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Prather Ranch up for conservation award

Managing cattle ranches and agricultural land in Northern California, the Rickert family works to promote biodiversity through their day-to-day operations, providing habitat for waterfowl during the migration and other wildlife year-round. They have planted more than eight miles of riparian habitat across nearly a dozen ranches.

For their efforts, the Rickert Family's Prather Ranch is one of five finalists for the 2007 Leopold Conservation Award. Named in honor of world-renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, it carries a \$10,000 cash award. The second-annual Leopold Conservation Award for California will be presented Dec. 3 at the California Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in Sparks, Nev.

The Sand County Foundation, California Farm Bureau Federation and Sustainable Conservation announced the five finalists recently. The Leopold Conservation Award is presented annually in six states to private landowners who practice exemplary land stewardship and management.

"These finalists, and the many other exceptional candidates, prove that California landowners' long-standing ethic of conservation continues to flourish," said Dr. Brent Haglund, Sand County Foundation President.

2007 finalists:

- Prather Ranch, Jim, Mary, and James Rickert – Shasta, Calif. (Shasta County)
- Sierra Orchards, Craig McNamara – Winters, Calif. (Yolo County)
- Three Creeks Ranch, Chet Vogt – Elk Creek, Calif. (Glenn County)
- V6 Ranch, Jack Varian – Parkfield, Calif. (Monterey and Fresno counties)
- Zylstra Dairy, Andy Zylstra – Turlock, Calif. (Stanislaus County)

In 2007, Sand County Foundation will present Leopold Conservation Awards in California, Texas, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming and Utah. The awards are presented to: recognize extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation on the land of exemplary private landowners; inspire countless other landowners in their own communities through these examples; and showcase conservation leaders in the agriculture community to people outside of agriculture. For more information, visit www.leopoldconservationaward.org.

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