



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MILES CITY FIELD OFFICE Press Release

November 7, 2006

Release: 061107A

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mark Jacobsen
(406) 233-2831
Mark_Jacobsen@blm.gov

BLM grazing permittee gets Stewardship Award

MILES CITY, Mont. --- The Bureau of Land Management Miles City Field Office presented Pat O'Neill of Terry the Montana BLM "Grazing Permittee Stewardship Award" in a small ceremony at the Prairie County Cooperative State Grazing District annual meeting Sept. 29.

O'Neill was selected by the BLM Montana/Dakotas State Office as the region's nominee for the national level award.

According to the citation written by BLM Rangeland Management Specialist Adam Carr, O'Neill showed "Positive management, attitude and commitment to maintaining and improving the conditions of the public and private land and resources" within his grazing allotments and warranted the special recognition afforded by the award.

The purpose of the BLM Grazing Permittee Stewardship Award is to recognize permittees and lessees that have demonstrated good public land stewardship. The nominee must demonstrate the maintenance or improvement of rangeland conditions through beneficial management practices and illustrate collaboration and cooperation with other public lands users.

Nominees must also demonstrate productive communication both within and outside the livestock industry.

O'Neill is authorized to graze livestock on two grazing allotments administered by the BLM Miles City Field Office. The public rangelands associated with his allotments are intermingled with deeded and state lands and provide habitat for wildlife such as Mule and White-tailed deer, Pronghorn Antelope, Sage and Sharp-tailed grouse and multiple species of migratory birds.

-more-

O'Neill's cooperative management efforts ensured the grazing allotments were maintained in proper condition and provided multiple wildlife values, according to the award.

O'Neill worked with the BLM and the Natural Resources Conservation Service through an Environmental Quality Incentive Program contract and developed a rest rotation grazing system that incorporated 12 pastures and a total of 25,524 acres; of which 9,917 acres are BLM administered.

He also contributed to several range improvement projects on private, state and BLM lands. O'Neil contributed approximately \$6,000 to four projects completed on BLM lands within the last five years, along with several thousand dollars of cost share from NRCS on both BLM and deeded lands that indirectly benefited public land resources.

The completed projects included pipeline construction --which increased livestock watering points for improved distribution-- and noxious weed infestation monitoring for treatment and evaluation.

O'Neill reduced livestock numbers and grazing duration on his allotments for three years in light of persistent drought conditions. He also provided management flexibility in his grazing rotation and provided extended periods of rest for two pastures with extensive hail damage in 2003.

"It is a pleasure to work with Pat because he is proactive, committed and contributes to and positively challenges the management and planning process," said Carr. "Pat is one of many positive and hard working permittees that the Miles City Field Office staff works with on a regular basis."

The BLM presented the award as part of a wider effort to promote adaptive management practices and to improve cooperation, collaboration and communication between permittees and other federal land management agencies.

Photo and Cutline:



Pat O'Neill of Terry displays his Montana BLM Grazing Permittee Stewardship Award plaque. The award was presented to O'Neill by BLM staffers Adam Carr (left) and Bill McIlvain (right) in a small ceremony at the Prairie County Cooperative State Grazing District meeting Sept. 29.