

Never Delivered due to
death of President Kennedy

Remarks of Congressman Bob Dole
10:00 A.M., Monday, December 2, 1963
19th Annual Kansas Association of Soil Conservation Districts Meeting
Pratt, Kansas

"CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION"
from a Legislator's Viewpoint

First, I welcome you to the First Congressional District, specifically to Pratt, and express my thanks to your President, Wilbur Wilson. Mr. Wilson has spent many, many hours on your behalf during the past year, and I can attest to his untiring efforts, both in Kansas and in Washington, D. C., to strengthen your association and the principles of soil and water conservation and water resources development. I also wish to pay tribute to Morrie Bolline, State Conservationist since January 10, 1960, not only for his outstanding leadership in Kansas, but for his continuous efforts to fully inform the members of the Kansas Congressional delegation and all others in Kansas who seek information and his advice. As a member of the Conservation and Credit Subcommittee of the House Committee on Agriculture, I was pleased to accept the invitation of Lyle Bauer, your Secretary-Treasurer; though, as indicated to him, my presence would be questionable because of the lateness of the session and the possibilities of having controversial legislation before Congress. It goes without saying, my first responsibility is to be present and voting on important measures. Clinton Schoonover has done an excellent job as the Convention Chairman, and you will undoubtedly find your visit to Pratt interesting and enjoyable.

The purpose of your presence and the purpose of a large part of your daily lives--the protection, improvement and development of soil and water resources--is the rock upon which the future will be built, the very foundation stones of tomorrow, the stones of "Challenges and Opportunities in Soil and Water Conservation." As previously mentioned, I have had a real opportunity in Congress to work closely with the Soil Conservation Service. As a member of the Conservation and Watershed Subcommittee, I can honestly say there is no more essential unit of our free government than the

conservation districts, and certainly no group of public servants more dedicated. As was recently stated by Hollis R. Williams, Deputy Administrator for Watersheds, Soil Conservation Service, "'Supervisor' has become an honored title. No scandal has been attached to it. No selfish purpose has corrupted it. Money can't buy it. It knows no party. It knows no favorite. It is honorable and dignified and exemplifies, more than any title I know, the good qualities of public service. The supervisor is a man of the soil, but he is distinguished by his vision and his willingness to assume leadership. He is a good citizen and a considerate neighbor. His face is bronzed by the wind and the sun and his hands are rough from a life of toil, but in his heart is a love and concern for his fellow man. To him, conservation is a profession as well as a duty. Neither the doctor nor the lawyer, the teacher nor the minister, surpasses him in the unselfishness of his devotion to the wellbeing of his community, and of the human race. He has listened to the warning of Jeremiah, the prophet, whose vineyard was laid waste by those who should have been its caretakers * * * and he has had the understanding of this bit of history to know its bitter lesson. And he has taken to heart the words of the Psalmist who told us that the land is the Lord's and he has stood guard for the Lord. Yes, the supervisor is somebody very special. We who are well-fed and well-clothed and who see opportunity spread out before us for ourselves and our children are forever indebted to him." This, too, echoes my feelings, not only of supervisors, but of all of you present today interested in soil and water conservation and water resource development.

Though I stand before "experts," since many of you have spent a lifetime, or nearly so, in dedicated soil and water conservation work, it still may be "sweet music" to hear again that the overall soil conservation program today finds itself in what is perhaps the most active and most productive period in its history. This high level of activity is significant, for nothing is more fundamentally important to the American economy than the conservation and wise use of our most basic natural resources--soil and water. You realize, but many do not, that a full realization of the value and wisdom of soil and water conservation was slow to come about. Our forefathers, for the most part, looked upon land and other bountiful resources as inexhaustible. Still another equally important factor in the slow development of widespread soil and water conservation practices was the basic fact a man's first responsibility was, and is, to feed and clothe his

family. Benefits from this conservation program are not immediately realized, and the average person cannot be expected to carry out practices which, no matter how beneficial ultimately, reduce his present means of existence.

Conservation has come a long way in the past quarter century, and while the development may have seemed slow, it has been sound; hence, it is not surprising soil conservation districts have become a permanent part of the American scene, for they are in the tradition of pioneer America. They are conceived, nurtured and managed to maturity and usefulness by local people who recognize their own problems and wish to be masters of their fate in dealing with them.

Since the mid-1930's, the concept of resource conservation has broadened tremendously. The soil-and-water concept has come to mean protecting land against all forms of soil deterioration, rebuilding eroded and depleted soils, building up soil fertility, stabilizing critical runoff and sediment-producing areas, improving grasslands, woodlands, and wildlife lands, conserving water for industrial and municipal as well as other uses, proper agricultural irrigation and drainage, and reducing floodwater and sediment damage for benefits to the public as a whole.

