

49th Annual Conference
for Soil and Water
Conservation District
Commissioners of Iowa



Awards Banquet
Thursday, September 7, 1995
Des Moines, Iowa

NACD-Zeneca Ag Products Conservation Education Awards

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and the Zeneca Ag Products Corporation recognize teachers and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) for their successful programs in conservation education.

Presenter: **Bill Bennett**, Elgin, Chair, IASWCDC Education Committee

Iowa Conservation Secondary Teacher of the Year

Winner: Robert Schulze, Council Bluffs, Iowa School for the Deaf, West Pottawattamie SWCD

Robert Schulze teaches vocational education classes at the Iowa School for the Deaf. He was the forerunner in establishing a 12-acre outdoor classroom at the school, and helped students plant trees, shrubs, and native prairie forbs and grasses in the area. He and other teachers at the school have expanded their environmental education activities by using the outdoor classroom in relation to their classes.

Schulze is also coordinating the development of a unique constructed wetland area with a footbridge crossing the wetland. Plans are underway to incorporate the Wabash Trace nature trail with the school's outdoor classroom so the public will have easier access to the nature area.

Schulze extends his interest in resource conservation by participating in activities of the Golden Hills RC & D, and by tending the numerous trees and shrubs he has planted around his home.

District Winner East Pottawattamie SWCD

The East Pottawattamie SWCD believes all its educational activities are important whether they are directed toward students or adults. The East Pottawattamie SWCD supports three school districts by providing assistance with new and existing projects. The District sponsored a puppet show for lower elementary grades to teach students about contouring, gully erosion and contour stripcropping in 1994. The ABC Mother's Club made puppets named Sammy Soil, Connie Conservation, Willy Worm, three Billy Goats Gruff and the Troll. The 4-H Youth Council and several high school students donate time to perform conservation puppet shows at the area grade schools.

The District also provided financial and technical assistance for a new living classroom at the Riverside North Elementary School and continued providing information and assistance for a wetland restoration project in Walnut. Fifteen students in the class of 1996 at Walnut High School have selected wetland restoration as their community service project. The students have already donated approximately 1,000 hours restoring a wetland for a local park and wildlife habitat.

Annual events sponsored by the District include the 6th grade environmental and conservation workshop and the Trees for Threes program through which each 3rd grade student in the District receives a tree seedling to plant.

The District's efforts to provide information to farmers and urban residents who are no longer in school include a multi-agency newsletter called "Conservation Quarterly" with articles from a number of conservation related agencies, a legislative tour featuring conservation practices used in the district, a warm season grass demonstration area and conservation information in local newspapers or on the local radio station.

Izaak Walton League Windbreak Award

The Izaak Walton League Windbreak Award honors landowners who practice conservation by planting field or farmstead windbreaks.

Presenter: **Ron Kuntz**, President, Des Moines, Iowa Division, Izaak Walton League

Farmstead Winner: Donna Robinson & Family, Masonville, Delaware SWCD

Donna Robinson and her family converted an old cattle yard and pasture into a 6.5-acre windbreak and shelterbelt including nine varieties of shrubs and 10 varieties of trees. The Robinsons cleaned out a stream channel that ran through the area and reshaped the banks that had degraded. Since being reshaped, the stream banks have been completely reseeded to reed-canarygrass and crownvetch, and have been bordered with trees and shrubs to provide a filter strip. The farmstead windbreak also helps the Robinsons conserve energy and provides a wildlife habitat.

Newly Established Windbreak Winner: Gary & J.D. Debner, Storm Lake, Buena Vista SWCD

Gary and J.D. Debner and their family enhanced an existing windbreak on their Buena Vista County farm with an additional eight rows of deciduous trees. The Debners planted the trees over a five-year period, providing for a variety of tree ages in the windbreak. As the trees mature they will protect the farmstead from winds and provide a wildlife habitat.

Field Shelter Belt Winner: Bob Hild, Webster City, Hamilton SWCD

Bob Hild planted a nine-row field shelterbelt in 1988. He watered the trees extensively that spring and summer, which were unusually dry, and was able to save all except for seven of the new seedlings. The first four rows of the shelterbelt include redosier dogwood, common lilac, wild plum and green ash. The remaining five rows are a variety of spruce trees. Weeds in the shelterbelt are controlled by mowing and mulching.

Woodland Owner-of-the-Year Award

This award recognizes individuals for outstanding accomplishments in woodland management, and is co-sponsored by the Forestry Division of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the IASWCDC.

Presenter: Mike Brandrup, Des Moines, Iowa DNR, Forestry Services Bureau Chief

Winners: Steve and Ramona Archer, Moulton, Appanoose SWCD

Steve and Ramona Archer work to maintain the timber quality and the wildlife benefits in their 310-acre woodland. Steve has completed 76 acres of crop tree release and pruning in mixed oak and walnut stands. He continues to accomplish more timber stand improvement each year. Most of the trees are intended for wood products, but some have been treated to increase their vigor or seed production for wildlife purposes. He has planted 16 acres of trees including mixed hardwoods and conifers.

The Archers have cut more than five miles of paths through their timber to facilitate forestry activities as well as wildlife enthusiasts. They plant 20-acre food plots consisting of corn, milo and special clovers annually. Another 80 acres have been seeded with native grasses. Some small areas of low-quality hardwoods have been clearcut to create openings for wildlife and songbirds.

The Archers have constructed two additional ponds, bringing the total to six, and have stocked all the ponds with fish. They have also constructed a dike which impounded a 20-acre wetland on the Chariton River bottom.

