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Special Purpose Water Districts

Cooperative Extension, South Dakota State University

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Cooperative Extension Service

WHY WE NEED

Special Purpose Water Districts

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Special Purpose Water Districts

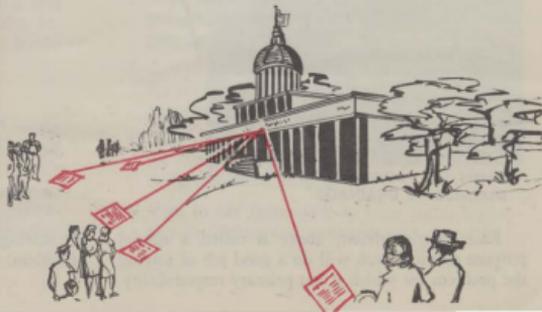
Many water problems have arisen during the years in which South Dakota has grown from an open prairie to a settled state. Sometimes these problems were too big for one individual to handle by himself.



When this situation developed, individuals banded into a group to attempt to solve the particular problem. But they realized that if a group is to work together they would need some rules and regulations for guidance. These rules and regulations needed legal status.

So they turned to the State Legislature and said, "Give us some legislation that will make it possible for us to legally band ourselves together to solve this problem."

The legislature did as the people requested. This resulted in five different district acts that people can use to solve group problems. These acts are described on the following pages.



The first four acts



WHEN THE PROBLEM WAS FLOODS



WATERSHED DISTRICTS



WHEN THE PROBLEM WAS DROUGHT

Legislation
Permitted The
Formation
Of



IRRIGATION DISTRICTS



WHEN THE PROBLEM WAS EROSION



SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



WHEN THE PROBLEM WAS
INADEQUATE DRAINAGE



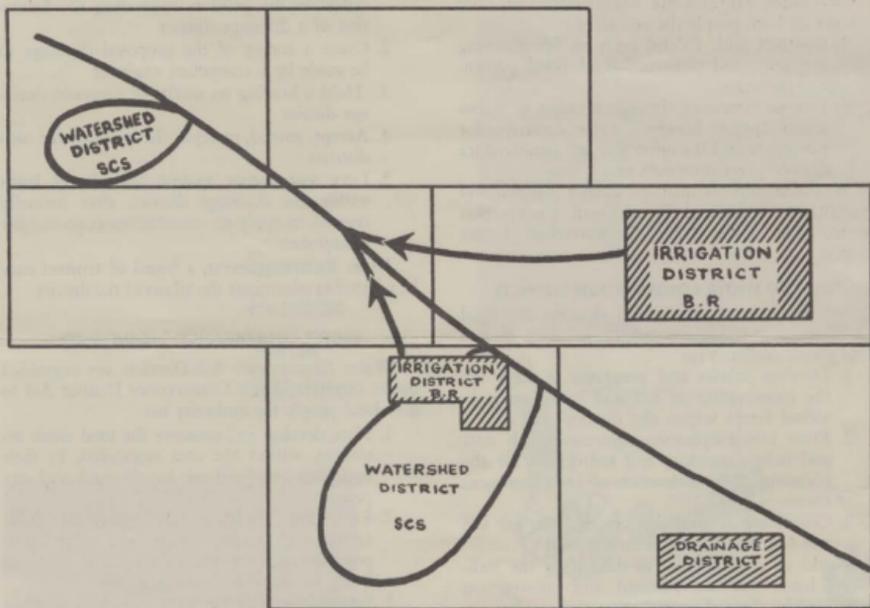
DRAINAGE DISTRICTS

Each district shown above is called a special purpose district. Each will do a good job of solving the problem for which it has primary responsibility.

In solving the primary problem, related or incidental problems can also be solved in some cases.

The fifth act

Water Conservancy Subdistricts



Each major block represents a Soil and Water Conservation District. Frequently these have the same boundaries as counties.

SCS=Soil Conservation Service
B.R.=Bureau of Reclamation

Sometimes more than one primary problem exists in an area. When this occurs it is usually desirable to coordinate the work being done by special purpose districts under one overall plan. This is known as multiple purpose planning.

A Conservancy Sub-District makes multiple purpose planning on a wide scale practical. The area planned is often a river basin since river basins usually have several problems and multiple purpose planning for the entire basin is a logical approach.

