DIVISION OF SOIL AND WATER DISTRICTS

Floyd E. Heft

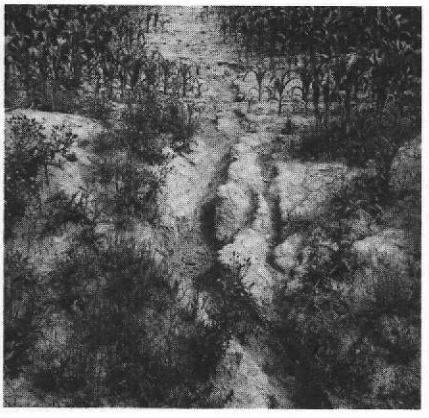

Figure 11.1. Erosion causes not only great losses to valuable soil resources but also great burdens of sediment pollution to streams and lakes. This photo from Huron County by Lloyd Young, 24 June 1977, by courtesy of the Soil Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

Figure 11.2. Grazing of livestock in woodlots not only destroys vegetation and many board feet of saw timber, but also greatly accelerates rates of soil erosion, up to 100 tons per acre annually. This photo from Warren County by Dave Berna, May 1978, by courtesy of the Soil Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

THE FLEDGLING THIRTIES

The first governmental recognition of soil erosion in our nation (Figs. 11.1 and 11.2) was marked by the Buchanan Amendment to the Agriculture Appropriation Bill enacted by the United States Congress in 1929. The appropriation of $160,000 to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for erosion investigation signaled the beginning of today's soil and water conservation programs not only in the United States but also for many other countries.

Ohio was an early and significant contributor to the development and implementation of these programs. In 1932, the federal Appalachian Erosion Experiment Station was established at Zanesville and conducted erosion experiments for 15 years. In 1933, Emergency Conservation Work Camps were started which in 1937 were transferred to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Early in 1934, the Salt Creek Watershed Demonstration Area in Muskingum County became the first of five such demonstration areas to be established in Ohio. In 1935, the North Appalachian Experimental Watershed (Coshocton Hydrologic Experiment Station) was established by USDA on the Little Mill Creek watershed in Coshocton County. This Station contin-

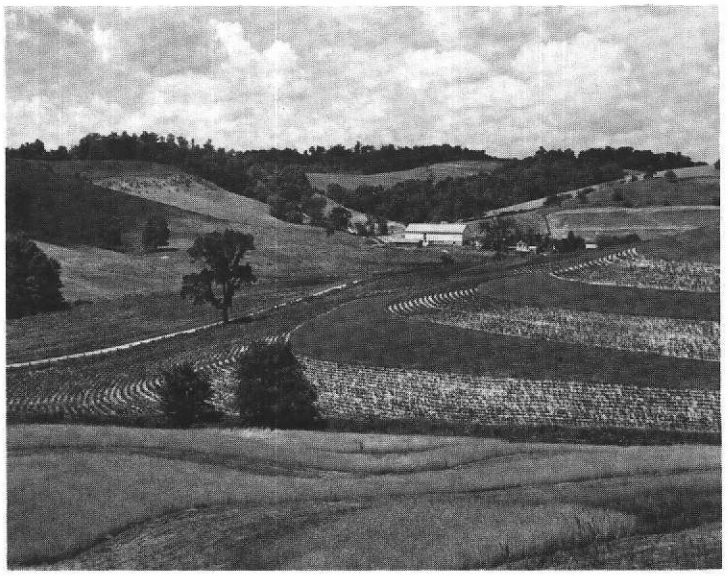

Figure 11.3. Contour strip-cropping became an accepted practice in the 1940's to reduce soil erosion on Ohio's hilly farmland as demonstrated on this farm near Baltic in Tuscarawas County. Photo by H.W. Black, 6 July 1945. Division of Soil and Water Conservation file photo.

ues to study land use and soil and water conservation practices with emphasis on water control and usage.

On 12 May 1934, the worst dust storm in the nation's history swept eastward from the Great Plains to the Atlantic Ocean, obscuring the sun and depositing obvious films of dust as it moved. This catastrophic storm served as the catalyst for public outcry and congressional action for soil and water conservation throughout the nation. On 27 April 1935, Congress passed and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Soil Conservation Act of 1935, Public Law No. 46, the preamble of which reads:

> It is hereby recognized that the wastage of soil and moisture resources on farm, grazing, and forest lands of the nation, resulting from soil erosion, is a menace to the national welfare and that it is hereby declared to be the policy of Congress to provide permanently for the control and prevention of soil erosion and hereby to preserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of reservoirs, and maintain the navigability of rivers and harbors, protect public health, public lands, and relieve unemployment.

The Act established the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) within USDA. It transformed a fairly small program, restricted to demonstration projects, to a nationwide program.

Until 1937, all the new soil and water conservation thrust had originated with the federal government working directly with landowners, primarily farmers. Farmers previously had little direct contact with USDA, and they were still very skeptical of federal involvement. Hugh H. Bennett, Chief of SCS; M.L. Wilson, Director of the federal Cooperative Extension Service; and Phil Glick, legal counsel in USDA; recognized the fragility inherent in this direct relationship between the federal government and local landowners. They realized that the future trust and long-term cooperation of landowners would depend upon a linkage of and involvement with federal, state, or local government. Because of their efforts, Congress passed a resolution, which the President signed, calling for states to become the conduit for soil and water conservation assistance from USDA to landusers through enactment of a law establishing a state soil conservation agency and procedures whereby local soil and water conservation districts could be organized. By the end of 1937, 22 states had enacted such a law, but Ohio's attempt to secure enactment in 1939 failed because of reluctant support of agricultural leadership in the state.

The decade of the 1930's, nevertheless, through federal action gave meaning and visibility to soil and water conservation. The rapid-fire passage of other laws created several federal agricultural agencies new to rural America, and not all proved acceptable. The Agricultural Adjustment Act was declared unconstitutional because of direct payments to farmers. Congress hastily amended the Act to create the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) of USDA which was viewed as constitutional because of the conservation designation and cost-sharing of payments for conservation practices. Agricultural technologies took on a new thrust as the traditional straight furrow and square field pattern yielded to the value and beauty of the contour (Fig. 11.3 and Plate 11). Erosion control and surface water management penetrated the research spectrum previously devoted primarily to agricultural production.

THE FORMATIVE FORTIES

As the decade of the 1940's began, world conflicts were bringing our nation closer to war each passing month and intense pressures were developing on farmers to increase food production on the land they managed. The 94th General Assembly retained soil conservation on its agenda, and on 16 May 1941 passed House Bill 646, which became the Ohio Soil Conservation District Enabling Act when it was signed by Governor John W. Bricker on 5 June 1941. This Act created the Ohio Soil Conservation Committee (OSCC) as an agency of the State of Ohio with offices at The

Ohio State University (OSU). The Committee's membership consisted of the Dean of the OSU College of Agriculture, the Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), and three farmers appointed by the Governor. The Act also established procedures for the formation of local Soil Conservation Districts, and the election of local District Boards of Supervisors in addition to defining the authorities and responsibilities of these local District Boards and OSCC. The roots of the Division of Soil and Water Districts trace directly to this legislation.

