

Gregory County Conservation District (No. 22)

History from 1969 publication:

The Conservation District comprises all of Gregory County, which is situated in the south central part of the state, and was Indian country until 1904 when it was opened for settlement. Before this, the land was undisturbed by the plow; after settlement, the sod was rapidly broken out and a diversified farming system established. Most of the rough land was left in grass and used for grazing. Most of the drainage of the Conservation District is to the southeast and east through the Whetstone and Ponca Creeks. The northern part drains to the north through Bull Creek.

The topography of the area is generally undulating to steeply rolling. The steep land is generally along the Missouri River and the creeks. Most of the soils of the northern part of the county are a grayish brown clay and are suitable for general farming and livestock production. The soils of the south then gradually change to a loamy and sandy soil with high fertility and are suitable for general farming, but badly need moisture conservation and protection against wind erosion hazards.

The original settlers found an abundance of good grass, good soil, natural springs and streams. The grassland was converted into cropland without the knowledge that cropland rotation and cover was important. The quality of the soil suffered. A rich countryside was depleted, causing a loss of prosperity and a loss of people.

As a result of the conditions brought on by the dry 30's, the people realized that they must do something. They started to hold meetings and talk about not only the problems, but what they could do and where they could go for help. Outside people were called in to help them. These people gave experiences of other areas and suggested actions that might be taken, and explained the procedures necessary in order to receive the needed help to protect their land. A group of seven was set up to start the ball rolling, consisting of: Nobel Inglett, Lucas; Ernest Leonard, Lucas; G.B. Cool, Lucas; Orville Stinton, Lucas; George H. Harding, Lucas; Ed Sperl, Burke; and Adolph Brunz, Gregory.

These men starting the ball rolling, decided what they would do, and asked other men to assist, including Ed Bailey, Fred Deffenbaugh, Delbert Drey, Jay Myers, Ed Sperl, and Paul Voelzke. These men spread the information and circulated the petition resulting in a favorable hearing and referendum in November 1941, with very little opposition.

The first board of supervisors prepared a Conservation District program and specified the following problems facing the Conservation District: Soil blowing without grass cover and stubble mulching; lack of water and ponds in necessary locations; lack of field shelter belts and farmstead windbreaks; and value of terracing and contour not accepted or unknown to farmers. To help meet these problems, the Conservation District and others helped the farmers to establish grasses. The farmers also initiated stubble mulching and proved its value to others.

Encouragement from the Soil Conservation District, technical help, government cost sharing and information has caused an increase in earth work, which directly benefits the community and provides an additional demand for local contractors.

The Conservation District's tree handling has been convenient to farmers. The value of trees has always been known to farmers and the Conservation District has put the trees within the reach of all. Single and double row field windbreaks are now being planted.

Terracing is gaining acceptance more slowly than the obviously beneficial practices. However, experience shows that the benefits are great. The farmers using terraces are the best salesmen for the practice. The conservation practices established changed the landscape from broad, unprotected fields to stubble mulched, strip cropped, and rotated fields with more grass and legumes.

The original Gregory Soil and Water Conservation District covered 87,066 acres. In 1944, an addition of 360,436 acres was made. In 1947, the remaining 177,235 acres were included. It then covered the entire county.

The supervisors and Soil Conservation Service personal have been: 1941 board of supervisors – Noble Inglett, chairman; G.B. Cool, vice chairman; Ernest Leonard; Orville Stinton; George Harding; W.S. Rasmussen, secretary; and Leslie E. Johnson, Work Unit Conservationist.

1941-November 3rd – Beginning of Conservation District Referendum.

1942-Myron Barber was secretary.

1943-Purchased 700 trees for resale, Gully Control program launched.

1944-Ed Sperl and Adolph Brunz joined the board. Weed ring formed in Jones Twp. for creeping jenny control.

1945-Howard Brown acted as secretary. First tube in dam for flood control.

1946-Adolph Brunz became vice chair, Hagen Kalsey was secretary. First terraces installed.

1947-Craig Lerud was secretary. 7000 trees planted.

