



GUIDE FOR EMERGING LEADERS AT THE 80TH SWCS INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The **80th Soil and Water Conservation Society International Annual Conference** is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to connect with a diverse network of conservation professionals, students, and organizations. This event is the perfect place to jump-start your career, continue your education, and make lasting memories with fellow program participants and alumni.

This year's conference theme, "Conservation Coast to Coast," keeps critical conservation priorities at the forefront, spanning regions and perspectives from coast to coast.

Dates: Sunday, August 3 - Wednesday, August 6, 2025

Location: Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa
Costa Mesa, California

Website: www.swcs.org/25AC

The Detailed Agenda and Preliminary Program are available on the website. Members of the 2025 Class of the SWCS Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) receive a complimentary full conference registration, valued at \$500 (*registration details are on pg. 7*). ELP participants and alumni will have specific sessions tailored to meet their needs.

We look forward to welcoming you to the 80th SWCS International Annual Conference, where emerging leaders like you will shape the future of conservation!



80th SWCS International ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Conservation Coast to Coast
August 3–6, 2025 | Costa Mesa, California



Event Details

Session Summary

- 27 symposia, 121 oral presentations, and 71 poster presentations across 10 thematic tracks
- 3 workshops and 2 conservation tours
- 4 partner events (including CEAP and CIG showcases)

Our Attendees

We anticipate around 300 attendees from across the United States and internationally, representing:

- Students
- University/Extension
- Federal/State/Local Government
- Industry/Private Sector
- Nonprofit/Foundation
- Conservation Districts
- Ranchers/Farmers
- ...and more!

Additional Costs

- Travel and lodging are the responsibility of the participant or their organization. View [hotel details](#) for information on the reserved block.
- Meals (besides those included in the Agenda At -A-Glance) are the responsibility of the participant or their organization.
- Conservation tours and workshops require an additional cost to register.

ELP Agenda At-A-Glance

Sunday, August 3

New Member and First Timer Orientation
 Emerging Leaders Networking Kickoff*
 Half-Day Workshops**
 Student and Early Career Networking
 Local Forum and Flavor Reception +

Monday, August 4

Morning Coffee and Light Breakfast +
 Conference Kickoff and Pritchard Keynote Lecture
 Concurrent Sessions
 SWCS Members Luncheon*+
 Concurrent Sessions
 - Emerging Leaders Lightning Talks
 - Emerging Leaders Alumni Feature
 Exhibitor and Poster Reception +

Tuesday, August 5

Morning Coffee and Light Breakfast +
 SWCS Leadership Breakfast* +
 Plenary Session
 Concurrent Sessions
 Awards Luncheon +
 Concurrent Sessions
 Open Networking Time*

Wednesday, August 6

Morning Coffee and Light Breakfast +
 Concurrent Sessions
 Emerging Leaders Roundtable Session*
 Conservation Tours**

+ Food provided in the session

* ELP exclusive or invite-only (you're invited!)

** Additional cost required to attend

Benefits of Attending

The Emerging Leaders Program embodies SWCS's commitment to nurturing the next generation of conservation leaders. Take advantage of attending the conference!

Networking

The conference provides a platform for you to network with industry peers, potential clients, partners, and thought leaders, which can lead to new business opportunities and collaborations.

Professional Development

This event offers valuable opportunities to enhance your skills, learn about industry trends, and stay updated on best practices.

Recognition and Visibility

Showcase your work, achievements, and leadership skills. Gain recognition within the conservation community through events like the ELP poster, awards ceremony, ELP symposia, members luncheon, and more.

Personal Growth

Take advantage of the conference's range of sessions and activities to enhance your leadership abilities, communication skills, and self-confidence.

Inspiration and Motivation

Get inspired by success stories, case studies, and experiences shared by fellow conservation professionals and program participants. Reignite your passion for making a positive impact on the environment and find support from others who share your vision.

Volunteer

Enhance your conference experience by volunteering for one of the sessions below. Volunteering will fulfill your ELP event-planning requirement while contributing to the success of the event.

- Sign up as a moderator
- Participate in the silent auction
- Volunteer at the SWCS booth
- Help present the ELP poster
- Present/organize the ELP symposia

Contact events@swcs.org by May 23 to learn more about volunteering opportunities.



Emerging Leader Recommended Sessions

Participants and alumni are welcome to attend any conference session. Below are specially curated events.

Sunday, August 3

Time	Event	Location	Details
11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Registration Desk Opens	Banquet 2 Level Alcove	Sign into the event and pick up your ELP or ELP alumni ribbon. <i>(Also open Monday-Wednesday).</i>
12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	New Member and First Timer Orientation	Banquet 1 Level Newport Beach II	Get acclimated to the conference environment and learn about the event structure.
12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Emerging Leaders Networking Kickoff Meeting	Banquet 1 Level Newport Beach II	Receive networking tips and an overview of the ELP-specific events at the conference.
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Student and Early Career Professional Networking	Lobby Level Fountain Terrace	Meet and network with attendees and other ELP participants and alumni. Create connections you can grow throughout the event.

