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Master Conservationists Presentations - 2007

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"TED"

GREAT PARTNERSHIP

1.) OMAHA WORLD HERALD - JOEL LONG

2.) University of Nebraska - IANR

Master Conservationists Presentations-2007

3.) NRD's Dr. Dick FLEMING - Professor emeritus

Opening Comments

Before announcing our honorees this evening, I would like to call your attention to results of an independent study done for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln during the past year. The "At Work for Nebraska" study was done by Battelle, of Columbus, Ohio, which is a nonprofit research and development-organization specializing in global science and technology. The independent study found that our Institute provides a 15-to-one return on every tax dollar invested with us. That's 15-to-one conservatively. We all wish we could get that return on all our own investments. I encourage you to browse our At Work for Nebraska Web Site for additional results of the study. You can find out more about this study which relates to our efforts in natural resources and other areas on the web at the address atworkfornebraska.unl.edu. I encourage you to check it out.

District A

Mark Watson and his brother Bruce Watson of Alliance are our first honorees this evening. I would like to ask Mark and his wife Denise, Bruce and his wife Ann, and the Watson parents, Howard and Shirley, to come forward. They are the Master Conservationists in District A which includes Nebraska's Panhandle. The Watsons are fourth-generation farmers who use no-till on 3,000 acres of corn, edible beans, proso millet, and wheat. Since zero tillage saves soil and organic matter, the organic matter in their soil has increased from 0.6 percent to 2.5 percent which enhances soil-structure. Microbial activity, along with the added organic matter, reduced the need for commercial fertilizer by 30 to 40 pounds per acre. They have hosted several no-till tours. The Upper Niobrara White Natural Resources District sponsored Field Days on their farm in 2005 and 2006.

Congratulations to the Watsons!

District B, North-Central, no award given

District C

Master Conservationists in District C, northeast Nebraska, are Paul and Jeryl Kettelson of Albion. Through non-till farming and creation of grassed waterways and filter strips, they are "reducing" the impact of the farming operation on Shell Creek. The Kettelsons have 40 cows and plant 1,480 acres to corn, alfalfa, and soybeans. They have not had the severe drought problems "experienced" by others due to use of no-till and contour farming practices. Like others in the neighborhood, Kettelson uses no-till on corn, but no-one had tried no-till on soybeans. The first attempts were quite successful and Kettelson plans to continue the practice. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service featured the farm in the NRCS newsletter. Congratulations to the Kettelsons!

District D

Master Conservationist honors in south-central Nebraska, District D, go to the Pursley Family of Enders. Family members who are present this evening are Chris, Andrew, and Caleb (Ka-lib) and the Pursley parents, Dean and Charlene. The farm, which has been in the family for four generations, includes 2,080 acres of owned and rented dryland-and irrigated land, 3,600 acres of owned and rented pasture and a 340-head purebred Angus cow/calf operation. One significant practice they use involves "rotating" spring and fall forages to meet their cow herd's nutritional needs. By "rotating" spring and fall forages, the cattle can graze the crop residue, such as volunteer wheat, for feed instead of dry pasture acres. The Pursleys received the 2006 Upper Republican Natural Resources District Honor Conservation Award. Congratulations to the Pursleys!

District E

“Two entries will receive Master Conservationist recognition” in District E in southeast Nebraska. They are Brandes (Bran-dis) & Sons, Inc., which includes Evan, his brother Roger, and their father Earl of Central City ~~and~~ L & L Farms LLC, which includes Lawrence Gronewold (Grone-wold), his son Larry, and Lawrence’s wife, Shirley, of Beatrice.

The Brandes (Bran-dis) operation includes 4,000 acres and a 110-head cow-calf operation. Proper nitrogen application has been a priority for over 26 years. In 1992 they started using an electronic flow controller linked to a monitor in the tractor cab so the driver can monitor the flow-rate of anhydrous ammonia and liquid nitrogen. This equipment allows the operator to apply nitrogen uniformly at the desired rate across the field. New algorithms for nitrogen application are used as they are developed. The family has been working over the years with University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institute of Agriculture and Natural

Resources scientists on nitrogen management. The family is cooperating in a current UNL study of nitrogen-use efficiency in corn production through use of active canopy-sensors. The sensors can detect developing nitrogen-deficiency in growing crops. The farm has been featured in state and national farm magazines. Congratulations to the Brandes (Bran-dis) family!

L & L Farms LLC was created in 2001 by Lawrence

Gronewold (Grone-wold) and his son, Larry. Lawrence's wife, Shirley, also has been actively-involved. The Gronewolds own/operate 2,104 acres. They currently have a Conservation Security Program (CSP) Contract, Tier II, an active Environmental-Quality Incentives-Program (EQIP), and a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to improve existing conservation systems. By using a rotation of three different crops in three years, terraces and no-till, soil-loss has been reduced from 5.9 tons to 2.2 tons per acre per year.

