

The ANNUAL REPORT

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Amendment to soil and water conservation district laws

By DICK McELIGOTT

This bill authorizes the directors of soil and water conservation districts to formulate and establish erosion and sediment control regulations either on the request of a resident of the district or any state or local governmental agency having land use planning, environmental or natural resource regulatory jurisdiction over lands within the district.

On receipt of a request the district directors shall review the request. If approved, a hearing must be held under the provisions of the administrative procedures act. Regulations proposed in a district ordinance must have the approval of the State Conservation Commission. The regulations do not become effective until the district directors receive written notice of approval from the state commission.

There are provisions for modification or repeal of

regulations as written and there are provisions for appeal in case the regulations might cause unnecessary hardship or great practical difficulties for any individuals to carry out.

This bill is supported by the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts not because any district directors welcome the opportunity to set up standards and regulations, but because this is our only opportunity to do this at the local level.

Our field runoff and wind erosion problems fit the definition of non-point source pollution. The federal and state laws are already on the books giving the Environ-

mental Protection Agency and the Department of Environmental Quality the authority and the mission of controlling non-point source pollution.

Neither of the agencies as yet has made a big move into the agricultural picture, but undoubtedly would if we are unable to make progress on the local level. We feel that in the local districts there is the knowledge of what is possible and economically feasible to do. We feel that only on the local level could we retain the flexibility to permit variances from the regulations and have the knowledge of soils and climatic conditions to safely do so.

Jones oustanding SWCD cooperater

Bob Jones has been working on a sound conservation program on his farm for more than 15 years. The systematic

approach that he has used on his 3459-acre farm earned him the honor of being the Outstanding SWCD Cooperater for 1974.

Good conservation practices are not new to areas along Heppner Flats and Rhea Creek, which Bob farms. As far back as 1965 Jones was constructing diversion ditches and forming a silt dam on his property. These first projects gave way to further expansion of his diversion ditch system, which he began work on in 1969 with the engineering help of the Soil Conservation Service. Last year Jones installed 33,260 feet of diversion ditches on the 1,873 acres of land he farms at the two sections.

He is by no means through with his conservation work. He plans to add an additional 26,600 feet of diversion ditches this year and at least two more silt dams are being planned for the future.

Besides diversion ditches and his silt dam he also conserves topsoil through careful crop and land management.

Jones was raised in Heppner and attended school here. While attending the University of Oregon in Eugene he received his degree in business and met his wife Carol Sue. After college, he joined the Army and served in Stuttgart, Germany.

When he returned to the states he took over management of his father's ranch, which with the additional Rhea Creek place now makes up his total acreage.



SEN. MIKE THORNE

Soil, water conservation

Local vs. federal control

Farmers are facing two alternatives in regard to erosion problems. They are already faced with federal and state legislation that has given authority to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Environmental Quality to deal with pollution and sedimentation.

Neither the EPA or DEQ has as yet moved into the field of agriculture, but they are going to unless conservation districts make better progress and come up with solutions on a local basis.

We feel that it would be far better to put the matter of standards and regulations at the local district level, according to Dick McElligott, president, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts. "In Oregon we have extreme variations in soils and climate. It's at the conservation district level where area people are locally elected that

there is the intimate knowledge of local conditions and economic feasibility of applying conservation practices."

Sen. Mike Thorne of Umatilla County, chairman of the Oregon Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, is now dealing directly with the Erosion and Sedimentation Act (Senate Bill 13). The bill would amend Oregon Soil and Water Conservation law to give authority to set standards based on knowledge of local conditions.

Sen. Thorne will speak at the Morrow SWCD annual meeting Thursday, Feb. 20, starting at 7:30 p.m. The program will be held at the A. C. Houghton School in Irrigon. Refreshments will be served. Farmers and all interested persons from both Morrow and Umatilla counties are invited to attend this important program.

MORROW SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

THIRD ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, February 20, 1975

7:30 P.M.

A.C. Houghton Elementary School
Irrigon, Oregon

PROGRAM

1. Introductions
2. Business Meeting
3. Irrigation District Progress Report
4. Horizontal Well Drilling
5. Featured Speaker:
Senator Mike Thorne, Senate Bill 13, Erosion and Sedimentation Act.
6. Discuss Wind Erosion Control Regulations that the Morrow SWCD is proposing to adopt.