NEWS RELEASE - For immediate release  
December 11, 2013  
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RALPH LENTZ NAMED MINNESOTA’S 2013 OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONIST

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) has named Ralph Lentz of Lake City as the state winner of 2013 Outstanding Conservationist Award.

The award was announced at the 77th MASWCD Annual Meeting, held Dec. 1-3 at the Doubletree by Hilton Bloomington - Minneapolis South. The award program recognizes farm families, individuals, conservation organizations, and other groups for their accomplishments in implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota’s natural resources.

The program is sponsored by MASWCD, with support from The Farmer magazine, and the award ceremony receives sponsorship from Minnesota Corn Growers Association. Mr. Lentz was one of eight finalists from across the state, nominated by local Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The finalists were:

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<th>MASWCD Area</th>
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<td>Northwest Area 1</td>
<td>Dave and Dorothy Adams</td>
<td>East Otter Tail SWCD</td>
<td>Darren Newville (218) 346-4260</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Richville MN</td>
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<td>West Central Area 2</td>
<td>Twin Eagle Dairy Pat and Jody Lunemann Clarissa MN</td>
<td>Todd SWCD</td>
<td>Tim Stieber (320) 732-2644</td>
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<td>Northeast Area 3</td>
<td>Greg and Tammy Anderson Princeton MN</td>
<td>Mille Lacs SWCD</td>
<td>Susan Shaw (320) 983-2160</td>
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<td>Metro Area 4</td>
<td>Hazelden Foundation Center City MN</td>
<td>Chisago SWCD</td>
<td>Craig Mell (651) 674-2333</td>
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<td>Southwest Area 5</td>
<td>The Jensen Sisters – Norma Schlemmer, Linda Nesburg, and Diane Jensen Redwood Falls Township MN</td>
<td>Redwood SWCD</td>
<td>Marilyn Bernhardtson (507) 637-2427</td>
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<td>City of Olivia Olivia MN</td>
<td>Renville SWCD</td>
<td>Tom Kalahar (320) 523-1559</td>
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<td>Southeast Area 7</td>
<td>Ralph Lentz Lake City MN</td>
<td>Wabasha SWCD</td>
<td>Jennifer George (651) 565-4673</td>
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<td>North Central Area 8</td>
<td>John and Lissa Sumption Longville MN</td>
<td>Cass SWCD</td>
<td>John Ringle (218) 547-7399</td>
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Background on the Adams:

Dave and Dorothy Adams grow corn, grains, and soybeans on their farm and utilize a minimum till operation to conserve and protect natural resources. They also run 40 cow/calf pairs on a 150 acre rotational grazing system that was designed by field office staff. Over their 41 years of farming, they have implemented a variety of conservation practices on their property including wetland restorations, planting field windbreaks, living snow fences, riparian buffers, and native prairie grasses.

Through their efforts they have created and maintained excellent wildlife habitat and have made their farm a showcase for conservation. Dave and Dorothy truly believe that they have a responsibility to leave the land in better condition for the next generations.

Background on Twin Eagle Dairy:

Twin Eagle Dairy, operated by Pat & Jody Lunemann and their family, is a 715 cow dairy, and farm of 1,200 acres of primarily forage crops. The Lunemann’s have farmed for 30 years. The farm has been in the family since 1932.

Conservation practices installed are many: Manure storage, concrete and earthen, roof gutters, compost bedding storage, infiltration ponds for silage leachate and feedlot runoff/storage water, earthen and concrete diversions, feedlot abandonment, pond closure, nutrient management, and a fencing & seeding project to exclude livestock from a ditch system. The family hosted the 2013 Todd County Breakfast on the Farm. “At Twin Eagle Dairy, we believe cows and nature can peacefully co-exist.”
Background on Greg and Tammy Anderson:

Greg and Tammy Anderson run a beef cattle operation in Princeton, Minnesota. In 2012 the Anderson’s installed an innovative, roofed stacking slab that is preventing nutrient laden runoff from seeping through course soils and into groundwater near the City of Princeton’s Drinking Water Safety Management Area.

