

DOUGLAS COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT TIMELINE

67 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

1935- Through the efforts of Hugh Hammond Bennet, a soil scientist from North Carolina, Congress founded the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in the U.S. Department of Agriculture on April 27, 1935.

1945- The Douglas County Conservation District (DCCD) was formed by farmers and landowners at referendum meetings held on August 17-20, 1945. Most people in the District are conscious of the seriousness of the erosion problems in Douglas County.

1946- The DCCD requested technical assistance from the USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS). A SCS technician was assigned to the district to assist with conservation activities.

1947- It is believed by many farmers that an improved crop rotation, a part of every Farm Plan, has materially increased organic matter in nearly all types of soil. Some farmers feel strongly that added organic matter helped stave off ill effects of the late drought of 1947.

1948- Major problems of the district were the establishment of good waterways for terrace outlets and the need for establishing approved crop rotation systems. There were over 415 completed Farm Conservation Plans.

1949- The Soil Conservation Service contributed the major service on the job with the technical service in planning and layout work. The SCS furnished their own transportation, instruments, office space and work materials.

1950- Records show the farmers of the county have accomplished a great deal in soil conservation, but as one drives over the county one cannot help but notice that most of the fields are still being farmed north and south or east and west regardless of the slope of the land. The lack of good pastures is very noticeable.

1951- Conservation progress was not made as expected because of excessive rain (on average it rained every 3rd day). Some valuable river bottom land was covered with as much as 6 feet of coarse sand.

1952- The Soil Testing Laboratory set up by the Extension Service has proven valuable to the farmers. Much time and effort has been spent in rehabilitating farm homes and farm lands which were damaged in the 1951 flood. Deep plowing has proved quite satisfactory, where valuable farm land was buried with sand.

1953- Douglas County experienced one of the driest years in its history. More ponds have been built or rebuilt than in any previous year. The SCS supplied one work unit conservationist, one farm planner and one conservation aid. The district has no employees.

1954- This dry summer, grasshoppers and army worms were hard on the local corn crop; many fields were disked or plowed under and never harvested in any way as there was nothing to be harvested.

1955- District Board member Emil Heck was in Washington, DC before the Senate and House Committees testifying on behalf of flood control. The only source of income that the district has is from applications for membership in the district. Each new applicant pays \$3.00.

1956- A good pond program in which the farmer can afford to participate is needed. It may be cheaper to impound water in large reservoirs than in farm ponds, but water in farm ponds is worth much more to our economy than water in large reservoirs.

1957- The highlight of the district education activities for the year was a tour and program for school teachers of the county. The group of around 100 was taken to various parts of a farm on flat bed wagons drawn by tractors.

1958- The Board of County Commissioners agreed to provide funds to pay for a part-time secretary for the office. The district has had the services of 3 people furnished by SCS.

1959- The Douglas County Agricultural Program (ACP) provided about \$70,000 cost sharing assistance for farms to establish soil and water conservation practices. A special Conservation Edition in the Journal World was published on February 10, 1959 in the local paper with many pictures and conservation articles.

1960- Soil Conservation Districts, the "Grass Roots" of the country, again feel the lack of "vitamins" for their growth: financial support. The Wakarusa Watershed is one of our major problems, to which the District is giving aid for its successful conclusion.

1961- The District has one radio broadcast each week on conservation practices. Weekly conservation articles are published in the Lawrence Journal World and the Baldwin Ledger. A special edition on conservation is published in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Conservation District.

1962- At the Bromelsick Farm, a part of the estate of the late A.H. Bromelsick that was left to the Youth of Douglas County, the Boy Scouts are being given actual practice on Conservation on their Conservation Field Day. They are making application for a pond and are planning to develop wildlife areas.

1963- The SCS made available five full time technicians and two part time technicians to assist farmers in developing and applying conservation plans. Two of the technicians were soil scientists who spend full time on the standard Soil Survey now underway in the District. The County Commissioners made \$1,000 available to the District to employ a part-time clerk.

1964- A big year for the Wakarusa Watershed. The District and SCS made tentative selection of sites for thirty flood water retarding structures in the Upper and Lower Wakarusa Watersheds. The District now receives tax money from both the county and the state.

1965- The first change of supervisors since the beginning of the District was completed with the appointment of Don Palmateer and the election of Roy Lawson as new supervisors.

1966- The Upper and Lower Wakarusa Watershed Plan was signed by the Douglas County Conservation District Board.

1967- Franklin County District Board visited the April meeting for the purpose of gaining interest with the Douglas County District Board in organizing the Tauy Creek watershed.

1968- The Soil Conservation Service in cooperation with the Conservation Needs Committee consisting of the Farmers Home Administration, the Agriculture Stabilization & Conservation Service and the Extension Service completed the Conservation Needs Inventory for Douglas County.

