

## Ziebach County Conservation District (No. 60)

History from 1969 publication:

Ziebach County is located in northwest South Dakota, with the Cheyenne River forming the south border, Corson County on the north, and Dewey and Meade Counties on the east and west. The north and south portions are in the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation. The county was organized in 1911 following the influx of white settlers who came with the railroad in 1910.

The north part of the county drains into the Moreau River through Thunder Butte and two other creeks, while most of the south part of the county drains into the Cheyenne River through Cherry Creek and Snake and two or three smaller creeks.

The topography of the area ranges from steep to undulating to rolling, and with the surface drainage ranging from excessive to moderate. The soils also have a wide variation ranging from clays, clay loams, loams and sandy loams. Most of the area is best suited for ranching, with the less rolling areas suitable for cash grain farming, provided attention is given to the conservation of moisture and to the maintenance of organic matter in the soil and fertility.

The one thing that created interest in getting the rest of Ziebach County in a conservation district was the fact that a part of the county was already in the Tri-County District, and the people saw the help that the district was receiving with their problems. They felt that more could be done with their problems if they were in a district. Joe Heimer was the best salesman for the district.

And so meetings were set in the winters of both 1951 and 1952 to explain the organization and operation of a soil conservation district, but with poor attendance because of stormy weather. And so in 1953, letters, news stories, bulletins, meetings and other informational media were used to acquaint the people with the program. This resulted in the circulation of petitions for a hearing, which was held in October. Those attending the hearing asked for a chance to vote on the matter. The referendum was held in December 1953, with 154 people voting 85 percent favorable.

As soon as possible thereafter, the people chose their supervisors, namely: Fred Hunter, Eagle Butte, Chairman; Joseph Gebhart, Coal Springs, Vice-Chairman; Ole Dragseth, Isabel, Treasurer; Frank Miller, Isabel; and Michael Schatz, Eagle Butte.

The supervisors then met, elected their officers, prepared and signed the necessary agreements with cooperating agencies and were ready to go to work.

They named the problems confronting the district as:

- Tree planting;
- Wind and water erosion;
- Range and pasture overgrazed;
- Water not well distributed over the range.

They proposed to meet these problems by using the following methods:

- By encouraging the use of conservation practices to control wind and water erosion;
- Proper range management;
- Stubble mulch farming;
- Dams and wells for better distribution of grazing.

This table shows the district accomplishments by the close of 1967:

|                                   |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Conservation cropping system      | 2,559 acres  |
| Contour farming                   | 7,531 acres  |
| Farm ponds                        | 68           |
| Shelterbelts                      | 39 acres     |
| Fish pond stocking                | 2            |
| Grassed waterways                 | 123 acres    |
| Pasture and hay land management   | 8,500 acres  |
| Pipelines                         | 1,150 feet   |
| Range proper use                  | 90,250 acres |
| Stubble mulch                     | 2,763 acres  |
| Terraces                          | 90,253 feet  |
| Water spreading ditches and dikes | 75 acres     |
| Strip cropping                    | 832 acres    |
| Range wells                       | 5 wells      |
| Cross fencing                     | 5,700 acres  |
| Weed control                      | 218 acres    |
| Water diversion structures        | 1            |
| Erosion control dams              | 2            |
| Wildlife food plot                | 26 acres     |
| Fencing wildlife area             | 1            |
| Range seeding                     | 370 acres    |
| Pasture plantings                 | 1,490 acres  |

Other activities in which the district participated are:

- The GSDA Soil and Moisture Conservation Program;
- Sponsor Soil Stewardship Week;
- Assist 4-H Clubs in their soil conservation activities;
- Conduct two range tours.

Other operators who have served as supervisors are: Robert Gebhart; Charles Capp; L.E. Woodard; Frank Parker; Archie McLellan; and Joe Heimer.

The 1969 supervisors were: Ole Dragseth, Isabel, Chairman; Lawrence E. Woodward, Dupree, Vice-Chairman; Neil Vollmer, Dupree, Secretary; Robert Gebhart, Glad Valley, Treasurer; Frank Parker, Dupree, Supervisor; and Delbert Miller, Dupree, Supervisor.

Updated information provided in 2012:

#### **Former Board Members**

Robert Gebhart, Ole Drageset, Lawrence Woodward, Delbert Miller, Fred Hunter, Joseph Gebhart, Frank Miller, Michael Schatz, Charles Capp, Frank Parker, Archie McLellan, Joe Heimer, Neil Vollmer, Donno Capp, Maurice Lemke, James Carmichael, Clifford Anderson, Gordon Wince, Jim Frame, Perry DePoy, Bernard Beer, Jake Schauer, Jay Till

#### **Current Board Members**

Ronald Linn, Rod Schad, Dale Johnson, Keith Dorsey, Ray Lenk