



Leopold Conservation Award seeks nominees: Utah farmers and ranchers who exemplify land stewardship

September 4, 2007 –Sandy, Utah — The Utah Farm Bureau Federation is excited to announce a new partnership with Wisconsin-based Sand County Foundation and a call for nominations for the co-sponsored Leopold Conservation Award. The Leopold Conservation Award will be presented in November to recognize and celebrate Utah’s *Landholder Leaders* – those exceptional landowners whose voluntary initiatives for conservation exemplify the spirit and history of Utah ranching and farming.

The Leopold Conservation Award, which is comprised of \$10,000 and an Aldo Leopold crystal, recognizes Utah farmers and ranchers who demonstrate outstanding stewardship and sustainable management of natural resources. The Leopold Conservation Award is presented in honor of famed conservationist and author Aldo Leopold who called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage.

“We are very excited to announce this award and this partnership on behalf of the farmers and ranchers of Utah,” said Leland Hogan, President of the Utah Farm Bureau Federation. “This award, however, is great for all of Utah because the recognition and funding helps to preserve and enhance our open space. Utah’s farmers and ranchers have a long history of land preservation and a deep commitment to preserving Utah’s natural resources. As stewards of the land we want to ensure that history continues well into the future.”

The award is expected to be supported, directly and indirectly, by a significant coalition of individual agencies and organizations, including the Utah Farm Bureau, Utah Cattlemen’s Association and the Nature Conservancy, together with the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development who help to pool and coordinate federal, state, and local resources for rehabilitation and restoration efforts in the wake of the 2007 wildfires.

“We believe this initiative is especially important right now in Utah in a year of natural disaster that has forced so many challenges on agriculture and on the individuals and families who must recover and continue to manage, protect and conserve the land,” said David Allen, Sand County’s Vice President who visited Salt Lake City recently to help organize the award.

According to Allen, a panel of independent judges will be looking for conservation management, economics, and community leadership as primary criteria for the award.

Beginning this year, the award program is expected to be presented annually each November. Sand County Foundation presents Leopold Conservation Awards in six other states, including in California where the Farm Bureau Federation is one of the local sponsoring partners.

“We view the Leopold Conservation Award as an important investment in private lands conservation,” said Dr. Brent Haglund, Sand County Foundation President. “The \$10,000 that accompanies the award wouldn’t go very far as a direct investment in a conservation project. But by using it to highlight the outstanding stewardship of a private landowner, we indirectly support hundreds of thousands in voluntary improvements by other landowners that make measurable and lasting improvements in water quality and wildlife habitat.”

The Leopold Conservation Award will be presented at the Annual Meeting of the Utah Association of Conservation Districts on Thursday, November 8, 2007 at St. George’s Hilton Garden Inn.

The nomination deadline is **September 26, 2007**. For more information, visit www.leopoldconservationaward.org , or contact Sterling Brown, 801-233-3001 or scb@fbfs.com.

About the Leopold Conservation Award

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

The awards are presented to accomplish three objectives: First, they recognize extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation on the land of exemplary private landowners. Second, they inspire countless other landowners in their own communities through these examples. Finally, they provide a visible forum where leaders from the agriculture community are recognized as conservation leaders to groups outside of agriculture.

About the Utah Farm Bureau

The Utah Farm Bureau is the largest general farm and ranch organization in the state with more than 21,000 member families. Its mission is to improve the net income of the state’s farmers and ranchers and the overall quality of life in the state and nation through political action, educational and informational means. The Farm Bureau is a non-partisan, voluntary organization, and its efforts are based on grassroots policies developed by members at the local, county, state and national levels. It is affiliated with the American Farm Bureau Federation, the world’s largest general farm organization, with more than 6 million family members in 50 states and Puerto Rico. For more information, go to the Utah Farm Bureau Web site at <http://utfb.fb.org>.

About Sand County Foundation

Sand County Foundation is a private, non-profit conservation organization dedicated to working with private landowners to improve habitat on their land. In the spirit of Aldo Leopold, author of *A Sand County Almanac*, the Foundation encourages the exercise of private responsibility in the pursuit of improved land health. <http://www.sandcounty.net>.