smith 1994 to 1997; Stephanie Hespe 1997 to 2000. Working partners with the Conservation District were, Yvonne Haefner DC, NRCS; George Trapp, Soil Conservation Technician, NRCS; Allen Faulkner, SS, NRCS; Jason Miller, Soil Conservationist, NRCS; Lee Ozanne Soil Conservation Technician, NRCS; Patrick Henry and Kurt Forman, USFWS; Gary Erickson and Valerie Mitchell, Extension Agents.

Highlights of the 2000's included a donation of 300 trees from the Conservation District to the City of Murdo. South Central RC&D celebrated their tenth anniversary. The Conservation District was awarded grants to assist with tree plantings, pipelines and tanks, and pond construction or repair. The Conservation District welcomed a Prairie Area Technician and New District Conservationist.

In 2000, Arlene Pitan won the People's Choice award in SDACD Photo Contest. The Stirling Ranch Tour was held in July. The Conservation District traded in the 750 John Deere No-Till Drill on the purchase of a 1560 John Deere No-Till drill.

In 2001, the State set a new record for planting trees and shrubs. The planting of 8,479 acres of trees and shrubs broke the previous record of 7,634 acres of trees and shrubs planted in 1967. Since 1944 NRCS in South Dakota has assisted in planting more than 189 million trees and shrubs on 336,780 acres.

In 2002, the Conservation District partnered with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in the repair and restoration of 10 ponds. Paul Thomas, representing South Central Resource Conservation and Development, presented Yvonne Haefner, District Conservationist, NRCS, with a certificate of appreciation for her assistance in the formation of South Central RC&D. South Central RC&D celebrated 10 years of accomplishments. Travis Hendricks was appointed to the Board as a Supervisor.

In 2004, a record number (188 acres) of trees and shrubs were planted in Jones County. The Board paid tribute to former Supervisor Dale Iversen. Dale contributed greatly to the conservation effort during his 42 years as a Conservation District Supervisor and Advisor.

In 2005, Jones County Conservation District partnered with North Central RC&D, South Central RC&D, Stanley County and American Creek Conservation Districts, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and SD Department of Game Fish and Parks, as well as other organizations, in an effort to protect, restore, and enhance riparian areas and grasslands.

In 2007, additional practices were completed in Jones County to benefit 552.6 acres through a grant and partnership with North Central RC&D, South Central RC&D, Stanley County Conservation District, American Creek Conservation District, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and SD Department of Game Fish and Parks. The Conservation District participated in the local Health Fair. The Conservation District partnered with Mellette and Todd Counties on tree grant projects.

In 2008, a three year grant was obtained for technical assistance in four counties; Jones County, Mellette County, Todd County, and Bennett County. The Conservation District welcomed Tyrell Tucker as the Prairie Area Technician. The Conservation District was also involved with a tree grant and a pipeline grant funded through the Conservation Commission grant program and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Valerie Feddersen received the Conservation District Employee Award of Excellence from SDACD.

In 2009, Yvonne Haefner, District Conservationist, NRCS retired after 30 years of service with the Natural Resource Conservation having spent 19 of those years assisting producers in Jones County. The Conservation District participated in several grants to apply conservation practices to the land. In December the Conservation District welcomed Ryan Willert as the new District Conservationist for NRCS. The Board paid tribute to former Supervisor Ron Louder. Ron made a great contribution to the conservation effort during the 37 years that he served as a Conservation District Supervisor.

Approximately 595 acres of trees and shrubs were planted in the 2000's. Planting trees for the Conservation District in the 2000's were Edwin and Beulah Aske, Wanda and Roger Larson, Calista Tatum and Valerie Feddersen.

Supervisors who served during the 2000's were Richard Nix, Paul Thomas, Ronald Louder, Darrell Daum Dianne Hendricks, Travis Hendricks; Advisors were Dale Iversen and Ed Daum. Serving as Conservation District Managers were Kim Jones 2000-2001, Kim Olson 2001-2002, Cheryl Iversen 2002 and Valerie Feddersen 2002-to current. Working Partners with the Conservation District were Yvonne Haefner DC, NRCS; Ryan Willert DC, NRCS; Rick Peterson, Range Specialist, NRCS; Barb Halligan, Conservation Aide; Lee Ozanne Conservation Technician, NRCS; Kevin Paulsen, Conservation Technician, NRCS; Nell Heying Conservation Technician, NRCS; Lee Kinney Conservation Technician, NRCS; Tyrell Tucker, Prairie Area Technician; Joe Nichols, Rich Madson, Jesse Lisburg and Kurt Forman, USFWS; Valerie Mitchell, Extension Agent.

In 2010 the Conservation District obtained grants and partnered with organizations to assist the landowners in conservation practices that would benefit the land, landowner, livestock and wildlife. In March Dean Volmer was appointed to the Board as Supervisor. Work to update the Long Range Plan continued. Open meeting laws changed and made for some interesting discussions at Board meetings, Area meetings and Convention. After many years of discussion

and planning a new USDA Service Center was built and the Conservation District moved into the building in late December. The Board paid tribute to former Supervisors Ed Daum and Eugene Thomas. Ed and Eugene made great contributions to the conservation efforts. Ed served 44 years as a Conservation District Supervisor and Advisor and Eugene served 13 years as a Conservation District Supervisor.

In 2011, Paul Thomas served as Prairie Area Director. The Board made steps to complete the Conservation District Supervisor Accreditation. Valburg Limited Partners received the Excellence in Range Management award for Area III from SD Society for Range Management; a tour of the Ranch will be held in 2012. Richard Nix was the Prairie Area Endowment Honoree and obtained the President's Club level for contributions of \$1,000.00. Richard Nix also received the Conservation District Official Award. The Conservation District obtained the President's Club level for contributions to the Endowment Fund. Presentations were made at SDACD Convention in November.

Supervisors to December 2011 were Richard Nix, Paul Thomas, Darrell Daum, Travis Hendricks and Dean Volmer; no advisors at this time; serving as Conservation District Manager was Valerie Feddersen. Working Partners with the Conservation District were Ryan Willert DC, NRCS; Lee Ozanne Conservation Technician, NRCS; Joe Nichols, Jesse Lisburg and Kurt Forman, USFWS; Valerie Mitchell, Extension Agent.

Jones County Conservation District Board of Supervisors – 2011
Pictured left to right: Richard Nix, Chairman; Travis Hendricks, Supervisor; Dean Volmer, Supervisor; Paul Thomas, Vice-Chairman; Darrell Daum, Treasurer.

