

2009 SWCS Awards to National Capital Chapter and Organizations Nominated for Awards by NCC

2009 Merit Award

Smithsonian Institution—Dig It! The Secret of Soils Exhibit

Dr. Patrick Megonigal (exhibit curator), Ms. Barbara Stauffer (exhibit developer), Ms. Elizabeth Miles (MFM Design Inc, exhibit design)



Pat Megonigal, Smithsonian Institute, receives the SWCS Merit Award from Peggie James, president, and Gary Steinhardt, president-elect for his work as curator on the 'Dig-It: The Secrets of Soil' exhibit at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

Starting July 19, 2008, visitors to the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History are journeying into the skin of the earth and explore the amazing world of soils in the new exhibition, Dig It! The Secrets of Soil. Dig It! transports visitors to the world of fungi, bacteria, worms, and countless other organisms. Visitors will discover the amazing connections between soils and everyday life and think about this hidden world in a completely new way.

In the “*At Home in the World of Soils*” gallery, visitors explore the connections between soil and culture. While we walk on soils every day, we rarely think about how soils affect our daily lives. This gallery explores these connections with a scale model of a typical suburban house lot that highlights soils in the around our homes. Nearby, an evocative video features soils as the “secret ingredients” in thousands of everyday items including medicine, food, fiber, paint, cosmetics, and pottery.

The “*Underneath it All*” gallery explores soils in a broader perspective. A large topographic model illustrates the role of soils in residential, urban, and agricultural areas. Touchable soil samples provide close-up looks of two very different urban soils found right here in Washington, D.C. Exhibit panels examine how soil management can help meet modern day demands for food production, infrastructure construction, and environmental protection.

Visitors can find their “home earth” in a display of 54 samples, or “monoliths,” representing each state in the nation, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Visitors become soil detectives and use clues to deduce what landscapes three-mystery soils support. Other interactive explore soil color, texture, particle size, and minerals.

SWCS 2009 PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP AWARD

Ross Braun – National Capital Chapter



Ross Braun, as chair of the 2009 Nominations Committee, was instrumental in leading the committee in the search process for Directors. Braun's determination to provide a qualified and diverse slate of candidates demonstrates his passion and dedication to the society. Through his leadership, committee members continued their search to provide as many qualified candidates for membership consideration as possible. Additionally, Braun has devoted countless hours over past years ensuring that the Fellows' Forum at the annual conference is delivered successfully. He has always made himself available to assist the president to further the goals of the society.

Ross Braun receives the 2009 SWCS President's Leadership Award from Peggie James, president, and Gary Steinhardt, president-elect.

SWCS 2009 SUSTAINED PERFORMANCE AWARD

National Capital Chapter – Washington D.C.

The National Capital Chapter is somewhat different than most Chapters. Most of the members do not live in Washington DC but they work in the metro area and have national responsibilities. Chapter members include federal agency employees from NRCS, EPA, Economic Research Service, ARS, the Congressional Research Service, NGOs representing farmers, NGOs representing environmentalists, and international engineering firms. The Chapter officers conduct monthly meetings open to all members. The location varies between the USDA Building, EPA Building, and downtown DC offices of NGO and private-industry officers. By



Ross Braun, NCC past-president, receives the SWCS Outstanding Chapter and Sustained Performance Awards presented to the National Capital Chapter by Peggie James, president, and Gary Steinhardt, president-elect

virtue of our location, National Capital Chapter officers have unique opportunities to meet with management in NRCS, the USDA-NRE Deputy Under Secretary, the EPA Office of Water, the EPA Agricultural Counselor, the USDA-Forest Service, and private industry representatives from environmental and farm organizations. We recruited support from Washington DC leadership for the SWCS Northeast Region conference in 2007, annual Chapter tours in the spring and fall, and participation in the SWCS Annual Conferences.

The Chapter conducts annual spring and fall tours. Some of the past tours include the ARS-Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, the US Fish & Wildlife Service National Visitors' Center, a classroom boat tour on the Potomac River, green buildings, and converted wetlands for environmental credit trading. New SWCS members can attend Chapter events for free.

