

D.T. Paugh



D.T. Paugh, a native of Barbour County, was a dominant force in the soil conservation district movement for over thirty years. As a livestock farmer, he was an innovator in soil conservation practices and endorsed the district approach as a democratic way to encourage and assist farmers to adopt soil conservation practices.

Mr. Paugh helped organize the Tygart's Valley Soil Conservation District in 1941 and served as its Secretary-Treasurer until his death in 1970. His untiring efforts to make the district's services available to landowners and to modify its procedures to meet current needs contributed immeasurably to the success of Districts in West Virginia.

Mr. Paugh, sensing a need for better coordination between the states's fourteen Districts, helped the West Virginia Soil Conservation District Supervisors Association in 1943, and served as its first Secretary. He was elected President in 1944 and served for seven years, leaving the post only after the organization was well established and functional.

In 1946, Mr. Paugh was one of 17 men who met in Chicago to organize the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts. He served in 1948 and 1949 as a director.

Mr. Paugh was honored by the State Association with a Life Membership Award in 1959. The West Virginia Future Farmers of America cited him in 1965 with its Distinguished Service Award for his efforts in formulating the FFA-SCD Program. He was also an Honorary State Farmer. He received the National Association of Conservation Districts' Special Service Award in both 1960 and 1967 for his service. He was a charter member of the West Virginia Chapter of the Soil Conservation Society of America.

Mr. Paugh was community minded from his early youth. He taught for several years in the elementary schools of his native Elk District in Barbour County. He served several terms on the Barbour County Court and one term in the West Virginia House of Delegates (1923-24). Active in farm cooperatives during the 1930's, he also worked diligently to bring better roads into Barbour County's rural areas, and was instrumental in rural electrification. Mr. Paugh, or "Pete" as he was known by family and friends, achieved prominence in state and national conservation affairs, but never lost his sense of responsibility to his neighbors. A charter member of the Barbour County Farm Bureau, he served as its president for several terms. For many years, he served the Overfield Methodist Church as teacher and superintendent. He maintained a large beef cattle herd pm the farm on which he was born.

Mr. Paugh was a layman in the sense that he never received a salary for his efforts in the conservation movement; nevertheless, he possessed a keen, professional mind that conceived both ideal concepts and practical solutions.