

# Heppner Soil Conservation District Has Fine Year

## District Wins Goodyear Award; Two Enjoy Trip

By RAYMOND FRENCH  
Agriculture, weather, and hospitality at its best. This about describes my trip to Goodyear Farms at Litchfield Park, Ariz., in mid-December. My stay at the farm, and the tour of the farm provided a week that I shall never forget. A steak fry on the desert plus food fit for a king plus an outstanding chef all combined to make "Operation Waistline" a success.

After seeing the Goodyear Farm, my original idea of an experimental farm used as a possible tax deduction by a large corporation had to be revised. The farm is operated as a profit-making enterprise, making its own way.

Goodyear started the farm in 1916 and has progressed to an outstanding farming operation. Today the farm produces over 2000 acres of cotton, 220 acres of citrus, and 2000 acres of alfalfa, which produces 65 tons per acre. All this, in addition to row crops, small grains and a feedlot of 6500 head capacity.

On this farm, as well as most others in the Southwest, in spite of their high producing ability, a major problem is appearing on the horizon and this problem is water, or, rather, its lack. Goodyear Farm is irrigated from 53 wells with an average depth of 780 feet. This provides adequate water for the land now under cultivation, but the water table in these wells is dropping from 8 to 10 feet per year.

Goodyear officials expect this source to last about another 20 years, and they frankly admit they don't know what will become of the operation after that. We were treated to a free

afternoon in Phoenix. Gar Swanson and I caught a taxicab and toured the city. We were fortunate to have a very affable driver who informed us that he had watched Phoenix grow from 56,000 people in 1946 to over 600,000 today. All this new construction, combined with palm trees and orange trees, makes Phoenix a very beautiful city indeed.

Our flight home on a perfectly clear day took us directly over the Grand Canyon. This awesome sight alone was worth the whole trip to me. Words cannot describe the beautiful scenic panorama except that the Grand Canyon is indeed one of the great natural wonders of the world.

### Conservation Makes Money for Farmers

A study conducted recently by the University of Illinois showed that farms using intensive conservation practices throughout the farm had much higher net incomes when compared to other non-conservation farms of like size, quality and crops. Immediate production and income was increased.

Any conservation practice put into use is an investment. Intensive practices may take longer to return the investment just like buying good farmland. However, it has been proven and concluded that conservation repays itself on a short term basis. In some cases the next generation won't have this management decision to make. It will be too late.



His COMPLETE strip-cropping operation brought Gar Swanson (right) of Ione the title of 1963 Conservation Man of the Year in Morrow county. He is shown in his field here with County Agent Nels Anderson. Strip cropping is visible in the background. Stubble mulching and silt retaining dams are other notable conservation practices followed on this 1200-acre place.

### HEPPNER SPEECH ENTRANTS MAKE EXCELLENT MARK

The Heppner Soil and Water Conservation district is proud of having organized a speech contest for young people of high school age. This is a contest that starts from the local districts, then goes to a group of districts (known as an area), and from there goes into competition with one other area. The winner of these two areas will enter state competition. This state contest is held during the annual fall conservation convention of the soil and water districts.

The Heppner district has been very grateful to the Morrow County Grain Growers for sponsoring the awards given to the top three contestants for the past three years. These awards have been trophies which the winning contestants get to keep. The contestants have told us that these trophies give them quite an incentive and a challenge to enter the contest.

In the past three years the district has had a contestant win the area contests, enter the state finals, and come out victor of one of the top three spots. There are approximately 60 other districts in Oregon, all eligible to enter the contest. This has been a very competitive contest and we are very proud of our winners.

Three years ago Beverly Davidson of Heppner high school brought us honor by capturing third place trophy in the state competition. In 1962 Martha Doherty of Heppner high school brought home the first place trophy. In 1963 we again had a winner with Marcia Rand of Heppner high school who won third place in the state competition.

As was mentioned earlier, all of these girls had won three speech contests before they entered state competition. In each of all three contestants they won a first place trophy or a plaque.

We are grateful to Mrs. Maurice Groves, the speech teacher at Heppner High school for working so diligently with the contestants and cooperating with the district. We who have worked with her know the effort and time she has put into these contests, and we know that these efforts and the time have been far beyond her regular duties as a teacher.