Procedures for the formation of a local Soil Conservation District required that a petition requesting a hearing and containing signatures of at least 75 landowners within the proposed District be submitted to OSCC. Then OSCC would conduct a public hearing concerning possible formation of the District. Testimony at the hearing provided information which assisted OSCC to determine the sufficiency of need for the District. A favorable decision resulted in OSCC authorizing the local petitioners to conduct a local referendum for or against the proposed District. Both OSCC hearings and the local referendum were advertised by legal notices in local newspapers. The description of the District's boundaries, name of the District, hearing and referendum dates, and balloting locations and times were required in the referendum legal notice. Landowners within the proposed District were eligible to vote. No referendum was ever challenged on the basis of this procedure. Results of the local referendum were tallied and certified to OSCC for review and action declaring the District organized if 65 percent of those voting favored establishment of the proposed District. Why the law required a 65-percent majority vote was never clarified, but the favorable vote in all but a few Districts exceeded 85 percent. This overwhelming support indicated that local people were dedicated to the cause of soil conservation and spoke emphatically at the polls when given the opportunity.

Administration of an organized District and its program was provided in the Act by requiring the election of a District Board of Supervisors consisting of five members, not necessarily farmers or landowners. The law stated that no Supervisor shall receive compensation for services but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of official duties. Upon submission to OSCC of petitions nominating candidates for Supervisors signed by 25 landowners within the District, OSCC conducted an election of Supervisors. OSCC, upon receipt of election results, declared a District functional and transmitted to the Ohio Secretary of State a copy of its finding and decree incorporating the District and a list of Supervisors of the District. The District thereupon became a political subdivision of the State of Ohio.

Thomas C. Kennard was designated the first USDA, SCS State Conservationist for Ohio, with David T. Herrman and Horton Alger as Assistant State Conservationists. All three were former county agents with the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service (OCES), and their knowledge and abilities helped greatly to develop the excellent working relationships between SCS, OCES, and local Districts in Ohio, a luxury which many other states did not enjoy.

A new era of soil conservation leadership erupted 25 March 1942 when OSCC met for the first time. Its membership included OSU Dean of Agriculture John F. Cunningham, ODA Director Robert Brown, Harry Silcott of Fayette County, Cosmos D. Blubaugh of Knox County, and John Grierson of Highland County. Dean Cunningham was elected the first Chair. Six petitions for the formation of local Districts were presented, and OSCC conducted official hearings on petitions from Clark, Highland, and Columbiana Counties and recognized receipt of petitions from Butler, Morrow, and Coshocton Counties. Practically all Districts in Ohio were organized by county boundaries and carried the county name as recommended by local petitioners. Although the first hearing was for the Clark Soil Conservation District, the Highland District sponsors conducted their election of Supervisors sooner after their hearing, and thereby were officially designated District No. 1 in Ohio. Many legal and procedural issues soon developed, and OSCC, with no staff, was nearly overwhelmed with organizational problems. Dean Cunningham spent much time interpreting the law and setting procedures with the help of the Ohio Attorney General. He retired in 1947, and his successor, Dean Leo L. Rummell, was also elected Chair of OSCC.

A total of 79 Districts were organized in the 1940's in

*Figure 11.4. Reforestation efforts of Soil Conservation Districts were assisted by this tree planter donated by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. **Raymond Firestone** (seated on the planter) demonstrated the process to (from left to right) **Oliver D. Diller**, a forester of the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station; **Howard Call**, a Supervisor of the Summit Soil Conservation District; and **Clay Stackhouse**, a Supervisor of the Huron Soil Conservation District. Division of Soil and Water Conservation file photo, 25 April 1952.*

79 counties leaving only nine counties not yet organized. Testimony given in support of these Districts included need for reduction of serious erosion from farming operations which resulted in loss of production capability, and need for technical assistance for design and construction of conservation practices and drainage systems. Several interesting departures from the norm took place during this organizational period. The first rejection of a District occurred when the 1943 referendum for a District in Richland County failed by a vote of 157 to 362. In October 1948, a second referendum passed creating the Richland District when well-known author and avid conservationist Louis Bromfield testified as a landowner on behalf of the Richland District. He was one of the most effective speakers in both rural and urban settings arousing nonagricultural people to support the cause of conservation. The Wayne District in 1947 asked permission to elect Supervisors on a geographic basis, but OSCC disallowed the request because the law did not provide for such structuring of the district-wide vote. The first referendum for the Darke District barely failed, and the petition hearing held by OSCC produced the first vocal opposition to a district. The opposition to a second referendum was centered in two townships that were opposed to all technical agricultural people regardless of agency and labeled them as "communist swivel-chaired leeches."

A landmark event occurred on 20 October 1943 when the Ohio Federation of Soil Conservation District Supervisors was established with three Districts participating—Clark, Butler, and Highland. This embryonic organization was destined beyond all expectation to become the most influential and respected force for land and water conservation and management in Ohio. Interested nonagricultural groups almost instantly gave support to the Federation. Trent Sickles, Manager of the Southern Hotel and Public Relations Vice President of Lazarus Department Stores in Columbus, sponsored a statewide meeting of District Supervisors on 17 December 1943 at the Southern Hotel. The Federation's first annual meeting was also held at the Southern Hotel in February 1944 with 19 organized Districts (and 18 in the process of organizing) in attendance. Allen Craig of the Clark District was elected President and continued to serve in that capacity until 1947 at which time Clay Stackhouse (Fig. 11.4) of the Huron District served as President until 1950. Both gave excellent leadership during the formative and critical stages of Soil Conservation District development in Ohio and the nation.

Early Federation activities included a request for a State appropriation to OSCC for staff support, an active role in organizing the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) (Allen Craig served on its first Board of Governors), and participation in a school for Supervisors emphasizing technical and economical aspects of conservation practices. Opportunities for joint sponsorship of programs with industry and nonagricultural interests were numerous including the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Conservation Awards Contest to identify conservation farm families and the Distinctive Service Outstanding District Recognition Program of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. The Goodyear Contest continues to remain a very strong program.

The 1940's were marked by very effective teaching and motivational activities within and among Districts, including plowing matches, air tours, and demonstration field days. The popularity of field day demonstrations was amazing as machinery companies and their dealers demonstrated the operational capabilities of their equipment. The ultimate field day was organized and conducted by the Licking District in 1947 when 75,000 people attended. It was labeled the "Second Frontier" and transformed two farms with a total face-lifting in one day. Even the line fence boundary separating the two farms was relocated on the

Figure 11.5. Use of soil inventory maps by farmers, teachers, and students has assisted development of soil and water conservation programs in Ohio. Division of Soil and Water Conservation file photo.

contour and incorporated into the titles of each farm.

The politics of the 1940's were very formative and established a pattern of operations that prevailed for two or three decades in many Districts. District politics were never partisan in nature but were limited to conservation politics. This policy position was, and is, unquestionably beneficial to District programs and the gaining of respect from landowners and the general public.

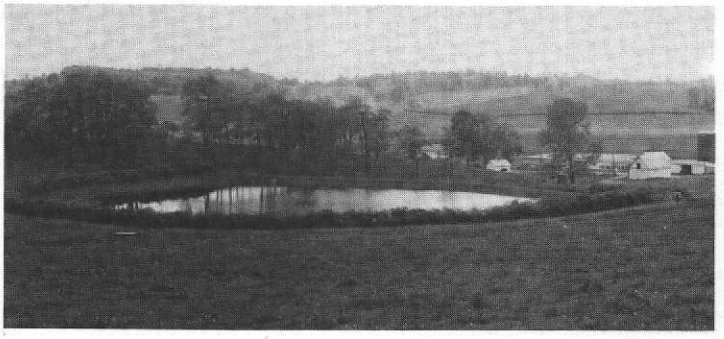

Figure 11.6. Multiflora rose was promoted in the 1940's and 1950's as a wildlife conservation plant. It was also used for living fences as shown here around this farm pond. Birds spread the seeds near and far, and the rose eventually became a noxious weed. Division of Soil and Water Conservation file photo.

