October 2, 2018

Greetings National/State/Field Conservation Leaders,

It is with great pleasure that the National Conservation Planning Partnership (NCPP) announces the opening of the Hugh Hammond Bennett Award for Conservation Excellence. The Award will honor the legacy of Hugh Hammond Bennett by recognizing those who are dedicated to conservation planning and implementation.

Hugh Hammond Bennett is revered as the “Father of Soil Conservation” for his leadership and dedication to soil conservation. Bennett served as the first Chief of the Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resources Conservation Service), within the US Department Agriculture. He was a vocal advocate for legislation that established several Soil Erosion Experiment Stations throughout the US and the establishment of 3,000 conservation districts.

Throughout his entire career Bennett grounded his philosophy on the importance of soil conservation. He spent time comparing virgin, timbered sites to eroded fields, which confirmed his belief that soil erosion was a problem not only for the individual farmer but also for rural economies. Bennett successfully argued that single practices such as the terracing of land would not succeed without a comprehensive program to address numerous resource concerns on farmland. It was this guiding principle that led to the development of the conservation plan. Conservation farming meant rearranging the operations of the farm in the interest of conservation and productivity. Soil conservationists worked on the land, directly with farmers, to develop conservation farm plans for the benefit of the land and the farmer. Those principles are what the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the National Association of Conservation Districts, the National Association of Conservation District Employees, the National Association of State Conservation Agencies, and the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils stand behind and act on as one unit through the National Conservation Planning Partnership.

Your assistance is requested to help us recognize an outstanding producer and conservation planner for the Hugh Hammond Bennett Award for Conservation Excellence. Those interested in making a nomination should notify their respective NCPP State partner leader. Submit nominations by email to beth-mason@nacdnet.org no later than November 2, 2018. Nominations must be received using the attached nominations form outlining how the producer or individual has met the award criteria.

**Contact.** If you have questions, please contact Stacy Koch, National Conservation Planning Partnership Coordinator, at Stacy.Koch@wdc.usda.gov or 570-925-5531.

Sincerely,

Astor Boozer  
NRCS, Regional Conservationist, West  
NCPP Co-Chair

Mike Brown  
Executive Director, NASCA  
NCPP Co-Chair

Attachments:

Hugh Hammond Bennett Award for Conservation Excellence Nomination Packet