

## The 2008 Annual Clarence Burch Award, the Outstanding Leadership in the Radical Center Awards and Banquet, January 19, 2008.

- Welcome ~ Remelle Farrar
- Banquet Meal
- The Quivira Waltz by Rita Cantu
- Radical Center Awards
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- 2008 Burch Award Recipients
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  - Mike Reardon ~ Cañon Bonito Ranch



Clarence Burch (1906-2000)

2007 Clarence Burch Award Recipient, Ojo Encino Ranchers Committee under the leadership of Watson Castillo, and with the support of its

growing membership, is setting an example of collaborative, innovative and progressive land stewardship on the Navajo Nation.

The ranchers of Ojo Encino operate within one of the most complex land ownership structures found anywhere. The Committee members utilize land with eleven different official



Back row, left to right: Michael Benson and Steve Fischer. Front row, left to right: Ted Mace, Lenora Mace, Lula Castillo, Watson Castillo and Joe Mace.

land status designations, which means collaboration is critical to the success of any endeavor.

In spite of these challenges, the progress of the Committee in restoring land health, in educating land users on how to use land sustainably, and in implementing improvements on the land has been exemplary.

# THAW CHARITABLE TRUST

The Thaw Charitable Trust was formed by Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw in 1981 to receive and hold gifts of fine art and to make those artworks available to scholars and the public through loans and gifts. The Thaws moved the Trust to New Mexico when they moved here in 1994. The grant making enterprise of the Thaw Trust was formally established from the sale of some of its most valuable art. Since then, the Trust has given more than 43 million dollars to Art, Ecology and Animal Welfare causes. More recently, the Thaws donated their Wind River Ranch in Mora County New Mexico to the Thaw Trust as

a community asset, to serve as an ecological and wildlife research station and an education center. They established the Wind River Ranch Foundation to manage the Ranch and its programs for that purpose. Eugene Thaw is a renowned art dealer, collector and connoisseur known for his collection of Old Master drawings which he donated to the Morgan Library in New York. He also formed one of the great collections of American Indian art which he subsequently donated to the Fennimore House Museum in Cooperstown, New York.

## Mike Reardon

Mike and his family have been in the Wagon Mound, NM area for over 50 years and for the last ten he has been very active in managing the family ranch known as Cañon Bonito. He has continually sought out the very best methods to reverse the declining conditions of the wildlife, range and watershed. Mike has traveled near and far to listen to various experts in different fields explain their system, their success and failures. Mike has developed many innovative and sustainable tools for the ranch that have led to diversity and abundance of wildlife and grasses. In ten years the ranch has gone from nearly a monoculture of blue gramma to growing over 55 grass species. Dry springs are flowing again and wildlife populations are up by a factor of ten.

During The Quivira Coalition's 2004 Annual Conference, Mike spoke on "The Do's and Don'ts of Removing Trees". He described his ongoing battle



Spencer, Liz and Mike Reardon.

against pinon and juniper trees, how he uses various tools like chain saws, axes, Polaskis, spin trimmers, loppers, Bobcats, front-end loaders, and fire... and which were more successful than others. Mike is currently restoring Cañon Bonito Creek using techniques developed by Bill Zeedyk with funding from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Wild Turkey Federation. Mike is working with and sharing information with the NM Department of Game and Fish and the NRCS. (**Excerpt from the nomination letter by Allen Darrow, friend and restoration collaborator.**)

# Dale Veseth

Working on and far beyond his family's remote Montana ranch, Dale exemplifies Quivira Coalition ideals of ranch-based stewardship, innovation, leadership and collaboration.

In a conservative ranching community warily facing an uncertain future, it is often lonely to be an audible innovator, box-less thinker and natural collaborator. Over the years Dale has quietly endured criticism from some neighbors for his "New Ranch" type of ideas. Dale pressed beyond self-doubt, thanks to infusions of dreams and validation gleaned from wide ranging inquiry and networks with other courageous and enterprising ranchers far distant from Montana's prairies.

So while Dale remains solidly anchored in his ranch and rural community, he has emerged as the eager learner and early innovator introducing a bevy of ideas designed to build resilience and hope among his neighbors. In the past that may have branded him a maverick, but due to years of steady, respectful, wise action (low stress handling principles work as well with people as they do with cattle!) now his community and industry look to Dale as a leader they can trust and follow.

Dale champions approaches that conserve native species as well as site-adapted human communities. He works to open communication and create consensus between unlikely partners such as multi-generational ranchers and people espousing an immense bison preserve that would displace those very ranchers. He deeply honors local traditions and the ranching heritage at the same time he looks to create opportuni-



Dale & Janet Veseth, photo by Anne Sherwood.

ties for land and community health given the looming challenges ahead of us all. Dale's work presages lasting success if authors Brian Walker and David Salt (*Resilience Thinking: Sustaining Ecosystems and People in a Changing World*) are correct when they state: "And the process in many ways is just as important to building resilience as the scenarios it produces. Through people sharing and building social networks that span different areas and scales of operation, the community is in essence building trust and social capital that is basic to enhancing adaptability and resilience.

Over the years Dale has implemented dozens of practices which favor biodiversity, enhance ecosystem function, increase livestock performance and improve economic return. Long-term monitoring on the ranch proves the success of these efforts.

Dale leads efforts to provide high-quality learning opportunities for local ranchers and conservation partners. Within the last year the Ranchers Stewardship Alliance (which Dale chairs) has sponsored workshops on Ranching For Profit, riparian assessment and management, and rangeland carbon sequestration and markets. *(Excerpt from the nomination letter written by Linda Poole, Glaciated Plains Project Director, The Nature Conservancy.)*