In 2007, we rekindled our relationship with the Washington DC Chapter of the Society of American Foresters (SAF). We collaborated with the SAF on a Science Academy event for high school students until 2006 when the event was discontinued. The SAF and SWCS Chapters collaborate on at least one activity each year, usually the fall tour. SWCS officers participate in the SAF annual holiday party held at one of the House of Representatives buildings and through SAF members, SWCS members are invited to the Forest Service Chief's annual holiday party.

The SWCS National Capital Chapter (NCC) provides major support for the soils exhibition at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. NCC members volunteered at the Smithsonian's

exhibit table during the National Harbor Food & Wine Festival. NCC coordinated volunteers and educational activities for the Smithsonian's Soil Exhibit grand opening and sponsored refreshments for all volunteers. Twenty-six volunteers were recruited from SWCS, SSSA and NRCS in Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, New Jersey, Connecticut, Virginia, and Washington DC to conduct the grand opening activities. The Sammy Soil costume was borrowed from an SWCD in Tennessee and volunteers wearing the costume engaged the public in the rotunda to promote the Soils Exhibit. NCC members continue to volunteer as docents for on-going educational activities at the exhibit.


NCC officers and members participate and promote participation in the Washington Capital Science Annual Conference and the Environmentors program of the National Council for Science and the Environments.



CHAPTER SUSTAINED PERFORMANCE AWARD

Is Presented To The
**National Capital Chapter
Northeastern Region**

In Recognition of Accomplishments during 2008 for
Continued Excellence and Overall Programming for a
period of more than two years Advancing the Goals and
Objectives of the Soil and Water Conservation Society



Peggie James, President

SWCS 2009 OUTSTANDING CHAPTER AWARD

National Capital Chapter – Washington D.C.

Support activities for the soils exhibition at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History started in January with a fund-raising meeting between SWCS, SSSA, and the Smithsonian and continued into 2009. National Capital Chapter (NCC) members volunteered at the Smithsonian's exhibit table during the National Harbor Food & Wine Festival. NCC coordinated volunteers and educational activities for the Smithsonian's Soil Exhibit grand opening and sponsored refreshments for all volunteers. Twenty-six volunteers were recruited from SWCS, SSA, and NRCS in Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, Connecticut, Virginia, and Washington D.C. to conduct the grand opening activities. The Sammy Soil costume was borrowed from an SWCD in Tennessee and volunteers wearing the costume engaged the public in the rotunda to promote the Soils Exhibit. NCC members continue to volunteer as docents for on-going educational activities at the exhibit.

The National Capital Chapter (NCC) meets monthly (10 times per year) at various locations in Washington D.C., usually in the offices of chapter officers. The membership is diverse and primarily includes national leaders in private industry (especially consultants and NGOs in agriculture and environmental protection) and federal agencies (especially NRCS, EPA, ARS, and ERS). The NCC council of officers is representative of the chapter's demographics and includes representatives from a private consulting firm, the Environmental Defense Fund, EPA, and NRCS.

The NCC collaborates with the National Capital Society of American Foresters (NCSAF) on an annual tour and NCC officers participate in the annual NCSAF holiday reception at the Longworth House Office building. This year's tour was held at Rock Creek Park in Washington D.C. where dams were replaced with low-water crossings and fish ladders were installed. Both construction activities involved the National Historic Preservation Act and NEPA due to significant historic and endangered species concerns. The tour also included a guided tour of the National Arboretum.

NCC officers and members have a history of participating in the Washington Capital Science annual conference and the Environmentors program of the national Council for Science and the Environment.

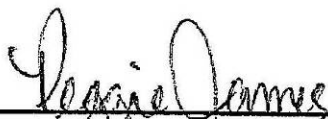


OUTSTANDING CHAPTER AWARD

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**National Capital Chapter
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In Recognition of Accomplishments during 2008 in
Overall Programming to Carry Out the Goals and
Objectives of the Soil and Water Conservation Society



Peggie James, President