

## Stanley County Conservation District (No. 63)

From the 1969 publication:

Stanley County is in the central part of South Dakota, across the Missouri River from Pierre. It has a long and interesting history. Fort Pierre is the oldest continuous settlement in the state. In 1817 a fort was built a short distance from the present city. In 1743 the Verendrye brothers buried a lead plate on a bluff at the edge of the city, and in 1840 Rev. Stephen Riggs came to the area. Most of the settlers came after the railroad was built to Pierre in 1880.

The larger portion of Stanley County drains into the Cheyenne River to the north and the Bad River to the south, with some areas draining directly into the Missouri River. The topography is mostly undulating with steep areas along the rivers. The surface drainage is mostly excessive, and the land is subject to water erosion. Soils are clays of different types, mostly Pierre clay, often referred to as "gumbo". These soils are best suited for ranching, with some of the rolling soils suitable for limited cropping, provided it is protected by erosion control practices.

The early settlers were ranchers; they found good grasses covering the land except on shale hills and banks. There was good water along the rivers and a few creeks and springs. Ranch headquarters were established along these areas. Stock water was scarce over wide areas.

There was exploitation of cropland. Many areas were broken which never should have been. The homesteaders found that they could not make a living on the small acreages, due to dry conditions; so they were forced out, leaving the cropland bare and in a condition to erode. Ranges were overgrazed, resulting in low carrying capacity and subject to erosion.

People began to see benefits from conservation districts in other areas. People came in from states to the south where conservation districts had operated for years. These people began the movement to establish a conservation district in Stanley County. Several meetings were held in 1953 and petitions requesting a hearing were signed and the hearing was held. The referendum was conducted in 1954, resulting in a favorable vote of 299 to 49.

Louis Kirkpatrick (Hayes), and William Eldridge (Pierre), were the two supervisors appointed by the State Committee to complete the organization of the conservation district. The first board of supervisors consisted of Chairman Louis Kirkpatrick; Treasurer Willard Eldridge; William Biermann (Midland); Mac Walters (Pierre); and Dayton Chisholm (Fort Pierre). They prepared their program and plan of work and were ready to start operations.

They named the problems facing the Conservation District as the lack of stock water resources, wind and water erosion, and very few trees and windbreaks.

They proposed to meet these problems by establishing such practices as building farm ponds, digging wells (mostly artesian), developing springs, laying pipelines for better distribution of stock water, the use of stubble mulch, contouring and strip cropping, terracing sloping lands, and building waterways.

The following are the most prevalent practices applied in Stanley County during 1968:

- Non-commercial recreational developments -- 5
- Commercial recreational developments -- 1
- Farm ponds -- 123
- Pasture and hayland planting -- 441 ac
- Stockwater pipeline -- 65,596 ft

Range seeding -- 150 ac  
Artesian wells -- 2  
Farmstead feedlot windbreaks, tree plantings - 59.9 ac  
Grade stabilization structures -- 2  
Grassed waterways -- 48.6 ac  
Stubble mulching -- 491 ac  
Cropland to grassland -- 161.6 ac

The following served as supervisors for the number of years indicated, and all served as chairman of the board of supervisors: Louis Kirkpatrick (Hayes, 16yrs), Willard Eldridge (Pierre, 11 yrs), William Bierman (Midland, 15 yrs), Dayton Chisolm (Fort Pierre, 15 yrs), Mac Walters (Pierre, 6 yrs), Paul Weber (Fort Pierre, 9 yrs), and DuWayne Slaathaug (Fort Pierre, 6 yrs).

The 1969 supervisors were Chair Paul Weber, Vice Chair Louis Kirkpatrick, Treasurer DuWayne Slaathaug, Supervisor William Biermann, and Supervisor Dayton Chisholm.

Update provided in 2012:

During the 1970's the following individuals served as supervisors to the Stanley County Conservation District at one time or another; D. A. Slaathaug, Paul Webber, Marvin Olson, Delwin Jensen, Richard Gould, Raymond Livermore, Dan Jones Louis Caldwell, Larry McQuiston, and Jeff Mortenson, .

Through the years, (1980's through 2011) Brent Pries was the only conservation district manager to be employed full time. Kendall Newling, Jerry Thelen, Paul Ingel and Jim Lawhon were employed as technicians and coordinators for water quality projects.

