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Finalists named in Colorado Leopold Conservation Award Program

Finalists for the 2014 Leopold Conservation Award in Colorado have been announced. The prestigious award recognizes private landowner achievement in voluntary conservation. It is presented annually by Sand County Foundation, the Colorado Cattlemen's Association, the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust, Peabody Energy, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association and American AgCredit.

The finalists are:

Scott and Jean Johnson, Flying Diamond Ranch, Kit Carson;

Kenny and Jody Rogers, Wagon Wheel Ranch, Yuma; and

Gary and Georgia Walker, Turkey Creek Ranch, Pueblo.

Flying Diamond Ranch, headquartered near Kit Carson, sits on 25,000 acres and has been owned and operated by Scott and Jean Johnson since 1990.

Wagon Wheel Ranch is operated by Kenny and Jody Rogers, is a multigenerational farm with three generations still actively involved.

Turkey Creek Ranch is approximately 65,000 deeded acres between Fort Carson and Pueblo West. It is owned and operated by Gary and Georgia Walker who manage it for both wildlife and livestock.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the Leopold Conservation Award recognizes extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation. It inspires other landowners through these examples and provides a visible forum where farmers, ranchers and other private landowners are recognized as conservation leaders. In his influential 1949 book, A Sand County Almanac, Leopold called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage, which he called "an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity."

Award applicants are judged based on their demonstration of improved resource conditions, innovation, long-term commitment to stewardship, sustained economic viability, community and civic leadership and multiple use benefits.

"The Colorado landowners who have been named finalists for the Leopold Conservation Award are committed to conservation and to teaching others about the importance of natural resources stewardship," said Brent Haglund, president, Sand County Foundation.

The 2014 recipient, who will receive \$10,000 and a crystal depicting Aldo Leopold, will be announced in April. The award will be presented at the Colorado Cattlemen's Association annual convention on June 16 in Colorado Springs.

"The Leopold Conservation Award is an excellent way to highlight the positive impacts of agriculture in Colorado. The families named as the finalists for this year's award exemplify sustainability and being natural resource stewards," said Terry Fankhauser, executive vice president of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association.

The Leopold Conservation Award is possible thanks to generous contributions from many organizations; including Peabody Energy, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Assoc., American AgCredit, The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, Farm Credit, DuPont Pioneer, The Mosaic Company and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

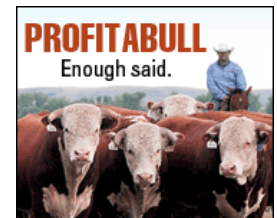
For application information, visit leopoldconservationaward.org.

The Leopold Conservation Award is a competitive award that recognizes landowner achievement in voluntary conservation. The award consists of a crystal statue depicting Aldo Leopold and a check for \$10,000. Sand County Foundation presents Leopold Conservation Awards in California, Colorado, Kentucky, Nebraska, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

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