Districts upon formation were encouraged to enter into agreements with USDA and SCS whereby technical conservation assistance could be provided through Districts to cooperating landowners. Basically, the District was to provide office space and operational costs for the federal technicians. Because Districts did not receive financial assistance from the State or local government, they could not provide such assistance and accepted the offer from SCS not only to provide facilities for its own employees but also to allow its office to be used as the District's office. This arrangement created an image problem for Districts because all office identification was federal and telephones were answered as such. News stories were seldom credited to the District and all field equipment was federally labeled. It was no small wonder that farmers and the public usually considered the District a federal agency run by SCS.

Regardless, the Districts appreciated their autonomy and guarded it very effectively. An unsuccessful challenge to this autonomy developed in 1944 when a bill was introduced into the Ohio General Assembly to place all conservation agencies into a single department of State government. Supervisors adamantly rejected the concept because they viewed entrance into the partisan political setting as detrimental to their local acceptance. A second challenge developed in 1948 when bills were introduced into Congress to place SCS under the federal Cooperative Extension Service. Districts throughout the nation objected strenuously, and the legislation did not pass. Districts continued to oppose becoming a part of a State department, and when in 1949 the Ohio Department of Natural Resources was created by Amended Senate Bill 13, Districts and OSCC were not included.

Conservation technology developed rapidly with the introductions of trash mulch seeding, drainage terracing systems, farm soil inventory maps (Fig. 11.5), and multiflora rose for living fences (Fig. 11.6). Administrators oversold this plant and it eventually became a pest of serious proportions. Nevertheless, the programs of the 1940's benefited from strong leadership, good judgment, understanding, initiative, and imagination from local, state, and national conservation leaders. Both the framework and groundwork had been laid firmly for future activities.

THE BREAKTHROUGH FIFTIES

The soil conservation movement in Ohio experienced landmark success in the 1950's. The long-sought State appropriation to OSCC was approved in 1950 and staff was hired to assist Districts. The enactment of House Bill 116 in 1951 authorized county commissioners to appropriate funds to Districts and the State to match such appropriations. It also provided sufficient additional funds for OSCC to hire an Executive Secretary. Floyd E. Heft (Fig. 11.7) was named to this position in 1951, and he was immediately engaged as Treasurer for the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Convention to be held in Cleveland in 1952.

Districts rapidly pursued county appropriations and gave first priority to hiring secretaries which released

*Figure 11.7. **Floyd E. Heft**, Executive Secretary of the Ohio Soil Conservation Committee, 1951-1969; Executive Secretary of the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission, 1969-1981; and Chief of the Division of Soil and Water Districts, 1969-1981.*

professional employees from secretarial duties and allowed more time for landuser assistance. All Districts had secretaries, and many had technical employees, by the end of the 1950's. Petitions from seven of the eight remaining counties were received and approved, leaving only Lucas as the last District to be organized in the 1960's.

Actions pursued by Districts in 1951 and 1952 included: 1) an Attorney General's opinion that payment of costs of legal notices for District Supervisor elections was a responsibility of OSCC and not of a District; 2) tenant farmers in addition to landowners were permitted to vote in District Supervisor elections; 3) cooperation with the Ohio Agricultural Experimental Station and the Coshocton Hydrologic Experiment Station to publish the information bulletin, "Studies in Soil and Water Conservation;" and 4) publication of a quarterly, "Conservation District News."

In 1952, Congress again proposed to place SCS under the federal Cooperative Extension Service over strong District objection. Districts won the battle, but SCS structure was changed to eliminate all regional offices thus linking Washington, D.C. directly to the states. Hugh Bennett retired as Chief of SCS, and an Ohio agronomist, Dr. Robert Salter, was named his successor. The United States Secretary of Agriculture issued Memorandum 1278 giving SCS technical approval responsibility for design and construction of conservation practices receiving cost-sharing from ASCS. Districts viewed this action as diluting SCS technical services assigned to Districts and objected, but the memorandum prevailed. This policy actually benefited Districts because it provided their services to many noncooperating farmers, and technically sound practices were installed on the land resources within the District with or without a conservation plan.

The year 1954 may truly be called a "watershed year" for conservation. Congress passed Public Law 83-566, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, authorizing and funding SCS planning and construction of facilities and features within a hydrological unit (watershed) not to exceed 250,000 acres in size. The Act was opposed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers because of that agency's position that flood protection could not be cost-effective under the small watershed concept, and the "big dam—little dam" battle of the early 1950's was launched. Congress in 1953 had authorized two pilot projects in Ohio, Upper Hocking in Fairfield District and Rocky Fork in Highland District. These projects, in addition to others nationally, were to provide evidence for or against establishment of a major, permanent, small watershed program. Interestingly, Congress was impatient and moved the following year to make the "Watershed" program permanent and began major funding as pilot watershed-planning was just getting under way. Governor Frank J. Lausche designated ODNR as the "Small Watershed" coordinating agency for Ohio.

Dr. Robert Salter resigned as Chief of SCS; and Donald Williams, an engineer, was named Chief, the first time that an agronomist did not head SCS. In the 1930's, a friendly, but obvious, jealousy existed between soil scientists and engineers within SCS, and it soon became apparent that the program emphasis of SCS varied directly with the type of training of the Chief. Emphasis with a fervor for the Watershed program and its emphasis on engineering prevailed during the tenure of Donald Williams, quite in contrast to the emphasis on erosion control during the tenures of the soil scientists Bennett and Salter.

Districts were very quick to accept and respond to SCS persuasion and take advantage of what appeared to be a financial bonanza to a troubled watershed. One of the first watershed applications was submitted by the Wayne, Medina, and Summit Districts involving the Chippewa Watershed. Some *25 years* later the complex Chippewa project plan was completed. Local sponsors and public interest groups had challenged, and almost aborted, the project several times. One of the more bizarre events occurred when SCS suggested to Supervisors and others that they should issue personal notes in the amount of $6000 to provide for local administrative costs without any guarantee of repayment. These generous people had to pay interest on these notes for ten years or more before receiving reimbursement. The Buffalo Watershed project sponsors in Noble and Guernsey Counties provided funds by personal notes of $1500 each and never received repayment due to

*Figure 11.8. **Vince West**, farmer and a Supervisor of the Jefferson Soil Conservation District from 1966-1977, frequently shared his insights and knowledge of soil and food production with students. Division of Soil and Water Conservation file photo.*

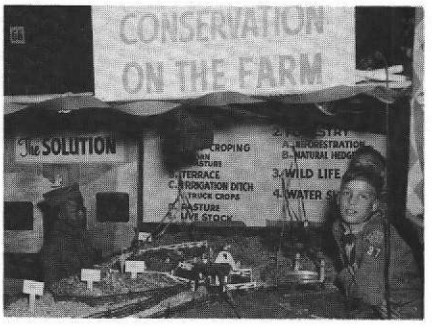

Figure 11.9. Science fairs have provided opportunities for students to learn the values of soil and water conservation. Division of Soil and Water Conservation file photo.