1969- The 23rd Annual District meeting was held January 29, 1968 at the Kansas University Student Union. The Douglas County Commissioners budgeted \$3,000 for the District with the state matching another \$3,000 for the District.

1970- The Silver Anniversary of the Douglas County Conservation District. The Annual Meeting was held January 24, 1970 at the Kansas University Student Union. Joe Adelman was the featured speaker.

1971- Radio talk shows featuring conservation topics were heard every Monday on KLWN. A total of 59 news articles were published by the Journal-World throughout the year.

1972- Ground breaking ceremony for the Clinton Reservoir was held in September. A tri-county meeting between Shawnee, Jefferson, and Douglas County was held in November to discuss mutual soil and water conservation problems.

1973- After several meetings, the KAW Valley Association was organized. This organization included the Douglas, Shawnee and Jefferson County Conservation Districts.

1974- In June, the Board sent nine telegrams to the state and national senators and representatives, Corps of Engineers and the EAP. The Board strongly protested the extended powers of the EPA and the Corps.

1975- The Douglas County Land Use Policy Statement was adopted and formally presented to the Douglas County Commissioners. The Board of Supervisors strongly felt there needed to be an official standing on the misuse of agricultural land and the logical development of Douglas County and thus protect the environment.

1976- The Douglas County Conservation District co-sponsors three organized watersheds- Upper Wakarusa, Lower Wakarusa and Tauy Creek. Approximately 65% of the county is in an organized watershed.

1977- The long awaited Douglas County Soil Survey Report was received in August. Two meetings were held to publicize the report and give instructions on its use.

1978- On August 29th the Board sponsored a tour and cookout for the 5th and 6th grade teachers of Douglas County. Each teacher received a packet with the rules for the poster, essay and limerick contest. The District received 12 essays, 55 limericks and 179 posters from seven schools that fall.

1979- The Conservation Districts first newsletter was published. Every three months the newsletter is sent to cooperators and other interested people.

1980- This year for the first time, state funds for cost-sharing were appropriated by the legislature to each county. These funds were handled through the Conservation District and amounted to \$9,500 available for Douglas County. The funds were spent on terracing projects.

1981- The District Board is working with the Douglas County Department of Public Works on the Lone Star Lake Project. This is part of the Clean Lakes Program.

1982- In September, the Board sponsored a dinner meeting for third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade teachers of Douglas County. The teachers received packets containing brochures and pamphlets on resource materials and rules for the poster, essay and limerick contest for their students. From the interest generated by the meeting, conservation slides and the conservation model farm were shown in five schools with 450 students attending.

1983- The District sponsored a conservation tour for the County Commissioners. Structural and management conservation practices were viewed and discussed. The District compiled a handbook of county natural resource data. The book is used along with county base data to make important resource management and program decisions.

1984- To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Soil & Water Conservation Movement, the District sponsored a "Run for Conservation". Over 120 individuals participated in the race. A telegram from President Ronald Reagan and a phone call from Secretary of Agriculture John Block congratulated the District on the unique event.

1985- The District recently published a cartoon booklet: "Sammy Soil Particle". The booklet is designed to educate elementary school students on the basic principles of soil and water conservation. The District assisted SCS with an experimental conservation practice: an erosion control structure lined with Enkamat.

1986- The Lone Star Lake Watershed in southwest Douglas County has been designated as a high priority agricultural non-point source water quality management project area by the EPA. The District received a Clean Lakes Fund Grant to provide costshare assistance to private landowners in the drainage area for the installation of conservation practices on cropland to reduce silt from entering Lone Star Lake.

1987- In response to the conservation provisions of the new Farm Bill with the 1985 Food Security Act, the District conducted four town meetings. One hundred farmers signed up 4,701 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

1988- The District set new policy for getting structural practices applied in a timely manner with approved costshare contracts. The District also adopted a point system to determine how high priority applications will be funded. Applications receiving the most points will be funded first.

1989- KDHE and the State Conservation Commission sponsored a water quality meeting at the Lawrence Memorial Hospital in December. Those agencies presented and explained the format required for the Clinton Lake Drainage Area Project.

1990- The District utilized the Earth Team Volunteer Program with six people assisting at the Field Office. They are involved at the local level by volunteering many hours in the office on the computer, filing and mailing activities. They also provided their expertise toward the education programs in the Lawrence and Baldwin schools.

1991- A VIP Tour was held to show the urban and county policy makers the importance of protecting our soil. A Riparian and Wetland Protection Plan has been developed. The District has enrolled in the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program, a self-guided tour where conservation practices can be discussed and viewed with a participating farmer.

1992- The District Board utilized all of the \$183,000 federal and county cost-share dollars by developing long term contracts with landowners in the Lone Star Lake Watershed. EPA has designated the Lone Star Watershed as a high priority agricultural nonpoint source water quality management area.

1993- Of the farms in Douglas County with Highly Erodible Land (HEL), eighty-three percent of the landowners have signed 1985 Food Security Act Compliance Plans. Of those plans, eighty-two percent have completed the implementation phase.