Conservation Reserve Program buffers such as field borders and filter strips, have improved wildlife habitat and reduced SEDIMENTATION

sedimentation and pollutants from pesticides and fertilizers in stream channels. L & L Farms LLC was the host site for the official signing of the first 2005 Conservation Security Program contract in Nebraska. Congratulations to the Gronewolds.

Community Public

Master Conservationist recognition in the Community Public category goes to Keep Omaha Beautiful, Inc., for their "World O! Water Festival." Cindy Smilley (Smil-ee), Executive Director, will accept the award. Keep Omaha Beautiful in partnership with the ~~Papillion-Creek-Watershed-Partnership~~, designed and carried out a World O! Water Festival for children and adults to learn about water pollution, water quality, and water fun. It's a free day of family, food, education, and exploration. It includes water education, animal demonstrations, speakers, prizes, kids'-science-experiments, art, canoeing, fishing, and games. The festival is held on the third Sunday of September from noon to 4 p.m at the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources Center facility in Chalco.

Hills Recreation Area and Wehrspann (weir-span) Lake near Omaha. There are more than 20 educational booths and demonstrations at the event. Attendance has grown from 200 people in 2005 to between 3,000 and 4,000 in 2007.

Congratulations to Keep Omaha Beautiful!

Youth Group

There are two Master Conservationist Recipients in the Youth Group category—Spalding Academy and the FFA Chapter at Superior High School.

Polla (Paula) Hartley will represent Spalding Academy this evening. Farmers in Greeley and Nance counties were concerned that too much valuable cropland was being lost to soil erosion on Cedar River. A Cedar River Stabilization Project was established to reduce streambank erosion and improve the health of Cedar River. One objective of the project was to have area youth monitor erosion sites. Students in Spalding Academy agreed to install willows and other riparian shrubs at a number of sites starting in March 2000. They monitored the sites with

photography, water sampling, and testing. The Stabilization Project provided the students with Global Positioning System units for mapping, chemical water testing kits, and training on use of the equipment. Spalding Academy 5th through 8th grade students cleaned up 3 to 4 miles of Cedar River. The students shared results of their work with landowners and professionals at a workshop earlier this year. The Cedar River Monitoring Teams composed of Spalding Academy students and their teacher, ~~Polla~~ (Paula) Hartley, received the Outstanding Youth Award earlier this year from the Western Rural Conservation and Development Association. Congratulations to Spalding Academy students and their teacher, Polla (Paula) Hartley.

The FFA Chapter at Superior High School is represented this evening by Erin Montgomery, president; Kellie Tinkham (Tink-em), vice president; Jessica Wood, reporter; and Dave Barnard, Chapter advisor.

During the past four years, the Superior FFA Chapter has placed emphasis on initiating and maintaining a tree nursery

project and developing an underground water-testing program. They inform the tenant or owner of water test results so proper action can be taken. The tree project involved planting 10 species of 10 trees each on a site in Superior approved by the City of Superior Tree Board. Both projects were funded by state grants. The tree nursery also was funded by a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant and the water testing was funded by state-reimbursed tobacco use monies. There are now 300 trees in the nursery and 88 wells have been tested. The hands-on activities brought awareness to students, parents, and the public. The Chapter reported that 70 percent of FFA members participated in the projects. The Superior FFA chapter now has been recognized for natural resources projects for 14 consecutive years by the Nebraska FFA Association. Congratulations to the Superior FFA Chapter and Dave Barnard, advisor!

Individual Youth

Master Conservationist honors in the Individual Youth category go to Adam Venteicher (Van-tiger) of rural Pierce, a

member of the Pierce High School FFA Chapter. He could not attend this evening. Adam set three goals to fulfill a lifetime desire of farming and to apply for a "National FFA Diversified Crop Production Entrepreneur Award."

1. "To have his own operation to learn more about crop management, chemicals, rates of chemicals, soil sampling, fertilizer application, and crop scouting.
2. To learn about record keeping and to make a profit.
3. To increase his production acres. By accomplishing this goal, his first two goals will be met."

Adam began by diversifying crop production on his own after helping his parents, Kenneth and Donna Verteicher (Van-tiger), many years on their farm. He started three years ago with native hay, bought six beef cows, and expanded from there. He rented some land and farm equipment from his father to plant no-till corn, soybeans, and rye. Then he worked for neighbors to gain additional experience and knowledge. Adam chose a program that can increase yields and reduce weed pressure by

using a variety-of-crops in his rotation. His efforts resulted in receipt of the Pierce FFA Chapter's first National FFA Diversified Crop Production Entrepreneur Award. Congratulations to Adam Venteicher (Van-tiger). Jodi Borchers is the Pierce High School FFA Chapter-advisor.

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