

Pilot Conservation Districts Used To Prove Possibilities

(This is the third of a series of articles dealing with soil conservation districts.—Ed note.)

By HALE SCARBROUGH
Since the federal government by one agency or another owns or controls much of the total land volume in the Western states, there is strong feeling in the West that

the federal government ought to be as progressive in improving its public holdings as its citizens are in improving their private holdings. Here in Klamath County the federal government has ownership or control of about two-thirds of the total acreage of the county and the same condition exists over

much of Eastern Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, Washington, parts of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Montana and others of the Western states. The federal government by all odds is the biggest landowner. If private landowners by farm and range planning, good resource management and practices, can increase the value of their property, the federal government could also increase the value and return from its holdings by the same practices. So can state and county governments, also large landholders in these Western states.

The idea was conceived some years ago at Elko, Nev., and just a couple of months ago the Langel Valley soil conservation district in Klamath County was selected as Oregon's pilot district.

The whole idea is to try to prove to the federal, state and county agencies having land within the soil conservation district that what private operators can do the public landholders can do also. Just laying out the proof is hardly enough. Pressure might be needed . . . and used . . . to get better resource management practices put to work on the public lands.

Opposition is bound to come up particularly on the point that the aims of the program would mean considerable expenditure of government money with the early effort of benefiting only a few. Improvement of government grazing land, for instance, paid out of public money would give immediate benefit to only a few persons having permit to run cattle and sheep on the government's grazing land.

Probably the program can be assailed on other points, too, because of a history of boondoggling and waste, proven or otherwise within the government's soil erosion and conservation programs. The Langel Valley pilot district now is about 750,000 acres in size, but of that total only 196,642 acres is in private ownership. Practically all the rest of the district is in federal hands, in national forests, federal range and forest lands, Indian reservation and Bureau of Reclamation wildlands. Only about 4,200 acres is owned by the state or county.

A detailed program has been worked out by officers of the Langel Valley district for improvement of both private and public holdings within the district, but there remains a selling job to get the improvements instituted. Most of the public agencies involved,

among them the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service, seem to look upon the endeavor favorably but whether the agencies can get money budgeted for the improvements they'll be asked to make is another story. So far there hasn't been any reaction to the proposals from the Indian Service. The State Game Commission apparently also is receptive to suggestions for betterment of wildlife conditions in the sprawling area. There, too, will be the problem of getting money to translate the plans into action.

The giant increase in the size of the Langel Valley district has created a lot more work to be done on private lands within the district, about 102,000 acres of range and 70,000 acres of crop lands. Surveys and basic plans of development are needed, and work to be done, according to the district's conservation program, includes:

Range practices—opening or installation of 40 springs and water troughs; seeding of 8,300 acres of range; water spreading on 5,000 acres; construction of a hundred small reservoirs and water holes; 62 miles of fencing, cattle guards, corrals; and sagebrush control on about 25,000 acres. That might mean burning or plowing under the sagebrush, to give natural stands of range grass a better chance of survival.

Crop land practices—leveling of 14,000 acres; drainage of 33,000 acres; construction of 42,000 acres; pasture seeding and proper use of irrigation water.

Forest practices—pruning, thinning, tree planting and seeding; control of noxious damage, insecticide eradication and stream improvement. This year the soil conservation district plans to use its equipment to level about a thousand acres of private land and also to furnish

technical assistance in farm and being asked to make surveys on about 30,000 acres of crop land and 25,000 acres of range during the year.

In addition, the Soil Conservation District is to be asked to set up a procedure for making surveys on private timber lands in the district, and to cooperate with the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service and the Indian Service in making the surveys.

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European Army Treaty May Be Signed By End Of April If Work Pushed

PARIS, (AP)—Gen. Eisenhower stands a good chance of seeing the six-nation European Army treaty signed and ready for ratification before the Maytime departure he is generally expected to take from his job as supreme allied commander.

Experts predicted Wednesday the voluminous treaty creating the

Teamsters Stage Strike

RICHLAND, Wash. (AP)—Continuation of a Teamsters Union strike kept 5,400 workers idle Wednesday on a 180 million dollar construction job at the Hanford Atomic works.

Five hundred AFL teamsters quit work Tuesday in renewal of a jurisdictional dispute and there was no indication when they would return.

The Atkins Jones Construction Co. ordered other workers to stay off the big expansion project until the Teamsters go back.

In Chicago Dave Beck, executive vice president of the Teamsters union, said the Hanford walkout followed "a clearcut violation of the Teamsters contract."

Beck said the union would file a complaint in Washington, D. C., with the Dunlop committee, a national labor-management group which directed that disputed loading and unloading work should be reassigned to the AFL Shermans and Stranahan's union.

The Teamsters quit work two days in mid-March but returned when the company assigned them the disputed jobs. Tuesday's walkout followed word that the Dunlop group had asked the company to give the jobs back to the other union.

The walkout affected only the expansion project, not actual production at the atomic plant.

Hop Growers Blast Order

PORTLAND (AP)—Many hop producers are abusing the crop diversion privilege, speakers said here Tuesday night at a hearing on proposals to amend the federal hop marketing order.

Paul T. Rowell, Salem manager of the Hop Control Board, said that of 382 Oregon hop growers last year, more than half replaced unharvested hops by getting diversion certificates.

This is a method whereby a grower can sell more of his crop than the quota allows by buying another grower's quota. That seller then doesn't harvest his hops. The method is sometimes used when there is poor yield and the grower can sell his quota at a better price than he would get for his hops.

Eugene D. McCarthy, Salem producer, said some growers were making a business of selling their marketing rights.

An amendment has been proposed which would put restrictions on this diversion procedure, and it was under discussion Tuesday night.

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One Bid Made On Pump Unit

Only one bid—that of George R. Stacey, Tulelake—was received at a bid opening held by the Bureau of Reclamation here yesterday on two pumping plants to be constructed in the Tulelake area.

Schedule 1, pumping plant R, drew a Stacey bid of \$72,731.25. Engineer's estimate was \$61,228.50.

Schedule 2, for pumping plant S, drew a bid of \$37,721.25 as against an engineer's estimate of \$29,727.

In this case the bids will be sent to the Regional Director of the Bureau in Sacramento for further consideration, according to Charles Wamstad, chief of the Klamath Project's engineering and construction.

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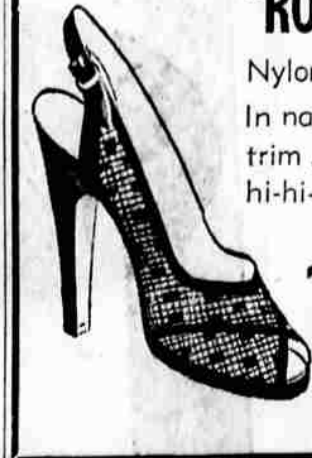
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