

Call for Presentations and Symposia Sessions



Choosing Conservation:

Considering Ecology, Economics, and Ethics

Guidance from Program Committee

Both Hugh Hammond Bennett and Aldo

Leopold recognized that effective

conservation decision-making takes

many tools. A shovel, a pen, and a

solid handshake were used skillfully

by both men to help land managers

and lawmakers make sustainable

choices for working lands. Leopold

was particularly vocal on the need to

reunite economics with ecology and

ethics. He recognized that each field

of inquiry strengthens the study of

natural resource conservation and its

application on the back forty. Recent

movements toward transdisciplinary research and systems approaches mirror Leopold's thinking. The 125th anniversary year of Leopold's birth provides us with an opportunity to take cues from Leopold and Bennett as we consider conservation choices today.

SWCS's mission is to foster the science and art of natural resource conservation. Though the nine general topic areas contained in this call for presentations address the key topic areas that make up the core of the work of the conservation community, the 2012 SWCS Annual Conference Program Committee invites and encourages presenters to address in their presentations how ecological, economic, and ethical considerations influence natural resource decision-making. We ask that presenters integrate these considerations with their own technical disciplines and experience as conservationists.

General Topic Areas

We welcome proposals for symposia, oral presentations and poster presentations that address one or more of the ongoing areas of emphasis outlined below. These ongoing areas of emphasis comprise the core work of SWCS: to foster the science and art of conservation. Please choose one of these areas when submitting an abstract. Special consideration will be given to new insights, techniques, or approaches in addressing each of these general topics:

1. Adaptive Management of Conservation Efforts
2. Agricultural and Conservation Economics
3. Biodiversity Conservation and Management
4. Conservation in Urban Settings
5. Conservation Models, Tools and Technologies
6. Conservation Policy and Program Design
7. Outreach, Education and Community Engagement
8. Soil Resource Assessment and Management
9. Water Resource Assessment and Management

About the Conference

The 67th International SWCS Annual Conference will be held in Fort Worth, TX. Primary conference dates are July 22-25, 2012. Tours will be on July 25th. The headquarters hotel is the Renaissance Worthington.

The conference includes workshops, concurrent sessions, symposia, posters, plenary sessions, and technical tours designed to raise the awareness of conference participants to recent developments in the science and art of natural resource conservation and environmental management on working land — the largely privately-owned land comprising working farms, ranches, forests, and rural and urban communities.

Abstracts must be received by December 15, 2011.

Submissions for symposia, oral or poster presentations must be made online at www.swcs.org/12AC.

General Notes

All conservation professionals are encouraged to submit abstracts for oral and poster presentations as well as symposia descriptions for the 67th Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Conference. SWCS welcomes papers, posters, and symposia reporting the results of research, testing, monitoring, and evaluation/demonstration projects, and/or lessons learned from professional experience working with conservation and environmental management systems, technologies, programs, and polices.

Our primary focus is on the science and art of natural resource conservation and environmental management in agroecosystems. We also welcome and encourage reports of knowledge gained from management of parks, wildlife refuges, and other land uses that contribute to earth's ability to provide the necessary complement of ecosystem services. Proposals will be transmitted to reviewers for consideration. All proposals are reviewed anonymously and are rated individually.

Proposals from students and from all professional sectors and students addressing the program topics areas are encouraged. Reports of conservation in developing countries are particularly encouraged.

67th Annual International Conference Schedule in Brief

Sunday, July 22

Society meetings, Leadership training , Half-day workshops, Fellows Forum, Welcome Reception

Monday, July 23

Keynote, Symposia and Educational Presentations, Silent Auction, Exhibit Hall & Poster Presenter Reception

Tuesday, July 24

Symposia and Educational Presentations, Evening events (Texas Rangers game, Billy Bobs)

Wednesday, July 25

Conservation Tours
Sustainable Rangelands Workshop

Additional Program Committee Guidance:

Highly-rated symposia descriptions or abstracts for oral and poster presentations will (within the categories above) address the following questions:

