



## Leopold Conservation Award finalists do great work for agriculture and conservation

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Sacramento, Calif. – Sand County Foundation, the California Farm Bureau Federation and Sustainable Conservation are proud to announce the finalists for the 2010 Leopold Conservation Award in California.

"The health of California's landscape is dependent on hard-working farmers and ranchers who are dedicated to ensuring that California's land, water and wildlife are in better shape than when they found them," said Dr. Brent Haglund, Sand County Foundation president. "Year after year, the high quality of nominees for the Leopold Conservation Award makes the selection process difficult but proves that California's natural resources are being cared for by innovative landowners who want to see them flourish for future generations."

The 2010 finalists are (brief bios appear below):

- Tim Koopmann – Sunol (Alameda County)
- Alfred G. Montna, Montna Farms – Yuba City (Sutter County)
- Bill and Kay Burrows – Red Bluff (Tehama County)

After a distinguished panel of judges makes its selection this month, the fifth annual Leopold Conservation Award for California will be presented Dec. 6, 2010, at the California Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in Monterey.

The \$10,000 award is named in honor of world-renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold. The Leopold Conservation Award is presented annually in eight states to private landowners who practice exemplary land stewardship and management.

The 2010 Award finalists include:

### **Tim Koopmann – Sunol (Alameda County)**

Tim Koopmann is a third-generation rancher who owns and operates a cow-calf operation on 850 acres of rangeland. He has been able to maintain the ranch in the face of increasing development due to conservation easements that were the first of their kind in Alameda County. Koopmann was instrumental in the creation and implementation of a pioneering approach to watershed management, which has improved water quality in the Alameda Creek watershed, as well as San Francisco Bay. He has held several positions of leadership within agriculture and participated in numerous workshops and field tours to help with conservation outreach to other livestock producers. Koopmann's ranch was also the site of the development of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition.

### **Montna Farms, Alfred G. Montna – Yuba City (Sutter County)**

Rice grower Al Montna has created extensive habitat for wildlife, particularly waterfowl, through his 2,500-acre farming operation. He also led the way in replacing the practice of burning rice stubble with environmentally safe alternatives and reduced pesticide runoff into the Sacramento River by 90 percent. Known for bringing people together, he has held leadership positions in numerous industry organizations and public policy boards, such as the Northern California Water Association, California Bay-Delta Authority and State Board of Food and Agriculture. Last year, he installed a solar power system to power the Montna Farms Rice Dryer.

### **Bill and Kay Burrows – Red Bluff (Tehama County)**

Bill and Kay Burrows employ Holistic Management techniques in the operation of their ranch. Their family works to improve the biodiversity on their land, increasing the productivity of the soil, plants and animals. The Burrows run cattle, as well as meat goats and sheep for brush control. The family diversifies its operation through agri-tourism, including hosting hunting and fishing tours. Bill and Kay also engage in community outreach, hosting an annual "Stewardship Day" at the ranch where local residents, agencies and organizations are invited to their ranch to learn about sustainable resource management.

In California, the Leopold Conservation Award is presented by Sand County Foundation, California Farm Bureau Federation and Sustainable Conservation. The California award is supported in part with generous contributions from the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, the Bradley Fund for the Environment and Audubon.

In 2010, 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 agricultural community to people outside of agriculture.

For more information, please visit [www.leopoldconservationaward.org](http://www.leopoldconservationaward.org).

### **About Sand County Foundation**

Sand County Foundation is a private, non-profit conservation group dedicated to working with private landowners to improve habitat on their land. Sand County's mission is to advance the use of ethical and scientifically sound land management practices and partnerships for the benefit of people and the ecological landscape. Sand County Foundation works with private landowners because the majority of the nation's fish, wildlife and natural resources are found on private lands. The organization backs local champions, invests in civil society and places incentives before regulation to create solutions that endure and grow. The organization encourages the exercise of private responsibility in the pursuit of improved land health as an essential alternative to many of the commonly used strategies in modern conservation. [www.sandcounty.net](http://www.sandcounty.net)

### **About Sustainable Conservation**

Sustainable Conservation believes protecting the environment can also be good for business. The organization's climate, air, water and biodiversity initiatives promote practical solutions that produce tangible, lasting benefits for California. Founded in 1993, Sustainable Conservation's effectiveness lies in building strong partnerships with business, agriculture and government – and establishing models for environmental and economic sustainability that can be replicated across California and beyond. [www.suscon.org](http://www.suscon.org)

### **About California Farm Bureau**

The California Farm Bureau Federation is California's largest farm organization. It works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of 53 county Farm Bureaus throughout California, whose members include farm families and those who support the farming way of life. [www.cfbf.com](http://www.cfbf.com)

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