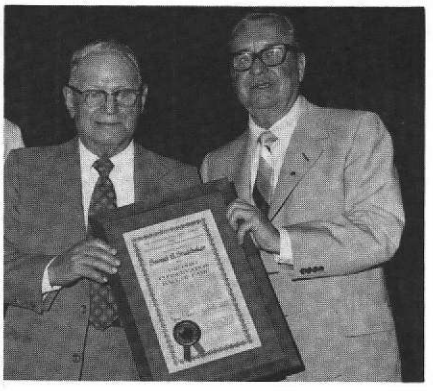

*Figure 11.11. **Sam Studebaker** of the Miami Soil Conservation District was the first Ohioan elected President of the National Association of Conservation Districts. **Governor James A. Rhodes** (on right) presented him with his certificate of induction into the Ohio Conservation Hall of Fame in 1976. Division of Soil and Water Conservation file photo.*

*Figure 11.10. Ohio leads the nation with 25 National Plowing Champions, six of whom are shown here (from left to right): **Martin Cummins** of Lewistown (1952), **R.C. "Bus" Cummins** of Lewistown (1953), **Lou Goettemoeller** of St. Henry (1956 and 1957), **Don Barbee** of Conover (1955), **Duane Mootz** of Hillsboro (1957), and **Robert Grieser** of Springfield (1960).*

failure of the project. Watershed project experience of the 1950's quickly identified the complexity of such projects in a highly populated state with an extensive network of public utilities and political subdivisions. Simpler alternatives needed to be provided by law for use in Watershed project areas.

Conservation education grew rapidly in the 1950's. Major new and expanded activities included educational programs (Figs. 11.8 and 11.9), publications, expanded training schools for District Supervisors, new educational format for Ohio 4-H Conservation Camp, soil stewardship materials for churches, air tours to view conservation practices, cosponsorship of world conservation expositions and plowing matches in Adams District (Fig. 11.10), Queen of the Furrow Contest, and a graduate course in conservation for professionals.

Districts through the Ohio Federation succeeded in many actions beneficial to Ohio's land and water management in the 1950's. These included employment of additional technicians from expanded State appropriations, activation of the Division of Lands and Soil for statewide soil surveys (see Chapter 13), expansion of the OSU Soil Testing Program, promotion of legislation and funding for liaison engineering assistance with Ohio Department of Transportation regarding drainage of lands adjacent to new and old construction, and assisting revision of the Ohio drainage law to include mandatory maintenance provisions and establishment of sod berms to reduce sediment pollution. House Bill 352, enacted in 1959, provided $75,000 for the beginning of State financial assistance to Districts for local technicians. Viewed as unattainable by many, the Bill passed with only two dissenting votes in both the House and Senate. Districts annually supported regulation of strip mining. Legislation in 1949 had created a Division of Reclamation in ODA, and additional legislation strengthened reclamation regulations and moved the Division of Reclamation to ODNR in 1959 (see Chapter 12).

The Ohio Federation in the 1950's profited from good local leadership and five outstanding, unselfish Presidents: James Lane (1950-1951), a fruit farmer of Greene District; Orran Hofstetter (1952-1953) of Wayne District, a natural salesperson and promoter; Frank Sollars (1954-1955) of Fayette District, the youngest President and an outstanding innovative farmer; Robert Grieser (1956-1957) of Clark District, a farmer and excellent community and state leader (Fig. 11.10); Sam Studebaker (1958-1959) of Miami District, farmer, a molder of unity, and first Ohio President of the National Association of Conservation Districts (Fig. 11.11). Robert Grieser's and Sam Studebaker's induction into both the Ohio Conservation and Agriculture Halls of Fame and

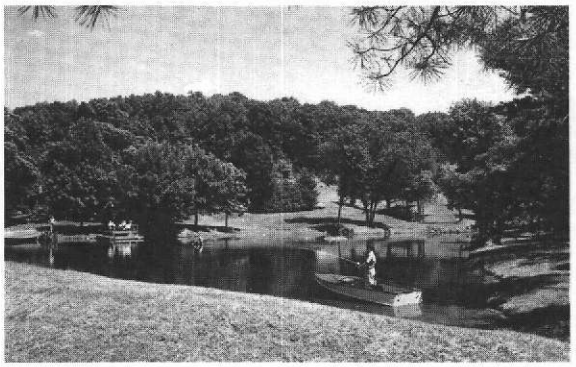

Figure 11.12. Soil and Water Conservation Districts have assisted in the installation of over 25,000 ponds in Ohio. Division of Soil and Water Conservation file photo.

*Figure 11.13. **Gene Derickson** (on right), the second full-time staff member of the Ohio Soil Conservation Committee, and **Larry Vance**, the second Chief of the Division of Soil and Water Districts, 1981-1982. Derickson retired in 1983 and Vance currently serves as Chief of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation.*

Frank Sollars' induction into the Ohio Agriculture Hall of Fame are indicative of their leadership qualities. Districts and the Ohio Federation came of age in the 1950's. Both were successful in legislative endeavors and initiating District identity with their State legislators through a very successful annual legislative breakfast, the first of which was held in 1959. They had laid the cornerstones for the building of the future.

The 1950's saw the beginning of a major shift in farm operations. Inexpensive nitrogen fertilizer entered the scene and farmers began to expand acreages and to move from multiple to singular enterprise systems, specializing either in livestock or grain but not both. Herbicides and pesticides entered the market, fences and fencerows began to disappear, and larger fields brought larger equipment. Conservation by use of crop rotation seemed in jeopardy. The advocates of the new technical revolution defended their position by pointing to increased biomass remaining on the ground for incorporation into the soil, thereby retaining the organic content and structure of the soil. This concept still remains questionable but economics prevailed. The new system brought havoc to the remaining woodlots and fencerows particularly in northwestern Ohio as it was more economical to clear and drain existing woodlot acres than to purchase additional acres. New tillage techniques began intriguing researchers and innovative farmers. Installation of farm ponds expanded to over 1000 per year (Fig. 11.12), and water rights issues took center stage momentarily in 1955 as severe drought occurred in certain areas of the state.

Structural and organizational changes of OSCC during the 1950's expanded the Committee to seven members to include the ODNR Director and an additional farmer. Herbert Eagon, prior to his appointment as ODNR Director, was appointed farmer member and ODNR Director Marion became a new member. The Ohio State University representative to OSCC, Dean L.L. Rummell, retired and Dr. Roy M. Kottman replaced him. Herbert Eagon became ODNR Director in 1957, and resigned from the Committee as farmer member. SCS leadership changed in 1959 as the first State Conservationist for Ohio, Thomas Kennard, retired and Raymond Brown succeeded him. Brown was an engineer by training and was given a strong mandate by SCS Chief Williams to get the Public Law 83-566 Watershed program moving in Ohio. Gene Derickson (Fig. 11.13) was hired in 1959 as the second full-time staff member of OSCC and was given responsibility for statewide program development.

THE TESTY SIXTIES

The role of the soil conservation movement in Ohio in the 1960's moved from an almost total orientation of agricultural soil conservation to one involving soil and water conservation with a much-expanded segment of citizens' interests. The capabilities of Districts to service water conservation needs fully were challenged constantly by legal restraints of the law governing them.

Program expansion suffered because of the structural position of OSCC within State government. The SCS expansionist philosophy, in view of a shrinking agricultural clientele, brought pressures to include new programs serving nonagricultural interests. Districts by receiving and expending public funds came under scrutiny of State auditors. Many operational changes during the 1960's were attained only after testy debates and greater scrutiny than in any previous time. Watershed activities and applications soared with great rapidity. By 1964, 53 Watershed applications were submitted of which six were being planned and eight approved for planning.

