



# Stearns County Soil & Water Conservation District

Stearns County SWCD  
110 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South – Suite 128  
Waite Park, MN 56387

Tel. (320)251-7800 ext. 3  
Fax. (320)251-9171  
e-mail Jason.Selvog@mn.nacdn.net

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## Stearns County Pheasants Forever Member Fred Bengtson Honored for Career of Wildlife Achievements

*DNR Wildlife Manager Receives Minnesota Pheasants Forever Professional Award*

**Mankato, MN – January 14, 2006** – Pheasants Forever (PF) awarded Fred Bengtson with the 2006 PF Minnesota Professional of the Year award during Pheasants Forever's Minnesota State Convention. The award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to the protection of wildlife, habitat, and Minnesota's hunting heritage. Bengtson is the Area Wildlife Manager for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in Sauk Rapids, MN and is responsible for the acquisition and management of state Wildlife Management Areas as well as working with private landowners wishing to improve their land for wildlife.

"For the past 22 years, Fred Bengtson has been tirelessly working to enhance pheasant and other wildlife populations in Minnesota.," said Matt Holland, Pheasants Forever Director of Conservation - MN. "His commitment to wildlife, soil, and water can be seen on the ground if you drive through Sherburne, Wright and Stearns Counties, where he has worked 20 years of his career."

"It's a group effort - without partnerships and an excellent staff things wouldn't fall together the way they do", said Bengtson. "I enjoy the variety of natural resource work responsibilities assigned to me, especially working with various conservation groups buying WMA land that will be available for future generations. I am fortunate to have been mentored by some of the top natural resource professionals in the nation and I work with equally knowledgeable and dedicated coworkers and volunteers", Bengtson said.

Bengtson resides on a family century farm near Clear Lake, MN. He earned his BS and MS in Wildlife Management from the University of Minnesota.

Ralph Feld and Dennis Fuchs also were recognized for their roles as Stearns County Pheasants Forever (SCPF) members. Ralph Feld was awarded the Dedication Award for his committee member contributions, being instrumental in the continuation of the chapter and development of chapter programs. Dennis Fuchs, Stearns County Soil and Water District (SWCD) Administrator was inducted into the Long-Spur Society for his dedication and contributions to Pheasants Forever the past 8 years. "It is through partnerships that area wildlife benefit - partnerships give us the ability to reach more people and implement more conservation on the land," Fuchs says, referring to the SWCD, PF, Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) partnership in which a PF Biologist is co-located in the SWCD office to assist landowners with Farm Bill Programs.

All programs and services of the Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District are available without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status.