



United States
Department of
Agriculture

**Natural Resources
Conservation Service**



National Association of
Conservation Districts



NCDEA
National Conservation District
Employees Association



August 6, 2019

Greetings National/State/Local Conservation Partnership Leaders:

It is with great pleasure that the National Conservation Planning Partnership (NCP) 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 an advocate for legislation that established Soil Erosion Experiment Stations and 3,000 conservation districts throughout the US.

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 concept of conservation planning. 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 we stand behind and act on as one entity 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 NCP State partner leader. We encourage you to look at your current and past state conservation farmer/rancher award winners as a starting point for the application process.

Submit nominations by email to awards@email.nacdnet.org no later than October 1, 2019. 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@usda.gov or 570-925-5531.

Sincerely,

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

Mike Brown
Executive Director, NASCA
NCP Co-Chair



Attachment: Hugh Hammond Bennett Award for Conservation Excellence Nomination
Packet