Administrative Secretaries were shared with Hughes County Conservation District. Betty Hunt, Candy Scheibe, Patricia Holso, Sandra Moos, Vivian Jackson, Alberta Olson, Sherri Cass, and Shelly O'Daniel all held the administrative secretary position starting in the 1970s through 2011.

The board was involved in Soil Stewardship Week. Local churches were supplied applicable material by the Stanley County Conservation District. They also assisted the Stanley County Commissioners in work to accelerate the Soil Survey, aided with the development of the GPCP Docket, and worked to develop and adopt the Erosion and Sedimentation Standards for land disturbing activities in Stanley County. Producers had the chance to voice concerns on conservation programs' need and effectiveness at the Resource Conservation Act public meeting hosted by Stanley County Conservation District.

Education seemed to be a priority to the board as they helped fund different events including scholarships for producers to attend the soil and moisture clinic at SDSU and provided conservation booklets to the public. The Conservation District nominated producers for the Range Man of the Year. They also participated in the GSDA contest, nominating producers from Stanley County. Many students were funded the opportunity to participate in the South Dakota Wildlife Federation Conservation Camp, Glacial Lakes Region Youth Conservation Camp, and Youth Range Camp through the Conservation District as well.

Hughes and Stanley Conservation Districts joined to put out a newsletter each month starting in the 70s. This eventually turned into a quarterly publication that received many awards and recognitions. It is still in circulation today!

During the 1980's the following supervisors held positions on the board: D.A. Slaathaug, Louis Caldwell, Charles Wharton, Richard Hall, Jeff Mortenson, Rick Riggle, and Gaylord Norman.

In the 80s the Conservation District held informational meetings in Stanley County to deal with the Blowing Dust Act, the Fragile Lands Bill, and the Bad River Target Area. Representation at RC&D meetings became an important item to the Conservation District. They even helped sponsor Fragile Rangeland studies through the North Central RC&D and the Conservation Commission. The CD helped establish guidelines for Tree Shelterbelt Tax Exemption. They also became a member of the South Dakota No-Till Association.

The Stanley County Board of Supervisors throughout the 1990s included: Rick Riggle, Clint Caldwell, Don Sandal, Rex Haskins, Gaylord Norman, Maxwell Finke, and Bob Stoesser.

Stanley County joined the Society for Range Management in 1990. Road signs advertising the Stanley County Conservation District and the Bad River Water Quality Project were put up. Some tree plantings and conservation camps were put on in conjunction with the High Plains Wildlife Association as well. A tree planting project was undertaken by Stanley CD for LaFramboise Island and an informational seminar was put on for the Kirley Bootstraps project.

Stanley Conservation District helped cost share construction and renovations of ponds and riparian sites within the county, and was used as an avenue to locate and disburse funding for ponds and their repair both were through an agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. A variance was also requested and received from conservation compliance provisions due to weather conditions. Another project completed by the Conservation District was the Fragile Lands Conversion project which came before CRP was offered. FLC had the same goal along with many of the same 'rules' of CRP.

Stanley Conservation District helped sponsor the Water Festival. The festival consists of 4<sup>th</sup> graders from central South Dakota schools. The program teaches kids the importance of soils and water.

The Bad River National Monitoring Water Quality Project was taken on by the Stanley Conservation District. There were three phases of this project. Phase one included monitoring (watershed sediment and vegetation cover), phase two was partial implementation, and phase three was full implementation of this water quality project. Two other creeks were included in this project; they include Ash Creek and Powell Creek. On a smaller scale, Stanley County did the same conservation practices and water quality monitoring on Foster Creek that they did for the Bad River Water Quality Project.

During the 2000's Clint Caldwell, Don Sandal, Gaylord Norman, Bob Stoesser, Rex Haskins, Rick Hall, and Carson Carlisle served on the board of supervisors at one point in time.

Stanley County Conservation District planted 301.8 acres which includes replants into existing shelterbelts on their peak year. The Conservation District also rented their drills and aerator out to landowners, participated in NACD poster contest, Arbor Day Essay Contest, and the Resource Conservation Speech Contest.

Supervisors that held terms in 2010 and 2011 include Bob Stoesser, Carson Carlisle, Gaylord Norman, Don Sandal, and Rick Hall.