As a member of the American Tree Farm System, Steve tries to persuade others to manage their woodlands by sharing information and giving them tours of his operation. He also tells them about his future plans for the woodland he manages and stresses that timber is a long-term investment.

Watershed Achievement Award

The Watershed Achievement Award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to solving resource conservation problems through the watershed approach. The award is co-sponsored by the Association and the SSCC.

Presenter: J. Kelly Tobin, New Market, Past President, IASWCDC

Winner: Turnquist Farm Account, Alta, Buena Vista SWCD

Lawrence Turnquist and his sons, Steve and Dave, work together on their Buena Vista County farm to protect or improve the quality of water that enters Storm Lake. The Turnquists use an integrated crop management program and conservation tillage. They recently installed the first riparian buffer along Powell Creek, which is a major tributary entering the lake. The 1,800-foot buffer includes four rows of trees, two rows of shrubs and 25 feet of switchgrass on both sides of the stream. They are also in the process of planting a half-mile of switchgrass bufferstrips along another section of the stream.

Division of Soil Conservation Awards

The Division of Soil Conservation and the SSCC annually recognize individuals for their outstanding service to soil and water conservation efforts in Iowa. Recipients are selected for their long-term contribution of time, energy and leadership to soil and water conservation programs.

Presenter: Lee Faris, Mt. Ayr, Chair, SSCC

Terry E. Branstad, Des Moines, Governor of Iowa

Throughout his tenure as Governor, Terry Branstad has supported soil and water conservation programs at the state and district levels by enacting legislation such as the Groundwater Protection Act in 1987, the Resource Enhancement and Protection Act in 1989 and the establishment of the Organic Nutrient Management Program in 1993. He has consistently supported the soil conservation cost-share program, and signed legislation to strengthen staffing levels in district offices in 1994 and 1995.

Branstad has encouraged all Iowans to take responsibility for resource conservation, rather than just those who make their living from the land they farm. He encourages tree planting in urban and rural settings, and was instrumental in having 1,000 evergreen trees planted on the Branstad family farm near Lake Mills. He also advocates the use of integrated crop management systems to encourage the proper use of nutrients and pesticides in urban and rural applications.

Sally Puttmann, Kingsley

Sally Puttmann has strong convictions about soil and water conservation practices and policies. Her dedication led her to serve eight years on the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC), during which time she was the vice-chairperson, the chairperson, and the chairperson for the Long-Range Planning subcommittee. She also represented the SSCC on a multi-agency team that reviewed Water Quality Protection/EPA 319 project applications. She recently accepted an appointment to the board of directors for the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture as a representative of the SSCC.

Puttmann practices soil and water conservation on the farm she operates with her husband, Dwight, in northwest Iowa. The Puttmanns have a diversified livestock and grain operation including 850 acres of corn, soybeans, oats, hay and permanent pasture. They also market 2,500 hogs per year and finish out the calves from 35 stock cows. Puttmann has also been active on a number of local and state committees of the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, including chairing the Environmental Resources Advisory Committee.

IASWCDC Honorary Memberships

Honorary memberships are bestowed upon individuals who have had a significant influence on the Iowa soil and water conservation program and contributed to its growth.

Presenter: Glenn Buresh, Ely, President, IASWCDC

Joe Kelly, Des Moines

In the four years that Joe Kelly has been the Association's representative on Capitol Hill he has done much to increase legislators' recognition of the importance of soil and water conservation. He has helped legislators see resource protection as a statewide priority as well as emphasize the specific needs of certain localized areas. His efforts to communicate directly with legislators on behalf of the Association have produced stronger support for Iowa's soil and water conservation programs.

Sally Puttmann, Kingsley

See Division of Soil Conservation Awards

J. Kelly Tobin, New Market

Kelly Tobin has been a leading force in soil and water conservation efforts in Iowa. He is a past-president of the IASWCDC. He is currently the Region 8 Association Director and vice chairperson of the Taylor SWCD. He has been chairman of the district, and was recognized as the Region 8 Outstanding Soil Commissioner in 1988.

Tobin graduated from Iowa State University in 1987 with a Bachelor of Science degree in agricultural studies and farm management. He is a member of the Iowa Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers. He is also a former trustee and past-president of the Iowa State Foundation Farms, the 12-member organization that manages 3,000 acres of farmland throughout Iowa on behalf of the University.

Tobin has been farming since 1949 and is now one of the operators of the Tobin Family Farm. The Tobins raise corn, soybeans and alfalfa. They also produce beef and swine. The Tobins utilize no-till planting and have installed terraces as needed on their nearly 600-acre farm in Taylor County.

Jeff Vonk, Lincoln, NE

Jeff Vonk was the USDA Soil Conservation Service State Conservationist for Iowa from October 1990, through August 1994. During the nearly four years he served in Iowa, Vonk was instrumental in administering the Conservation Compliance Program established by the 1985 Food Security Act. He also worked to strengthen the relationship between conservation groups and major commodity organizations, helping each to realize how much they gain from working together for the protection of Iowa's natural resources.

Vonk also provided Iowa farmers with a strong link to Washington, D.C., by informing members of Congress of Iowa's conservation issues and working to make USDA guidelines more effective in Iowa. Upon leaving his Iowa post, Vonk served as the Deputy Chief of Programs in the national office of the SCS. He is currently the Regional Conservationist for the Northern Plains Regional Office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, in Lincoln, NE.

