

Banquet Remarks for the 75th Anniversary Celebration of the Iowa Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the 75th anniversary banquet of the Iowa Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. It is an honor to serve as MC for such an illustrious audience. I am especially delighted to open these proceedings tonight as I have spent most of my career engaged in wildlife conservation issues. In fact, it was people like Ding Darling and the land grant system that helped make it possible for a kid like me, the first in my family, to attend college, to have the opportunity to earn graduate degrees in fish and wildlife science, and to have the satisfying and wonderful career that I have experienced to date.

Iowa State University has a great tradition of conservation with many of its leaders serving as pioneers in that area. I am fortunate to say that I obtained a little of that pioneer history upon purchasing a Victorian house built by Louis Pammel in 1892. Pammel was one of Iowa's first ecologists, served as the chair of the ISU Botany Department, and was George Washington Carver's major professor. I treasure the photos of Pammel and Carver sitting in what is now my living room. Another of Pammel's notable students was Ada Hayden, the first woman to receive a doctoral degree from ISU and to become a well known botanist and conservationist. I think that many of you had a chance to visit Ada Hayden Lake and conservation area yesterday. But what I find most exciting about Pammel is that he founded the Iowa Conservation Board and was its first president. He also founded the Iowa Parks Department and the first Iowa fish and wildlife agency, which predated the current Department of Natural Resources. So Pammel was an ecologist before we knew what the word was. I'm proud to inhabit a house with such outstanding ghosts!

You will find that Iowa State University is a university of firsts. We are the first land grant university. The legislative language that created the first national Agricultural Experiment Station System was written by two Iowa State professors. The nation's first Extension Service began in Hull Iowa, 11 years before the Smith Lever Act was passed by Congress creating the National Cooperative Extension System. And the wonderful and successful Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units started here at Iowa State University 75 years ago.

It is always interesting to me to hear reports that the conservation movement is a product of our generation and that it started with the first Earth Day. I'm sure that some young people probably think it started with Al Gore or the first Toyota Prius. But as most of us know, it really started many years ago in the progressive minds of people like Louis Pammel, Ada Hayden, Aldo Leopold, Paul Errington, and Ding Darling, an editorial cartoonist from Sioux City, Iowa.

One need not look much further than his cartoons to appreciate how progressive Ding Darling was. As an editorial cartoonist, Ding Darling advocated conservation

of our nation's natural resources and created a platform for what could only be termed as conservation activism. One of "Ding" Darling's cartoons, titled "How Rich Will We Be When We Have Converted All Our Forests, All Our Soil, All Our Water Resources, and Our Minerals Into Cash?," best illustrates both his conservation ethic and his remarkable ability to convey complex thoughts with a few strokes of pen and ink. Darling drew this cartoon in 1938. Father of the Federal Duck Stamp Program, founder of the National Wildlife Federation, and creator of the Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit Program, Ding Darling laid the groundwork for the system of today's National Wildlife Refuges. Darling's pragmatic conservation ethic and forceful leadership continue to guide the thoughts and actions of the conservation movement today, decades after his death.

Ding Darling's story punctuates how some of our greatest champions for the environment came from unlikely backgrounds. It isn't always the people with the conservation degrees, but those with a passion for something who produce change. The founder of the Audubon Society in 1886 was George Grinnell, the editor of Forest and Stream Magazine. Ducks Unlimited was founded by Joseph Knapp; a publisher and philanthropist. Clara Barton was a patent office clerk before she founded the American Red Cross. We can only imagine what fun Ding would have had satirizing the global warming debate and watching the bioeconomy unfold.

Today, we celebrate not just the 75th anniversary of the Iowa Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, but all of the Co-op Units. They are the jewels of the Higher Education System in our country and are vital in the training and education of our nation's future conservation leaders. These programs are as relevant and important today as they were 75 years ago when Ding Darling saw the need to create a program that would provide university trained managers and scientists to work in conserving our nation's and the world's natural resources. It is a tribute to the past and present leaders of these Units that we are able to celebrate 75 successful years of outstanding accomplishments. Let us use this anniversary celebration as an opportunity to re-affirm our commitment to work together to ensure that we get the job done.

And now I have the privilege of introducing some very important guests who are here tonight. Cooperative is a word in the title of the Unit, which designates that the Unit program is a partnership among state and federal agencies, an NGO, and the University, and there are guests here tonight representing those various partners.

Richard Leopold became director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in January 2007. Prior to the DNR, Richard was the executive director of the Iowa Environmental Council since September 2003. He has held a variety of biologist, naturalist, and administrative positions within the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the Minnesota and Iowa Department of Natural Resources. From 1999-2002, Richard served as the coordinator for IOWATER, Iowa's statewide volunteer water-quality monitoring program. Please welcome Richard Leopold.

James Pritchard is an adjunct assistant professor at Iowa State with appointments in the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management and the Department of Landscape Architecture. He is the author of "Preserving Yellowstone's Natural Conditions: Science and the Perception of Nature." Pritchard's research interests start with environmental history and include science in the national parks, the history of animal ecology, the history of wildlife in North America, and the foundations of natural resource policy and management. Please welcome James Pritchard.

Outdoor Life magazine awarded **Steve Williams** its prestigious Conservation Award for Public Service for his leadership in strengthening the long-standing conservation partnership between America's sportsmen and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. In March 2005, Steve was hired as the president of the Wildlife Management Institute, a nonprofit, scientific and educational organization dedicated to the restoration, sound management, and wise use of natural resources in North America. Previously he served three years as the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, administering the nation's primary federal fish and wildlife conservation agency. Please welcome Steve Williams.

Before being named chief of the USGS Cooperative Research Unit, **Ken Williams** was leader of the Vermont Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit and held positions in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's North American Waterfowl Management Plan Office and Office of Migratory Bird Management. He has been instrumental in the development and implementation of adaptive harvest management for North American waterfowl populations. Please welcome Ken Williams.

Joe Colletti is senior associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and associate director of the Experiment Station. Joe is a member of the College of Agriculture and Life Science's air quality team and currently has a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to study the use of trees, shrubs, and other perennial plants to enhance air quality protection around poultry and egg production facilities. He has played an instrumental role in the research and demonstration of the Bear Creek riparian buffer project near Roland, which has been designated by the USDA as a national model for managing erosion and protecting water quality. Please welcome Joe Colletti.

Erwin Klaas retired in 1999 after 30 years of service with the U.S. Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey as a wildlife research biologist. He served the last 25 years as assistant leader (1975-92) and leader (1992-1999) of the Iowa Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Iowa State University. He won the Distinguished Iowa Scientist Award from the Iowa Academy of Science in 2000 and was elected to the Hall of Fame of the Iowa Chapter of The Wildlife Society in 2001. Please welcome Erwin Klaas.