- What are some ecological, economic, or ethical leverage points that have the greatest impact on our ability to achieve conservation goals?
- Can a greater integration of ecological, economic and ethical considerations enhance the resilience of systems in desirable states or transform systems that are in undesirable states?
- How are conservation decisions made when uncertainty is high? How does uncertainty affect conservation choices? How can we improve decision-making when uncertainty is high?
- What are the strengths of current economic approaches that assign value to ecosystem services? Challenges? How can we utilize diverse approaches within the field of economics to strengthen conservation efforts?
- How can conservation achieve maximum cost efficiencies (e.g. targeting, market-based approaches)?
- What are some tools and techniques for successfully incorporating ethical considerations into local conservation practice?
- Are there consistencies in conclusions that scholars and practitioners in the fields of economics, ecology, and ethics have drawn? Irreconcilable differences?
- How are scholars and practitioners in the fields of economics, ecology, and ethics working together to evaluate tradeoffs in conservation decision-making?
- Are there timely opportunities to more effectively incorporate economics, ecology, and ethics into local, state, national, and global decision-making?

All presenters and/or organizers (oral, poster, or symposia) who indicate intent to participate in the annual conference imply agreement to register for the conference at the appropriate fee, attend the conference, and make the presentation in person.

SWCS does not reimburse presenters for expenses incurred for travel to the annual conference. This includes authors, symposia organizers, and individuals invited to present as part of a symposium.

www.swcs.org/12AC

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General Topic Area Descriptions

Please choose one of these areas when submitting a proposal for the conference.

Adaptive Management of Conservation Efforts

Adaptive management and structured decision making are related processes that can guide management when there is uncertainty regarding the outcomes of particular actions. Adaptive management for soil and water conservation, as for other resource management, is appropriate when uncertainty is high but management is possible ("controlability" is high). It is an iterative structured process that allows management to occur despite uncertainty, with the goal of enhancing learning and reducing uncertainty, thereby improving management over time. It is not trial and error. Adaptive management abstracts focused on all aspects of water and soil management are encouraged. Specific topics may include, but are not limited to: maintaining and enhancing ecosystem services; plant and animal responses to management; conservation policies implemented as experiments; changes in soil and water quality responses to management action; monitoring to inform decision-making; management actions meant to enhance resilience; scientific and technical advances in targeting conservation and in precision conservation; effective use of human capital to increase conservation success; and approaches to structured decision making in general.

Agricultural and Conservation Economics

It is people who decide whether, how, and to what extent to conserve soil and water resources. Their decisions are based in large part on incentives -- economic and other incentives. This new section will focus on economic and related drivers of conservation adoption and maintenance. How do the outcomes of conservation actions relate to the amount of incentive and how the incentive is provided? How does the incentive-action relationship change as other variables (e.g., cost of production, land prices, uncertainty) change? Are there economic barriers to conservation that are not being overcome under current programs and policies? What sort of economic incentives are required to induce change in behavior with regard to conservation? We welcome reports on the findings of behavioral economic studies that provide lessons for the design and presentation of incentives for conservation actions.

Abstracts must be received by December 15, 2011 and will only be accepted through the online submission website at www.swcs.org/12AC



Biodiversity Conservation and Management

Fish, wildlife, plants and other life forms are essential components of earth's ecosystems. They provide food, fiber and energy; they process nutrients and chemical pollutants; they provide economically important hunting, angling and ecotourism opportunities; and they provide cultural and aesthetic benefits that cannot be replaced. Examples of topics in this section are: decision drivers in biodiversity conservation and management; restoration of declining or important native fish and wildlife habitats; impacts of invasive species on fish and wildlife habitats; conservation of native pollinators; the risks and effects of climate change on fish, wildlife, and biodiversity; and methods and methodological challenges in biodiversity valuation; and the use of science, local knowledge, and traditional ecological knowledge in conservation policy; and use of science, local knowledge, and traditional ecological knowledge in conservation policy. We welcome papers addressing agricultural, urbanizing, and urban landscapes.

Conservation Policy and Program Design

Conservation and environmental policy is a critical driver of land and water management decisions. There are many different models for achieving conservation goals through policy design and implementation. Voluntary, incentive-based, targeted, and regulatory approaches influence natural resource management choices in different ways. In addition, limited natural and financial resources, lead lawmakers, conservation professionals and land managers to make decisions that involve trade offs: who gets how much water, which conservation practices should be funded and in what quantities? Abstracts for this topic may address: evaluation and reform of voluntary, regulatory, and market-based approaches to natural resource management; conservation implications of international trade agreements and global markets; conservation compliance - policy and practice; the place of outreach and education in conservation policy; ethical considerations in conservation policy; funding for quantifying benefits of policies and programs; nutrient trading and programs for implementation; implications of the Farm Bill; monitoring and assessment of conservation needs and benefits.

