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Master Conservationist Presentations 2008

John Owens

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, jowens2@unl.edu

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"JOEL LONG"

CASNR
College of Agricultural Science & Natural Resources
Master Conservationist Presentations 2008
Holiday Inn, Kearney, NE - September 29, 2008

District A

Our first Master Conservationist award this evening goes to Curtis and Sandi Roth of Gordon, in the Panhandle, District A. Would Curtis and Sandi please come forward? When Roth decided to change his 2,030 dryland corn acres from "a conventional" to a no-till system in 1993, "most" of the information came from newsletters and magazines about experiences "farther east". He began by adapting methods and equipment to the climate and soils of northwestern Nebraska. Today Curtis uses no-till "exclusively" and follows "a rotation" of winter and -spring wheat, sunflowers, corn, alfalfa, and millet. This no-till system has allowed Roth "to reduce" the use of fertilizer 10 percent. He also uses less fuel and machinery. Since the Upper-Niobrara White-Natural-Resources District received a grant to promote no-till back in 2001, Curtis has been involved in "various aspects" of the no-till education program. The first annual NRD No-Till Field Day was held on the Roth farm and they hosted the event "again" in 2008. Congratulations to the Roth family.

District B, North-Central Nebraska

("Troester")

Master Conservationist honors in north-central Nebraska, District-
B, go to Dave and Sharyn Traster and their son, Aaron, who operate
DT Farms, Inc. near O'Neill. The operation includes 4,960 acres for
"production" of corn and soybeans and 515 acres "designed" for wildlife.
The Trasters began conservation tillage in 1980 and conservation crop-
rotation in 1984. ^{Mr.} Traster began low pressure conversion of the
irrigation system in 1978 and became a "pioneer leader" by installing
drop-nozzle-heads back in 1979. He "spoon feeds" nitrogen through
"center pivots" to match nutrient uptake of the crop while "minimizing"
leaching. Insects are "managed" by using chemigation. The family has
"enhanced" wildlife by planting 28,552 trees and shrubs in pivot corners.
By using "lighter-weight" tractors and implements, they have reduced
soil compaction, minimized field traffic, and preserved soil structure.
The Traster family received a Soil Stewardship Award from the Upper
Elkhorn Natural Resources District. Congratulations to the Trasters!

District C, Northeast Nebraska

James and Jeanine Bliven of Dakota City are the Master Conservationists in District C, northeast Nebraska. Their 1,460-acre row-crop operation includes 1,220 acres of bottomland on the Missouri River, irrigated-land, and rented-out pasture land. He has applied a wide-variety of soil and water conservation techniques as well as wildlife habitat practices on various types of land use including 240 acres of highly-erodible land north of Newcastle in Dixon County. He has used no-till since 1990 and plants all soybeans into standing-corn stalk-residue in 15-inch rows with a split-row planter. An active promoter of "many" conservation practices and programs, Mr. Bliven is a 'proponent' of wetland restoration in the historic Missouri River oxbow-area south of Dakota City. He "encourages" farmers to enroll wet, marginal crop-land in the Wetland Reserve Program. Mr. Bliven has offered his tract as "a site" for interested landowners as well as for natural resources and education 'professionals' to learn more about native-plant restoration. Congratulations to the Blivens!

District D, South-Central Nebraska

Master Conservationist honors in District D, south-central Nebraska, goes to the Tecker Ranch, Inc. at Parks. Jon, Christy, and Si Tecker will receive the award. Their operation includes 300 cow/calf 'pairs' as well as alpacas, llamas, and sheep. They have 7,300 acres of rangeland and 1500 acres of crop land, including 1400 dryland acres and 100 irrigated acres. The Teckers installed 32,000 linear feet of livestock-water-pipeline, five livestock tanks, and a new livestock well. Fence lines were established in the 1980s when the family 'implemented' cross-fencing. They plant 'both' winter-wheat and rye on the 1,400 acres of dryland for spring grazing. The 100 acres of irrigated-crop-land is 'planted' to cane and wheat. The cane is baled into round bales and used as winter feed for cattle. The Upper Republican Natural Resources District presented its 2007 Rangeland Award to the Tecker Ranch. Congratulations to the Tecker Family!

Community Public

The Master Conservationist Award in the Community-Public Category goes to the Keep Sidney Beautiful entry. Ashley Hart, director of the program, and RAMONA JOYCE (~~g... (SBA)~~) will accept the award. Keep Sidney Beautiful was established in 2002 and is affiliated with Keep Nebraska Beautiful. Each spring, the Keep Sidney Beautiful team “presents” “Recycling Groundwater” at the Western Nebraska Children’s Groundwater Festival. They explain and demonstrate “how” proper efforts and practices at a landfill can help “protect” and “conserve” groundwater. Each April, the Great Trash Race makes picking up trash “fun”. Teams collected 270 bags of refuse in 2007. The team sponsors “Tire Amnesty Week” every summer. They collected 531.62 tons of tires in 2007 which “surpassed” the group’s “goal” of 400 tons. “A number” of recycling-projects have been conducted since 2002. “Last year” Keep Sidney Beautiful worked with city officials to establish a Beautification Corridor along Highway 30, the main traffic way running through the city. Another “first-time effort” in 2007 involved collection of 10,580 pounds of “potentially” hazardous-waste. Last year team members also “worked” with preschool children to “teach” them the importance of recycling and reducing the amount of waste entering landfills. Congratulations to Keep Sidney Beautiful!

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