Monday, August 4

Time	Event	Location	Details
All Exhibitor/ Poster Breaks	SWCS Booth	Banquet 2 Level Emerald Bay/ Prefunction	Volunteer at the SWCS Booth to inform conference attendees about our offerings and how to connect with our members. <i>(Also on Tuesday, more on pg. 5)</i>
All Exhibitor/ Poster Breaks	Emerging Leaders Poster	Banquet 2 Level Emerald Bay/ Prefunction	Volunteer to present the ELP poster. Share your experience in the program and network. <i>(Also on Tuesday, more on pg. 5)</i>
12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	SWCS Members Luncheon	Banquet 2 Level Pacific Ballroom	Learn about our work in the SWCS State of the Society presentation and be acknowledged as a group for your participation in the ELP program.
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Emerging Leaders Lightning Talks Symposium Session	Banquet 1 Level Laguna Beach III	Participate in or support other ELP participants as they share lightning talks about the program, lessons learned, and their events. <i>(More on pg. 6)</i>
3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Emerging Leaders Alumni Feature Symposium Session	Banquet 1 Level Laguna Beach II	Participate in or support other ELP alumni as they share their perspectives one year out from graduating. <i>(More on pg. 6)</i>

Tuesday, August 5

Time	Event	Location	Details
7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	SWCS Leadership Breakfast	Lobby Level Catalina Ballroom I	Network with SWCS chapter leaders and engage in a facilitated dialogue on leadership in conservation.
12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Awards Luncheon	Banquet 2 Level Pacific Ballroom	Sit at the reserved VIP tables for Emerging Leaders! Receive your certificate for graduating the program and take a group photo following the event. Want to bring a guest to celebrate with you? Email Renee!
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Open Networking Time	Meet in the Hilton Hotel Lobby	Meet up with other ELP participants and alumni and spend an informal evening in Costa Mesa. <i>(More on pg. 6)</i>

Wednesday, August 6

Time	Event	Location	Details
8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Emerging Leaders Roundtable Session	Banquet 2 Level Balboa Bay	Share your experiences, insights, and challenges in a supportive and collaborative listening session.

Additional Session Details

Exhibitor/Poster Breaks

(All Exhibitor/Poster Breaks Monday and Tuesday)

Volunteer at the SWCS Booth or help present the SWCS ELP Poster “Equipping Tomorrow’s Conservation Workforce: Our Year in the SWCS Emerging Leaders Program” during the breaks below.

Monday, August 4

- 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Morning Coffee and Light Breakfast)
- 10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. (Morning Break)
- 3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Afternoon Break)
- 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. (Exhibitor and Poster Reception)

Tuesday, August 5

- 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (Morning Coffee and Light Breakfast)
- 10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. (Morning Break)
- 3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Afternoon Break)



“Emerging Leaders Lighting Talks: Insights and Impact” Symposium Session (Monday, August 4, 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

In this 1.5 hour session, Emerging Leaders from the 2025 ELP Class will present 5-10 minute presentations about their experiences in the program, their events, and any additional insights. SWCS staff will moderate the session and there will be a question and answer session following the presentations. Presentations may be oral or include a PowerPoint to display relevant visuals. Increase your professional visibility and practice your public speaking by participating! Contact events@swcs.org to get involved in the session.

“Emerging Leaders Alumni Feature” Symposium Session (Monday, August 4, 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

In this 1.5 hour session, Emerging Leaders Alumni from the 2024 ELP Class will participate in a guided dialogue discussing their experiences in the program and as an alum. Contact events@swcs.org to get involved in the session.

Open Networking Time (Tuesday, August 5, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.)

This is an informal and optional networking session. Use this time to meet up with other ELP participants and alumni. Choose an activity of interest to your group like visiting nearby restaurants, playing mini golf, or going bowling. Visit the conference webpage to find additional things to do in Costa Mesa.

Emerging Leaders Roundtable Session (Wednesday, August 6, 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.)

Provide SWCS staff with your perspectives on the Emerging Leaders Program and the conservation career field in general. This is your time to let us know how we can best serve you and your careers moving forward. This session is for ELP participants only.



Information for Employers

Thank you for contributing to your employee's professional growth through this program! We strongly recommend continuing to invest in your workforce by supporting your employees to attend the 80th SWCS International Annual Conference. Your employees and your organization benefit!

Brand Representation

Sending employees to events allows your organization to showcase its expertise, thought leadership, and commitment to industry advancement. Have your employee represent your organization through an exhibit booth, social media posts, and in sessions. Sign up as an exhibitor or sponsor by June 16.

Recruitment and Retention

Offering opportunities for professional growth and networking can attract top talent to the organization and improve employee retention by boosting morale and motivation.

Is your organization hiring? Utilize this event as a recruitment opportunity. Have your employee bring flyers to be displayed at your booth and/or the Student and Early Career Networking Session.

Competitive Advantage

Stay informed about industry developments and trends. Events are the perfect place for market research. Learn what others in the field are doing to make better-informed, strategic decisions for your organization. Stay competitive!

Skill Transfer and Collaboration

Employees bring back knowledge and insights gained from events to share with their colleagues. This promotes collaboration within the organization and with potential external partners.

Expanded Perspectives

Attending an international conference exposes employees to different perspectives and global trends, broadening their worldview and enhancing their ability to work in diverse environments.

Registration Instructions

1. Go to <https://registration.socio.events/e/25ac>
2. Input the code emailed to you in the "Enter Access or Discount Code" section and select apply
3. Select the free "Full Conference SWCS Member (Early Rate)" and proceed with registration

Complete before the early bird deadline of **June 16***

**Please do not register unless you have full approval to attend.*

Will your organization cover your registration cost? Please consider having them do so as a donation back to SWCS so we can continue to offer the opportunity to those who need assistance.

Email events@swcs.org with any questions.