

## **Marshall County Conservation District (No. 34)**

History from 1969 publication:

Marshall County is located in the northeast part of South Dakota. It borders North Dakota on the north and Roberts County on the east. Early in the 1850's Marshall County was known mainly to soldiers, traders and hunters. Fort Sisseton was established on the banks of the Kettle Lakes in 1864 but not many settlers came until the early 1880's. Fort Sisseton is located in the southeast part of the county where there are many lakes; this area is known as the "Lake Region" and is part of the Coteau des Prairies, known locally as the "Sisseton Hills." The west part of the county drains to the west into the James River and is considered the Lake Dakota Plain. The extreme northeast part of the county drains into the Little Minnesota River – Red River lowlands.

The Conservation District is divided into three areas of different topography and soils. The east portion is undulating to rolling with considerable excessive drainage, and the soils are loams of glacial origin. The middle part of the Conservation District, extending northeast and southwest are more level topography with silt loams, silty clay loams and some hard-pan areas. The west part of the Conservation District is nearly level with areas of marshy lands, sandy soils, loams, clay loam, and some hard-pan. In general the soils are productive and well suited for general farming, when protected from wind and water erosion, and with maintenance of fertility and the organic matter content of the soil. About 60% of the county is cropland with the rest being range, pastureland, lakes and marsh.

Both wind and water erosion had become serious problems. Surrounding areas, including part of Marshall County, already had been operating under soil conservation districts and the people had an opportunity to see the effectiveness of the different practices in these conservation districts. They decided to organize the remainder of the county into a separate conservation district.

Late in 1943, a series of informational meetings were held at which the matter of a conservation district was discussed, as to organization and operation, and petitions for a hearing were circulated. Then on March 9, 1944, a hearing was held resulting in a request for a referendum. The referendum was held on June 30, 1944, with a 93 percent favorable vote. Marshall County Conservation District was established in 1944, excluding six Northwest townships that were originally part of the Brown-Marshall Conservation District (established in 1937). Total acreage in the area was 277,111.

Harold Franzen, Langford, and Clarence Gronseth, Britton, were appointed as supervisors to conduct an election of three more supervisors. P. Jerome Olson, Havana; Percy Wallace, Britton, and Arthur Boe, Langford, were elected to complete the board of supervisors. These five supervisors then elected officers signed the necessary agreements and prepared their program of work. They named their problems as: flooding, potholes, wind and water erosion, gullying, weeds, the need for trees, and inadequate livestock water supplies. They proposed to meet these problems through the use of: contour planting, contour strip cropping, wind strip cropping, pasture management, seeding of pastures, building farm ponds, farm drainage, sod waterways, mowing pastures, chemical weed control, weed control by tillage, farmstead windbreaks and field windbreaks.

In 1948 six townships transferred their membership from Brown Marshall CD to the Marshall County Conservation District. Today's Conservation District which includes all of Marshall County has approximately 567,040 acres.

Updated information provided in 2012:

The original Long Range program of work was written in 1944 and completely revised and approved in 1965. The plan is now reviewed on a yearly basis with changes and updates made as needed. Our Marshall County CD long term goals are:

1. Protect the soil from water and wind erosion.
2. Improve the rangeland and pastureland.
3. Improve the recreation and wildlife.
4. Protect all water quality of Marshall County.
5. Protect Soil Health.

Marshall County Conservation District works to implement conservation practices that will preserve our soil, water and all natural resources for future generations.

The Conservation District works together very closely with its many partners to promote and establish Best Management Practices for all resource concerns of the county. The Conservation District works to secure grants to assist local producers with conservation implementation. In 1997 the Marshall County CD received the National Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Group Award for creating and restoring over 80 wetlands. That was the result of several grants and promotional activities that still continues today. We still partner or administer several grants that provide cost share to create wetlands, provide cross fencing, and promote proper grazing and rotational grazing with pipelines and tanks for proper water distribution. We are partners of the Northeast Glacial Lakes Project that continually works to keep our "lake region" environmentally healthy.



The photos above show a livestock/wildlife pond and farmstead shelterbelt. These are a small sampling of recent conservation activities in Marshall County.

The secretarial duties for the Conservation District were taken care of by the County Extension office from 1944 until 1978 when Reva Mette was hired as the first permanent employee of the Conservation District. Reva started part time but as programs and duties evolved she became

a full time employee and remained at the position until 1989. In 1989, Marge Kraft took over the Conservation District Manager duties. In May of 1991, Wanda Franzen was hired and is the current Conservation District Manager for the Marshall County Conservation District.

