

Reflections on the year that was — 1981

Accomplished last year

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 1981
January 1 - June 30

- + Continued evaluation of Morrow County's resources in USDA's Multiresource Inventory.
- + Planning and implementation has progressed well in the Jordan Canyon Special Project. Twelve out of fourteen landowners participated in the project this year. Primary emphasis has been in terracing; however, conservation tillage is being widely accepted.
- + Long term agreements continue to be an important element of achieving desirable land treatment. An additional two LTA's were developed in this period of time.
- + The reduced tillage program using chemical aids has

- heightened to a great extent.
- + Assisted the sixth grade Outdoor Classroom Conservation Education Program.
- + Supported the National and Oregon association of Conservation Districts.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

	No.	Amount
Technical assistance	422	—
Individuals applying conservation practices	50	—
Plans	5	2,563 Acres
Terrace systems	44	417,490 L.F.
Chemical Tillage		

... and projections for a prosperous 1982

This year's objectives

MORROW SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL WORK PLAN
July 1, 1981 - June 30, 1982

SOIL EROSION — WATER QUALITY

1. Continue Jordan Canyon special project.
 - a. Develop conservation plans on remaining cooperators (5).
 - b. Continue terracing program.
 - c. Evaluate resource management systems (stubble mulch & terraces).
2. Support LTA program in Morrow County. Presently 10 on-going LTA's.
3. Continue to advance the reduced tillage program. Evaluate the results of chemical treatment.
4. Submit application for a SWCC grant on annual cropping and if approved, provide leadership in the development and evaluation of the project.
5. Streambank fencing is being promoted by the Fish & Wildlife Dept. Bob Krein to initiate project.

IRRIGATION — DRAINAGE

1. With SCS special emphasis project, irrigation will be an important priority.
2. Highest priority will be placed on those using sprinkle irrigation systems. Irrigation management evaluations will be made.
3. Drainage is becoming an important element in northern Morrow County. In many cases drainage will have to precede before proper irrigation management.

RANGE IMPROVEMENT

1. A project proposal of knapweed spraying and reseeding range damaged by wintering elk will be developed by the Oregon State Fish & Wildlife Department.
2. Limited assistance will be provided for range improvements due to special emphasis programs in dryland crop and irrigation.
3. Sagebrush spraying projects under ACP will include management plans.

SWCD awarded \$1,600

Nine Soil and Water Conservation districts in Oregon including Morrow County will receive grant money from the Department of Agriculture. The grant money is being used by these districts as demonstration for erosion control projects.

In Morrow County, a no-till annual cropping program will be demonstrated. The purpose is (1) to determine if a no-till program will significantly reduce soil erosion and improve water quality; (2) to determine if this program is a practical management alternative in the shallow soil, high precipitation dryland farming area; (3) to determine if this program will provide an adequate economic return to growers; and (4) to determine fertilizer requirements.

In Morrow County, 40,000 acres have greater than 12 percent slope, less than 30 inches of soil and greater than 12 inches of annual precipitation. Under these conditions, soil loss is from 5 - 10 tons per acre greater than is permissible. Soil conservation structures are not always effective in reducing soil loss to tolerable levels.

Typically on these kinds of soils, the soil profile commonly fills with moisture in one winter. A fallow period nets no additional soil moisture. Soil erosion potential is increased with a grain-fallow rotation primarily due to repeated tillage operations which reduce surface residue and degrade soil structure.

The program will thus evaluate these conditions as well as attempt to determine the fertilizer requirements. The fertilizer program will be an integral part of the success or failure of this project. Recognizing the need of the crop under annual cropping conditions is very different than under a wheat-summer fallow program. Hopefully this will be determined under this project.

1981 year of challenge to Forestry Dept.

The year 1981 was one of challenge and change to the Oregon State Forestry Department. The Fossil unit office of the East Central Oregon District which includes much of Morrow County, was no exception.

Late spring rains delayed the start of fire season but high grass and long periods of hot, dry weather quickly brought fire danger to high levels. In fact, seventeen days of extreme fire danger, an unusually high amount, were recorded during fire season 1981.

Budget reductions experienced in 1981 have resulted in the loss of our Forest Practices-service forester at the Fossil unit. We have, as a result reduced our Forest Practices operation inspection

and switched our emphasis from preventing damage to responding to damage reports; although some prevention work, particularly on high risk operations, will continue. The loss of our service forester has meant that we are unable to assist private landowners in timber management planning work. We are continuing to service referrals under the A.C.P. program for cost-shared timber thinning and planting practices.

Eastern Oregon timberland is facing, once again, a serious threat from an insect pest; the Western Budworm. The 1981 aerial insect survey, flown last summer, revealed a total area of 306,380 acres affected compared to 5,640 acres in 1980. The budworm is a defoliator affecting Douglas-

fir, grand fir, and white fir. In Morrow County, 17,057 acres of privately owned timberland is currently affected. The area affected in the Umatilla National Forest is much larger. The State Forestry Department, The Forest Service, and private landowners affected are cooperating jointly to assess the damage, and develop action plans based on budworm populations, resource losses, suppression costs, and environmental impacts. The final course of action, if any, will be determined in the early spring of 1982. The alternatives include:

- (1) doing nothing,
- (2) using silvicultural means to reduce host species or
- (3) using biological and/or chemical controls.

The East Central Oregon District recently concluded a detailed study of its fire protection system. This protection survey was designed to point out areas where our fire protection system can be improved. One area of concern was the "Rural Forest Interface" where increasing numbers of homes are being built on or very near forest land. Although the State Forestry Department protects

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