

## **Iowa PF Announces Regional Award Winners**

### **Eastern Iowa Youth Award**

**Dubuqueland PF**-The volunteers from Dubuqueland host a very popular youth hunt every fall located at Ringneck Ridge, a Wildlife Management Area the chapter was instrumental in acquiring. They partnered with several other groups in the area to host a Youth Day for kids across the Dubuqueland area. This day is full of hands-on activities that expose youth to many of the great outdoor recreations - over 125 children attend this event every year. In 2008, the chapter, along with the Dubuque County Conservation Board, engaged the entire family by hosting Hands on Habitat, where families witnessed a controlled prairie burn, helped plant a food plot and trees, and watched and/or participated in many other activities.

### **Eastern Iowa Professional Excellence Award**

**Dan Cohen**-Cohen is Executive Director of the Buchanan County Conservation Board and an active member and Secretary of the Buchanan County Chapter. After receiving his Bachelor's Degree in Animal Ecology from Iowa State University, Dan has been working in the conservation field as a naturalist or Conservation Board Director for the past 23 years. He is a past Chair of the Iowa Conservation Education Council and the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards. Cohen has received several awards during his career, including national recognition for his work as a 4-H wilderness trips leader at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, and Educator of the Year by the Iowa Chapter of Safari Club International. His many years of consulting work include writing more than 20 natural resources booklets. Cohen currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Iowa State Association of Counties and as President of the Buchanan County Extension Council. He has also been very engaged during the past two years as a member of the Committee for Sustainable Funding for Natural Resources as he believes this initiative has incredible potential to drastically improve natural resources, outdoor recreation opportunities, and the quality of life for all Iowans.

### **Eastern Iowa Expenditure Awards**

**Jackson County PF - \$250,000 Award** Since their first banquet in 1986 Jackson County's volunteers have allocated \$257,175 toward the mission of PF. They have created or improved 9,000 acres of critical wildlife habitat while spending \$40,000 on conservation education and awareness.

**Winneshiek County PF - \$1,500,000 Award**-Not only does Winneshiek County PF lead the state in Native grass plantings at 21, 167 acres of critical nesting cover, they are also among the elite in the nation in acres planted. The incredible partnerships between the Iowa DNR, NRCS, SWCD and the chapter have allowed Winneshiek County to become one of the true upland gems in Iowa. Not only have upland birds benefited from the great work of this chapter, but also brown trout that live in the coldwater streams are now naturally reproducing due to the improved water quality that Winneshiek PF's native grass plantings have provided.

### **Western Iowa Youth Award**

**Sioux Prairie Chapter (Sioux County)**-This year, in addition to hosting the governor's hunt in 2007, their annual youth hunt, yearly banquet, and presiding over the largest PF land acquisition in Iowa to date, the Sioux Prairie Chapter held their first Youth Banquet. 110 youth and 220 attendees came out to enjoy the fun and educational games and stations, which included dog training, trap shooting, county educational games, name that critter game, putting for habitat, pheasant darts, and a dunk tank. The chapter was able to recruit great partners to help with the event, such as the Iowa DNR, the Sioux County Conservation Board, trap range clubs, media resource professionals, local conservation law enforcement, and many local businesses.

## **Western Iowa Professional Excellence Award**

**George Hemmen, Retired Iowa DNR Conservation Officer-**Hemmen worked 34 years as a conservation officer in Polk, Guthrie, and Audubon counties, where he still enjoys teaching shooting sports to groups, including helping out with the local high school trap team. To this day he looks forward to teaching at the PF youth camps held at Springbrook Park each year. George's affinity for the outdoors was formed at a young age - his grandfather owned a farm near Kelsey 'loaded with all kinds of game' and today he still loves to hunt with his English setters, and in fact he has made a vow to never be without one in the house. George has been married to his wife Diane for 42 years and together they have two daughters, Stacy and Angela, one son, Travis, and four grandchildren.

## **Western Iowa Expenditure Awards**

**Buena Vista County - \$100,000 Award-**This \$100,000 raised and spent by the Buena Vista County chapter has improved 5,217 acres of habitat, spanning 462 projects, including the planting of 15,000 trees. The chapter has also shown enthusiasm for giving young people outdoor opportunities in the county, as they have allocated over \$15,000 towards youth education. Their new youth program has also breathed some new life into the chapter, bringing in new volunteers and growing their annual banquet.

