

# Berks County ASCS holds awards banquet

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS  
Staff Correspondent

BETHEL — Berks County conservationists met recently to praise and award outstanding efforts in the conservation and preservation of nature's resources by fellow Berks Countians.

Jack B. Gounder, a WEEU radio personality, and a district director served as the master of ceremonies and Dr. James Grace, Extension Coordinator, School of Forest Resources at Penn State University, highlighted the evening with his presentation on "The Year of the Forest."

"Many people take for granted the natural resources that got us where we are today," Grace stated in his presentation. "We truly have a wonderful resource in our forests of Pennsylvania. With proper management, we can reap many more benefits," he went on to say.

According to statistics Grace presented, Pennsylvania now controls over four million acres of

public owned forest lands. Another 13 million acres is privately owned. These figures rank Pennsylvania as the leading state in the number of forest land owners. Pennsylvania also has more hardwood timber than any other state.

This state also ranks as number one in the number of hunters and in the amount of money spent in the pursuit of fish and game. Stressing 1986 as the "Year of the Forest," Grace encouraged everyone to get involved in conservation efforts and educational efforts to preserve the nation's forest lands.

Each involved directly in conservation practices in their businesses or way of life, the 1986 award recipients provided excellent examples of conservation efforts on a local scale.

Receiving the applause and admiration of everyone present was the outstanding conservationist of the year. Harvey Adams, Sinking Spring, has been an active conservationist for most

of his life. He has served in the conservationist Izaak Walton League of America for 53 years and has continuously held office since the Berks County chapter originated in 1932.

Adams has been a concerned conservationist all of his life and has testified before government representatives on issues including clean water and air, acid rain, soil erosion, strip mining, recycling, and the bottle bill.

Forrest C. Stricker, R1, Robesonia, was honored as the outstanding conservation farmer of the year. His 188 acres of his family dairy farm are contoured stripcropped and under a conservation tillage program. Cover crops are used on all corn silage acres. Grassed waterways are utilized, and rotation plans are followed. Active in the Conrad Weiser Young Farmers, the Berks County Holstein Club, and the Berks Farm-City Committee.

Other farmers recognized for their efforts and awarded a sign were: Walter M. Brubaker, Greenwich Township; Norman Moser, Colebrooke Township; Sam Schlouch, Brecknock Township; and Fred Wenz, Brecknock Township.

The outstanding conservation educator of 1986 went to Larry R. Kirk, a teacher in the Berks County Intermediate Unit.

Kirk assisted in beginning the outdoor education program at the Kutztown Area School District and has been involved with this type of program since its beginning. Appreciating the assistance the various conservation commissions can give to this type of outdoor and environmental educational programs, Kirk continues to help



Mark Wolfskill stands with Solon Phillips, outstanding conservation contractor, as he was presented the award. Roy Christman, ASCS member also presented the award.

teach and support others in the development of these programs.

A special award highlighted this year's banquet went to Solon C. Phillips, Reading, as the outstanding conservation contractor. An equipment operator for the district since 1948, Phillips has constructed farm ponds, miles of diversion ditches, cropland terraces, and sod waterways. He

has signed up many new cooperators over the years.

The ASCS county and community committee people with over ten years of service were also recognized at the banquet. They are: David Shirey, 35 years of service; Mark Balthaser, 15 years of service; George Delong, 10 years of service; and Richard Troutman, 10 years of service.



Mark Wolfskill, ASCS member, presents the award for outstanding conservation educator of the year to Larry Kirk, Reading.

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