

MEDIA RELEASE

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Local Farmer (Touchet, WA) Achieves National Recognition for Farming Bees

Washington, D.C. (Wednesday, October 17, 2011)

The NAPPC-NACD Farmer-Rancher Pollinator Award recognizes individuals who have contributed significantly to pollinator protection, conservation, and issue outreach resulting in increased awareness of the importance of pollinators and pollination within the agricultural community. This special sheds light on the contributions of American farmers to natural and cultural resource preservation.

Mark Wagoner is a fourth generation farmer whose crops include alfalfa and the native solitary alkali bee, *Nomia melanderi*. Mark practices a unique style of holistic farming where care for the land brings in native pollinators to native crops. Sticking to his roots and making innovation out of tradition has made Wagoner Touchet Farms a place where native bees and production agriculture coexist.



The Pollinator Advocate Award designed by acclaimed artist James Randolph.

Mark is a farmer but he is also an advocate and an innovator. Mark works with Washington State University's Dr. Douglas Walsh to conduct research about best management practices for the alkali bee.



An alkali bee in a bee bed at the Wagoner Toucher Farm.

He also provided the EPA with his perspective on insecticide safety regulations and small-crop exemptions for safer chemistries for 24 years, making frequent trips to DC to give his on-farm perspectives to administrators. He has also been active in community issues involving pesticide use in agriculture, making the Walla Walla Valley a safer place for pollinators. In the early 1990's an alkali bee population crash was attributed to a new generation insecticide. Since that time, growers have no made no subsequent mistakes, with the result that the valley-wide nesting population has grown 15-fold to 20 million female alkali bees.

Mark's achievements will be celebrated at a VIP reception held at the Canadian Embassy in Washington DC on October 17, 2012. He will share the evening spotlight with the 2012 Canadian Farmer-Rancher award winners Don and Marie Ruzicka of Sunrise Farm in Killam, Alberta, and with the 2012 Pollinator Advocate Award Winners from Canada, the United States, and Mexico.

Without pollinators we would lose one third of our diet, nearly all of our high-nutrient food, most terrestrial ecosystems would collapse, important plant species that provide the raw materials for medicines would die out, and the biosphere would stop filtering air and freshwater for us and other wildlife. Factors such as uncontrolled development, agricultural intensification, chemical misuse, and pathogen introduction are decimating their populations.

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NAPPC is a collaborative effort of over 120 organizations in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico whose common goal is to promote awareness of the essential role that pollinators play in food systems and ecosystems, and to provide the public with simple, effective ways to engage in environmental stewardship.

The **Pollinator Partnership**, the largest organization in the world dedicated to the protection and promotion of pollinators and their ecosystems, is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization headquartered in San Francisco. Pollinator Partnership has offices and activities in Washington D.C., Louisiana, Nebraska, Iowa, Montana, Ohio, Arizona, Washington, and Canada.



The **National Association of Conservation Districts** (NACD) represents America's 3,000 conservation districts, which are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level. Districts work with millions of cooperating landowners and operators to help them manage and protect land and water resources on all private lands and many public lands in the United States.

To learn more about the NAPPC and the Pollinator Partnership visit www.pollinator.org or contact info@pollinator.org for more information or call 415-362-1137.