The new federal engineering thrust, championed by the newly named State Conservationist, focused upon obtaining a rapid increase of Watershed applications from local organizations. The most pronounced expansion occurred in the Maumee River basin of northwestern Ohio. The Maumee Conservancy District joined with local boards of county commissioners and soil conservation districts to blanket the Maumee River basin with Public Law 83-566 Watershed applications. Although such applications claimed flood protection as their main objective, greater benefits would accrue to agriculture from improved drain-

*Figure 11.14. Supervisors of the Jackson Soil Conservation District in the mid-1960's, from left to right, seated: **Wayne Brown** and **Rex Jolly**. Standing: **Paul Jones**, **Earl Lemaster**, and **Floyd Philips**. Division of Soil and Water Conservation file photo.*

age of farm lands. County commissioners and Districts visualized financial assistance for their continuous challenge in finding adequate subsurface drainage outlets for farm drainage systems. SCS, headed by an engineer interpreting the law, saw that a flood control effort through enlarging major drainage channels would give extensive relief to drainage needs and greatly expand the local demand for Watershed projects. The Maumee Conservancy District saw the Watershed program as a logical opportunity to become involved in a meaningful, visual, public action program (see Figure 9.28 on page 136).

The explosion of Watershed applications in Ohio caused many problems. The planning capability of SCS was swamped and generated a need for establishing a dual planning priority system by ODNR to prevent SCS from giving priority to the Maumee applications over older applications from other areas of the state. Processing of applications took so long that local interests subsided and, in some cases, disappeared or became a testy force of disenchantment and bickering criticism. SCS argued that extra planning money could be secured only by flooding Congress with Watershed applications and local pressure for planning assistance. Ohio was unable to provide funds to SCS for additional Watershed planning staff, and federal construction funds were so inadequate that completion of projects required decades, not years as promised.

The late 1960's became even more testy for the Public Law 83-566 Watershed program in Ohio as meetings organized by environmental groups in 1969 drew national attention to the Watershed program as destroying biological and vegetative environments in and around streams. The Little Auglaize Watershed project in the Maumee River basin drew special attention through national media coverage during its channelizing, or reconstruction, phase in the late 1960's. Environmental interests began to counterbalance drainage and engineering initiatives.

Environmental organizations succeeded in establishing federal policy that any federal project had to produce an acceptable Environmental Impact Statement endorsed by many agencies and levels of government, some of which were hostile to each other. The Watershed program brought extensive polarization among conservation organizations having opposite views. Although the Watershed program had served to alleviate some community problems in some watersheds, the program was brought to a virtual standstill until federal policy addressed the environmental issues of design and cost by permitting mitigating environmental costs to be paid by federal funds. Federal appropriations during these testy years diminished greatly. Districts were not spared from criticism. Their inability to identify as a local independent unit of government and not as a part of the federal SCS was cause for guilt-by-association.

Ohio's Districts, OSCC, and the Federation secured legislation to provide for their voluntary name change to include water to represent better their major natural resource areas of service. Within two years, all local Districts changed their names to include water; for example, the Jackson Soil Conservation District (Fig. 11.14) changed its name to the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District. Such name changes are certified with the Ohio Secretary of State. OSCC's name was changed to the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Committee, and the Federation changed its name to the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Because of their extensive tree-planting activities and forest management interests, Districts had frequently encouraged expansion of the forestry program at OSU. Neither OSU nor any other school in Ohio had an accredited forestry program, and Ohio students desiring to obtain a degree in forestry were obliged to leave Ohio to find such a program. For many years, resolutions to enlarge the forestry program at OSU had been passed by Districts and forwarded to the University, but few tangible results developed. Eventually, the Federation, prompted by the Athens District, passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a School of Forestry at Ohio University in Athens. Administrators at OSU were quick to understand that message and moved immediately to address the Districts' major concerns. An agreement was negotiated with Michigan State University whereby Ohio students could obtain a

forestry degree at Michigan State with OSU paying the additional out-of-state fees. Shortly thereafter, OSU added additional forestry faculty which led to the establishment of degree programs in Forest Industry Management and Forest Products Management. Districts had accomplished a significant long-term improvement, not only for their own interests but for others as well.

Soil erosion in and about incorporated areas resulting from exploding residential and other urban and suburban development became a concern. Because of the impacts of such erosion on drainage channels, storm sewers, and water supply reservoirs, many incorporated areas became a part of Districts by petition (Fig. 11.15). Cooperation between Districts and incorporated areas led to such programs as evaluation of a soils capability to support industrial building and various housing structures; downstream impact of accelerated water flow from housing, industrial, and shopping center sites; and the possibility of multiple-purpose structures for water impoundment, retardation, sediment control, and recreational facilities at a given site within an urban-growth area.

Similarly, many boards of county commissioners negotiated working agreements with their local District to supply its technical review of all building permit requests outside incorporated areas, including information on soil capacities to assimilate effluent from private septic systems and the necessary leach bed capacity and design for various soil types.

Multiflora rose had generated so much landowner concern because of its spreading and difficulty of control that districts pursued passage of legislation designating it as a noxious weed and prohibiting its propagation in Ohio. Objection to the rose became so intense and eradication so expensive that ASCS developed a cost-share practice for its control, a total reversal of the cost-sharing practice for the original establishment of multiflora rose plantings in the 1940's and early 1950's.

Local Districts took drainage maintenance seriously and began working with the county engineer and board of county commissioners to put the maintenance program in operation. Henry District pioneered a precedent-setting example by entering into an agreement with its county engineer and county commissioners whereby the District inspects drainage facilities concerning maintenance needs and actually conducts the appropriate maintenance work, charging the costs back to the county. The District hires personnel and buys the required equipment. Because of excellent results at less cost, many other Districts have followed this example.

Major legislation, Senate Bill 160, was passed by the General Assembly in 1969. It replaced the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Committee by creating the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission (OSWCC) and the Division of Soil and Water Districts in the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Districts and OSCC, with support of other farm organizations, ODA, and ODNR, provided the major thrust in enactment of Senate Bill 160. There were five compelling reasons for Districts to switch their long-standing position of opposing a merger into any department of State government:

1) Greater State financial involvement in Watershed projects was essential in light of experiences in the Chippewa and Buffalo Creek Watersheds.

2) Districts, to secure the amounts of money required for Watershed projects and other District programs, needed an organizational connection with a department of State government having cabinet status.

3) Districts and OSCC had gained public and legislative respect sufficient to request and attain their desired status and authorities within a major department of State government.

4) Although recognizing the greatly expanded partisan political influence in ODNR since 1963, Districts had developed sufficient political clout in soil and water conservation affairs either to prevent or alter significantly any future irrational or politically motivated administrative directives.

5) District programs could serve better local needs if Districts possessed the ability to communicate directly through State administrative channels.

The Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Committee, by motion made by ODA Director John Stackhouse, seconded by Dean Kottman, unanimously approved merging into

Figure 11.15. Severe soil erosion associated with urban and suburban development stimulated some incorporated areas in the late 1960's to petition to become part of a Soil and Water Conservation District. This photo from Franklin County by Gene Alexander, 3 June 1980, by courtesy of the Soil Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

ODNR. Chair Harle Hicks appointed a committee to draft the necessary legislation bringing about the merger and containing certain provisions necessary for the Committee's support. Districts gave their tentative support contingent upon approval of the finally drafted legislation. Essential provisions for support of the Districts were as follows:

1) The Committee be made a Commission advisory to a newly created Division and be given representative membership on the Recreation and Resources Commission functioning as advisory to the ODNR Director.

