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"Building a Culture of Conservation ~ Farmer to Farmer: Iowan to Iowan"

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Iowa Learning Farm offers new videos**

AMES, IOWA—A new video series "A Culture of Conservation" is now available from the Iowa Learning Farm. The series of five short videos explores the relationship humans have with soil and water and offers ways for everyone to have an active role in protecting and preserving the Earth's natural resources.

Beginning in December, every Iowa Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) office and all Iowa State Extension offices will have a copy of the video series. Curriculum will be developed for middle and high schools, and community colleges for use in the classroom by fall 2009. To request "A Culture of Conservation Video Series" DVD, contact the Iowa Learning Farm, email: [ilf@iastate.edu](mailto:ilf@iastate.edu).

ILF assistant project manager Jacqueline Comito received an SWCD Initiatives grant from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to produce videos. Comito intends that the videos will inspire dialogue as well as actions to help preserve natural resources for now and the future. Serving as executive producer for the project, Comito was surprised and pleased by how many people became involved.

"I am amazed by the collaboration of all of the ILF partners and how many people had a hand in the production," said Comito. "Much of the content is based on listening sessions we held throughout Iowa over the past two years with staff from various agencies and with farmers. Hopefully, these films will be used to start a dialogue among Iowans, farmers well as non-farmers, to talk about our land and water usage."

### **The videos**

The videos can be shown individually or collectively and each video is approximately seven to eight minutes long. The viewer does not need to see one to understand the next. All carry a specific, individual message.

The "Water is Life" video reminds the audience how important clean water is to the body, the community and the Earth.

"We All Have a Place in the Watershed" defines watersheds and how humans interact within them. "Our watersheds provide water for drinking, agriculture production, irrigation and industry. Lakes and streams are settings for outdoor activities and recreation. Healthy watersheds provide food and shelter for a diversity of plants and animals."

In "Don't Call it Dirt: A Passion for Soil," viewers are asked to think about soil and how it is used. The video also provides ideas in which everyone can improve soil quality and keep it where it belongs.

"The Work of Our Hands" discusses the relationship of societies and agriculture, historically and today. A quote from the video offers a glimpse, "Humans have lived as both a species within the environment and as

innovators in shaping the environment to suit their purposes. Some ancient cultures carefully protected their resources, while others were destructive or, at best, shortsighted in their behavior.”

“Reclaiming Stewardship” highlights several Iowans who are working to achieve the goal of building a culture of conservation. Floyd County SWCD commissioner and ILF conservationist Jon Gisleson offers his point of view, “Everybody’s got a responsibility to be concerned about what’s happening to our ground water and our surface water. Everybody has a responsibility—whether you own [land] or not.”

### **Originally Iowa**

The videos are exclusively Iowan—words, images, music and personnel. Video production is by Jon Anderson with Iowa State University Extension Marketing and Communications. Comito served as head script writer with contributions from ISU Extension water quality engineer Matt Helmers, ISU associate professor and Heartland Regional Water Initiative leader Lois Wright Morton, and Heartland Regional Water Initiative project coordinator Jean McGuire, as well as the entire ILF team.

The music in the videos was composed by Ann Staudt, a native Iowan originally from Floyd County. Staudt, along with the musical group Joyful Hearts, were inspired by the themes and images of Iowa that are presented in the videos. Staudt was happy to have the music, which reflects her rural upbringing, as a significant part of the video series.

Iowa Learning Farm (ILF) was started in 2005 to encourage all Iowans to have an active role in protecting and preserving these resources. Using a farmer-to-farmer approach, ILF demonstrates cropping techniques that improve water and soil quality while remaining profitable. For more information about the Iowa Learning Farm project, visit the web site: [www.extension.iastate.edu/ilf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ilf).

Iowa Learning Farm is a partnership between the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa State University Extension, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources; in cooperation with Conservation Districts of Iowa and the Iowa Farm Bureau.