



# 2025 SWCS EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM POST-PROGRAM REPORT

<b>2025 Data</b>	Participants	165
	Graduates	128
	Conservation Event Planner Certifications	100
	ELP Events Held	109
	Participant States/Regions/Territories	39
	Total Event Attendees	6,922
	Partner Organizations	283

## Overview

The 2025 class of the Soil and Water Conservation Society's (SWCS) Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) has much to celebrate! Over the course of the year, these early career professionals demonstrated creativity, perseverance, and a true commitment to leadership. Despite navigating a year of professional transitions and change, this cohort stepped forward with energy and drive –making an impact not only within the program, but also across their communities and the broader Society.

## Participant Feedback

- 97% said the program met or exceeded their expectations
- 94% ranked the program good or excellent
- 91% indicated the program better equipped them to navigate their role and responsibilities

Of the 37 participants who didn't graduate...

- 9 indicated personal or professional changes as barriers to completion
- 6 changed careers or roles
- 22 did not respond

## Top Skills Learned

1. Leading Myself
2. Addressing Barriers to Leadership
3. Event Planning
4. Networking
5. Developing Confidence

*All data from the post-program questionnaire.*




## Emerging Leaders in SWCS Leadership

These graduates, along with the 2024 cohort, are serving as chapter leaders, committee members, conference planners, and even representatives on the SWCS Board of Directors. Their presence brings fresh ideas, energy, and perspective to the Society's leadership, helping shape the future of conservation at both local and national levels.

### By the Numbers:

- 10 have joined local chapter's leadership (3 serving as "President" or "President-Elect")
- 4 served/are serving as SWCS Board of Directors *Ex Officio* members
- 7 served/are serving on SWCS committees
- 45 volunteered to help plan the International Annual Conference, 81 attended the event
- 2 returned to host ELP modules/networking sessions
- 2 won the 2025 ELP Alumni Award
- 14 served as speakers at SWCS events

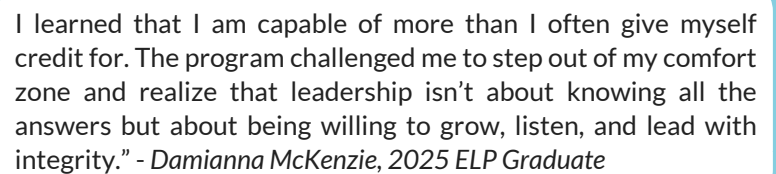


100% of program participants who attended the conference would recommend it to future participants!

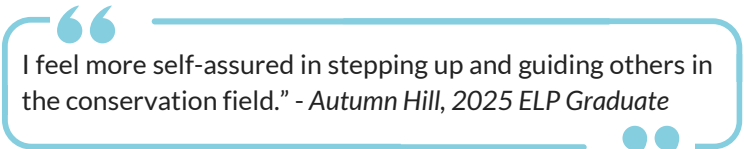
## Emerging Leaders Alumni Network

The impact of the Emerging Leaders Program doesn't end at graduation. With three years of participants now connected, the ELP Alumni Network continues to expand. Alumni are mentoring new participants, sharing their expertise through Society programs, and contributing articles, presentations, and outreach that extend the impact of the program.

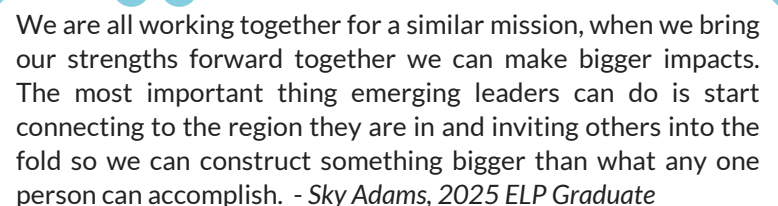
The Alumni Network not only provides professional support and collaboration but also serves as a long-term community for conservation leaders across disciplines and geographies. Its continued growth will be a powerful force for advancing conservation and strengthening SWCS for years to come.



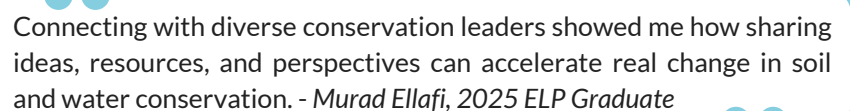
I learned that I am capable of more than I often give myself credit for. The program challenged me to step out of my comfort zone and realize that leadership isn't about knowing all the answers but about being willing to grow, listen, and lead with integrity." - *Damianna McKenzie, 2025 ELP Graduate*



I feel more self-assured in stepping up and guiding others in the conservation field." - *Autumn Hill, 2025 ELP Graduate*



We are all working together for a similar mission, when we bring our strengths forward together we can make bigger impacts. The most important thing emerging leaders can do is start connecting to the region they are in and inviting others into the fold so we can construct something bigger than what any one person can accomplish. - *Sky Adams, 2025 ELP Graduate*



Connecting with diverse conservation leaders showed me how sharing ideas, resources, and perspectives can accelerate real change in soil and water conservation. - *Murad Ellafi, 2025 ELP Graduate*