1948-J.S. Meyers and Fred Deffenbaugh became new members. 2400 acres contouring; 20 miles of terracing; 100 acres grass waterways

1949-Delbert Drey and Ed Bailey became new members; Adolph Brunz was elected chair, J.S. Meyers vice chair, Ray Rezac secretary. Mike Craig was Work Unit Conservationist.

1950-Gregory County held the State Terracing Contest in the fall of 1950.

1951-Wilmer Jones and Ray Gilbert became assistant supervisors.

1952-Ray McFayden and Lindgren became assistant supervisors. Mike Craig, WUC, left and Jessie Roberts was acting WUC.

1953-Dale Hanson became a supervisor and Fred Deffenbaugh an assistant supervisor.

1954-Wilmer Jones was made chairman.

1956-Harvey Glover became secretary

1957-Allan Kime, Harold Robertson, Andy Carlsen, and Paul Voelzke were interviewed as assistant supervisors. Delbert Drey was appointed treasurer. Ed Sperl joined the board as an assistant supervisor.

1958-Dale Hanson resigned from the board and Andy Carlsen took his place on the board.

Adolph Brunz was appointed treasurer, Curley Haisch was made assistant supervisor. Howard Peterson came on the board as assistant supervisor.

1959-Allen Kime became a regular supervisor, filling the vacancy of Wilber Jones, deceased.

1960-Noel Spicknall was an assistant supervisor. Earl Zutz became the Work Unit Conservationist. Ed Bailey was chairman. Jim Blackketter became secretary.

1961-Allen Kime was made vice chairman.

1962-Andy Carlsen was made vice chairman.

1963-Adolph Brunz, treasurer, was to receive \$50 a year salary.

1964-Shirley Armfield became the first full-time secretary.

1965-Robert Swenson became the new Work Unit Conservationist.

1966-Ed Artz became the Work Unit Conservationist. Berniece Pravecek became the second office secretary, replacing Shirley Armfield. Tom Strachen was hired by the Conservation District to publish the newsletter.

1967-Allen Kime was again appointed vice chairman.

1968-Norma Sperl & Karen King were the secretaries replacing Berniece Pravecek.
1969-The 1969 supervisors were: Earl Drey, Herrick, chairman; Jim Pochop, Gregory, vice chairman; Adolph Bruns, Gregory, treasurer; Paul Voelzke, Gregory; Hollis Haisch Bonesteel; assistant supervisors: Ed Bailey, Lucas; Claude Harrison, Lucas; Delbert Drey, Herrick; Andrew Carlson, Fairfax; Earl Widden, Bonesteel; and Leroy Lamp, Gregory, secretary (county agent). Sandra Odenbach was hired as administrative secretary. The Soil Conservation Service personnel were Ed Artz, Work Unit Conservationist, and Jerold Noelle, Technician.



Wind erosion in Gregory County ("before"& same farm "after" pictures)

Updated information provided in 2012:

1970-First newsletter published by the Gregory Times Advocate. 1st Fifth grade poster contest. Governor Farrar attended the Conservation picnic.
1971-Typewriter donated to the Conservation District by Burke State Bank. Fire at the Courthouse, the Conservation District lost some inventory.
1972-Purchased a new JD Tractor for \$3600.00. Delbert Drey, supervisor, collected a \$2400.00 donation toward this tractor. Sherry Kahler was hired as Conservation District secretary replacing Sandra Odenbach.
1973-Culverts purchased to sell to famers.
1974-New JD 14' drill bought by the Conservation District through revenue sharing funds. Dorothy Smizer was hired as Conservation District secretary replacing Sherry Kahler
1975-Richard Bailey of Dallas was hired as the first Conservation District manager. 50% of his wages were paid by the county and 50% were paid by a grant.
1976-226 acres of trees were planted. Soil Survey began in Gregory County. Richard Bailey was hired as Conservation District manager.
1977-Ernie Vomacka built a new tree planter. The Conservation District acquired a 4110 Ford Tractor through the Old West Regional Commission, of Yankton. Clean tree contest held. 170 acres of trees planted.
1978-Bought a new compressor for the tree cooler. Henry Kortmeyer was hired as the Conservation District manager. 126 acres of trees planted.
1979-Stubble mulch demonstration held. 170 acres of trees planted.
1980-Tour of RC&D projects. Kerry Stiner was hired as District Conservationist. 200 acres of trees planted.
1981-Soil Survey completed. 190 acres of trees planted.
1982-Purchased a Tye drill. 117 acres of trees planted.
1983-Purchased railroad property from Nile Purvis. 123 acres of trees planted.
1984-Roy Hasche was hired as the Conservation District manager. Received a congratulations letter from the Secretary of Ag for planting the most trees in the state. Planted 2 spruce trees at