**Taylor County - \$100,000 Award-**With over 286 projects completed, the Taylor County Chapter reached the \$100,000 milestone by improving 3,637 acres of habitat and allocating \$3,500 on youth conservation education.

**Boyer Valley - \$250,000-**The Boyer Valley Chapter has raised and spent one quarter million dollar by completing 856 projects improving 10,960 acres of habitat, including the planting of nearly 70,000 trees. Boyer Valley has also spent over \$37,000 on youth conservation education. In addition to all these projects, the chapter is currently working on the Oldtown Conservation Area, a land acquisition of over 341 acres.

**Cherokee County - \$250,000-**To reach the quarter million milestone, Cherokee County Chapter's volunteers completed 863 projects affecting 5,255 acres of habitat, including the planting of almost 70,000 trees. Recently Cherokee County finalized a land acquisition of over 78 acres that expands an adjoining park of 244 acres. Cherokee County has also spent over \$66,000 on youth conservation education.

**Plymouth County - \$500,000-**The volunteers of the Plymouth County Chapter have reached the half million mark by raising and spending funds for 14,255 acres of habitat spanning 1,382 projects. This chapter has also planted nearly 310,000 trees and spent over \$97,000 on youth education.

**Carroll County - \$750,000-**The volunteers of the Carroll County Chapter raised and spent their \$750,000 to complete 2,233 projects improving 20,000 acres of habitat. The chapter has also planted nearly 210,000 trees and allocated over \$100,000 on youth conservation education. They've been especially active the last two years, purchasing in excess of 200 acres of land in the county, and hosting the 2008 Governor's Hunt.

## **Central Iowa Youth Award**

**North Butler Chapter-**This highly devoted group of individuals is dedicated to the next generation of outdoorsmen and women in their area – no matter what obstacles Mother Nature might put in their way. The North Butler Chapter has held a youth hunt for the last 10 years with an average of 22 participants, and of course this year was no exception, even after the horrific tornado this spring and the floods this summer that destroyed many of their communities. As might be expected, the pheasants were few and far between in 2008, so the group headed to a shooting preserve, marking the first time ever the volunteers and their young hunting companions did not chase wild birds. This particular event is also sponsored by one individual – for the past years he's provided food, shells, vests, and anything else the young hunter might need.

### **Central Iowa Professional Excellence Award:**

**Kevin Reynolds**-Kevin Reynolds has served as President, Habitat Chair, and is currently the banquet Chair for the Decatur County Chapter. He's been instrumental in the success and accomplishments of the southern Iowa chapter since its beginning. Under Reynolds' guidance, the local volunteers spend nearly all of the funds they raise on habitat in the area. Though Kevin's day job with the NRCS allows him to help landowners and farmers with cost share and wildlife questions every day, he sees his duties to habitat and wildlife as never-ending. A dedicated family man as well as outdoorsman, Reynolds could not accept his award in person as he was traveling to Kansas City to welcome his newborn granddaughter.

### **Central Iowa Expenditure Awards**

**North Butler - \$250,000**-The volunteers of the North Butler Chapter have reached the quarter million dollar mark of funds raised and spent by completing 1,171 projects affecting 8,090 acres of wildlife habitat, including planting over 330,000 trees since the chapter was started. The North Butler Chapter has also shown enthusiasm for bringing up the next generation of hunters and conservationists, hosting a youth hunt for the last 10 years and winning the Central Iowa Youth Award for 2008. They've spent a large portion of their hard-earned funds on youth conservation education as well, racking up \$45,000 on education and public awareness.

**Winnebago-Hancock - \$1.75 million**-The north central Iowa chapter reached this prestigious milestone of funds raised and spent by completing 2,784 projects affecting 16,947 acres of habitat for pheasants and other wildlife. The volunteers of the Winnebago-Hancock chapter have also planted over 535,000 trees since the chapter's formation. This chapter shows no signs of taking a break when it comes to carrying on the PF tradition, as they have allocated over \$115,000 on education and public awareness.