



Generations on the Land: A Conservation Legacy

Joe Nick Patoski

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The landowners in this book have improved their land and done so by being profitable, generous to their human community, committed to family, and desirous of leaving land better than when it came into their stewardship.—from the introduction by Brent Haglund In 2008, the Sand County Foundation and the Texas A&M Department of Ecosystem Science and Management co-hosted a workshop called “Generations on the Land: Working for Land Stewardship.” It brought to College Station winners of the foundation’s Leopold Conservation Award, who presented their stories and interacted with students and other land managers. The common themes among the award-winning ranchers and farmers were their commitment to progressive and ethical land management practices and their success in keeping their land and business operations in the same family over successive generations. Following the workshop, the Sand County Foundation asked Texas writer Joe Nick Patoski to spend time with seven of the award-winners and profile them in extended essays that now make up this manuscript. The foundation’s goals in producing a book were to more widely publicize the voluntary conservation achievements of private landowners across the country, to recognize their roles as conservation leaders outside the agricultural communities where they live, and to reinforce the value of family commitment to land stewardship. The seven landowners profiled by Patoski in the book include five ranchers, a forester, and a vintner who live in California, Nebraska, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Their conservation accomplishments range from providing a habitat corridor for pronghorn antelope to hammering out an endangered species “safe harbor” agreement for grape growers. A short introduction by a fellow conservation or ranching professional precedes each of the personal portraits by Patoski, which are written in an informal, conversational style. Brent Haglund, president of the Sand County Foundation, provides an introduction to the purpose and work of the foundation, and a conclusion summarizes the substantive conservation contributions of the Leopold award-winners. Four to five color photographs accompany each profile (including one family portrait, see excerpt).

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