the Burke City Park entrance to honor Fred Klein, Henry Kortmeyer, and Bob Hoar. 142 acres of trees planted.

1985-Soil Survey book distribution meeting held. 113 acres of trees planted.

1986-1st, 2nd and 3rd Conservation Reserve Program sign-ups. \$500 memorial given to the Conservation District by the family of Ed J. Sperl. 95 acres of trees planted.

1987-4th and 5th Conservation Reserve Program sign-ups. 91 acres of trees planted.

1988-6th and 7th Conservation Reserve Program sign-up. The Conservation District office moves from the courthouse to the Masonic building on Main Street. 110 acres of trees planted.

1989-Assisted DW&NR with Sediment Survey on the Burke Lake Watershed. 8th and 9th Conservation Reserve Program sign-up. The Conservation District received a \$4000 SD Wildlife Grant. Hosted the District 29 legislative meeting. 218 acres of trees planted.

1990-First phase of the Gregory wetland inventory completed. Conservation District purchased its first computer. Weed barrier fabric first used in the Conservation District. First Youth Range Day Camp held. 179 acres of trees planted.

1991-50th Anniversary Banquet held in conjunction with the awards banquet. 145 acres of trees planted.

1992-David Gnirk won the Area II Excellent in Grazing Management Award.

1993-No Wives Ranch won the State Izaak Walton Award. The Conservation District donated \$400 to the SDACD Endowment fund in honor of Andy Carlson for his 36 years as a supervisor and Curley Haisch for his 35 years as a supervisor.

1994-Dwayne Breyer, Rangeland Specialist, came to Burke to work on the Bootstraps Program. 119 acres of trees planted.

1995-The Governor proclaimed January 22, 1995 as "Appreciation Day" for Andrew Carlson's continued service of 37 years to the board and Curley Haisch's retirement from the board after 36 years. 50 acres of trees planted due to a very wet year, could only plant half of the trees planned.

1996-The Conservation District office moved from the Masonic building to the ASCS office. The Conservation District completed the Bootstraps Grant. The Bull Creek, Ponca Creek and Range & Wildlife Grants are all in process. 160 acres of trees planted.

1997-185 acres of trees planted.

1998-Ted Braun was hired as the Conservation District manager replacing Roy Hasche. 170 acres of trees planted.

1999-The Conservation District purchased a new computer.

2000-114 acres of trees were planted.

2001-Built a new tree shed and cooler. Planted a tree test plot that consists of 29 different species of trees and shrub. The plot is located by the gate at the Gregory County Landfill. Dorothy Smizer retires after 28 years as Conservation District secretary. Tina Schonebaum was hired as Conservation District secretary. 240 acres of trees planted and 72 miles of fabric laid.

2002-Co-sponsored the Tri-County Ranchers Workshop. 309 acres of trees planted and 119 miles of fabric laid.

2003-Richard Rubel of Dallas was elected as Prairie Area Director for the SDACD. He is also a supervisor for the Gregory County CD. 196 acres of trees planted.

2004-Conservation District held a small sprayer calibration workshop. 113 acres of trees planted and 175,882 ft. of fabric laid.

2005-Conservation District started a \$1000 Scholarship. 119 acres of trees planted and 144,000 ft. of fabric laid.

2006-109 acres of tree planted and 239,000 ft. of



fabric laid.

2007-65 acres of trees planted and 116,740 ft. of fabric laid. Sold 26,000 hand plant trees.

