



# GRASSROOTS

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## **Finalists announced for the 2010 Leopold Conservation Award in South Dakota**

Sand County Foundation, the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association and the South Dakota Grassland Coalition are pleased to announce the finalists for the 2010 Leopold Conservation Award. "The health of South Dakota's landscape is dependent on hard-working farmers and ranchers who are dedicated to ensuring that South Dakota's land, water and wildlife are in better shape than when they found them," said Dr. Brent Haglund, Sand County Foundation President. "The high quality of nominees in this inaugural year made the selection process difficult but it proves that South Dakota's natural resources are being cared for by innovative landowners who want to see them flourish for future generations." The Leopold Conservation Award, named in honor of world-renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, is comprised of \$10,000 and a Leopold crystal. The award is presented annually in eight states to private landowners who practice responsible land stewardship and management.

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For more information or other events the **SOUTH DAKOTA GRASSLAND COALITION** is involved with, please contact Kyle Schell or visit the website: <http://www.sdgrass.org>

**The 2010 Leopold Conservation Award finalists, listed alphabetically, are:**

**Dorn and Linda Barnes (Hyde County)**

Dorn and Linda Barnes' Cedar Valley Ranch is comprised of almost 3,000 acres. The Barnes family views their land as an important haven for wildlife. They have planted over 90 acres of trees, installed grassed waterways, built dams to enhance wetlands and planted several acres of grass to reduce soil erosion and improve wildlife habitat. The Barnes began raising pheasant chicks to increase the bird population, which has led to a significant increase in the diversity of bird species on the ranch. The robust pheasant population allows the ranch to manage a pheasant hunting business as added income. Cedar Valley Ranch is also 100 percent no-till, which helps increase worm movement, maintains moisture in the soil and provides nesting areas for wildlife. Aside from wildlife, the Barnes family is also dedicated to grassland and water management. They utilize rotational grazing to increase the productivity and profitability of the grassland and installed fences, water lines and water tanks to enhance the water supply for their cattle, as well as the wildlife.

**Rick and Marlis Doud (Haakon County)**

Rick and Marlis Doud operate 6,000 deeded acres and 2,500 leased acres on which they run nearly 400 cow-calf pairs. They made a significant switch in their management technique when they transitioned to rotational grazing and a summer calving program at the beginning of the decade, which the Douds credit as the catalyst for tremendous improvement in the productivity and diversity of the grasses in their rotated pastures even in the face of severe drought. The family has installed cross-fencing, more than 15 miles of water pipeline and 20 water tanks. Rick and Marlis have also planted three shelterbelts to catch snow for runoff and provide nesting cover for wildlife. Their land and water management techniques have led to an abundance of wildlife, which is managed through a hunting program. The Douds believe in lifelong learning, and Rick has passed his knowledge on as a mentor to young ranchers who have an interest in summer calving and rotational grazing.

**Paulson Family (Jerauld County)**

Dale Paulson and his family run a 90-head grass-based dairy that optimizes forage produced on the ranch, as well as a 305-head beef herd. Dale has implemented a Management Intensive Grazing (MIG) system to increase his carrying capacity, helping to increase revenue by reducing cost. The Paulson's MIG plan includes 15 miles of cross-fence and 8300 linear feet of above ground pipeline. When the Paulsons purchased the ranch 15 years ago, it consisted of 1,031 tillable acres of row crops and 2,200 acres of rangeland. Currently, all except 300 acres of the tillable land has been planted to native grasses or an orchard/wheat grass/alfalfa mix. No till is used on the remainder of the cropland. Additional land management techniques include the construction of an animal waste lagoon and rehabilitation of riparian areas by timing grazing activities around the high impact areas. The family also developed a multi-purpose pond, which is fenced out and set aside for wildlife use.