A Conservancy Sub-District may include a block of many counties. It may provide flood control and water for wildlife, recreation, irrigation, cities, industry, pollution abatement, lake and stream levels, and recharge of ground water.

FEDERAL LAW REQUIREMENTS

Most Federal laws, relating to soil and water conservation and development, require formation of special purpose districts. The special purpose district must be organized under the laws of the state in which the district is located. The federal government feels that this is necessary because operation

and maintenance of the project is a local responsibility and to properly do the job of operating and maintaining, local people must be organized. Organization into special purpose districts gives local people an opportunity to take advantage of federal programs and still keep local control.

WHAT IS LOCAL CONTROL

Local control is the authority under state law for local people to:

1. Organize, establish the boundaries, establish policies, and develop the program of a special purpose district
2. Accept or reject any plan for soil and water resource development presented to them by agencies assisting under federal law
3. Enter into agreements with federal agencies for construction and to operate and maintain the project after completion
4. Vote to tax themselves to raise funds necessary to operate and maintain such projects

WATERSHED DISTRICTS

Watershed Districts are organized under state law giving local people the authority to:

1. Contract with federal agencies for planning assistance and construction of flood prevention measures
2. Provide financing, through taxation or assessments against benefited areas involved, for easements and for operation and maintenance of flood prevention measures

Works of improvement are usually planned and construction supervised by the soil conservation service after approval by the watershed district managers.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Soil and water conservation districts are legal sub-divisions of state government organized to give local people authority to:

1. Develop policies and programs to carry out the conservation of soil and water on individual farms within the district
2. Enter into cooperation agreement with state and federal agencies and individuals for the planning and construction of land treatment measures
3. Coordinate all available resources to get soil and water conservation on the land

Works of improvement as desired by the individual landowner are planned and construction supervised by the soil conservation service after approval by the district board of supervisors.

IRRIGATION DISTRICTS

Irrigation districts are organized under the Irrigation District Law giving local people the authority to:

1. Cooperate and contract with federal and state agencies and with individuals to deliver irrigation water to their land
2. Provide for financing the construction and maintenance of canals, ditches, and other structures necessary to deliver water to each landowner

Planning assistance and construction supervision is usually provided by the Federal Bureau of Reclamation, although the Soil Conservation Service sometimes assists on the smaller projects. Projects are built after the Irrigation District electorate approves a contract with the federal agency.

DRAINAGE DISTRICTS

State law provides that jurisdiction over a drainage district shall be the responsibility of the Board of County Commissioners authorized to:

1. Act upon a written petition signed by a ma-

majority of the owners of agricultural lands described in the petition, requesting the formation of a drainage district

2. Cause a survey of the proposed drainage to be made by a competent engineer
3. Hold a hearing on merits of proposed drainage district
4. Accept, amend, or reject the proposal for such districts
5. Levy assessments against agricultural lands within the drainage district, after formally created, to apply on construction costs and for maintenance

Note: By arrangement, a board of trustees may be selected to administer the affairs of the district.

WATER CONSERVANCY SUB-DISTRICTS

Water Conservancy Sub-Districts are organized under the state Water Conservancy District Act to give local people the authority to:

1. Plan, develop and conserve the total water resources, within the area organized, to their optimum beneficial use by all rural and city people
2. Enter into contracts and agreements with agencies, cities, individuals, and special purpose districts for the development and delivery of water for beneficial use
3. Establish a plan for financing such projects through taxation and the sale of water service

Since this is a multiple purpose district, many agencies are usually asked to assist in planning and supervision of construction. The principal ones are: Bureau of Reclamation, Soil Conservation Service, Corps of Army Engineers, and the state Water Resources Commission.

OTHER AGENCIES INVOLVED

Other federal or state agencies can work cooperatively on local projects developed by the Soil Conservation Service, Corp of Engineers, and Bureau of Reclamation. Some of these Agencies are the Extension Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Farmer's Home Administration, Federal Wildlife Service, State Department of Game, Fish and Parks, State Department of Health, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The Bureau of Reclamation, Corps of Engineers, and Soil Conservation Service can all include as a part of their plans, fish and wildlife development, municipal or industrial water supply. The Corps and Bureau also plan development of power resources.

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