1994- The Conservation District Board administered \$68,973 through the State Water Resources Cost-Share Program. Landowners received \$25,213 from the federal cost-share program administered by the Consolidated Farm service Agency (CFSA) formerly ASCS.

1995- A budget was adopted to effectively manage the \$50,500 from the Douglas County Commissioners and \$10,000 from the State of Kansas.

1996- The Jayhawk Chapter of QU sponsored a cost-share program to seed native grass/forbs in Douglas County. QU will costshare 80% up to 20 acres for each producer. The District selected plugging abandoned water wells and illegal dump sites as two categories to develop project work plans.

1997- A regional residue conference called Ag-Vision 2000+ was sponsored by the District with over 400 people in attendance. A Rainfall Simulator was built for information and education to promote residue mgt.

1998- The District assisted the City of Lawrence on a 156 acre native grass seeding and wetland project located below Clinton Dam. The District sponsored the first Rural Home Fair at the fairgrounds.

1999- The District approved purchase of a new native grass drill. A Rural Home Fair Workshop was offered at the fairgrounds for people thinking about moving to the country. All rural living topics were covered by a variety of speakers.

2000- The District purchased prescribed burning equipment: drip torches, flappers and backpack water sprayers. The equipment will be loaned out to producers wanting to burn grassland. The Rainfall Simulator was demonstrated at the No-Till On the Plains Conference in Salina with over 1,200 producers in attendance.

2001- Over 800 4th graders attended the first annual Slice of Ag Program at the fairgrounds. The Upper Wakarusa Watershed was approved as a High Priority Watershed area in Kansas for the EQIP Program. A Woodland Direct Tree Seeding Test Project was completed on the Johanning and Faust Farms.

2002- A public hearing on the Marais des Cygnes Basin to gather public opinion, concerns and data on water quality and the future needs of this basin which covers the southern one-third of Douglas County. The Flory Farm, located south of Lawrence hosted over 400 fourth grade students for a conservation field day.

2003- The Field Office received a GPS Unit and a digital camera. The Fall School Program was held October 2 at the Mike Flory Farm. The 270 students from Baldwin, Vinland, Eudora, Quail Run, and Deerfield stopped at nine different stations that explained the importance of soil and water in our everyday lives. One county commissioner and the county administrator attended.

2004- The new USDA Service Center Building at 1217 Biltmore Drive was completed and the move was completed the week of April 5th. All new furniture was installed. One private office and ten workstations for the Conservation District and NRCS was included with this building. FSA also has a private office and three workstations in the same building.

2005- Three NRCS Student Trainees from Haskell University have worked at the Lawrence FO this year. Douglas County Commissioners approved and signed the District's 2006 budget for the requested \$73,200. Long time District Manager Vernis Flottman retired on March 4th.

2006- A new soil survey website replaced the traditional hard paper copy Soil Survey found in every county in Kansas. The District participated in the Slice of Ag Workshop at the Fairgrounds on February 20th. Forty 4th grade classes with over 856 students, along with teachers and parents attended the program.

2007- The District approved the purchase of a Kawasaki ATV 4-wheeler to be used by NRCS and District employees. York Bayer, a crop consultant from Berlin, Germany requested the District build a Rainfall Simulator and ship it in time for the Agritechnica Conference that will be held in Hanover, Germany in November 2007. Over 200,000 people were expected to attend this conference. A unit was built and UPS'd to Germany in time for the conference.

2008- The District awarded scholarships for local producers to attend the No-Till On the Plains Conference in Salina, KS. The District completed two Long Range Planning meetings to review current activities, brainstorm for new activities and set goals and objectives for the District to be more effective in future years.

2009- Yankee Tank Watershed Lake was approved for a study to determine what is needed to bring the lake up to high hazard watershed lake specifications. Eventually, the lake was approved for federal funding for the construction activities for the rehabilitation.

2010- The County Commissioners approved the Districts 2010 budget for \$84,150. Congressman Jerry Moran stopped at the John Bradley Farm in Douglas County to start his annual Kansas Conservation Tour. The District will no longer receive funding for the Buffer and NPS Coordinator Position from the State Conservation Commission; this is a \$15,000 reduction in aid. A Brush Mgt. Field day was held August 26th at Stull on the John Hasse Farm. Over 180 producers attended the workshop.

2011- The District approved the purchase of a new Great Plains No-till drill for seeding native grass/forbs. FSA announced the first Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) area. Douglas County is one of eight Kansas counties approved for the program. The District voted to disband from the MAACD Organization.

2012- A series of meetings and open forums have been held around the state to gather input for each of the challenges set forth in the national memo regarding the Field Office of the Future. The District approved funding to continue the soil testing program that provides 400 free soil tests each year to local producers. The KACD and SCC have developed 16 training modules that can be used to teach supervisors the basic operations of conservation districts.