

## **Douglas County Conservation District (No. 72)**

Douglas County has a total area of 277,741 acres or 434.8 square miles. Armour is the county seat and agriculture is the basic industry in the county with approximately 268,257 acres used for agriculture production.

History from 1969 publication:

Douglas County is located in the southern part of South Dakota, the second county north from the Nebraska line and fourth county east from the Iowa line. The county was created in 1873 and organized in 1880 through a faked petition, and was officially organized in 1882. A number of Holland farmers settled in the west part of the county: German families in the east and north-east. Many of the homesteaders came from Iowa, Indiana, and Wisconsin in 1882, and by 1885 nearly all of the land had been taken.

The drainage of Douglas County is into the Missouri River through the Choteau and Platte Creeks and their tributaries. The topography is mostly undulating to gently undulating and moderately well drained, except in some areas where hardpan spots occur. The soils are derived from glacial material and are mostly silt loams and silty clay loams. The soils are suitable for general farming with the use of grain and cultivated crop, along with livestock production. The soils do need to be protected by the use of good soil and water conservation practices, along with the maintenance of the organic matter supply and fertility.

Early settlers found deep, dark and fertile soil, covered with lush growth of good grasses and abundant water from several creeks and springs well scattered over the area. The settlers immediately went into grain farming. That is an important type of land use today.

A group of farmers became interested in securing the assistance provided by a Soil Conservation District, but only a few appeared to be interested. And so a group in Garfield Township decided to establish a conservation district in the township. The hearing was held on February 25, 1965 and the referendum on March 22 with a favorable vote of 56 to 5. Later in the same year, East Choteau and Belmont townships were added by petition. The remaining unorganized areas joined the Conservation District and by February 1, 1968, the Conservation District included the entire County.

When the Conservation District was first organized, it was given the name of Choteau Creek Conservation District. Then in 1968, when the remainder of the county was added to the Conservation District the name was officially changed to the Douglas Conservation District.

The original supervisors were: Ray Schrank, Corsica, Chairman; Lyle Gardeman, Corsica, Vice Chairman; Lee Goddickson, Corsica, Treasurer; Abe Brink, Corsica, member; Marvin Olawsky, Armour, member; Norman Telkamp, Armour County Agent, Secretary; and Robert Hegdahl, Lake Andes, acting county agent.

The supervisors prepared and signed the necessary agreements and prepared their program and plan of work, and set forth the problems facing the Conservation District and what practices they proposed to meet these problems. Then in 1967, the supervisors requested to become a part of the Resource Conservation and Development Project.

The supervisors found their greatest handicap at first was that only a small area was included in the Conservation District –that did not provide much justification for help. Soon they were able to get help from the Conservation District office at Lake Andes, the Soil Conservation Service,

Extension Service, the County A.S.C.S Office, Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, Fort Randall Conservancy Sub-District, F.H.A and many others. Much progress has been made since the entire county became a part of the Conservation District and there was ample justification for assigning assistance to the Conservation District. Early in 1968, the Supervisors requested and Conservation District was approved for the Great Plains Conservation Program.

The problems facing the Conservation District as the Supervisors saw them were the need for: Wind strip cropping, Contour strip cropping, Conservation cropping systems, Terracing, Waterways, Proper range use, Pasture seeding, Range seeding, Stockwater developments, Farmstead windbreaks, Noxious weed control and Recreation and wildlife

The following men have served as Supervisors of the Douglas County Conservation District: Ray Shrank, Corsica; Lyle Gardeman, Corsica; Lee Goddickson, Corsica; Abe Brink, Corsica; Marvin Olawsky, Armour; Arie (Bud) Van Zee, Corsica; and Carl Gunnare, Delmont.

The 1969 Supervisors were: Lyle Gardeman, Corsica, Chairman; Marvin Olawsky, Corsica, Vice-Chairman; Lee Goddickson, Corsica, Treasurer; Gottlieb Wenzel, Delmont, Supervisor; Bud Van Zee, Corsica, Supervisor; Carl Gunnare, Delmont, Supervisor; and Norman Telkamp, Armour, County Agent, Secretary.

SCS Technicians who have assisted the Conservation District include: Lloyd M. Haisch, Work Unit Conservationist; Lyle Laberee; Cecil Sealey; Larry Kobringer; and Dave Konechne. Men from the County ASC Committee who have also assisted the Conservation District include: Harold Baldt, Platte, Chairman; Alois Nolz, Parkston, Committee member; John Teeslink Corsica, Committee member and Emil Baier, Delmont, Office Manager.

