

## Moody County Conservation District (No. 35)

History from 1969 publication:

Moody County is located along the east border of South Dakota in about the middle of the state from north to south. The county history dates back 250 years when a trading post was established in the Big Bend of the Sioux River to trade with the Indians and was abandoned in 1763. Another post was established in 1822 but abandoned in 1827. The first permanent white settlement was at Flandreau in 1869. The county was organized in 1873 and is one of South Dakota's best farming areas.

The county is drained by the Sioux River and its tributaries which flow through the county from north to south. The topography ranges from undulating to gently rolling to nearly level and the soils vary from silty clays, silty clay loams, and silt loams and are generally fairly well drained and have been adapted to livestock and general farming with the production of corn, soybeans, small grains and alfalfa. However, these soils do need to be protected by the use of grass and legume rotations and the establishment of soil and moisture conservation and fertility maintenance practices.

The early settlers found the fertile soil covered with native grasses primarily of the mid and tall grass species and an abundance of water from the Sioux River and its tributaries, as well as many springs that flowed the year around.

The burning of range land and crop stubble was common during the early years. As time passed, these practices encouraged both wind and water erosion, especially on the sloping lands, which did considerable damage.

The early settlers grew primarily wheat and utilized the native grass range for cattle production. The wheat production gave way to corn production in the early nineteen hundreds until the 1940's, when a relatively small acreage of spring grains and alfalfa were added to most farm rotations. Corn and soybeans continue to be the main cash crops. Market livestock production, utilizing roughages and grains, are conducted throughout the county, also.

C. M. Culhane, County Extension Agent, and some of the farmers in the county had seen some of the erosion control work that the SCS was doing. Several demonstrations were set up on farms scattered over the county. With the assistance of the Soil Conservation Service personnel located in Huron, SD, the Moody County Extension helped area farmers establish conservation practices on a limited basis. These practices were distributed over the county as demonstration sites.

Informational meetings were held in 1942, 1943, and 1944 which lead to the organization of the Moody County Soil and Water Conservation District. A public hearing was held on March 15, 1944, and in August, the Conservation District was organized with an 83 percent favorable vote. Moody County became the thirty-fifth Conservation District to organize in South Dakota. The original Conservation District covered Blinsmon, Colman, Egan, Enterprise and Lynn Townships in the southwest corner of the county. In 1946, the remainder of the county was added to the Conservation District. While there was some opposition to the organization of a Conservation District, it was neither organized nor active.

A board of supervisors was established from these early promoters to get the Conservation District organized and operating. Under the leadership of Pete Ginsbach, Dell Rapids, chairman; Henry Scherff, Trent, vice-chairman; Nick Frantzen, Dell Rapids, treasurer; A. A.

Duncan, Egan; and Fred Elhoff, Colman, agreements were established with cooperating agencies and a statement of major problems were identified which consisted of wind and water erosion of the soils, a lot of wet land, and unsatisfactory crop rotations. Conservation practices promoted to correct these problems were field strip cropping; contour farming and terraces on sloping fields; good crop rotations; drainage of potholes and sloughs through tiles and open ditches; and farmstead and field windbreak tree plantings. Some of these practices were readily accepted, others developed acceptance more slowly. Stock dams and dugouts were also widely accepted. During the past ten years, irrigation of crops with water drawn from wells and the Big Sioux River were developed with encouragement and assistance of the Conservation District.

Updated information provided in 2012

Most of these conservation practices were installed with the assistance of the USDA Farm Bill program cost-share dollars and the landowners'/operators' investments of money, machinery, and labor. As time and technology advanced, additional conservation practices have been added that address water and air quality, grazing management, livestock waste management and wildlife habitat.

During this timeframe, the Conservation District began to hire staff to provide clerical assistance for the SCS/NRCS technicians and to provide services to landowners in establishing some of these practices. Tree planting and maintenance has been a main revenue generating enterprise for the Conservation District. Grass drills were added in the 1990's and are rented to assist landowners in establishing Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres, grassed waterways, and other grass seeding projects. As the Conservation District continued to offer more services and secure federal and state grants to implement best management practices, it was decided to hire a Conservation District Manager to oversee and implement these programs.

As a result of the Conservation District's continuous public outreach through its information and education program, the Flandreau Public School has participated in the annual Arbor Day Essay Contest. In 2006 and again in 2007, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student from Flandreau won the state contest.

In 1995, after fifty years of successful leadership in promoting the conservation of our natural resources, the Conservation District's Board of Supervisor prepared to lead the Conservation District into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by establishing the Conservation District's vision and mission statements, an annual work plan and a five year long range plan. The annual work plan and the five year long range plan are updated each year to address the needs of the Conservation District. Information gathered from public meetings held in the nine watersheds in the county was used to formulate these statements and first plans as well as to develop hydrologic unit plans to address the individual concerns identified in each of these watersheds. In cooperation with the Brookings and Lake County Conservation Districts, the Conservation District completed water quality projects to address the natural resource concerns in the Spring Creek, Battle Creek, Jack Moore Creek and Bachelor Creek watersheds by December, 2005.

In 2006, the Conservation District began working on the multi-year Central Big Sioux River Watershed Project in cooperation with the Brookings, Lake and Minnehaha Conservation Districts, the East Dakota Water Development District, and the City of Sioux Falls. In 2010, the Conservation District became the prime sponsor for that project to address the water quality concerns in the Big Sioux River basin. In 2012, the project was expanded to include the Lower Big Sioux River Watershed Project encompassing Lincoln and Union Conservation Districts and the boundaries were extended to reach from the Brookings/Hamlin County line to Sioux City, IA.

The following individuals have served as Conservation District employees:

District Manager/Technician - Merris Miller, Racheal Brewster, Mark Koster, John Hay, and Harvey Shafer, who is the current Conservation District Manager/Technician. Secretary for the Conservation District included Corrine Ehlers, Carol Shaw, and Lacey Iott. The current secretary is Jackie Hay.

The following individuals have served as elected supervisors of the Moody County Conservation District:

Pete Ginsbach	1945-1958	Wayne Lyford	1978-1991
Nick Frantzen	1945-1953	Jack Majeres	1986-Present
A.A. Duncan	1945-1960	Todd Intermill	1990-2007
Henry Scherff	1945-1947	Edward Duncan	1991-2004
Fred Elhoff	1945-1972	Martin J. Parsley	1991-1994
Floyd A. Johnson	1948-1963	Bruce Martinson	1994-1996
Lawrence Hasvold	1953-1958	John Hay	1996-1998
Raymond Benson	1958-1978	Dean Jaycox	1997-Present
Charles Lee	1958-1963	Steve Hemmer	1999-2001
Harold Smallfield	1963-1990	Warren Jackson	2001-Present
Norman Hauglid	1963-1974	Betty Armstrong	2005-2008
Robert Ullom	1966-1996	Steve Doyle	2007-Present
Dwayne Halse	1972-1991	Lane Miller	2009-Present
Mark LeBrun	1974-1986		