Conservation in Urban Settings

The majority of our population lives in urban and suburban areas, which are growing at a rapid pace worldwide. People that have been in urban settings for generations will have different perspectives on the ecology, economics and ethics of natural resource conservation. Conservation practices in these settings are primarily designed to reduce erosion, create and conserve green spaces, and preserve or improve habitat and water quality. Presentations in this topic area may describe how to design research and demonstration projects that expand adoption of conservation practices, new designs and methodology, new programs for enforcement and education, and similar subjects of interest in urban settings. Topics may include but are not limited to: land use and community planning and zoning, farmland and open-space protection; integrated urban watershed management and planning; urban storm water management and planning; erosion and sediment control systems; systems to improve water quality; innovations in conservation designs and education; low impact development.

Conservation Models, Tools, and Technologies

In the implementation, planning, management, and development of conservation practices, we rely on models and tools that provide decision support through analysis, visualization, and evaluation. Development of new tools and technologies, evaluation results, and application experiences all can provide information of value to share. Topics may include but are not limited to: development and testing of conservation practices and systems; quantification of the environmental and conservation effects of best management practices (BMPs) and systems; advances in science and technology for predicting and/or evaluating environmental and conservation effects of alternative resource management practices and systems (soil, water, nutrient, grazing, manure, pest, plant and landscape management); decision support tools for conservation planning and implementation; biodiversity conservation; geographic information systems.

Outreach, Education and Community Engagement

Educated and engaged land owners, managers, and other stakeholders work with conservation professionals to choose land and water management practices that are ecologically functional, and economically sound. Outreach, education and engagement help integrate scientific and quantitative data with qualitative knowledge and social concerns, thereby giving the decision making process ethical integrity. Understanding successful outreach, education, and community engagement is critical for

moving conservation forward in a manner that involves and considers many variables and stakeholders. Abstracts should address: research and model programs that demonstrate effective methods for engaging decision-makers; programs that foster cooperative stakeholder-based decision-making; outreach that incorporates unique cultural considerations; integration of voluntary and regulatory conservation efforts that include outreach, education and community engagement; educational needs assessment; and evaluating the impacts of outreach activities, including technical assistance to land owners, managers and communities.

Soil Resource Assessment and Management

The use of soil resources is required to provide the food, fiber, and energy needs of a growing world population. Problems of soil and environmental degradation have made the development of technologies and practices for sustainable soil management a high priority. We are seeking presentations that consider the ecology, economics and ethics of soil resource assessment and management when crafting solutions to these challenges. Abstracts are invited that address: research results, demonstration projects, or other knowledge and information regarding soil resource management that maintains agricultural production while protecting soil, water and air resources. Topics may include but are not limited to: soil conservation and management; soil quality; soil survey, assessment, and analysis; soil quality assessment and management; cover crops; water and wind erosion prediction and management; carbon sequestration; implications of climate change for soil conservation and management.

Water Resource Assessment and Management

This area addresses the social, economic, environmental, and technical dimensions of water resources management. Abstracts in this area should disseminate results, information, lessons learned, and/or shared experiences of research, testing, monitoring, and/or evaluation/demonstration projects on water resources issues. Topics may include but are not limited to: international and transboundary water resource management; watershed-scale research methods and tools; watershed-scale planning methods and tools; development and implementation of TMDLs; water quantity, supply and conservation; irrigation and drainage; watershed restoration; implications of water resource management for biodiversity conservation; targeting watershed management interventions; implications of climate change for water resource conservation and management; and institutional collaborations in water resource management.

A submitted abstract or session description is indicative of the quality of conference presentations; therefore, authors are urged to prepare quality abstracts and session descriptions. The abstract should include 1) a statement of current relevance or need, 2) general methods and data analysis information, 3) results or predicted results if the work has not yet been completed, and 4) how the results or outcomes contribute to science and society. Inclusion of tentative or final conclusions will greatly strengthen paper proposals and abstracts.