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Hoy Family Receives Kansas Leopold Conservation Award

News release provided by Sand County Foundation

Josh and Gwen Hoy's Flying W Ranch of Cedar Point has been selected as the recipient of the 2020 Kansas Leopold Conservation Award®.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes those who inspire others with their dedication to land, water and wildlife resources in their care. The Hoy's recently were presented with \$10,000 and a crystal award at a special ceremony at their ranch near Cedar Point.

In Kansas the award is presented annually by Sand County Foundation, American Farmland Trust (AFT), Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) and Ranchland Trust of Kansas (RTK).

Unconventional ranching on protected prairie is how Josh and Gwen

Hoy describe what they do on Flying W Ranch, a bison and beef cattle ranch on the tallgrass prairie of the Kansas Flint Hills.

"The Hoy family epitomize the land ethic that Aldo Leopold wrote about. Their public outreach ensures their conservation success stretches far beyond their property line," said Dan Meyerhoff, KACD Executive Director.

"Congratulations to the Hoy family. Their dedication to conser-

vation can be seen by their ranch stewardship practices. They also have been great advocates for the cause, sharing the story of ranchland conservation with the public," said Chelsea Good, RTK Chair.

"Recipients of this award are real life examples of conservation-minded agriculture," said Kevin McAleese, Sand County Foundation

conservation in agriculture requires a focus on the land, the practices and the people. The Leopold Conservation Award recognizes the integral role of all three."

In 2020, Kansas landowners were encouraged to apply (or be nominated) for the award. Applications were reviewed by an independent panel of agricultural and conservation leaders.

Among the many outstanding Kansas landowners nominated for the award were finalists Vance and Louise Ehmke of Healy in Lane County, and Dwane Roth of Manhattan in Riley County.

In 2015 the first Kansas Leopold Conservation Award was presented to Sproul Ranch of Sedan. The Leopold Conservation Award in Kansas is made possible thanks to the generous support of sponsors Every;



Josie, Josh & Gwen Hoy

President and Chief Executive Officer. "These hard-working families are essential to our environment, food system and rural economy."

"We are pleased to present this award to Josh and Gwen Hoy for their outstanding application of innovative grazing practices along with their dedication to the land, soil and livestock they steward," said John Piotti, AFT President and Chief Executive Officer.

"At AFT we believe that con-

port of sponsors Every; Farm Credit Associations of Kansas; ITC Great Plains; Kansas Department of Agriculture (Division of Conservation); Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism; Kansas Forest Service; McDonald's; The Nature Conservancy; USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and a Kansas Leopold Conservation Award recipient.

Visit leopoldconservationaward.org for more information.

OUR MISSION

To preserve Kansas' ranching heritage and open spaces for future generations through the conservation of working landscapes.

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RTK Welcomes New Board Members

By Samantha Weishaar, RTK Associate Director

RTK welcomes new board members Greg Wingfield and Scott Strickland.

Greg is a conservationist from McDonald, KS who has dedicated his career to conservation work in Kansas and Nebraska. He recently moved to Chase County, beginning his retirement adventure with his wife, Dina. Greg has supported RTK since the organization was formed in 2003. He enjoys hunting, fishing, golf and travel. To learn more about Greg, read his spotlight feature in the Fall 2019 newsletter on RTK's website.

Scott was born and raised in the Kansas City area. He and his wife Patti both have been RTK volunteers by serving on committees and helping plan events. He has been an advocate for RTK since he learned about the



Patti & Scott Strickland

organization at a Symphony in the Flint Hills event years ago. Scott is a KLA member and enjoys quail hunting, fishing, reading and painting. To learn more about Scott, check out the Summer 2019 newsletter spotlight feature on RTK's website.

Thank you to outgoing board members Bill Eastman, Cade Rensink and Ryan Arndt. Bill and Cade both served on the RTK Board of Directors for nine years and Ryan served six years. We greatly appreciate the time and dedication each of them put towards serving the mission of RTK. Thank you for everything you have done and continue to do for land conservation in Kansas!



Greg & Dina Wingfield

Save the Date!

COWBOYS FOR CONSERVATION TRAIL RIDE

June 19, 2021

Allison Land & Cattle
Eureka, KS



Kansas Leopold Award Seeks Nominees

News Release Provided by Sand County Foundation

Know a Kansas farmer, rancher or forestland owner who goes above and beyond in the care and management of natural resources? Nominate them for the 2021 Kansas Leopold Conservation Award.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor American Farmland Trust (AFT) present the Leopold Conservation Award to private landowners in 22 states for extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation. In Kansas, the \$10,000 award is presented with Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD), and the Ranchland Trust of Kansas (RTK).

In his influential 1949 book, "A Sand County Almanac," Leopold called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage.

Nominations may be submitted on behalf of a landowner, or landowners may nominate themselves. Applications are reviewed by an independent panel of agricultural and conservation leaders. The application can be found at www.sandcountyfoundation.org/ApplyLCA.

The application deadline date is June 1, 2021. Applications can be emailed to award@sandcountyfoundation.org. If mailed, applications must be postmarked by June 1 and mailed to: Dan Meyerhoff, KACD, 414 Autumn Lane, Hays, KS 67601.

"The Leopold Conservation Award Program provides a valuable opportunity to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of Kansas agricultural landowners who are committed to strong conservation practices and ef-

fective stewardship," said Dan Meyerhoff, Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD).

"RTK is a proud supporter of the Leopold Conservation Award in Kansas. It is an honor to help recognize those conservationists who go above and beyond in the stewardship of our natural resources," said Chelsea Good, RTK Board Chair.

"Conserving our state's rich and diverse natural resources is ingrained deeply in the culture of our multi-generational farms and ranches," said Kansas Agriculture Secretary Mike Beam. "The Leopold Conservation Award serves an important role of reminding

the general public of how private land managers conserve and enhance these resources for future generations."

The award will be presented in November at the KACD Annual Convention in Wichita.

The 2021 Leopold Conservation Award in Kansas is made possible thanks to the generous support of sponsors Everygy; Farm Credit Associations of Kansas; ITC Great Plains; Kansas Department of Agriculture (Division of Conservation); Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism; Kansas Forest Service; McDonald's; The Nature Conservancy in Kansas; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; and a Kansas Leopold Conservation Award recipient.

Visit www.leopoldconservationaward.org for more information on the award.



A message from the Board Chair



2020 was a year for the record books, but maybe not in the ways that term is typically used. In March, we quickly learned about social distancing and Zoom as COVID-19 restrictions became the new normal. Many of my friends in Washington D.C. and other large cities were quick to exit and perform their work remotely in a more rural setting. Some do not think they will ever return.

Never have wide-open spaces been appreciated more than during these times when they can bring needed rejuvenation and a sense of normalcy. Our great Kansas ranchers have been social distancing all along as a matter of lifestyle. Outside of some missed meetings and travel, their days continued as usual.

We should all be proud of how well Ranchland Trust

of Kansas has weathered a year that was difficult for so many non-profits. When the forecast changes, plans must pivot. The Symphony in the Flint Hills was canceled and, with it, the RTK Pre-Symphony event. Still, our work with landowners desiring to place voluntary conservation easements on their working agriculture land continued. We also added some events for those who were comfortable, like our first RTK charity golf tournament.

Navigating 2020 took strong leadership. We are certainly blessed to have that in Lynn Gentine, who was hired as RTK's first full-time executive director in 2019. We have benefited from her vision and adaptability.

Looking forward, we are excited to continue the great work of RTK and hopefully connect with our great supporters and partners, ideally in person!

Chelsea Good

RTK Board Chair