



# CONSERVOGRAM

The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society



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## 70th SWCS International Annual Conference

Greensboro Sheraton at Four Seasons  
Greensboro, North Carolina  
July 26-29, 2015  
[www.swcs.org/15ac](http://www.swcs.org/15ac)

### Paving the Path for a Sustainable Future Starts Here!



Registration for the 70th SWCS International Annual Conference is OPEN! Take advantage of the opportunity to learn about the latest research, policies, and practices in natural resource conservation as well as network and connect with the world's leaders in environmental affairs. The conference, held July 26-29, in Greensboro, North Carolina, includes workshops, concurrent training sessions, symposia, posters, plenary sessions, and technical tours designed to raise awareness of recent developments in the science and art of natural resource conservation and environmental management.



Register now at [www.swcs.org/15ac](http://www.swcs.org/15ac) to receive the \$100 early registration discount.

### Preliminary Program Now Available

Want a sneak peek at all the great topics and presentations being offered at this year's Annual Conference? Check out the Preliminary Program at [www.swcs.org/15ac](http://www.swcs.org/15ac).

### Student Moderator Program Now Accepting Applications

The Student Moderator Program is an opportunity for full-time student members of SWCS with a major in conservation and/or environmental affairs to experience the SWCS Annual Conference in a hands-on learning capacity. SWCS will cover conference registration and two hotel room nights for up to 10



student members. These students will spend one day assisting conference organizers with tasks such as AV technical support, note taking, and session facilitation. In exchange for volunteering their time, students will be granted admission to attend educational sessions on the alternate day.

Students are responsible for covering the cost of their own transportation and meals, as well any workshop or tour fees, should they choose to attend. Full details along with a link to the application may be found at [www.swcs.org/15ac\\_SMP](http://www.swcs.org/15ac_SMP).

### Exhibitor and Sponsorship Opportunities Available

Do you have an organization or a business or know of one that could benefit from increased exposure to over 400 conservation professionals? If so, please visit [www.swcs.org/15ac](http://www.swcs.org/15ac) for details on becoming an exhibitor or sponsor of the 70th SWCS International Annual Conference.

You may also contact Chrissy Rhodes at [christine.rhodes@swcs.org](mailto:christine.rhodes@swcs.org) or call 515-289-2331 ext. 114 to receive further details or to discuss a customized sponsorship package. Exhibitor and sponsor referrals are also greatly appreciated!

### Farewell, Linda!

Congratulations to SWCS receptionist Linda Larson! After 20 years of service to the Society, Linda is retiring on April 23. Linda has not only been a dedicated employee, but also a wonderful friend to all who pass through our doors. She has shared her sunny attitude daily with members over the phone and in the office with smiles, excitement, and enthusiasm. Linda assisted at several annual conferences over the years, and her work supported every branch of the organization. She will be greatly missed, but it is with joy we wish her a happy retirement and many enjoyable endeavors for the future.



### Why Not Precision Conservation?

In a recent guest post for the [Precision Conservation Blog](#), a publication by SWCS corporate sponsor Agren, SWCS Executive Director Jim Gulliford highlighted precision conservation as an important solution for agriculture and a topic of ongoing interest to the Society:

Farmers are using more and more sophisticated tools to refine and improve their crop management decisions, and to evaluate both yield and economic results. Precision

agriculture equipment and software applications support auto-steer technology, seed selection and plant population rates, variable rate application of fertilizer, integrated pest management, yield measurement, and the post-harvest economic evaluation of all of these decisions.

The same concepts and technologies apply to the challenges farmers face as they protect their soil from erosion, restore soil health, and protect water quality. Using precision agriculture tools for conservation purposes—precision conservation—can enable the farmer to make informed decisions to achieve conservation objectives as well.

[Click here to read more...](#)

### News from DC

*Courtesy of SWCS DC Representative John Peterson*

- Wednesday, March 18 marked National Ag Day. Events across the country helped to share the importance of agriculture to our food, fiber, and fuel.
- The 2014 Farm Bill consolidated over 100 programs and made cuts to mandatory spending across many titles, saving an estimated \$23 billion over 10 years, including \$6 billion in conservation funding. Many groups, including SWCS, are asking the Budget Committees to refrain from additional cuts to Farm Bill Programs.
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced the selection of the first projects of the new USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Learn more about these projects [here](#).
- SWCS Executive Director Jim Gulliford spent time in Washington, DC, the week of April 6 and spoke with NRCS Chief Jason Weller about activities for SWCS and NRCS partnership.
- On April 6, the EPA sent the White House its controversial regulation (proposed Clean Water Act rule) to redefine the extent of its authority over the nation's waters. There is concern that the regulation would expand the agency's jurisdiction. The EPA is working on an updated final rule based on comments and concerns.
- The Conservation Partners Program (CPP) will be awarding \$2.45 million in NRCS funds, leveraged by up to an additional \$3.7 million in National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funding to eight geographic areas. Deadline for pre-proposals is May 12th.

