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**UNWNRD Press Release**  
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**January 16, 2025**

### **NRD Recognizes Outstanding Conservationists at Range Day Event**

The Upper Niobrara White Natural Resources District (UNWNRD) hosts a Range Day Education Event at Chadron State College each year to provide learning and networking opportunities for landowners, producers, students and agency personnel who are interested in rangeland management, upcoming technology, weather forecasts and even financial tools to improve their operations. The Range Day has been held for nearly 10 years now with the generous support of the C.F. Coffee Family Foundation. This year, the UNWNRD decided to expand the Range Day in order to provide a consolidated public event in which our Conservation Award Winners could be recognized for their outstanding conservation efforts as well.

Annually, the UNWNRD accepts nominations for individuals or groups who have shown exemplary work to protect the natural resources in Northwest Nebraska. Nominations are accepted from agencies and natural resources professionals as well as private citizens and nominees must be conducting their conservation efforts within the UNWNRD encompassing Dawes, Sheridan, Box Butte and Sioux Counties.

Multiple categories of natural resource conservation can be recognized including Tree Planting, Forest Management, Range Management, Soil Conservation, Outdoor Recreation, Wildlife Habitat, Water Conservation, and Natural Resources Education. The UNWNRD Board of Directors will also entertain nominations in other categories as long as they fit into natural resources conservation.

The 2024 winners were recognized at the Range Day awards luncheon on Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> with their families and other conservationists in attendance. Congratulations to the 2024 UNWNRD Conservation Award Winners and thank you for your noteworthy conservation efforts.

#### **The 2024 UNWNRD Conservation Award Winners are:**

##### **Conservation Award for Natural Resources Education:**

*David Carlson of Hay Springs, Nebraska*

Nominated by: Robin Foulk and Bryan Kahl, Chadron NRCS

##### **Conservation Award for Wildlife Habitat & Outdoor Recreation:**

*Arlee and Betty Phillips of Hemingford, Nebraska*

Nominated by: Kelly Mildebrandt, Pheasants Forever

##### **Conservation Award for Range Management:**

*Ronald Betson of Crawford, Nebraska*

Nominated by: Robin Foulk and Bryan Kahl, Chadron NRCS

##### **Conservation Award Soil Conservation:**

*Steve Benzel of Alliance, Nebraska*

Nominated by: Brad Carlson, Alliance NRCS

Nominations for 2025 will be accepted from July 1, 2025 to November 1, 2025. Please contact Kylene Armstrong at the UNWNRD at (308) 432-6190 or [armstrong@unwnrd.org](mailto:armstrong@unwnrd.org) for more information on Conservation Awards.