Heather Jons of Bonesteel was the first scholarship recipient. Completed the Gregory County Conservation District 65th Anniversary Book.

2008-Chelsea Fuhrer was the recipient of the \$1000 scholarship. Planted 64 acres of trees and laid 129,698 ft. of fabric. Sold 15,900 hand plant trees

2009-Brand Heyden was the recipient of the \$1000 scholarship. Planted 66 acres of trees and laid 179,245 ft. of fabric. Sold 16,264 hand plant trees.

2010-Sponsored the 1st Annual Women in Ag Day held in Burke. Scott Stukel was the recipient of the \$1000 scholarship Ted Braun received the State Conservation District Employee Award. Richard Rubel was elected as Vice Chairman for SDACD Planted 37 acres of trees and laid 105,000 ft. of fabric. Sold 15,480 hand plant trees

2011-Sponsored the 2nd Annual Women in Ag Day. Mike Braun was the recipient of the \$1000 scholarship. Planted 69 acres of trees and laid 174,679 ft. of fabric. Sold 12,000 hand plant trees.

Conservation District Supervisors & Assistant Supervisors 1941 – 2011

Noble Inglett, Lucas	1941-1949	Jim Pochop, Gregory	1969-1972
G.B Cool, Lucas	1941-1943	Earl Whidden, Bonesteel	1969-1990
Ernest Leonard, Lucas	1941-1949	Ronald Kyburz, Gregory	1973-1996
Orville Stinton, Lucas	1941-1943	Claude Harrison, Lucas	1969-1976
George Harding, Burke	1941-1948	Leroy Neuharth, Burke	1972-1977
Ed J. Sperl, Burke	1941-1968	David Jacobsen, Gregory	1973-1997
Adolph Brunz, Burke	1944-1971	Les Keever, Lucas	1974-1998
Fred Deffenbaugh, Herrick	1948-1953	Larry Roggow, Burke	1976-2003
J.S. Meyers, Dallas	1948-1957	Frank Stukel, Gregory	1977-1991
Ed Bailey, Lucas	1949-1972	Jim Lubbers, Burke	1977-1983
Delbert Drey, Herrick	1949-1973	Richard Rubel, Dallas	1983-Present
Rhuben Lindgren, Fairfax	1951-1952	David Gnirk, Burke	1991-2006
Ray McFayden, Gregory	1951-1952	Leroy Lamp, Burke	1991-1992
Ray Gilbert, Gregory	1951-1952	Kay Don Jons, Bonesteel	1992-Present
H. Jewell, Dallas	1951-1952	Jim Krier, Herrick	1995-Present
Wilmer Jones, Burke	1951-1959	Dale Pastian, Gregory	1996-2004
Fred Deffenbaugh, Herrick	1953-1955	Gregg Lundberg, Gregory	1997-Present
Dale Hanson, Gregory	1953-1958	Joel Drey, Herrick	1997-2006
Allan Kime, Burke	1957-1968	Todd Hoffman, Fairfax	1998-Present
Harold Robertson, Gregory	1957-1969	David Jones, Burke	1999-Present
Paul Volske, Gregory	1957-1977	Tim Peppel, St. Charles	2003-Present
Andrew Carlson, Fairfax	1957-1998	OB Steffen, Burke	2004-Present
Noel Spicknall, Gregory	1960-1961	Justin Keegan, Gregory	2006-Present
Hollis Haisch, Bonesteel	1960-1994	Myron Johnson, Burke	2007-Present
Earl Drey, Herrick	1968-1996		

Conservation District Managers include Richared Bailey, Henry Kortmeyer, Roy Hasche and Ted Braun. Conservation District Secretaries include Shirley Armfield, Berniece Pravacek, Norma Sperl, Karen King, Sandra Odenbach, Sherry Kahler, Dorothy Smizer, and Tina Schonebaum.

SCS Employees include Leslie E Johnson, Harold Stoltenburg, Jessie Roberts, Ralph Stensland, Mike Craig, Wayne Noble, Earl Zutz, Calvin Miller, Jerold Noelle, Kerry Stiner, Robert Swenson, and Edwin Artz.