We need your support in attendance at these contests. We need the sponsors' support and the support of the schools to make the 1964 contest a success. If as much interest is shown this year, as has been in the past we will have another contest and possibly another contestant from the Heppner district will win his or her way to the state competition.

### Annual Soil Loss In U. S. Astounding

A 1963 statistic shows that the total volume of erosion silt removed or dredged annually from U. S. ports and harbors exceeded the cubic yardage excavated from the Panama Canal.

Last year in one productive area of Umatilla county, 190 tons of soil eroded away on a single day. (One acre inch of soil weighs 150 tons). It's less than 30 inches to solid basalt rock in this area. Similar losses occurred in Morrow county on highly valued farm land. These losses occur so frequently that some lands are becoming unproductive already.

Soil depth, fertility and structure (including organic matter and humus) contribute more to yield potential than all other production factors. When water and wind erosion remove these resources from a field, yields are reduced permanently. Future erosion problems are increased.

## Man of Year Demonstrates Interest in Conservation By Good Farm Practices

Stopping soil erosion is a No. 1 goal of the Heppner Soil Conservation District. Farmers who earnestly use tillage and conservation practices that control soil and water losses are recognized.

The district co-sponsors with the Oregon Wheat Grower's League, the Conservation Man of the Year contest.

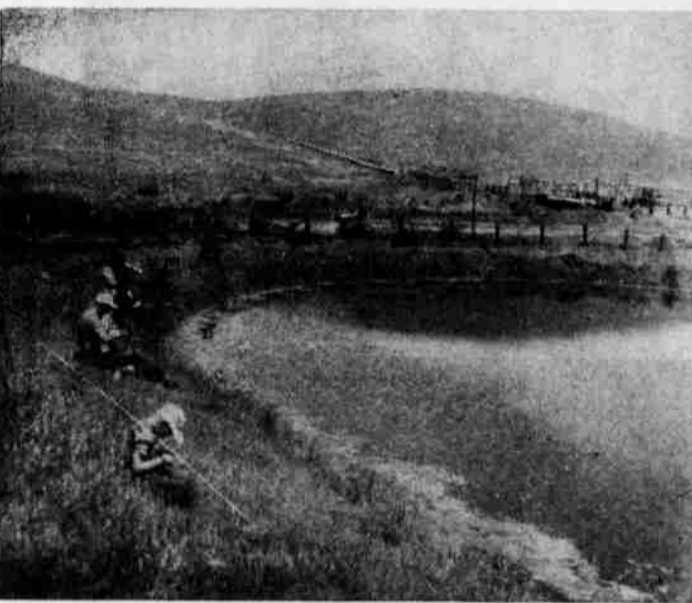
Selected for 1963 was Gar Swanson. Gar has always used a stubble-mulch plow, leaving as much protective trash on the surface as possible. Recently he established 200 foot wide field strips on 1600 acres of his cropland. An additional 320 acres are sodded down with crested wheat grass in the conservation reserve program. Also constructed on his farm are eight large silt dams, which are located and

spaced in draws to enable the strip cropping to run continuously and stop gullies from forming. Sub-soiling is done where needed. A mold-board plow has never been used on his farm. Gar designed and built a hydraulic operated drill hitch which allows his deep-furrow drills to be used on the contour on hillsides. This is believed to be the first hydraulic drill hitch used in the Northwest. Four bird guzzlers and one feeder has been established for game birds.

Gar's philosophy towards soil conservation is not only contributing to his own use but for future generations as well. Stimulating this attitude and encouraging all farmers to practice serious conservation is the primary purpose of the district.