Updated information provided in 2012:

Many changes in programs, personnel, population and farming practices happened since 1969!

Supervisors serving on the Boards include with years: Lyle Gardeman, Corsica, 1965-1976 and 1989-1992; Ray Schrank, 1976-1980; Gottlieb Wenzel, Delmont, 1965-1970; Lee Goddickson, Corsica, 1965-1981; Arie Van Zee Corsica; Marvin Olawsky, Armour, 1965-1974; Carl Gunnare, Delmont, 1967-1978; Donald Walz, Armour, 1971-1976; Dennis Gerlach, Corsica, 1975-1996; Dirk Overweg, Corsica, 1977-1988; Kenneth Hozeng, Armour, 1977-1980; Norman Bietz, Delmont, 1979-1998; Vern Goehring, Delmont, 1981-1988; Wayne Bok, Geddes, 1982-1988; Kenneth Vanden Hoek, New Holland, 1988-1996; John Fink, Delmont, 1989-1992; Joe Brenner, Delmont, 1993-1999; Alton Goehring, Delmont, 1993-1996; Elmer Goehring, Delmont, 1997-2005; Floyd Muntefering, Parkston, 1997-1999; Richard Gunnare, Delmont, 1997-1999; David Hartmann, Armour, 1999-2010; Herman Fink, Delmont, 1999-2009; and Bob Holleman, New Holland, 2004-2010.

Current Board Supervisors and year started are; Ron Vanden Berge, Corsica, 1999; Steve Lau, Delmont, 2006; Morris Wegehaupt, Dimock, 2009; Julie Feenstra, Corsica, 2010; and Terry Van Zee, New Holland, 2011.

The Conservation District works with many entities and has a Memorandum of Understanding agreement with the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Services.

Local Work Group meetings have been held annually to identify the conservation needs in Douglas County. The following are the needs in 2011:

### CROPLAND

- 1) Soil erosion: Classic and Ephemeral Gullies
- 2) Soil Condition: Contaminants-Salts and Other Chemicals
- 3) Soil Condition: Organic Matter Depletion
- 4) Water Quantity: Excessive Runoff, Flooding, or Ponding
- 5) Water Quality: Excessive Nutrients and Organics

### GRAZINGLAND

- 1) Need of Incentive to keep pastureland in grass, SD is taxed based on soil whether in grass or crop, thus leading to more breaking of grass into crop \*\*this is included in here to make more aware of what may happen if the taxing system does not change soon
- 2) Domestic Animals: Inadequate Stock Water
- 3) Plant Condition: Productivity Health and Vigor
- 4) Plant Condition: Forage Quality and Palatability
- 5) Plant Condition: Noxious and Invasive Plants

### HEADQUARTERS

- 1) Domestic Animals: Inadequate Shelter
- 2) Inefficient Energy Use: Equipment & Facilities
- 3) Soil Erosion: Wind: Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation; Field Border
- 4) Domestic Animals: Inadequate Stock Water
- 5) Water Quality: Excessive Nutrients and Organics

The Conservation District's funding comes from services offered and Douglas County gives an amount of funding in promoting our conservation duties. The Conservation District continually tries and has received grants to help with this effort. The funding is used to promote and educate conservation programs, promote educational activities and continue the effort on leaving abundant resources for following generations in Douglas County.

Tree planting is our most popular program. Since 1961 1,343,238 trees have been planted. This breaks down into 157.6 miles of field windbreaks, 693.0 acres of field windbreaks, 1,598.8 acres of farmstead/ livestock windbreaks; 169.2 renovation plantings, 281.5 wildlife plantings, 404.1 other plantings. For a total of 3,154.5 acres of trees with 1,571 farms planted. Many of the earlier plantings are in need of renovation or no longer exist.

The Vision and Mission Statement for Douglas County Conservation District is the following: The Douglas County Conservation District will promote erosion control, promote good water quality, promote pesticide management, promote proper grazing management on range and pasture land, promote proper treatment of all soils within capabilities, promote management of animal waste phosphorus, nutrient management and land applications, and promote health and safety and general welfare of the people.

Our mission is to work with producers and landowners of Douglas County on an equal basis to promote animal nutrient management, improve cropland and residue management, improve water quality and development, grassland management, buffer strips, plan and plant new shelterbelts, reduce the water and wind erosion, and conserve our natural resources.

The Douglas County Conservation District will encourage conservation on the land with the assistance of the Conservation Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and Living Snow Fence Program, working with federal and local agencies, and promotion of a local assistance program sponsored by the Conservation District.