Send orig & 3 copies to State Office

P R O G R A M

SEMINOLE SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Seminole Soil Conservation District was formed by the people of Seminole County for the purpose of providing an organized procedure for assisting farmers, landowners, and operators with agricultural problems which are related to soil and water conservation. The concerted effort of the district will be directed toward preparing plans and establishing practices necessary for conservation of soil and water and the general improvement of agriculture.

2. LOCATION

The Seminole Soil Conservation District is composed of lands lying within the boundaries of Seminole County, Florida.

Seminole County situated in the north central part of the Florida Peninsula, about 150 miles south of Jacksonville and nearly 120 miles northeast of Tampa, was created in 1913 and organized in August 1913. As defined by its present boundaries, the county contains approximately 205,440 acres or 321 square miles. In a north and south direction it has a maximum length of 16 miles and its greatest width is about 23 miles. It is bound on the north

and east by St. Johns River, on the west by the Wekiva River and Orange County, and on the south by Orange County. Seminole County is the fourth smallest in the State in area.

3. AGRICULTURE

Agriculture in Seminole County began with the first settlement and is highly specialized and about 65 per cent of the people live on farms, the gross income from agriculture is relatively high. Agricultural products, principally celery, other truck crops, citrus fruits, asparagus plumosus ferns, Boston ferns, and the production of ornamental plants forms a large industry. The production of livestock and of livestock products are at present minor enterprises.

In addition to the direct income from sales, several thousands of laborers secure almost their entire annual wages from employment on farms and in plants which process agricultural products for market. Beef cattle and hogs are produced on the range and 50 or more farmers specialize in dairying or poultry production. Very little hay is produced and most feed for livestock is purchased. Few farm pastures are improved excepting the pastures on dairy farms.

The 1945 U. S. census lists 663 farms in the county, 416 of which are less than thirty acres in size, 167 range from 30 to 99 acres, and only 80 exceed 100 acres. Some of the larger farms are owned by range cattlemen, others by truck producers, and citrus growers. 557 farms are operated by full

owners, 74 by part owners, and practically all others by managers.

4. PROBLEMS

The major problems with which the District will endeavor to assist landowners are: water control, land use, soil depletion, erosion (wind and water), pasture development, woodland and wildlife management.

A. Water Control

In general surface drainage of Seminole County is poor. The surface of the County is level in the truck farm areas adjacent to Lake Monroe and Lake Jessup as well as along the St. Johns and Wekiva Rivers. From these level lands the surface rises somewhat abruptly to the higher parts of the county.

The uplands are undulating and contain numerous lake basins and sinkholes.

Elevations vary from 13 feet M.S.L. at Lake Monroe to more than 100 feet in the uplands. The county is drained by the St. Johns River and its tributaries. The principal supply of water in the trucking sections is free from drilled wells which yield water under artesian pressure. There are more than 3,000 such wells near Sanford, Lake Monroe, and Oviedo. The discharge from these wells varies from a few gallons per minute to 100 gallons per minute; they also vary

in depth from 50 to 300 feet with an average diameter of 3 inches. The artesian wells located on the higher ground are not flowing wells and in some instances these wells are used for drainage.

Most of the cultivated land is equipped with irrigation tile which can be used for drainage as well. The District has two major water problems: one is the control of the ground water level, and the other is irrigation. Investigations directed by Mr. Sidney A. Stubbs show "that there has been a permanent loss of irrigation waterhead on account of excessive draft, and that a large part of the wells are now drawing upon highly saline waters. Further agricultural development and excessive use of the artesian water can be expected to reduce the present area of artesian flow and to materially increase the areas of highly saline water. A serious curtailment of agricultural operations will undoubtedly result unless proper precautions are taken and the use of artesian water regulated in the future."

Provisions for water control are particularly important. In many cases these problems are not ones which can be adequately handled by the individual landowner because of the construction costs and the condition of adjacent lands.

B. Soils

A tentative Soils Legend has been set up by the Soil Conservation Service in cooperation with the Florida Experiment

Station. Soil conservation surveys will be made showing only the variations in land that affect its use, management and treatment. Land features usually mapped include soil, slope, and degree of erosion. Certain other physical conditions as flood hazard, wetness, and salinity are also mapped where necessary. Land use at the time of the survey is also essential information for conservation planning and other purposes.