Modern soil and water conservation includes planning and treating complete watersheds as resource units. This means coordinating the management of crop, range, and forest lands, and the treatment of watercourses in the upper watersheds to minimize the damage of floods and sedimentation and to improve the quality and regularity of water supplies. Indeed, it is safe to say that today's soil and water conservation job bears little more resemblance to that of 20 years ago than the 1964 automobile does to the 1942 model. Only the basics are the same.

In Kansas, as elsewhere, Soil Conservation Service provides technical help in soil and water conservation work, is requested by landowners, operators and local organizations. SCS helps 105 locally managed soil conservation districts in Kansas. The 105 soil conservation districts have 85,000 (76,000 in 1960) cooperators operating 28.2 million acres. SCS is helping 33 (20 in 1960) watershed protection and flood prevention projects in the state. Of these, two are completed and 15 are being worked on. You are aware of the great strides being made in Kansas even during the past year, the fact that cooperators built 1932 ponds, seeded 34,800 acres of cropland to pasture and planted 1593 trees, and have completed soil surveys on 28 million acres (21.3 million

The Great Plains Conservation Program helps in preparing and carrying out conservation plans and guarantees cost-sharing assistance to Great Plains farmers and ranchers on land subject to drought, soil blowing or water erosion. Over 1200 contracts have been signed covering 1,161,000 acres, not to mention conversion of 50,000 acres from cropland to grassland, and 378 applications for contracts are still being processed. In 1963 alone, 392 contracts covering 224,000 acres were signed and 11,680 acres of cropland conversion to grassland were contracted.

To say that the "Challenges and Opportunities in Soil and Water Conservation" are unlimited might be an understatement, but it will be tomorrow what you make it. If you lack vision, so will your program. Let me caution you not to overlook the opportunities offered by small watershed projects as you plan conservation action to meet the future needs of your children. The small watershed project brings together town and country in a common cause. It is a golden opportunity for multiple purpose projects, for attention of all aspects of water management, including agricultural, municipal, industrial, recreational and wildlife developments. To my knowledge, as a member of the Watershed Subcommittee, multiple purpose watershed projects have thus far proved practical and effective.

Conservation programs, directed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, consist of several different facets, all aimed at development and use of land and water resources for the benefit of the entire public. The group approach is emphasized and teamwork between local organizations and agencies of county, state and federal government is stressed.

Two primary types of federal assistance are available to the private landowner in carrying out conservation practices on private lands, technical assistance through the Soil Conservation Service and cost-sharing assistance through the Agricultural Conservation Program.

As you know, the majority of soil conservation projects carried out on private land today is done through soil conservation districts.

S.C.S. is charged with the responsibility of providing professional leadership in soil and water conservation.

Farm practices that conserve soil and water resources are costly. They require

initial installation. This document is from the collections at the Dole Archives, University of Kansas. <http://dolearchives.ku.edu>
Federal cost-sharing through the Agricultural Conservation Program, since 1936 has helped to overcome, through its incentives, the economic barriers to carrying out conservation measures.

Due to the peculiar climatic conditions existing in the Great Plains states Congress, in 1957, authorized the Great Plains conservation program to supplement existing conservation programs in designated wind erosion susceptible counties in the ten Great Plains states.

As I mentioned, the small watersheds program authorized by the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 is still another valuable conservation program.

Briefly, these programs make up the framework of the overall soil conservation program. A national policy of saving the soil as a basic resource was adopted by Congress and today's programs are the logical outgrowth of this policy.

These programs reflect the thinking of much of the American public as the authorizing legislation was passed by their elected representatives. This is the paramount function of the legislator: to interpret the needs and wants of his constituents and relate them to the general welfare of the nation. Federal soil and water conservation programs are prime examples of the positive accomplishments of this process.

Great progress has been made in conserving our lands and our water, but the conservation battle is not over. A recent nationwide inventory of soil and water conservation needs of our agricultural lands revealed the magnitude of the conservation ahead.

Sixty-two percent of our cropland still needs conservation treatment. Almost three-fourths of our privately-owned pasture and range land needs conservation treatment and more than half of our private forest and woodland needs conservation treatment.

The "Challenges and Opportunities" are upon us. Challenges will be met and opportunities taken if those seeking to accomplish conservation goals pull together.

NOTE-----NOTE-----NOTE

Congressman Dole cancelled his scheduled personal appearance for the reason set out in a telegram Friday, November 29, to Convention Chairman, Clinton Schoonover. The text of the telegram is:

"In respect to the memory of our late President, John F. Kennedy, and all Americans who continue to mourn his tragic death, I am cancelling all engagements scheduled the balance of this year. Participation at any function might possibly be misconstrued; hence I am cancelling my scheduled appearance at your annual convention, Monday, December 2. Please notify President Wilson and Secretary-Treasurer Bauer and advise them copies of remarks previously prepared for delivery Monday are being forwarded to you today."

Bob Dole
Member of Congress