St. Paul, Minn.—The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry have awarded Warren Roberson with the 2010 Minnesota Outstanding Forest Steward Award. The Wabasha Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) nominated him for the award.

The award will be presented at the 74th annual MASWCD Convention, which will be held Dec. 5-7 at the Crowne Plaza St. Paul Riverfront Hotel, St. Paul, Minnesota. The award honors landowners who have implemented innovative forestry conservation activities, demonstrated leadership, and achieved significant results in the protection of Minnesota’s forestry resources.

Roberson has incorporated many woodland management activities on his 1200 acre beef cattle and crop farm near Lake City, Minn. He has had a forest management plan for his property since 1960. Since then, the plan has been revised three times to reflect evolving management needs. From 1962 to 1985 he planted an average of 7,000 trees per year. From 1985 to present he has continued tree planting to a lesser extent as was needed. Through hard work and conservative fiscal management, Roberson has continued to grow his farm and forest acreage. He has reclaimed areas that were understocked or growing undesirables, following up with site preparation and replanting to desirable species. Many trees plantings have been done on steep cropland utilizing conservation programs such as CRP to help hold the soil, and riparian areas are also protected by trees.

In addition to activities focused on forest products, Roberson has conducted several projects aimed at enhancing the other natural resources on his property. Windbreaks were the first tree plantings and he has established windbreaks on all the farms he acquired over the years. He has also installed terraces and diversions to control runoff and erosion. Roberson has installed over thirty-five grade stabilization and/or water retention structures over the years. Waterways in areas of concentrated flow were constructed and maintained and an animal waste storage system was constructed. A stream on his farm that ceased flowing in the 1950’s, began flowing again by the 1970’s and is now supporting a healthy population of trout. Sixty-five acres of upland habitat work have been completed.

But Roberson doesn’t stop with being a wise steward of his own land. He also shares his knowledge and experiences with others. His property is used on forestry and conservation tours, hosting field days along with air tours. Roberson continually experiments with different ideas and attends nearly every forestry program in the local area, implementing many of the ideas he hears about. Roberson is a member of the Minnesota Forestry Association and the Wabasha County Forestry Committee.

Roberson strongly believes his tree planting and other conservation work have benefitted the environment. He is truly worthy of recognition for the many years he has devoted to conservation and proper forest management.