The Andersons also assist the SWCD in controlling the noxious weed, Leafy Spurge, by participating in a bio-control program that allows the SWCD and MN Department of Agriculture to harvest bio-control beetles from a closely monitored site on their farm. These harvested beetles are then used to control Leafy Spurge in Mille Lacs and surrounding counties. The Andersons have been nominated as Mille Lacs Outstanding Conservationists because their Conservation projects benefit the entire community.

Background on Hazelden Foundation:

Pictured here are Bill Knudson, Manager Facilities Operations, and Doug Jurek, Facilities Maintenance Technician.

Hazelden is located in Center City on over 500 acres of rolling farmland, woods, and wetlands along four miles of undisturbed native shoreline of South Center Lake. Hazelden has a strong tradition of conservation and land stewardship. Five years ago, the decision was made to return the land adjacent to the campus to its natural growth. Since then, 4,000 trees and shrubs have been planted, native prairie grasses restored, and habitat plantings created for pheasants and wildlife. Highly erodible farmland has been converted to permanent hay crop. The Chisago SWCD would like to thank the Hazelden Foundation for their efforts to improve water quality and wildlife habitat while being a community leader.
Background on The Jensen Sisters:

Norma Schlemmer of Minneapolis, Linda Nesburg of St. Peter, and Diane Jensen of Minneapolis, are three sisters who own a farm in Redwood Falls, MN. They have owned this 446 acre Farm since 1991, when they inherited it from their parents. The primary operation consists of a corn/bean rotation; however, there is a native prairie pasture and several pieces in CRP and RIM.

They have conducted several conservation practices, including grassed waterways, water and sediment control basins, grade stabilization structure, wetland restorations, buffer strips, buckthorn control, a diversion structure, and native prairie management. They enjoy being good stewards of this land and hope it inspires others to do the same.

Background on City of Olivia:

City of Olivia Mayor, Sue Hilgert, Administrator Dan Coughlin and Council members Terry Kohout and Bernard Johnson.

A 2012 infrastructure project required that the city install a storm water pond. The City chose to go beyond a mere “hole” and created an aesthetically pleasing park-like area. With the help of the Renville County PF Chapter, native grasses and forbes were planted. Walking trails were mowed, fish stocked, and wood duck houses installed. Future plans are to construct educational kiosks along the walking paths. The City has been proactive in solving past problems. In the mid-1980’s residents were annually shoveling sediment deposited on their lawns from nearby crop fields. The city purchased land and planted this shelterbelt to protect the neighborhood from erosion.
Background on Ralph Lentz:

Ralph Lentz of Wabasha County is known in the grazing community for promoting the use of livestock in land management to improve diversity and sustainability. His field acres are planted to grass and hay and he manages 40 cow/calf pairs and 2 bulls through a rotational grazing plan that incorporates a stream bank. The stream has been divided into 4 sections that are either grazed or non-grazed since the 1960’s and has been more closely monitored by multiple agencies in the last 30 years.

A waterway outlet in the pasture shows how cattle have managed the drainage area from becoming a gulley. Over the years Lentz has hosted many field days, spoken at events, and mentored many people. At 84 he continues to enjoy giving tours sharing the results of his work.

Background on John and Lissa Sumption:

John & Lissa Sumption operate an 18 acre organic vegetable farm providing locally grown produce to the area. The Sumptions have farmed for 25 years and the farm has been in the family since the 1940’s. John is also the Land Conservation Specialist for the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation, working with landowners to secure donated conservation easements on sensitive shoreland and adjacent riparian forest areas. In the past year, John has helped secured six easements protecting over 182 acres of riparian land and 12,100 feet of sensitive shoreline. Completed earlier this year, this area of Lundstrom’s Bay on Ten Mile Lake is protected by two adjacent conservation easements which protect over 3000 feet of sensitive shoreline and 38 riparian acres. Lundstrom’s Bay is a DNR-designated sensitive shoreline area, home to several endangered plant, fish, and animal species, and is also critical to maintenance of the excellent water quality of the lake.