

## **Kenner Marsh Project Gets First Ever Stewardship Award**

(Devils Lake)—Farmers and agencies involved in the development and management of the Dry Lake-Grand Harbor Watershed Management Project were the first recipients of the Devils Lake Basin Water Stewardship award presented at the Lake Region Extension Roundup on Wednesday, January 7, 2004.

The Kenner Marsh project is a cooperative management arrangement between local farmers, the Ramsey County Water Resource District, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, The Natural Resources Trust (Trust), and many other state and federal agencies.

Joint Board Chairman Carl Duchscher presented the award saying, “The 2004 Water Stewardship Award winner is a great example of a group of diverse interests, who do not always agree, working together for the benefit of the Devils Lake Basin and the state of North Dakota.”

The Stewardship Award is presented to an individual, group, or organization who has contributed to assisting with the implementation of the Joint Board’s mission statement: “Development of a comprehensive, coordinated water management plan for the Devils Lake Basin that will protect the economic and biological values of the basin while providing optimum benefits for agriculture, wildlife/fisheries, recreation, and economic development for its citizens.”

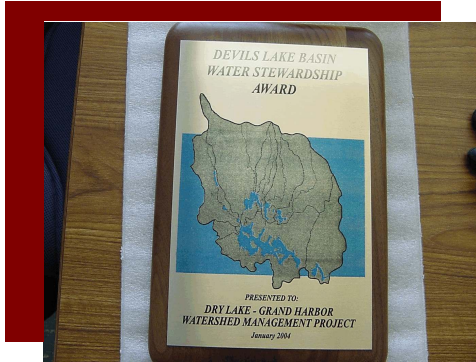


**Joint Board Chairman Carl Duchscher (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) presents the Stewardship Award to (l-r) Mark Blanchfield, John Peryle, Dan Webster, Byron Lannoye, and Wilton Webster.**

Dry Lake Township is very flat. After nearly 20 years of struggling with sheet water compounded by a wet cycle and the ramifications of a poorly engineered coulee clean out, Dry Lake Township under Ray Horne’s (former Trust board member) direction began the process of developing a model water management project. He engaged the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Ducks Unlimited, Inc., as well as the state, county, and township units of government. Pam Dryer, president of Blue Stem Inc., facilitated the interactions among all of these stakeholders. (Blue Stem Inc., contracted the management of the Trust at that time.)

The Devils Lake Basin has become well known for many conflicts between agricultural and wildlife conservation interests. After more than 20 years of trying to force the ecology of Dry Lake Township with constructed drains and over \$140,000 of personal expense, the farmers took a considerable risk to join hands with the conservation groups

to develop a “show case” project for mutual benefit. Despite years of grief caused by various agency roadblocks, the farmers were able to put aside their animosity in deference to initiating a project that was truly ecologically compatible with the landscape and of mutual benefit to the farmers, the community, and the region.



One hundred eighty-three acres of farmland have been mitigated and 600 acres have been made productive. Four hundred eighty acres have been dedicated to a large marsh and a smaller pool with uplands seeded to native grasses. Management of the wildlife area provides jobs to game and fish employees. The Trust holds title to 640 acres of marsh, upland, and crop land and pays over \$6,000 in property taxes. Recreational opportunities for birders, hikers, and hunters abound. Kenner Marsh is a

“show case” for the annual Devils Lake Water Foundation Tour and science outings for the area school children.