C. Erosion

Although some loss of soil in Seminole County is caused by rainfall, runoff, and overflows, surface erosion appears not as serious as leaching. Most of the soils are sandy and porous and rainwater rapidly moves downward through the soil. The process of leaching--the downward percolation of surplus water through the soil--causes a loss of fertility in many of the sandy soils of the District. Sheet erosion occurs but appears to be a lesser degree of seriousness than that caused by leaching.

D. Land Use

The 1945 U. S. census shows 172,624 acres as land in farms; 14,840 acres used for crops, 7,427 acres in pasture, and most of the remaining acreage as woodland pasture. Toward the achieving of better land use and in accordance with the capability of the land, the District will encourage the growing of

more legumes for soil improvement, more feed for livestock, and encourage pasture improvement and reforestation.

E. Pasture Development

During the past few years dairymen have shown a progressive interest in the improvement of animal breeds; however, there is still room for future improvement. Along with the improvement there must go an attendant improvement in the food production for such animals. Dairy farming in this District is extremely small and few farms, if any, produce sorghums or hay. The main problem appears to be the developing of winter feeds. Pasturage on the native grasses is good from five (5) to six (6) months and fair to poor for the remainder of the year.

During the winter months cattle suffer from lack of feed. Hay production would help if it can be successfully cured. With the rapid development of improved pasturage grasses and summer legumes, such as hairy indigo, the District believes that less milk will need to be imported and that many more acres of improved pasture can be established.

F. Woodland Management

Few of the woodland areas are under proper woodland management practices. There are about 140,000 acres in woodland, most of which is grazed by cattle.

These lands deserve particular emphasis because of the fact that most of the land is considered more suitable

for forestry, grazing, and wildlife than for cultivated farming. The fact that forest lands and farm woodlots now occupy a greater percentage of the total district area itself, emphasizes the need for maintaining these lands in their highest possible state of production.

Throughout a long period of time, neglect and misuse of the forest lands in farm woodlots in Seminole County has resulted in depletion of forest resources. Woods fires and destructive cutting have contributed most heavily to the present depletion. Present stands of pine timber, most of which are composed of second growth long leaf and slash, sometimes have too large a percentage of cull or low value trees, such as those which are crooked, limby, diseased, or otherwise defective. Some of the sound and desirable pine timber is open grown, and because the trees are scattered, having too much room, they are developing into limby trees of relatively low value. Probably the major problems of forests and farm woodlots in this district is that of fire protection and controlled burning. No part of the county is under the fire protection of the Florida Forest Service. If fires can be controlled in the timberlands, good natural restockings will thrive in most areas.

C. Wildlife

Management of wildlife land to obtain the maximum production of desirable and beneficial forms of wildlife will

be encouraged. Farm ponds both natural and artificial used for water storage and livestock can also be used for the production of fish. These ponds often contain undesirable forms of fish life and are usually unproductive.

The District recommends the management of these ponds to include the elimination of undesirable fish and stocking with desirable fish such as black bass and glue gill bream, thereby increasing their fertility so that the maximum production can be obtained.

5. REVISION

This program will be revised from time to time as the need arises and as additional information becomes available. The supervisors will welcome any suggestions or comments regarding the revisions of this program from any agency, groups, or individuals. Such revisions or amendments will be incorporated as a part of the district program when adopted by the supervisors.

6. ADOPTION

Recognizing the Seminole Soil Conservation District as a governmental subdivision of the State of Florida, a body corporate and politic, organized in accordance with the provisions of the Florida Soil Conservation Districts Law, Chapter 582, Acts of 1937, as amended in 1939, for the purpose, with the powers, and subject to the restrictions set forth therein, the supervisors hereby adopt this program which

describes general conditions existing in the district.

ADOPTED

Board of Supervisors
Seminole Soil Conservation District

R. F. Cooper
R. F. Cooper, Chairman

C. A. Wales
C. A. Wales

T. L. Lingo
T. L. Lingo

R. T. Milwee
R. T. Milwee

Tom McLain, Jr.
Tom McLain, Jr.

Signed:

Date: October 15, 1948