

Madison County Soil Conservation District
Annual Report
1947

To: The Farmers of Madison County

The Madison County Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors submit to the farmers of the district whom they represent, the following report of 1947.

Conservation farm plans have been prepared on 708 farms, covering 108,595 acres, prior to this year. These plans called for a complete conservation program on each farm. During 1947 plans have been prepared for 134 more farms, covering 19,836 acres, bringing the total acreage planned for complete conservation to 128,451 during the past year and since the district was organized in 1941. Highly satisfactory progress has been made, we feel, toward the establishment of these practices. A list of such accomplishments for 1947 and to date will be found at the end of this report.

We wish to point out particularly what some of these figures show. Over 1500 miles of terraces have been built since 1941 – over three times the distance from the Eastern Boundary of Tennessee to the Mississippi River; 241 miles were built during 1947. There have been 582 farm ponds built, 280 during the past year, 95 of these ponds have been stocked with fish. The total surface area of water impounded by these ponds amounts to several hundred acres. This water has been held back in the hills where it can be used rather than creating flood problems further downstream.

Over 7,000 acres of wet bottom land have been properly drained. Much of this has been converted from wasteland to productive farm acreage.

While such spectacular progress has not been made in vegetative conservation practices, we feel that the 2,165 acres of sericea established in eroding lands, the 12,539 acres of winter cover sown in 1947 on cropland, and the moderate acreage of kudzu deserve special mention.

Included in the drainage figure is one group enterprise, where three landowners of the Diamond Grove Community, pooled their efforts in constructing a canal serving all three. The district supervisors wish to encourage this sort of work, particularly with regard to drainage, for we realize that drainage quite often can be done satisfactorily only if all who are affected fully cooperate. Preliminary plans for several such projects have been made for 1948.

Certain conservation jobs accomplished during 1947 not only helped the work this year, but laid the foundation for more and better work in the future. Conservation surveys have now been completed for practically the entire county. This means that practically all farmers in the county can now secure basic detailed information as to the soil type, degree of erosion and slope of their land, on their individual farms. This information is necessary for complete conservation farm planning.

Contracts have been made with four construction companies to do earth moving conservation work; three are located in Madison County. Prior to 1947 it had been necessary to depend largely on “outside the county” construction companies. Enough heavy machinery is now available to take care of all work calling for such equipment. There is also an increasing amount of farm tractor machinery being used by individual farmers in terrace construction and related conservation jobs.

One great need in the county is for a large acreage of severely eroded land to be planted to trees. The conservation surveys show the need for, and most farm conservation plans call for, a certain amount of tree planting on this severely eroded area. In the past this part of our program has been greatly handicapped by a lack of planting stock. But during 1947 the Tennessee division of forestry put into operation a large tree

nursery in the Southeastern part of the county. Tree seedlings from this nursery will be made available to local cooperators, and it is hoped that the needed practices will receive much attention during the coming years.

While the soil erosion problem is confined to no particular group or part of the county, the problem is particularly bad on farms owned and operated by Negro farmers. The Soil Conservation Service has assigned a Negro conservationist aide to the district and the supervisors have worked out a plan with the Negro farmers of the county whereby this Negro aide will work exclusively with the Negro district cooperators, assisting them with the establishment of practices called for in their conservation plans.

The district supervisors have made office space available to the AAA in the same building where the Soil Conservation Service is located. Since the SCS technicians prepare individual farm conservation plans, this arrangement results in greater service to farmers of the county. We believe that a greater volume of planned conservation work will come out of this arrangement.

While various federal state and county agencies have assisted the district during the past year, we wish to mention particularly the Soil Conservation Service. This Service has assigned technicians to the Madison County Soil Conservation District. These technicians assist individual farmers in preparing farm conservation plans, and they have provided the necessary technical assistance in getting the planned conservation practices on the lands.

The work of SCS technicians has been especially valuable in terrace layout, drainage surveys and farm pond design. By providing construction designs, linear forage and yardage estimated, and supervision of earth moving conservation work, they have not only helped in getting high quality work done but in many cases have reduced the cost to many farmers. Surveying equipment and transportation for use in their work is provided by the Soil Conservation Service, as well as necessary office equipment and supplies.

The conservation surveys mentioned above have been performed by a SCS Soil Scientist. In addition to its primary use as a basis for conservation plans, this survey data was used by the State and Federal Forest Service in locating their tree nursery, which we expect to be so much benefit to the district's conservation program.

To help in establishing certain conservation practices, the SCD has furnished to the District cooperators a limited amount of seeding and planting material not readily available to the public. This distribution has been made according to the board of supervisors' recommendations.

We wish to also thank the other agencies for their cooperation and assistance. The Extension Service, through the county agent and his staff, has carried on a continuous conservation education program. This has resulted in new applications for farm conservation plans.

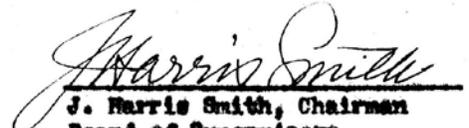
The Production and Marketing Administration (AAA) requires earth moving conservation work to pass inspection by SCS technicians before being eligible for AAA payments. This encourages application for conservation work under the district program. AAA maps and other farm data have also been made available to us. The cooperative spirit shown by the County ACP Committee and office employees generally has been great help in carrying out our program.

The FHA has encouraged its clients to participate in the District program. The CO-Ag teachers and Veterans' Agricultural Training Program instructors have done a great deal of conservation education work and have encouraged their students to participate in the district program.

The State Conservation Department particularly through its Forestry Division has rendered a great service to the district by locating a tree nursery in Madison County. Through its local forester it has given technical assistance to several cooperators.

Finally we wish to thank the Madison County Court for providing office and our parking space; various county officials for their helpful assistance, and The Jackson Sun for very favorable news items and editorials during the past year.

Respectfully Submitted,


J. Harris Smith, Chairman
Board of Supervisors