2) The Commission to consist of seven members: Dean of OSU College of Agriculture, ODA Director, four members appointed by the Governor of which not more than two shall be from the same major political party, and a member appointed by resolution of the Federation; the ODNR Director to be an advisory member.

3) The Commission would retain authority to distribute State matching funds to Districts, to supervise elections in local Districts, to make loans for preliminary expenses necessary in planning Watershed and other conservation works of improvements, to authorize creation of joint boards between Districts, to recommend to the ODNR Director State cost-share funds for construction of Watershed projects and conservation works of improvements, and to have the services of an Executive Secretary designated by ODNR.

All these provisions were included in Senate Bill 160; however, ODNR initially pursued a section status in the Department rather than a divisional status. The Committee and districts disagreed and succeeded in securing divisional status. Senator Harry Armstrong of Logan was the prime sponsor of the Bill and insisted upon divisional status. Armstrong, a past District Supervisor, Treasurer of the Ohio Federation, Hocking County Commissioner, and State Representative, had misgivings about the merger. He feared injection of partisan politics into the soil and water conservation arena. Districts, OSWCC, and staff experienced some degree of skepticism in autumn of 1969 when the physical move and organizational move into ODNR were accomplished. Floyd Heft (Fig. 11.7) was appointed Chief of the newly created Division of Soil and Water Districts and Executive Secretary of OSWCC.

After enactment of Senate Bill 160 in 1969, the newly established Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission (OSWCC) elected David Urmston of Butler District as its first Chair. Other appointed members were Orran Hofstetter of Wayne District, Robert Grieser of Clark District, and Donald Leith of Fairfield District. Jay Skinner of Delaware District was the first appointed member by resolution of the Federation.

Expansion of programs and services included in Senate Bill 160 has provided more opportunities for natural resources management at the local District level every year since its passage. The most significant was the provision for sponsorship and implementation of Watershed projects and Conservation Works of Improvement (CWI) supported by a rotary loan fund and a cost-share fund to pay the costs of public benefits designed into a project. The provision for CWI in Senate Bill 160 was approved by the General Assembly to assist the Public Law 83-566 Watershed program in Ohio. This specific language provided for not only small watersheds but also for any other project that would enhance natural resource management. Recreation, forestry, wildlife, water supply, flood control, and many other types of natural resource projects qualify under the present language. Districts have successfully and increasingly used these provisions of Senate Bill 160 to solve local needs both rural and urban.

In 1965, Ohio again hosted the National Convention of the National Association of Conservation Districts, this time in Cincinnati. A long-sought goal of Districts was partially attained as soils in Ohio were being classified regarding their production potential and then could be taxed according to their Capability Analysis and Use Valuation rating. The Ohio Tax Commission assisted counties in adopting the new appraisal and tax reduction program for lands committed to agricultural use. Districts and the Committee in cooperation with other agencies organized a State Tile Quality Committee to develop a program assuring quality tile for farm use that will meet federal ASCS cost-share

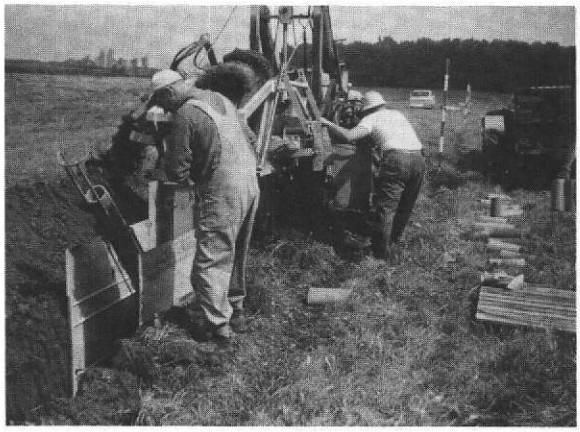

Figure 11.16. Installation of subsurface drainage tile on a Preble County farm in the 1960's. Division of Soil and Water Conservation file photo.

requirements (Fig. 11.16). The Miami District successfully pursuaded their county commissioners in 1966 to appropriate $10,000 to support and expedite a countywide soil survey in cooperation with the State Soil Inventory Board. This precedent pursuaded many more Districts and counties to do the same, greatly accelerating the statewide soil survey.

Excellent leadership prevailed in the Districts and the Federation in the 1960's: Harle Hicks (1960-1961) of Putnam District, a successful grain farmer and cattle feeder; Sam Frantz (1962-1963) of Franklin District, an agricultural engineering graduate of OSU, a certified seed producer, and a community leader; Paul Stockman (1964), a grain farmer from Henry District served only one year due to his untimely death by cancer; Homer Bohl of Highland District, a good public speaker and producer of registered Jersey cattle, became President in 1965 to complete Stockman's term and again was elected in 1966; Wayne Darr (1967-1968) of Coshocton District, a successful cattle feeder; and Harold Dobbins (1969-1970) of Greene District, a grain and livestock farmer. In 1968, the Committee hired Robert Goettemoeller as a third staff person, and Floyd Heft served as the first President of the National Association of State Conservation Administrative Officers.

The 1960's ended with Raymond Brown's retirement as State Conservationist of SCS and Robert Quilliam's appointment to that position. The administrative and operational philosophies of SCS changed significantly—to less testy patterns, similar to those of the original State Conservationists.

THE RENAISSANCE SEVENTIES

Conservation politics and legislative action dominated the 1970's. A decade with major confrontations between energetic, crusading, idealistic, newly organized and existing environmental groups had arrived. The Vietnam War had spawned public unrest to the point of resentment of the federal government particularly and, to a lesser degree, state and local government. The "Establishment," denoting the industrial complex and its profit motivation at all costs, did not go unchallenged. Management practices on natural resources in rural areas were highlighted as environmental crusaders demanded preservation and restoration of already damaged natural resources. Districts were portrayed by environmental advocates as not having been responsible in their soil and water conservation efforts toward wise management through land use according to capability. Specifically, the condemnations by environmentalists of "channelization" encompassed in the Public Law 83-566 Watershed program and the use of agricultural chemicals for agriculture production sent tremors throughout the agricultural community. In a similar (but not quite as radical) atmosphere, soil conservation programs born in the 1930's by a dust storm, were criticized as not having resolved the problem in forty years and if things did not soon change directions, the land would be depleted and productivity lost and the water unfit to use. Districts were deeply concerned, especially regarding the emotional and dramatic attention given to these issues by the media and legislative bodies. Older experienced District Supervisors predicted an environmental overkill followed by a more reasonable and realistic program of environmental actions.

The major environmental thrusts in the early 1970's culminated in the enactment of the federal Clean Water Act with immediate targeting of point sources of pollution from industrial and municipal polluters. These were not easy targets but they were manageable targets. Districts, the Commission, and the Division were analyzing these actions in anticipation of future legislative thrusts and they ultimately established five basic positions:

1) Nonpoint source pollutants would not go unidentified and would involve pollutants primarily originating from farms and other land-disturbing activities.

2) Although not desiring regulatory responsibilities, Districts were the logical administrative structure to deal with pollution from agricultural operations and other land-disturbing activities.

3) Districts possessed the capability and knowledge of working with agriculture and its complex uncontrollable aspects. The Division was well-positioned within ODNR to enable development of a broadly based resources management program coordinated locally through Districts to users of the land.

4) Due to the nature and complexities of the reasonable control of nonpoint pollutants, the major point of attack must be by a local governmental unit; and if Districts did not accept the responsibility, another existing or newly created local unit of government would.

