



Conservation Man of the Year

Don and Jean Bennett stand on a diversion on a terraced hillside wheat field, with their Hinton Creek farmhouse in the background. Bennett was named Morrow County's Conservation Man of the Year during last Friday's Wheat League meeting in Heppner.

Don and Jean Bennett reap award for conservation on Hinton Creek farm

Just keeping soil in the fields along the flood-prone slopes of Hinton Creek is no easy task, but Don Bennett has met the challenge with a flourish.

During 1976 and 1977, Bennett installed some 57,165 feet of terraces, one acre of grassed waterway, 16 sediment dams, and seeded 167 acres of steep cropland back to grass. For his efforts, Bennett was named Morrow County's Soil Conservation Man of the Year during a special meeting of the Morrow County Wheat Growers League last Friday.

Bennett's terracing project was the first performed under the Heppner Water Control District program, in coopera-

tion with the Soil Conservation Service and the Resource Conservation and Development program.

Last year, the Hinton Creek rancher harvested his first crop from the newly terraced wheat fields, and experienced yields averaging in the vicinity of 55 bushels per acre.

Bennett and his wife, Jean, farm about 480 acres of cropland on their Hinton Creek spread. About 150 acres are devoted to alfalfa, with the bulk of the remaining acreage used for wheat and fallow land. In addition, they maintain a 150-unit cow-calf operation on their 2,000 acres of carefully grazed range land,

summering the cattle on leased pasture near Ukiah.

The farm has been in Mrs. Bennett's family for more than 50 years, and in fact, Jean was born in an upstairs room of the home place. The Bennetts have been operating the farm for the past 15 years. Prior to that time, Don, a native of Kansas, spent 16 years with Morrow County Grain Growers.

Bennett said he was surprised and pleased over being named Conservation Man of the Year—though he did question whether he really deserved the honor. His first reactions included the feeling the award may have been premature. "I thought, 'why now?' I'm not done, yet. I've

got other things in mind. And though I'm conservation-minded, I feel some of my efforts may have been for naught," Bennett said.

But being selected for the honor has been gratifying. It's especially pleasing when, as Olex rancher Marion Weatherford told Bennett in a congratulatory call, "it was neighbors that chose you for the award... They felt you were doing a good job."

In addition to operating their ranch, the Bennetts somehow find the time to be involved in a wide range of community organizations and services. Don is vice chairman of the Heppner Water Control District, chairman of the Heppner Rural Fire Dist-

ric, and a member of the Wheat League, Oregon Cattlemen's Association, the Farm Bureau and has served on the school board budget committee.

Jean is a member of the Morrow County School Board, serves as county brand inspector, is a past president of the Morrow County Cowbelles, and has been active in 4-H work and as a fair superintendent.

The Bennetts are the parents of three girls, Deborah Johnston, Judith Barber, and Sandra Bennett, who is an employee of the Heppner ASCS office. They have two grandchildren, Kimberley and Jody Johnston.

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Ullman aide says Congressman will seek funding for WC dam

Oregon Rep. Al Ullman will ask for funding of the Willow Creek Dam for fiscal year 1980, Gayle Gilmour, district administrative assistant to the Congressman, said last week.

Gilmour came to Heppner for a brief meeting with County Judge D.O. Nelson and Heppner Mayor Jerry Sweeney last Tuesday. He told the local officials a news release sent out by Ullman's office a couple weeks earlier was worded improperly.

A story in the April 12 issue of the Gazette-Times—taken from a news release and subsequent calls to the Congressman's Oregon office—stated that Ullman would not include the Willow Creek Dam in funding requests for the President's 1980 water development budget for the Pacific Northwest.

At that time the Second District Congressman cited "local concern" over the proposed dam and "the need for a revised cost-benefit

ratio" as reasons for not seeking construction funding during the coming year.

Gilmour said a cost-benefit study underway by the Corps of Engineers will be completed about June 15 and at that time Ullman will seek funding for the 1980 year under the main bill if it hasn't gone to committee.

If the main bill has already gone to committee when the cost-benefit study is completed in mid-June, Gilmour said Ullman would then ask for funding in a supplemental budget that is sent to Carter later in the year.

The cost-benefit study is required by the Office of Management and Budget. Under federal guidelines for public work projects such as the dam, construction costs must at least equal the value of benefits to be received after completion. In the case of the Willow Creek Dam, the benefits would be measured in terms of property that would

be saved from potential flooding. As the rules now stand, the value of human lives that could be saved through building the dam may not be included in the benefit value.

Local officials were concerned about further delay in starting construction of the project because it leaves the City of Heppner up in the air about what to do with its deteriorating water line extending to municipal wells up Willow Creek. If the dam is constructed the line will be replaced as part of the project—at minimal cost to the city. If the dam isn't funded in the next year, city officials will probably have to go to the voters with a special bond issue to finance replacement of the line.

For several weeks during February of this year Heppner residents were forced to boil their water as the city's lines had become contaminated with muddy water, believed to have entered the system

through broken pipe somewhere along Willow Creek.

Last year Senator Mark Hatfield and Ullman were instrumental in obtaining \$500,000 for design work and right of way acquisition for the Willow Creek project. Hatfield

has been pushing the Corps of Engineers this spring to complete necessary studies so funding for a construction start could be obtained for 1980, eliminating further delay of the project, according to an aide.

Road management plans for Heppner Unit now available

Proposed interim Road Management Plans for the Heppner and Ukiah Ranger Districts will be available for public review at the Heppner Ranger District Office.

Individuals interested in reviewing these plans may do so between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, May 7 to May 18.

The Forest Service solicits written comments regarding these plans but verbal input will be accepted.

The purpose of Road Management Plans is to fulfill the needs of various user groups and to manage the transportation system with concern for land management objectives, safety and economics.

Auxiliary hosts Open House at Pioneer Memorial Hospital

An open house will be held Friday, May 11 between 3-5 p.m. at Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner to commemorate National Hospital Week May 6-11.

The open house will be hosted by the newly-formed Pioneer Memorial Hospital Auxiliary, who will also be subscribing new members during the afternoon.

Pro-tempore officers have been elected to stimulate organization of the PMH

Auxiliary and new officers will be elected in the coming months. Sandy Murray is serving as president; Martha King, vice-president; Carly Drake, secretary; and John Kennedy, treasurer.

Mrs. Murray said the Auxiliary will recognize nursing home patient birthdays, provide regular visits to the infirmed, raise funds for equipment and generally open lines of communication between the community and the hospital.

"We're looking forward to building a strong membership of individuals interested in providing something for others as well as themselves, by helping," said Mrs. Murray.

A free blood pressure clinic and pulmonary (lung) screening will be offered during the open house by hospital personnel, noted PMH Administrator Bob Byrnes.

Refreshments will be served.

Accident claims life of 11-year old Robert Kinzer

A weekend baseball game at a Heppner area farm ended in tragedy, when 11-year-old Robert Lee Kinzer was struck in the stomach by a batted ball, then collapsed and died, almost instantly.

Precisely what caused the death has not been determined. Preliminary results from an autopsy showed that young Kinzer, son of Richard and Klara Schmacher Kinzer of Heppner, suffered from no

pathological conditions, and there was no apparent injury to internal organs.

The Kinzer youth collapsed after he was struck in his stomach area when he jumped

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Catapult contest tests students engineering skills

