



Region 10

August 2015

## Agriculture to Wetland Project: Coeur d'Alene Basin Howard Orlean Excellence in Site Reuse Award Presented to Mike and Brenda Schlepp

Photo courtesy Mike Schlepp

### Turning Farmland into Healthy Habitat

One goal of the 2002 cleanup plan for the Coeur d'Alene Basin is to increase the amount of safe feeding areas for waterfowl. In 2011, after years of intense effort by many parties, EPA finished converting nearly 400 acres of agricultural property near Medimont to healthy wetland habitat. The area was made into clean feeding habitat for swans, ducks, and other wetland birds and mammals. This project is the first of its kind in the Basin.

Fundamentally, the project was made possible by property owners Mike and Brenda Schlepp. Their care and commitment to their land, their ability to work through complex processes, and their patience and willingness to overcome challenges, helped lay the groundwork for success. Throughout the effort, the EPA worked closely with the Schlepps, as well as the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited and many others. More recently, the Coeur d'Alene Basin "Restoration Partnership" (the group of state, tribal and federal natural resource trustees) has taken on a leadership role in managing and enhancing the habitat.

**Mike and Brenda Schlepp** are excellent stewards of the land and have the best interests of the local wildlife and environment at heart. Because of the cleanup and new habitat, waterfowl diversity and abundance on this property is among the highest in the Lower Basin during spring migration.

Congratulations, Mike and Brenda!

#### About Howard Orlean

*This award is named in honor of **Howard Orlean**, Superfund Project Manager with the Environmental Protection Agency. Howard was dedicated to finding innovative approaches to cleaning up and reusing contaminated properties. He was with the EPA from 1987 until he passed away in 2014.*



*Over the years Howard made important contributions to protect people's health and the environment. He worked on many substantial RCRA and Superfund sites in EPA Regions 2 and 10 throughout his career. He was recognized with several awards, such as the National RCRA Corrective Action award "Connecting Communities to Cleanups," and National Remedial Project Manager of the Year. In 2014, Howard won the first Region 10 Excellence in Site Reuse Award for his work on the Oeser wood treatment site and the adjacent Little Squaticum Creek in Bellingham, WA. Loved and respected by his peers, Howard embodied passion and commitment to protecting the environment and returning formerly contaminated land to productive reuse. For this work, his award was renamed in his honor.*

#### For More Information:

<http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/bunkerhill>

<http://www.facebook.com/cdabasin>