5) Many of the conceivable pollution control practices and structures that may be required were synonymous with present-day conservation practices.

These conservation groups, agricultural organizations, and State and federal agencies agreed that it behooved Soil and Water Conservation Districts to take the initiative for developing a nonpoint source pollution abatement program for Ohio. Action prior to any major environmental thrust was appropriate because such sensitive programs can best be developed outside an emotionally charged, emergency oriented atmosphere. Senate Bill 305 was enacted in 1971 giving responsibility to the Division of Soil and Water Districts and two technical advisory boards named by the Division for the development of an agricultural pollution abatement and urban sediment pollution abatement program. Districts, OSWCC, and the Division after three years of frustration, criticism, and defensive tactics surrounding the "channelization" issue had regained a favorable public image and were again on the offensive in their pursuit of wise natural resource management.

Another major initiative began in 1970. Districts were finding that their programs had matured and their staffs had grown to the degree that more management assistance at the District program level was needed. Executive Secretaries for Districts were viewed as a way to provide more program direction by the Supervisors, delegating day-to-day staff and program details to be handled by the Executive Secretary. Several Districts had developed broadly based agricultural and urban assistance programs that extended beyond the scope of traditional SCS and OCES programs, and those Districts needed to develop and manage employees and programs accordingly.

The Division also responded by initiating a program specialist project through which District program development and administrative assistance could be coordinated at a regional level. Larry Vance filled the first of eventually ten positions to serve this need. Vance became the fourth Division staff member in 1970.

A change of State administration and political party control in January 1971 brought many new philosophies and pursuits into ODNR with the appointment of Director William B. Nye. The Division and Districts received extensive support from Nye's administration in the form of a large increase in State matching funds for Districts and Division staff expansion. Three staff positions were funded to assist Robert Goettemoeller, the newly designated pollution abatement coordinator, and three new field program specialist positions were established.

After more than two years of research, debate, and strategy considerations, the Agricultural Nonpoint Pollution Abatement Program was approved by OSWCC and Director Nye. Recommendations centered around four types of potential pollutants: agricultural erosion, agricultural chemicals, animal wastes, and air pollution. Strategies included the following: 1) an economic fairness strategy, 2) a fair enforcement procedure emphasizing local review and peer evaluation, 3) a public complaint procedure, 4) an educational and informational initiative, 5) a technical assistance service, and 6) a cost-share strategy.

The Urban Sediment Pollution Abatement Program was completed and submitted to OSWCC for review and recommendation a few months later. It encountered more debate regarding strategies of approach, content, and implementation due to involvement of realtors, builders, townships, counties, and incorporated municipalities. Concerns focused on impingement upon municipal "home rule" doctrines of law, burdening the construction industry with additional permit delays and requirements, and extensive costs of applying corrective measures. Strategies included the following: 1) an implementation and enforcement strategy, 2) a suggestion that the original permit for

construction be issued by local units of government, 3) an assurance that there would be no interference or involvement by State government should local units enact and enforce ordinances, and 4) a model ordinance to be prepared by the Division with an illustrated publication.

The mid-1970's brought additional emphasis upon nonpoint source pollutants as the federal Clean Water Act required a "208 Plan" for all pollution abatement efforts to attain fishable, swimable waters by 1985. Guidelines of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for acceptable 208 Plans required the inclusion of a nonpoint source pollution abatement strategy containing enforcement capability for attainment of clean water goals. The Agricultural and Urban Sediment Pollution Abatement Programs then being developed by the Division fit the requirements perfectly by required legislative enactment of the necessary authorization. Both Programs were approved by OSWCC, Director Nye, and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) Director Ira Whitman.

Another change of State administration and political party control in January 1975 resulted in the appointment of a new ODNR Director, Robert W. Teater, and a new OEPA Director, Ned E. Williams, both of whom were supportive of the Programs and the need for legislation. In spite of strong opposition from ODA Director John Stackhouse, who was also a member of OSWCC, legislation was introduced in 1977 by Representative Fred Deering, a farmer from Monroeville well-acquainted with Districts and the Division. After much debate and numerous revisions, a weakened bill was enacted in 1978. Rules for Ohio's nonpoint source pollution abatement programs were adopted and the cost-share provisions put into operation with limited funds starting in 1980.

The 1970's produced many other legislative and conservation politics activities. The Ohio Soil Conservation District law was amended to place all lands in a county into the existing Soil and Water Conservation District and to grant all owners and occupiers the right to vote in electing District Supervisors. The Ohio Drainage laws were amended to modernize antiquated, cumbersome, and procedural conflicts. Districts and OSWCC strongly supported "Bottle Bill" legislation in an effort to control throw-away containers and to reduce litter, because throw-away cans and bottles were proving quite hazardous to farm equipment operations, livestock, and human safety. Operationally, the Districts, Division, and OSWCC experienced several challenges and a gradual shift to less federal assistance and greater State and local assistance with similar shifts of program activities, administrative responsibilities, and control.

As an outgrowth of the issues of the 1970's, watershed project activities in Ohio slowed rapidly. A total of 81 applications had been submitted by 1981, and yet only five projects had been completed over the years, three of which were very small. CWI projects under Senate Bill 160, utilizing a much less bureaucratic procedure and focusing on local involvement and funding support, however, were being initiated rapidly throughout Ohio by Districts. The CWI loan and cost-share provisions were being extensively pursued. The popularity of State-local partnership exceeded all expections by the end of the decade. A few of the projects pioneered new frontiers of service and working relations with other units of government. The Ross District initiated an agreement with the Ross County Commissioners and City of Chillicothe in the construction of the Adena-Philclare Flood Control project, protecting a residential area. The Licking District structured an agreement with the Licking County Commissioners, City of Newark, and the Corps of Engineers to plan and construct the Log Pond Run Diversion Flood Control project protecting residential and small businesses in northwestern Newark. Monroe Memorial Park at Woodsfield was a recreation-based CWI. The Geauga District succeeded in securing enactment of the first Ohio countywide sediment control ordinance by the Geauga County Commissioners.

Two significant court cases in Ohio gave great strength and attention to urban sediment control and off-site damages caused by accelerated flow. The City of Lorain was declared liable and required to compensate for the increased flooding frequency of farmland immediately below the outlet of a newly constructed storm sewer required for urban development. The City of Mayfield Village in

Figure 11.17. This conservation tillage demonstration plot established by the Hancock Soil and Water Conservation District was typical of similar efforts by many Districts in the 1970's and 1980's to communicate the advantages of no-till to reluctant farmers. Division of Soil and Water Conservation file photo.

Cuyahoga County was found guilty of creating unreasonable damage to residences downstream from a shopping center for which the city had issued a building permit without adequate provisions for accelerated water runoff generated by the shopping center. Mayfield Village was ordered to satisfy the damages to the downstream residences. These two court cases were appealed to higher courts; the Lorain case to the Ohio Supreme Court, and the Mayfield Village case to the United States District Court of Appeals. In both cases, the higher courts found in favor of the plaintiff.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service discontinued providing fish fingerlings to stock farm ponds upon construction unless the pond was made available for public fishing. Districts pursued continuation of the stocking program as in the past, but failed. Today, practically all newly constructed farm ponds are stocked by the landowners by purchase of fingerlings from private hatcheries. Many Districts coordinate the fingerling sale as a service once or twice annually. The void was filled. The Districts' and farmers' objection to public fishing on these ponds was predicated upon the personal liability the farmer assumes in case of an accident by permitting public access.