**Mark and Sharon Stime (Brookings County)**

Beginning in the 1980's, the Stimes converted almost 300 acres of cropland into grassland, which decreased their costs by 80 percent, planted several shelterbelts and buffer strips to prevent soil erosion, conserved the abundant wetlands on their property and provided food plots all of which benefit the wildlife population on their ranch. The Stimes graze their 130-head bison herd and utilize fire to simulate techniques that were used on prairies in pre-settlement times. Currently, about 100 acres of grassland are being rejuvenated by farming them for a 2-year period and will then be re-seeded to a diverse mixture of native grasses and forbs. The Stimes reach out to future generations by hosting youth and their adult mentors during the youth pheasant, waterfowl and deer seasons. They also welcome students from South Dakota State University for research opportunities.

The Leopold Conservation Award recipient will be formally recognized December 1 at the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association's Annual Convention in Aberdeen.

The Leopold Conservation Award in South Dakota was possible thanks to generous contributions from many organizations, including: the Bradley Fund for the Environment, American State Bank, Daybreak Ranch, Ducks Unlimited, Millborn Seeds, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association, the South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation, the South Dakota Grassland Coalition, and The Nature Conservancy.

For more information, please visit [www.leopoldconservationaward.org](http://www.leopoldconservationaward.org)

### **Generational Transitioning to be Topic of Discussion at the South Dakota Grassland Coalition Annual Meeting**

The South Dakota Grassland Coalition is pleased to announce that they will be having their annual meeting on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The meeting is going to be held at the AmericInn in Chamberlain SD.

The topic of discussion for this year's meeting will be Generational Transitioning and there are two excellent speakers lined up to give advice on how to pass a family farm on to the next generation – Jim McCarthy, vice president of the Advanced Estate and Business Markets for Farm Bureau Financial Services, and Sherry Vinton, Nebraska Sandhills rancher.

In the morning session, Jim McCarthy will discuss some of the legal issues to be aware of when starting the transitioning process. He specializes in estate tax, business succession planning, and charitable gifting strategies for a family owned business, farm or ranch. Jim grew up in Washington, Iowa; he received his Business and Financial Degree from the University of Notre Dame and his Law Degree from Creighton University. He has been with Farm Bureau since 1992 and has earned several financial and insurance designations. Jim is currently a member of the Agriculture, Probate and Trust Sections of

the Iowa Bar Association and is a member of the Nebraska and North Carolina Bar Associations. Sherry Vinton will discuss the importance of retaining ranchers on the grasslands in the afternoon session. "I think the future in production agriculture is bright, especially for grass-based agriculture," Vinton says. "Grasslands are our biggest asset, and as a landowner you want to optimize that resource." Sherry Vinton and her husband, Chris, represent the 5th generation of a family ranch in the Sandhills of Nebraska. After studying accounting at University of Nebraska, Sherry and Chris returned to his family's ranch. Currently, she serves on the Grant County planning commission, as treasurer and a mentor for the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition, is a state director for Nebraska Farm Bureau, and is an appointed board member for the Nebraska Environmental Trust. She and Chris feel blessed that their three children and families involved on the ranch. "Words are important," she adds, "especially when dealing with a contract [such as easements]. So landowners must make sure they understand the legal aspects." Similarly, as climate change legislation and federal estate tax issues face reform, Vinton stresses the importance of understanding the issues. Bottomline, she says, "Make sure you're not legally binding yourself to something you don't understand." A lunch will be provided between the two speakers as well as the Grassland Coalitions annual business meeting. Registration begins at 9:00 am with Jim's presentation at 10:00 am. The meeting will be free of charge for all South Dakota Grassland Coalition members. If you are not a member, there is a \$30 registration fee. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to by December 9, 2010 to Judge Jessop at (605) 280-0127 or at [jjessop@sdconservation.org](mailto:jjessop@sdconservation.org). If you have any other questions, contact Judge or go to the South Dakota Grassland Coalition website at [www.SDGrass.org](http://www.SDGrass.org).



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**Calendar of events:**

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Phone No.</u>
SD Cattlemen's Convention	Dec 1-2	Aberdeen, SD	SDCA	605-945-2333
SDGC Annual Meeting	Dec 15	Chamberlain, SD	Judge Jessop	605-280-0127

Please remit any comments, suggestions, or topics deemed necessary for further review to: Kyle Schell, SDSU Box 2170, Brookings SD 57007, [kyle.schell@sdstate.edu](mailto:kyle.schell@sdstate.edu), (605) 688-6623