

Winnebago County SWCD 73rd Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon



The **Winnebago County SWCD** held their **73rd** Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon on Friday, January 31st at Klehm Arboretum. About 95 people attended the event. It included a short business meeting, and the election of three directors. Elected to two year terms were Paul Beuth, Roger Christin and Justin Krohn. Several Individuals and organizations were recognized for their outstanding efforts in the areas of Environmental Education, Environmental Awareness, and Dedication to Water Quality Protection. An Outstanding Conservation Farmer was recognized, and an individual was honored for his Distinguished Merit.



The District held a silent auction to benefit our educational efforts. Over 40 businesses, organizations and individuals donated items such as gift cards, prints, baked goods, and other items. **\$2,960** was raised in the auction, which will go into our Education Fund, which is used for our scholarship program and other educational events.



A huge thank-you goes out to all of the auction donors, with a special thank-you to Wyffels Hybrids, for their generous donation. We also want to acknowledge **Judy Barnard**, one of our Associate Directors, for helping organize the auction.



Pictured - SWCD Vice-Chairman Paul Beuth and Roger Christin.

Roger Christin was given the District's "**Distinguished Merit**" Award. Roger recently retired from the Winnebago/Boone Farm Bureau in December of 2012, where he served as the Farm Bureau manager for 20 years. Roger has always been supportive of the educational activities and conservation efforts of the District and those of our partners, and continues to be actively involved.

The District held a rain barrel design contest last fall. The winning design came from 4th grade student **Analese Vondrak**, from **St. Bridget's School**. A live auction of the rain barrel was conducted by **Jim Sacia**, with the proceeds from the auction going towards the school's garden and food pantry. This was definitely one of the highlights of the meeting, as the bidding reached **\$1,000** for the barrel!! It was purchased by **Dwayne Proctor** (with **Tessa Chadwick** as a silent partner). They, in turn, donated the barrel back to the school.



Rock Valley College “Students for Responsible Environmental Sustainability” Club was selected to receive our “*Environmental Awareness*” Award. This club was formed in 2012 by a group of students in Dr. Joey Holmes Environmental Science Class. The students realized the need to make a change in people’s mind sets and in their practices, in order to make our world a better place. They felt a strong need to take action so they formed the club to start making a difference. They volunteer to do prairie seed collection, make bird houses and bird feeders for local parks, and promote environmental sustainability at their campus. They currently have about 30 active members studying a variety of subjects. This award was sponsored by the Four Rivers Environmental Coalition. Pictured are Club President Abigail Simon and Vice President Will Freiburger.



Our “*Outstanding Conservation Farmer Award*” was presented to **Bernie Walsh**. Bernie farms approximately 1100 acres in the Durand area, where he has farmed his whole life. Most of his land is enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program, which is a voluntary program that encourages producers to address resource concerns by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing the conservation activities on their land. Bernie also has his most environmentally sensitive lands enrolled in various practices in the Conservation Reserve Program, which is geared towards water quality protection and wildlife habitat. Pictured is **Bernie Walsh**, and award sponsor **Greg Smith** from **Durand State Bank**.

Brenden Schultz was awarded the “*Environmental Education*” Award. Brenden has been with the Pecatonica High School for 10 years, where he teaches the Agricultural, Horticulture & Environmental Science classes. He is also the adviser to the Durand-Pecatonica-Winnebago FFA chapter. Brenden likes to incorporate many hands-on activities for his students, such as field plots and classroom activities at the Torstenson Family Conservation Education Center; as well as the construction of the pavilion, and FFA orchard and garden adjacent to the High School. Pictured is award sponsor **Jeff Sterling** from **German American State Bank**, with **Brenden Schultz**.



Stenstrom was awarded our “*Dedication to Water Quality Protection*” Award. They received the award because of their commitment to protection our water quality resources, and setting an example for others in the County. They understand their responsibility for controlling non-point source pollution on construction sites, and try to prevent any negative impacts to the environment by using sound planning and implementation of soil erosion and sediment control practices. Pictured is award sponsor **Bill Brenner** from **Riverside Community Bank**, and Stenstrom Representative **Jim Frykman**.

Thank You to our Program Sponsors and Supporters

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