

Henry's Ponds

This was an old slew along the riverbank that was full of cattails and had no water. The restoration was 60 ft wide by 500 ft long. The slew was reclaimed so now there is water, and materials were placed to create islands for nesting.



Trees

Through the years as they purchased more land there were old trees that needed to be removed. Shari made sure that all trees removed were replaced with new ones, and they planted many trees. At the feedlot there is a 1,400 ft long windbreak that protects the cattle from the north wind. They planted trees in the south hills for the sake that someday it would make the area look nice. There is a saying that "one plants trees for the next generation to enjoy." The next generation at Sadle Cattle Co will have a lot to enjoy!



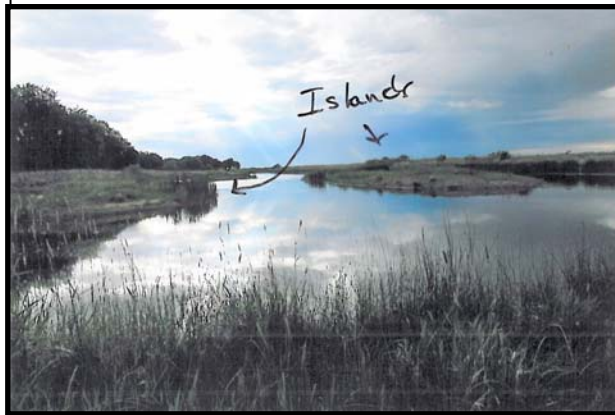
First Restoration Project

Chuck's favorite improvement is reclaiming wetlands for water fowl (he does not hunt ducks or geese). Chuck thanks the staff at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Dept in helping and instructing the best ways of developing habitat for water fowl (they were a joy to work with!). Chuck also thanks Ivan & Linda from Regier Land Improvement for doing an outstanding job in moving material to make the wetlands look natural.



When Chuck came to Sadle Cattle Co in 1973, there were no Canada geese that nested in the spring. It took several years after developing the wetlands that the geese finally started to nest and hatch out their broods. Now in the spring there is a residency of approx 75 geese, many nests, and many broods, but as soon as they can fly, they are gone until the next fall and spring.

The first project was an old slew that was full of cattails along the bank of the North Platte River. The area was 150 ft wide and 1,800 ft long. There are three ponds in this project. It is very important when enhancing habitat for water fowl to have an island in the ponds for the geese to nest, giving them a source of



protection from predators. This was Chuck and Shari's first wetland project. These two pictures are of the same site, looking from different directions.

THANK YOU!!

Thank you for allowing us to share with you the passion for conservation that we at Sadle Cattle Co have done over the last 30 years. All of the projects each generation has worked on have taken a lot of planning and hard work, but we feel it has all been worth it. Shari and my motto has always been "what God has given us, leave it much better for the next generation." We are humbled by the recognition of our peers for our efforts to be good stewards of the land. If Shari was able to understand this honor, she would be pleased.

Sadle Cattle Co — Chuck & Shari Flaming



2017 Keith-Arthur Conservation Award
Sadle Cattle Company



The Twin Platte Natural Resources District takes great pleasure in recognizing landowners who go above and beyond in their dedication to our natural resources. This year's award winner is Sadle Cattle Company. This pamphlet shows just a few of their efforts to restore and rehabilitate wetlands for water fowl. They are truly passionate people making a difference!!!! Thank you!

SADLE CATTLE COMPANY

Shari Flaming's grandfather, Bill Sadle, was born in North Platte. In his youth, he worked summers for Buffalo Bill on his "Wild West Show," and in the late 1920's he purchased land northwest of Paxton in the north valley. Shari's father Byron Sadle, more commonly known as Bud, was raised on the homestead north of Paxton. This is where Shari grew up. Bud attended the University of NE and became a County Agent in Gosper County, then later returned to Paxton and bought the land from his dad and started to farm. Throughout the years, Bud purchased more land. In 1972 Chuck Flaming married sweet Shari Sadle. Upon their graduation from the University of NE, they came back to the farm with Bud and his wife Frances, where Chuck was an employee. In 1975 Bud decided to incorporate and the operation became Sadle Cattle Co. Chuck and Shari started to buy stock and eventually became the owners of Sadle Cattle Co. It was important for all the Sadle generations to improve the land and use the newest and best practices for soil conservation. Bud continued the practices, as well as Chuck and Shari, always working to make the land better. With their deep faith in God, they believe it was a blessing to enhance their property. It has taken many years to complete their conservation and restoration projects, and they feel nothing is more gratifying than to drive around in the evening and watch the baby Canada goslings swim in the restored wetlands, or watching the ducks and geese arrive in the fall as they migrate south.

In the 1950's, Grandpa Bill and Grandma Edda Sadle, and Bud and Frances Sadle, received the Keith County Soil Conservationist Award.

