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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Quail Unlimited Announces Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative Award for Individual Achievement

Edgefield, SC--(March 22, 2007)— In recognition of superior efforts in implementing the **Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI)** directives, established to develop a quantitative habitat-oriented plan to restore bobwhites to the density they enjoyed during the baseline year of 1980, **NBCI and QU announce its individual winner. "Pete Heard, Director, NRCS Agricultural Wildlife Conservation Center, Madison, Mississippi** reflects the dedication and efforts that are producing landscape changes in the bobwhite's populations" stated **Rocky Evans, President of Quail Unlimited.**

Mr. Heard's 40 year federal career reflects a great conservationist with passionate personal dedication to planning and achieving a key leadership role in elevating considerations for fish and wildlife habitat in the SCS and NRCS process at the state and national level. His recent work focused on the NRCS involvement with the ever growing wildlife components of the Farm Bill conservation programs.

His work in the technical publication "A comprehensive review of Farm Bill Contributions to Wildlife Conservation 1985-2000" led congress to demand better accountability from the USDA on the impacts of Farm Bill conservation programs on fish, wildlife and all resources. Combined with a series of award-winning educational materials including "Buffers for Wildlife" job sheets, habitat management leaflets, "Core 4" materials and the video training course "Understanding the landscape" this reveals a driven professional in Pete Heard.

Continued vigilance from Heard monitored the \$1.5 million dollar Northern Bobwhite Habitat Restoration project involving 11 grants to evaluate the impact of various Farm Bill conservation programs on bobwhite habitat.

QU, through its dedicated chapter members coast to coast, is leading the charge to restore the natural habitat of wild quail, working with private landowners as well as state and federal agencies across the country with unprecedented partnerships. By putting on local events and fundraisers, QU chapters raise conservation dollars that are then used for on the ground projects in their area.

"Today's award recipient is a key element in the acknowledged beginning landscape recovery of the bobwhite quail and is a true ambassador for the NRCS with the wildlife community. Pete Heard promotes the best possible technical knowledge on wildlife habitat information and its delivery to resource professionals and private landowners alike. It is with great pleasure that Quail Unlimited and all its dedicated national membership recognize Pete Heard for his initiative and leadership in bobwhite restoration efforts" emphasized Evans.

Quail Unlimited (QU) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the restoration of habitat for wild quail. Its almost 300 chapters nationwide raise local project dollars for on-the-ground projects, including private and public land management with banquets, auctions, sporting clay events and more. QU has a highly trained staff of biologists, state and regional directors and dedicated members that work with private landowners and state and federal agencies to restore quail populations. In 2005, Quail Unlimited chapters and partners invested over \$2.2 million dollars in quail habitat improvements. For more information on QU, the EXPO and membership go to the website at www.qu.org .

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