The Corps of Engineers and Congress activated an authority of the Corps to regulate dredge and fill activities nationwide and gave it added definition and authority for the Corps to administer. The program was dubbed the "404 permit system" because it was authorized under Section 404 of Public Law 92-500. The Corps' expansive definition of terms alarmed farmers and local officials, and the permit system brought loud and forceful objections from Districts and farmers. The protests were heard, and many implementation limitations and procedures were altered.

In regard to technical capabilities, the Division, Districts, and OSWCC established an unprecedented level of acceptance and performance in the 1970's. A significant dialogue with USEPA regarding animal waste regulations and the issuance of permits and monitoring of tile drain outlets gained excellent results. The idea of issuance of permits for tile outlets was eliminated as totally impractical and nearly impossible. Animal waste regulations were adopted which practically paralleled the Ohio regulation and implementation strategy.

Conservation tillage, although meaning different things to different farm operators, gained a significant place in conservation technology and application during the 1970's. The range in definition included the elimination of one seedbed preparation operation over the land to no land disturbance at all, commonly termed "no-till." Conservation tillage by any definition served to reduce land compaction, erosion, water runoff, and the exposure of the soil to rainfall through the retention of surface biomass, commonly known as surface mulch. No-till was the ultimate in almost eliminating soil erosion and maximizing infiltration and percolation of rainfall. Research and use proved no-till to be equal or better in more ways than any previously recommended conservation practice. The practice requires less labor, lower fuel costs, equipment investment, and tractor horsepower, and less preplanting preparation. It does, however, require the use of more chemicals, a more expensive planter with special design, and sharper management skills. Even with all the benefits, farmers were reluctant to adopt this "radical change in the way they farmed" until they had practical hands-on experience. Districts worked to resolve this limitation through no-till demonstrations (Fig. 11.17) and farmer-field trial programs. Districts proceeded to purchase, rent, or lease no-till equipment from the various local implement dealers for use by several interested farmers on a small acreage for one, two, or three years. Usually, this learning experience was enough for the farmer to adopt the practice and decide whether to use no-till on more or all the acreage and to purchase the equipment.

All forms of conservation tillage were given extensive recognition as one of the primary practices needed to reduce nonpoint source pollutants coming from agricultural operations. The Seneca, Huron, and Crawford Districts formed a Joint Board of Supervisors and entered into a three-year cooperative agreement with the Corps of Engineers to measure and evaluate the pollution abatement and economic impacts of no-till farming and the farmers acceptance attitudes within the Honey Creek Watershed. The project also gave added information to Dr. David Baker of

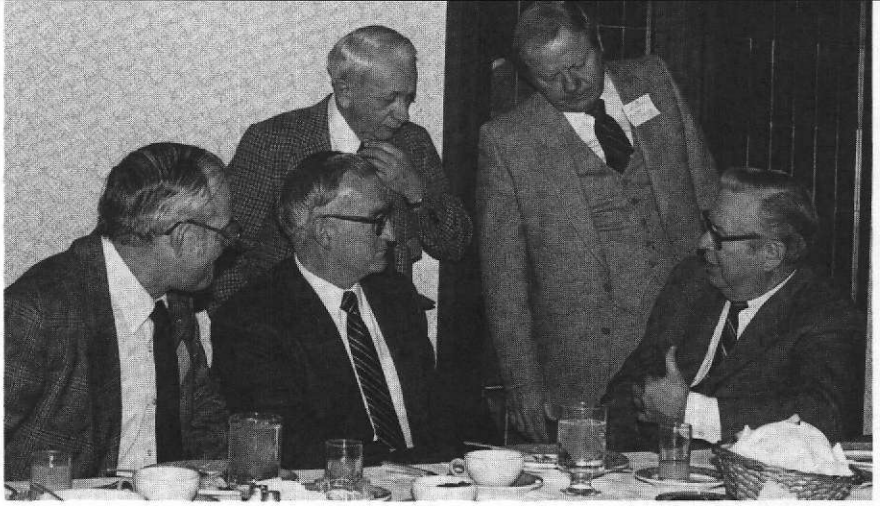

Figure 11.18. Soil and water conservation issues provided the agenda for this discussion in 1980 with ***Governor James A. Rhodes*** *(on right) and (from left to right)* ***Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts President-elect James Vines*** *of the Ashland District,* ***ODNR Director Teater, Federation President Wilbur Gantz*** *of the Franklin District, and* ***Chief Floyd Heft****. Division of Soil and Water Conservation file photo.*

Heidelberg College who was conducting research on nonpoint source pollution under USEPA grants. Perhaps of all soil erosion control alternatives, conservation tillage saved more soil through residue management than all the engineering and structural practices installed since the inception of the program.

Districts were very successful in securing appropriations from local boards of county commissioners for expediting local soil inventory programs by counties. These additional funds were meshed with federal funds from SCS and State funds from the Division of Lands and Soil. By the end of the 1970's, all but two counties had been completely mapped or were in the process of being mapped.

Administratively, Districts reached a realistic stage of maturity in the 1970's when many found it necessary to hire administrative assistants and more technical assistance. Districts by the end of the 1970's were employing approximately 300 such persons due to public demand for their programs. Robert Quilliam, State Conservationist of SCS, retired in 1979 after giving Ohio ten years of outstanding leadership. He had returned harmony to soil and water conservation efforts in Ohio.

The 1970's demonstrated that the merger into ODNR was the right decision because soil and water conservation programs of Ohio and local Districts flourished. Benefits were as predicted, although unexpected challenges surfaced and were satisfactorily resolved.

Soil and water conservation in Ohio through the 1970's was guided by five outstanding Presidents of the Federation: Mason McConnell (1971-1972), a Portage District fruit grower; Calvin Kiracofe (1973-1974), an Allen District grain farmer and cattle feeder; Clarence Durban (1975-1976), a Union District grain farmer and former dairyman and Ohio's second President of the National Association of Conservation Districts; Arthur Brandt (1977-1978), a Darke District grain and livestock farmer; and Wilbur Gantz (1979-1980) (Fig. 11.18), a Frankin District dairy farmer.

Soil and water conservation educational efforts of previous decades with assistance from the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service were continued with the addition of conservation tillage, pollution abatement, and the Division's leadership in establishing training activities for District technicians, secretaries, and administrative personnel. The Division staff and staff of the OSU Department of Agricultural Education jointly developed a soil and water conservation teaching outline for use by vocational agriculture teachers of Ohio. The 1970's with the expanded conservation programs and challenges shall always be identified with strong, capable, and consistent leadership within the soil and water conservation spectrum providing a legacy of performance laced with opportunities to determine long-term program direction and expanded public service.

The 1980's ushered in a new era for the program, and effective 15 March 1982, the Division of Soil and Water Districts was merged with the Division of Lands and Soil, and most of the Resource Analysis Section of the Division of Water into the Division of Soil and Water Conservation. This transition began at the end of the 1970's. Floyd Heft, Chief of the Division of Soil and Water Districts, and Dick Jones, Chief of the Division of Lands and Soil, worked effectively with the soil and water agricultural, environmental, and conservation organizations, legislative leaders, and ODNR Director Teater to assure an orderly merger and transition. Floyd Heft retired in August 1981, and Larry Vance (Fig. 11.13) was named Chief of the Division of Soil and Water Districts for the final few months of its existence. Activities and programs of the new soil and water conservation agency are presented in Chapter 19.