## Chapter Membership – 10 Ways You Can Help Your Chapter Thrive

By Cammie Callen

An organization's effectiveness depends on its ability to attract and keep active, committed members. In addition to participating in SWCS at the international level, professional and leadership experience can be gained at the local and regional levels as well. The best opportunity for involvement begins with your SWCS chapter!

You can help ensure the future of your chapter and grow membership by contributing to your chapter's program offerings. A chapter with a strong program, specific activities (both short-term and long-term), and vision for the future will attract and retain members.

Ways each member can help grow a strong, active membership:

1. Consider joining or contributing to your chapter's membership committee. If your chapter doesn't have a membership committee, speak to chapter leaders about program goals and the possibility of creating a committee.
2. Recruitment runs year-round. Invite colleagues to attend chapter meetings, workshops, and field tours.
3. Let your chapter leaders know why you're a part of the Society. What activities have benefited you the most? This feedback will help planners continue to provide quality events and information.
4. Reach out to current members and encourage them to stay active.
5. Take the time to read chapter emails and newsletters.
6. Consider activities that you'd like your chapter to offer. Communicate these ideas to chapter leaders and think about ways that you could help facilitate the activities.

7. Watch for news from other chapters, especially within your region. Would your chapter benefit from a similar event? Could you work together on a region-specific activity?
8. Make a point of welcoming new members to your chapter. By introducing yourself at a meeting, you not only help newcomers feel involved, you also add valuable contacts to your professional network.
9. Reach out to student chapters/members in your area. Are there activities that would benefit from chapter collaboration?
10. Recognize members for accomplishments. Many chapters have local awards. Also consider nominating members for Society-wide awards.

For more information on these and other ways to jump-start your chapter's activity, [click here](#) or email [memberservices@swcs.org](mailto:memberservices@swcs.org).



Members socializing at an SWCS conference.

### Conservation Conversation

#### April Reader Question:

**What can production nurseries, greenhouses, and other artificial growth environments do to contribute to soil and water conservation efforts?**

We ask that our readers answer the question via email (to [pubs@swcs.org](mailto:pubs@swcs.org)) or respond through social media, and in the next issue, we will post some of the responses as well as ask a new question. We hope that this will provide a discussion forum for our readers and us!

### Upcoming Events

SWCS Northwest Region Technical Meeting  
Pierre, South Dakota  
June 16-18, 2015

Oklahoma Chapter Annual Conference  
Medicine Park, Oklahoma  
June 18-19, 2015

Alabama Chapter Annual Conference  
Spanish Fort, Alabama  
June 23-25, 2015

70th SWCS International Annual Conference  
Greensboro, North Carolina  
July 26-29, 2015

## Michigan Chapter Seminar Recap

By Chapter President Hugh Brown

The Michigan Chapter presented the seminar “A Matter of Balance: Feeding our Crops and Protecting our Water in a Changing Climate” on March 6 as part of Michigan State University’s Agriculture and Natural Resources Week. There were 77 people in attendance and another 11 participated in a webcast including SWCS members from the Ontario Chapter. The event was sponsored by The Resource Institute of Michigan; Hickenbottom, Inc.; Delta Institute; Michigan Farm Bureau; and the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee.

David Baker, director emeritus of the National Center for Water Quality Research at Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio, kicked off the program with an overview of phosphorus (P) inputs into Lake Erie. His title was “Long-Term Trends in Agricultural Runoff to Lake Erie: Causes, Consequences and Remedies” and he discussed the interaction of P losses from dissolved and particulate sources. One dilemma in agriculture is that no-till tends to stratify nutrients with high concentrations at the surface while plowing may reduce dissolved P, but increases erosion and transport of particulate P.

Larry D. Geohring, senior extension associate in the Biological and Environmental Engineering department at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, gave two talks: “Water and Contaminant Movement through Soils: Facts and Fallacies” and “Using Controlled Drainage and Bioreactors to Reduce Water Quality Impacts from Tile Drain Discharges.” The first addressed water contaminant movement through soils with an emphasis on macropores that allow materials applied at the surface to move to the water table and into tile lines. Larry described construction and operation of a subsurface drain bioreactor that used wood chips and biochar to reduce nutrient losses.