In the beginning, the Conservation District shared an office with the Soil Conservation Service that was co-located with the ASCS and FMHA. They still are housed in the Ag Service Center with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (former SCS) and Farm Service Agency (former ASCS & FMHA).

In 2002, Marshall Conservation District began construction of a new tree building that was completed and used for the 2003 spring tree season. The building has two tree coolers and room for equipment storage. It was a great improvement and is fully utilized throughout the year especially during planting season.

The Marshall County Conservation District stays active in many areas. For many years they participated in the Soil and Moisture Conservation Achievement Program and recently switched to the Conservation Farm/Ranch Award that was promoted by the SD Legislature. The Conservation District promotes many educational events such as Arbor Day festivities, Soil Stewardship Week, Eco Ed Day, Northern Prairie Water Festival and the Farmer Rancher Short Course at SDSU. We assist or host several contests such as Arbor Day Essay Contest, Natural Resources Speech Contest, and the NESD Land and Range Contest. Conservation education and practices are promoted by the Conservation District through federal and state programs, grants, and partnerships. The Conservation District has a quarterly newsletter "Conservation Circular" and promotes conservation with regular news articles in the local papers and through promotional booths, tours and workshops.

The Marshall County Conservation District has planted 6,596.5 acres of trees since 1944. The total number of trees planted is 3,611,859 on 2,935 sites.

Our current elected supervisors are: Arthur Steiner, Chairman; Irwin Symens, Vice Chairman; James Grimsrud, Treasurer; John Knebel and David Nelson. Neil Bien recently shifted from elected supervisor joining Darian Kilker, Walton Johnson and Harland Peterson as MCCD advisors. The Marshall County Board of supervisors and advisors stay active in local, state and national activities. Bien and Symens have both served as Coteau Area Directors. Symens was the SDACD Sec/Treasurer from 2001-2003, SDACD Vice President from 2004-2007 and completed a 3 year term as the SDACD President in 2010.

The following people have served as supervisors or advisors on the Marshall County Conservation District Board.

SUPERVISOR	BEGIN	END	ADVISORS	BEGIN	END
Boe, Arthur	1944	1945	Schultz, Jeppe	1944	1945
Franzen, Harold	1944	1972	Gronseth, Marvin	1945	1961
Gronseth, Clarence	1944	1961	Hill, Marvin	1945	1967
P Jerome Olson	1944	1946	Olson, Charles	1945	1961
Wallace, Percy	1944	1963	Keintz, Cornelius	1945	1978
Schultz, Jeppe	1945	1946	Freden, Paul	1948	1951
Rockwell, Henry	1948	1978	Fitting, Lester	1967	1989
Hill, Marvin	1951	1967	Freden, Paul	1967	1969

Freden, Paul	1951	1967	Erickson, Clarence Jr	1970	1972
Gronseth, Marvin	1952	1954	Hill, Roger	1972	1989
Hansen, Henry	1955	1963	Jarrett, Donald	1972	1991
Guy, Carvin	1963	1986	Osness, Jerome	1972	1973
Damgaard, Harlan	1964	1984	Peters, Emerald	1973	1981
Fitting, Lester	1965	1967	Hansen, Tom	1980	1981
Ogren, Ehlert	1973	1988	Bien, Neil	1981	1983
Jaspers, Valery	1975	1992	Michlitsch, Lyle	1981	1988
Keintz, Cornelius	1978	1980	Grimsrud, James	1981	1983
Hansen, Tom	1981	1984	Smeins, Dan	1986	1989
Peters, Emerald	1981	1982	Williams, Roger	1989	1989
Bien, Neil	1983	2008	Hill, Jay	1990	2000
Grimsrud, Jim	1984	present	Nordquist, Terry	1990	1992
Michlitsch, Lyle	1989	2000	Patterson, Ron	1990	2001
Symens, Irwin	1989	present	Cole, Rick	1991	1993
Steiner, Arthur	1993	present	Hastings, Richard	1992	1996
Nelson, David	2001	present	Olson, David	1993	1995
Knebel, John	2008	present	Buhl, Wayne	1994	1999
			Knebel, LeRon	1996	2000
			Hanson, Donnell	1997	2006
			Binger, Harvey	2000	2006
			Kilker, Darian	2000	present
			Knebel, John	2000	2008
			Johnson, Walton	2001	present
			Peterson, Harland	2006	present
			Bien, Neil	2008	present