

## SMALL WATERSHEDS IN SOUTH DAKOTA AND THE NATION

I'm happy to be back in South Dakota, and I'm honored to be asked to attend the dedication of this multi-purpose facility you call, "Pattee Number One."

--Personal reflections on 1956-60 tour of duty in South Dakota--

- (1) Old friends in the audience
- (2) Changes noted in the watershed program
- (3) etc.

You sponsors--the Pattee Watershed District, the Lincoln County Conservation District, and the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks are to be wholeheartedly commended for the cooperation you displayed and the effective manner of carrying out your operations which made the completion of this facility possible.

They tell me that this 43 foot high dam has a total flood recreation and sediment storage of 2,040 acre feet. That during the heavy snow-melt of 1969 the flood prevention features of the dam worked perfectly and that following the drawdown of floodwaters you now have a permanent recreation pool of 90 surface acres of clear water. Clear water for swimming, boating, and fishing. In addition, the picnic area, the adequate access road and parking, the boat launching ramp, and other facilities

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Material used by Norman A. Berg, Associate Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, at the Dedication of Lake Lakota, Canton, South Dakota, June 23, 1970.

provide a complete unit for the enjoyment of all who might visit here. I'm impressed with what you have done--as I'm certain are those who come and enjoy these recreational facilities.

I also want to commend the sponsors on the manner in which they have moved ahead on the entire Pattee Creek Watershed Project. Besides this facility, two other floodwater detention dams have been built. There are also four grade stabilization structures included in the project. Two have been completed and the other two (5A and 5B) are being finished now. There remains only one flood detention structure and slightly more than 1.5 miles of channel improvement, in order to have a completed project. I'm sure you'll continue your active program toward this end.

Most importantly, I want to commend you for providing a land treatment program (terracing, pasture planting, contouring, etc.) on seventy-five percent of the land needing treatment above each of the completed structures. This is good. As you know, it is the emphasis on watershed protection that sets these small watershed projects apart from other flood control and water development projects. And it is this same land treatment in small watershed projects, and in regular Conservation District programs, which reduces water pollution and enhances our environment.

Watershed treatment practices do this through the reduction of sediment in our streams and lakes; by providing trees for beauty and for wildlife; by establishing and maintaining productive pastures; and by protecting our cropland from soil erosion.

#### Further Opportunities in South Dakota

So, I say you have done a good job here in the Pattee Watershed. Several other sponsoring groups like yourselves are also doing a good job in their watershed projects. When we look at the watershed program statewide, there are still many opportunities for further watershed developments like the one you have here.

At present the SCS is completing the final stages of a River Basin Study of the Big Sioux River. This is being done in cooperation with the East Dakota Conservancy Subdistrict, the State Conservation Commission, and Water Resources Commission in South Dakota; and comparable State organizations in Iowa and Minnesota. This study will reveal the opportunities for USDA programs and projects for the conservation and development of the land and water resources in the Big Sioux Basin.

At this time it looks like there will be opportunity for 16 additional small watershed projects in the Big Sioux Basin. The first step in taking advantage of these opportunities, as with any small watershed project, is to develop local interest and local support.

If we take a wider look at the opportunities for small watershed projects, Statewide, we find from the recently completed conservation needs inventory, that there are 205 small watersheds in South Dakota that need project action.

So you can see that the opportunities remaining somewhat dwarf our accomplishments to date. This is also true on a nationwide scale.

Under Secretary J. Phil Campbell at the National Watershed Congress on June 8, in Denver, said:

"Water problems in the last analysis are watershed problems.

It is estimated that since the beginning of the Water Protection and Flood Prevention Program in upstream rural areas in 1954, projects carried out under the program have prevented \$142 million in property damages. Loss prevented in the past fiscal year alone is estimated at approximately \$40 million.

"Secretary Hardin recently called attention to the fact that siltation kept out of streams by permanent cover in the past 30 years would displace a volume of water equivalent to a 10-year supply for all U. S. households.

"This is, I think, a noteworthy record of progress.

"I happen to be one person who believes what our farmers and forest and woodland operators and the conservation-minded people in government at all levels deserve to be commended for what they have done to improve the environment during the past few decades. In fact, I have no hesitation in saying that our farmers, ranchers, and foresters as a whole have done more than any other part of our society to improve the natural environment.

"They were concerned about conservation and the wise use of natural resources long before the gentlemen of the press and other communications media learned about their importance.

"This is not to say that more does not need to be done. More must be done--and I believe agriculture and forestry will continue to lead the way. The thing is that we must get more help from other parts of American society than has been the case up to now. Improving the environment is everybody's business.

"Secretary Hardin has described the environmental role of the U. S. Department of Agriculture as follows: 'To manage the environment for the widest range of beneficial uses, without degrading it, without risk to health or safety, without loss of future productivity, and without being tyrannized by pests.'

"This, he said, requires an integrated approach to assure:

- '1. The necessities of life: Adequate food, fiber, shelter, and raw materials for industry.

'2. The safety of man: Safe and adequate water, clean air, productive and safe soil held in place, sanitation, disease and pest control, the perpetuation of basic life processes.

'3. A quality of life: Space to live, attractive surroundings, suitable habitat for plants and animals, outdoor recreation, and esthetic satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

"This is the approach employed in evolving and carrying out a watershed project.

"The development plan for any given watershed project takes into account the widest possible range of questions, the pros and cons, the goals, and the right and wrong ways of achieving those goals. Not just how water itself will be conserved, utilized and its quality improved, but decisions on the best use of land, establishment of better cover, enhancement of wildlife, recreation potentials, and economic gains in terms of rural nonfarm job opportunities in addition to the improvement of farm income.

"In some instances this requires recognition of the fact that a given project may prove harmful to certain forms of wildlife and vegetation--but recognition also that these adverse effects will be mitigated by total improvement of the watershed area.



"It may mean facing up squarely, for example, to the necessity of channeling part of a stream to end repeated flooding.

Or to clear bottom land and shift crop production to that more level acreage from hillsides where run-off and erosion will be checked by beneficial new cover. It means understanding and accepting the fact that a loss in one place will be offset by improvements in many others, resulting in a total net gain for the watershed area.

"This is the integrated approach--and it makes sense.

"...how... can we help develop the kind of environment we all seek for America.

"First, we must push ahead to complete the land treatment and structural work needed in the watersheds.

"We must recognize that in contrast with the Nation's needs and the legislative history of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, funding has been too little and too late. The President's Task Force on Rural Development has recommended, 'accelerated annual appropriations to develop more small watersheds each year and to provide adequate funds to complete the projects within the estimated work schedule. '"

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Finally, I understand that the State Planning Agency has proposed the directing of Federal assistance programs through six multi-county planning districts. I'd just like to urge that Conservation Districts, and Watershed Districts alike, develop close working relations with these planning districts when they become a reality.

Consideration of the conservation and development of our natural resources and the preservation of unique natural areas in the plans of county and multi-county districts is vital to the immediate and long-range interests of Conservation Districts. Conservation Districts have available a considerable amount of resource information (soils, plants, water, recreation, biological, which must be made available to planning agencies in order that the planning agencies can give full consideration to the conservation, development and preservation of these resources.

And, as you know, the SCS role, as always, is to assist districts in carrying out this type of activity if districts in carrying out this type of activity if districts so desire.

Let me once again thank you for the opportunity to be here--to commend you for your accomplishments, and finally, to urge you to continue and also to broaden the scope of your efforts.