



Call for Nominations South Dakota 2025

Deadline: March 7



Presented by
Sand County Foundation *in partnership with*
American Farmland Trust, *and state partners:*
South Dakota Cattlemen's Association
and South Dakota Grassland Coalition

Slovak Ranch, 2023 South Dakota
Leopold Conservation Award recipient

Leopold Conservation Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2025 Leopold Conservation Award®.

The \$10,000 award honors farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their management of soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat on working land.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor, American Farmland Trust, along with state partners, present the Leopold Conservation Award to private landowners in 28 states.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes landowners who inspire others to consider conservation opportunities on their land. In his influential 1949 book, *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold called for "a land ethic," an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage.

Award nominations may be submitted on behalf of a landowner, or landowners may nominate themselves.

Nominations must be emailed to SouthDakotaLCA@sandcountyfoundation.org. Nominations are reviewed by an independent panel of state-specific agricultural and conservation leaders.

Leopold Conservation Award 2025

Application Deadline: March 7, 2025

The 2024 South Dakota award was presented and sponsored by:

Please provide all of the following information in your application.

Name of Nominee, Name of Farm/Ranch/Business, Mailing Address, Primary County(s) of operation, Email Address, Phone Number, Website:

Name of Nominator, if different from nominee:

If you are selected for the Leopold Conservation Award, how would you like your name to appear on the award: (*Examples: John Smith, John Smith and Family, Smith Family Farms*)

Please address the five criteria, and limit each response to 1,000 words.

- 1. Conservation Ethic** – Describe how the nominee has voluntarily exceeded the minimum obligations of regulation to enhance and conserve natural resources.
- 2. Resilience** – Describe the business and conservation methods used by the nominee to make the operation productive into the future.
- 3. Leadership and Communication** – Describe significant efforts the nominee has made to share his/her conservation ethics and techniques with others inside and outside of agriculture. Describe community service, positions held, leadership roles and media outreach.
- 4. Innovation and Adaptability** – Describe how the nominee has taken risks by utilizing or experimenting with new techniques to adapt to change (consumers, markets, weather, regulations, etc.).
- 5. Ecological Community** – Describe how the nominee's agricultural operation works with natural systems (soil, water, plants and wildlife, etc.). Describe how this benefits others.

Describe any other relevant accomplishments and/or challenges.

Please provide this additional information: *Your responses to the following do not impact the selection of the Leopold Conservation Award recipient. This information is intended to help the judges learn more about your practices.*

Number of acres under management (*there is no minimum or maximum acreage required*).

Provide a one line description of your farm/ranch/forest (*examples: dairy farm with cash crops; cow/calf beef operation; integrated forestry with focus of pulp wood production*).

Which local, state, federal agencies or partner organizations are involved with the nominee's conservation practices?

Which, if any, federal conservation programs do you utilize (*e.g. EQIP, CSP, CRP*)?

Which, if any, farm advisors do you work with (*e.g. crop consultant, Extension agent*)?

Attach three letters of recommendation. At least one should be from a natural resources conservation organization or agency.

Please sign and submit the following statements with the application.

1. I agree to be a nominee for the Leopold Conservation Award.
2. I manage and/or own the property described in this application.
3. The agricultural operation described in this application is in compliance with all applicable regulations, and provides a positive example of environmental stewardship.
4. I understand I may be asked to be available for communications/media opportunities to promote the message of voluntary private lands conservation.
5. I understand a video will be produced featuring my agricultural operation, which will require my participation.
6. I understand I must be available to host a tour and video production team during the summer, and participate in a fall award presentation.

Please email applications to SouthDakotaLCA@sandcountyfoundation.org



South Dakota Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Jim and Karen Kopriva

Millborn Seeds

South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation

North Central SARE

Pheasants Forever

South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks

Professional Alliance

South Dakota State University College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences

South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust

South Dakota's Conservation Districts

USDA-NRCS

South Dakota Soil Health Coalition

Audubon Great Plains

South Dakota Soybean Association

Bad River Ranches Belle Fourche River Watershed Partnership

The Nature Conservancy

Blair Brothers Angus Ranch

Todd Mortenson Family

Cammack Ranch

Daybreak Ranch

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Ducks Unlimited

First Dakota National Bank

Wagner Land & Livestock