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November 8, 2005

News Release

Mills Soil and water Conservation District Holds Annual Conservation Appreciation Banquet

On Thursday, November 3rd, Mills Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) honored four landowners for their commitment to conservation of natural resources within Mills County. Ninety-two people were in attendance at the "Mills SWCD 2005 Conservation Appreciation Banquet." The Mills-Montgomery Cattlemen's Association supplied and prepared "Flatiron" steaks and sides for the event, which took place in the Malvern Community building.

After dinner, SWCD Commissioner Doug Beckman presented a slide show on his recent trip to China with Farm Bureau. Beckman spoke of Farm Bureau's meetings with top Chinese officials concerning importation of commodities, especially grain, into the ever growing population of the Asian nation. He also shared many interesting pictures and commentary about the Chinese lifestyle and farm industry.

Next, Director Kenneth Tow of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship – Division of Soil Conservation, awarded Mills Soil and Water Conservation District a check for development of the Mud Creek area for water quality purposes. The money allocated for this project will be used to monitor water quality and assess the need for conservation practices within the watershed. Mud Creek watershed is located in Mills and East and West Pottawattamie SWCD's.

Awards were then given to individual landowners for their conservation efforts. David Grudle & family were given the "Prairie Restoration" award for their past and ongoing protection of a remnant prairie on their farm. The Grudles are implementing a buffer system to their native grasses and forbs (flowers) with funds through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). David's mother, Mary, was presented the award on behalf of her family.

Butch Belt was awarded a "Wetland Restoration" award for his role in enrolling a large tract of land into the CRP CP-23 (floodplain wetlands) program. Belt's ground borders the Iowa DNR's Willow Slough, which has had a known population of the Massasauga Rattlesnake, a threatened/endangered species. Mr. Belt completed an extensive restoration plan, that went far above the restoration plan needed to meet program requirements.

Paul Hathaway, CHR **Charles Goodman, V-CHR** **Commissioners**
Steve Roenfeldt **Sandra Mass** **Doug Beckman**

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David Sieck was given a “Special Recognition” award for his coordination in the Saint Mary’s Island mitigation project. The area surrounding the rest stop on Interstate 29 was once an island within the Missouri River system of channels. Once the Army Corps of Engineers channelized and leveed the river and floodplain, many of these areas filled in with sediment and eventually were farmed. This locale, though, has remained relatively low in the floodplain, and is often plagued with high water tables. Sieck, who farms in the area, was essential in the initial contact with these landowners for NRCS and then the US Army Corps of Engineers, who eventually took over the project and are in the process of acquiring those tracts.

The final award of the evening was a “Lifetime Achievement” award given to Doctor Melvin Scheffel. “Doc” Scheffel, as he is affectionately known around Mills County, has been proactive in his conservation efforts on the farms that he owns. Over the years, he installed thousands of feet of terraces, as well as water and sediment control basins, and two large structures. Many of these projects were done without cost-share. Doc had field borders before they were required as part of conservation plans, and has enrolled multiple areas in CRP, taking poorly productive/highly erodible land out of crop production. Scheffel is still very active on his farms installing new practices to address soil erosion and water quality concerns.

Mills SWCD would like to thank the following for sponsoring this annual event: **Brownco, Inc.; Farm Service Company; Glenwood Family Dentistry, Dennis Gray DDS, Paul Albertson DDS; Glenwood State Bank; Hays Insurance Services LLC; Houghton State Bank; Jim Hughes Real Estate; Kaiman's Supermarket; Lewis Mather and Sons, Inc.; Mills County Bank (National Association); Mills County Farm Bureau; Richards & Son Agri Supply; Rieken Construction, Inc.; Shirley’s Home Café; Jipsen Construction, LLC; Bunge North America, Inc.; Stavos State Farm; Don Schoening; Cellular 29 Plus; Tom & Sarah Heitman; Philip & Beverly Dashner.**

Again, thank you to the sponsors of the event, those in attendance, and congratulations to all of our award winners.



Kenneth Tow, Director of IDALS-DSC, awards Paul Hathaway a check for the Mud Creek Watershed Study.