Shari's Pond

This restoration project is 150 ft wide by 600 ft long. Upon its completion, this pond sat nearly unused by geese and ducks. About five years ago there was an abnormally warm winter, and geese and ducks started to land in the pond. Now it is a favorite place in the winter for water fowl, until it freezes over.



Thank you to this years sponsor of this Conservation Award.....
Regier Land Improvement

The Bull Ditch

According to the old timers, when this valley was settled the meadows were very wet so they used oxen and the big V plow (currently at the Lincoln County Museum) to drain the swamps. This was in the good old days when there were wet meadows before the canal systems were in place, and before the river was scoured in times of high flows. The restoration of the bull ditch was a major project. The ditch was narrow and wide, and full of cattails.



There was no running water, and it was 6,000 ft long.

For this project, they cleaned out the cattails and (because the water table is shallow) dug out ponds on the sides, with islands for nesting. As the fill material was being moved out of the way, water immediately was seeping out of the ground to fill the bull ditch. Currently there is running water and the geese love this wetland.



The Twin Platte Natural Resources District provides technical and cost-share assistance to encourage landowners and land managers in the conservation of our natural resources, which are so valuable to all of us. Our continuing partnership with the farmers and ranchers in the District will help ensure that we reach our common goals.

Rangeland and Water Wells

Sadle Cattle Co cows are on a four pasture rotation in the summer. This has increased grazing and improved the grass. Water is the cheapest input cost in cattle, yet it is the most important asset for livestock production. Locating the water sites can be a great tool in grazing management. It can become tiresome to depend on the wind, so over time they installed solar wells, electric wells, and generators to pump water into 6,000 gallon storage tanks to fill smaller tanks. Some pastures have two or three watering locations. In the winter, cornstalks are utilized for grazing.



Irrigation

Irrigation is the life blood of the farming side of Sadle Cattle Co. In the early days, Bill Sadle opened the boxes on the Keith-Lincoln Irrigation Ditch into the big ditches that were on the top end of the fields. Then with a spade he would cut a break in the ditch for the water to go down the corn row, then fill and cut, and cut, and cut another break, working his way through the field, doing this all day long. Then came the syphon tubes with the canvas dams and the great invention of gated pipe. Coming from a dryland farm Shari had lots to teach Chuck, and together they became quite efficient as she would open gates and he would pick up and lay down the socks, sometimes doing this all day, laying out miles and miles of pipe. In the mid 1990's, they started to replace the gated pipe with

Irrigation....continued on the next page

Irrigation....continued

pivots, which was not easy due to their location. The operation was blessed with the North Platte River, bull ditch, Union Pacific Railroad, another drainage ditch, Keith-Lincoln Ditch, county roads, and the NPPD ditch, plus they had to move the REA poles. With all of these obstacles, they improvised, engineered, and then built bridges, and more bridges. One pivot goes over 20 bridges, all ranging from 30-65 ft long. Over time the gravity irrigation was replaced with 16 pivots (wipers, corner systems, 3/4 wipers, and some full circle). With the installation of pivots, the crop yields have improved with important factors such as the application of using less water, and the timing of irrigation.

The West Place

When Tri-County built its' irrigation canal, it created seepage problems in various areas in the North Platte Valley



north of Paxton. This created high water tables, so drainage ditches were built to take the water to the North Platte River. Over time the drainage ditch filled in with both cattails and organic material, so that it no longer transported water to the river. This restoration project was 2,200 ft long. Cleaning out this ditch allowed for large ponds to be dug along the sides for water fowl habitat. Because the water table is so close to the lands surface, ponds can built without having to move much material.

The 50 acre meadow was infested and over-run with Russian olive trees and other unwanted species. Once these invasive plants were removed, the meadow returned to a beautiful productive site. Cleaning up the trees and other species took a lot of time and effort. Equipment was used where it could be, but much of the meadow was cleaned up by physically walking in front of a loader, picking up the branches and then dumping them into a burn pile to be burned at a later date. The end result was more than worth the effort!



Respite

This project is called "respite" as it is a very unique piece of property that is similar to a small piece of paradise! Chuck goes there to get away and think. There is a cabin on this piece of property that overlooks the valley. When Shari was still at home, the mornings when the health care professionals came to



help with Shari, Chuck drove to the cabin to have morning devotions. It was a precious time to read the Bible and pray for wisdom and guidance. This was the last project, and Chuck's favorite. The drainage ditch that starts at the West Place flows through this property. This project consisted of 2,800 ft of digging. Since the water was flowing, they did not need to clean out the ditch. The water table was very shallow, so they dug out many ponds and cleaned out the old slews.

Chuck added water fowl habitat and cleared 116 acres of Russian olive and cedar trees. As they cut the cedar trees they made sure there would be "wildlife game trails." In these areas, they left the male cedars and cut down the female cedars, creating beautiful meadows. The task of picking up all of the branches was a HUGE task. All of the work to restore this project was well worth it!!! They feel so blessed to have all these wetlands for wildlife.