## '64 Adds Long List Of Achievements

- Heppner District has 302 cooperators with conservation plans on 710,619 acres.
- 3000 acres soil-surveyed making a total surveyed to 891,011 acres.
- Signed 14 new cooperators on 52,127 acres.
- 14 basic conservation plans written on 31,818 acres and 1 plan revised.
- 446 acres of contour strip cropping now totalling 12,467 acres.
- 1249 acres of field strip cropping now totalling 3251 acres.
- 1654 acres of wind strip cropping now totalling 4137 acres.
- A total of 19,855 acres strip cropped in the district. 9 new cooperators stubble mulched for the first time for 5084 acres. Checked 3329 acres of subsoiling.
- 60 farmers did 1586 acres of seedings hay, pasture and range, and 46 acres renovated to hay or pasture.
- 76,110 linear feet of diversions established.
- 190 acres of land leveling bring the total in the District to 4572 acres.
- 35 acres of land smoothing.
- 7200 feet of permanent irrigation ditch.
- 20,661 linear feet of stream channel improved or changed.
- 1710 feet of outlet ditch built.
- One large irrigation structure built.
- Two farm ponds with 15 erosion dams and six stock ponds.
- One acre of grassed waterway and 2338 feet surveyed for 4 inch tile.
- In January the Heppner Soil and Water Conservation District made a Memorandum of understanding with the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture.
- Worked out the conservation planning with the Future Farmers of America.
- In February the district sponsored and held its annual meeting.
- In May the district sent in the Goodyear report that won the district the coveted Goodyear award.
- The district sponsored a conservation tour for adults.
- The district sponsored a conservation tour for the 5th grade school children.
- The district worked with the churches in furnishing them with material for soil Stewardship Week, May 27 to June 3.
- The district sent a high school boy to Range Camp in August.
- The district sponsored a forestry tour in September.
- The district made application for the Rhea Creek small watershed project in October.
- The district sent a committee on a tour of the Hood River small water shed project on October 17.
- Sponsored the Soil and Water Conservation speech contest. Winning first in the district, first in the semi-finals and third in the state contest.
- Sponsored the local soil judging contest.
- The district was co-sponsor of the farm and city banquet.
- The district sent representatives to the state convention for Soil and Water Conservation Districts at Grants Pass.
- Raymond French, chairman, and Garland Swanson, Conservation Man of the Year made the Goodyear tour in Arizona in December.
- The district bought a Gopher Getter in 1963 and added it to its conservation equipment. The Heppner Soil and Water Conservation equipment was used by 56 farmers during the year.



WATER CONSERVATION brings added recreation as this picture at the Don Greenup pond shows. By the care and concentration these fishermen are giving their gear, there must be some big ones to be caught in the pond. Even though this pond is used for all kinds of recreation, several mallards nested by it for the past several years.

## How Districts are Financed

As is usually necessary in most ventures, some form of finances must be available in order to operate and perform the duties of the organization. In order to raise the money, the board of supervisors of the Heppner S.W.C.D. has for a number of years furnished various pieces of special equipment on a rental basis to the cooperators of the district.

The equipment and rental fees are as follows: Grass seeding drill, @ .50 per acre; Noble sweep plow, @ .50 per acre; Packer, @ .25 per acre; Terracer, @ 1.25 per hour; Gopher Getter, @ .35 per acre.

The Gopher Getter machine was purchased early in 1963 and is proving very popular with farmers for clearing their irrigated ground of gophers.

Also, a nominal fee is charged for staking material furnished by the district and used for staking for land leveling or for diversion terraces, strip cropping, etc.

The receipts from these services are used for repair and replacement of the machines and for purchase of supplies, stamps, envelopes, stakes, trophies, scholarships, desk pen set for County Conservation Man of the Year, co-sponsorship of Farm-City banquet, and many other activities.

Receipts for 1963 were \$815.20 and expenses amounted to \$992.62 which included purchase of the Gopher Getter machine. We are going into 1964 with

about \$1500.00 in the bank and a good slate of activities on schedule for the coming year.



AMONG HONORS won by the Heppner Soil Conservation district are those in state soil judging. Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Palmer are shown here with the knives they won as prizes for getting third place in the Oregon Association of Soil Conservation Districts' soil judging in November, 1962, at Eugene. Mr. Palmer was third for men and Mrs. Palmer was third for women.

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HEPPNER SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# YOU are invited to the annual meeting of the HEPPNER SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## Tuesday, Feb. 4

### Lexington Grange Hall

### 7:30 P. M.

- FILM
- SPEAKERS
- Refreshments

### PROGRAM

- 7:30 - Report and Slides on Goodyear Awards Trip By Raymond French and Gar Swanson
- 8:30 - Business Meeting and Election of Supervisors
- 9:00 - Discussion on "Watersheds and Their Development"
- 10:00 - Refreshments Courtesy of Lexington Implement and Bristow's Market