Blaine Baker, co-owner of Bakerlads Farm in Lenawee County, and Thomas Van Wagner, technical coordinator for the Center for Excellence Program of the Lenawee Conservation District, gave practical examples of nutrient management on farmland with a presentation about a “Dairy Livestock Wetland Sub-Irrigation System.” The system takes liquid wastes from the milking parlor, stores them in a surface lagoon, treats it in a three-stage wetland, and then pumps into tile lines.

Nathan Moore, assistant professor in the Department of Geography at Michigan State University, presented “Past and Projected Future Impacts of Climate on Agriculture in the Great Lakes Region.” He discussed adaptations that farmers can use to maintain productivity and noted that farmers may need to add additional conservation practices to reduce the risk of increased soil erosion and avoid a decline in productivity from extreme weather events.

In summary, the Seminar provided a wealth of information about current trends in agriculture and management practices that can help with the environmental challenges that we are experiencing.



*Michigan Chapter Seminar with David Baker presenting.*



*Michigan Chapter Seminar panel discussion. Moderator Tim Harrigan (left) with David Baker, Larry Geohring, and Nathan Moore (right).*

## New Members

Welcome members who joined in March!

### International

Fangshe Yang

### Alabama

Thomas Brannum

### Canada—Atlantic Canada

David Blanchard

### Canada—Manitoba

Robert Seward

### Canada—Ontario

Dan Petker

### Connecticut—University of Connecticut

#### Student Chapter

Benjamin Lorenzet

### Georgia

Jennifer Young

### Iowa

Cathy Ayers

### Louisiana

James Henson

Ronnie Maurer

### Louisiana—University of Louisiana Lafayette

#### Student Chapter

Andrew Bull

### Michigan—Grand Valley State University

#### Student Chapter

Chad Safranski

### North Dakota

Mark Anderson

### New York—Empire State

Jacqueline Gerson

### Ohio—All Ohio

Fayette SWCD

Hardin SWCD

Monroe SWCD

### Oregon

Brian Dougherty

### Virginia

Melvin Womack

## Corporate Members

Please contact [corporate.info@swcs.org](mailto:corporate.info@swcs.org) for more details.

### Gold .....



### Silver .....



### Bronze .....



## Using the Power of Multimedia for Conservation Education

By Jody Thompson

Open access to information about soil and water conservation has never been more readily available than it is today. Technology has not only changed conservation practices, but how we are able to communicate to one another about those practices. Information that was once limited to those in the field or in a laboratory is now making its way to the surface of one of the most culturally relevant networking systems—YouTube. Online videos, and social media in general, have expanded the bounds of conservation conversations, making information accessible and engaging to anyone with a computer.

Michael Collins, area conservationist and member of the SWCS board of directors, has been creating online conservation videos since 2001, using platforms such as Vimeo, Livestream, Ustream, and YouTube. He believes the world can become a better place through media outreach, which can be achieved through video. Anyone with a camera can be a part of this movement. “Everything records video these days,” he says, “no excuses.” Over the years, Collins has created videos ranging from interviews in the field to documenting conservation seminars and panels. One of his favorite videos was an interview with Tom Doughty, Wyoming’s first Soil Conservation Service employee. It took six months to create, but “was the most fun,” he says. Some of his other favorite videos are with speakers from different countries, as they provide views and opportunities “that we don’t normally get.” These speakers include Rolf Derpsch of South America, Jill Clapperton of Canada (now in Montana), and Christine Jones of Australia.

Creating videos can be a great way to network with your peers. Videos don’t need to be flashy to be engaging or interesting. Having a basic knowledge of video editing techniques can go a long way.

Online videos are not only adding to conversations, but they are archiving the larger journey that soil and water conservationists are on. They can provide educational material for both present and future researchers, farmers, students, and conservationists. [Click here](#) to view some of Michael Collins’ videos.

### Tips for creating videos...

When filming, take a few seconds to test the sound quality before creating the whole video, especially if you are outside. A windy day can ruin hours of work! Also, when uploading videos to a website like YouTube, take the time to give them specific titles and descriptions. “Tag” the videos with keywords like “conservation” and “agriculture”—these words will help peers find your videos.



*Jerry Forster interviews Tom Doughty in Sheridan, Wyoming, in 2002 to discuss his early days with Soil Conservation Service.*



*Tom Doughty recalls the time he met President John F. Kennedy.*



*Christine Jones visits northeast Colorado.*

