

CONSERVOGRAM

The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

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2018 International Annual Conference Recap

Albuquerque Convention Center
Albuquerque, New Mexico
July 29 to August 1, 2018
www.swcs.org/18AC

Thank You!

Another successful year is in the books! SWCS would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to the sponsors, exhibitors, presenters, session organizers, tour coordinators, volunteers, and participants who made the 73rd SWCS International Annual Conference a success. A tremendous amount of time and energy is spent planning behind the scenes to make this conference possible, and we would like to recognize the efforts of the SWCS New Mexico Chapter along with our Program Planning Committee for their countless volunteer hours to help plan, organize, and coordinate this year's event. We truly could not have brought our participants such a quality program without the help of all involved.

We would also like to recognize this year's group of student moderators. Each year, SWCS provides registration and hotel assistance to a group of SWCS student chapter members who are given the opportunity to experience the conference from an insider perspective. These students provide volunteer support at the conference, but also have the opportunity to attend sessions and network. This year, we would like to thank Bethani Chambers (West Virginia University), Mohammed Omer (New Mexico State University), Emily Creggan (New Mexico State University), Gaurav Jha (New Mexico State University), Judy Smith (Heidelberg University), Spencer Pech (Iowa State University), and Paramveer Singh (New Mexico State University).



The 2018 conference brought together more than 440 conservationists, representing 4 countries and 49 states. The conference program included 115 oral presentations and symposia and 71 poster presentations. This year's specialty topics included Forest Restoration: Research, Policy, and Applied Science of Ecological Restoration across Landscapes and Watersheds; Rangeland Restoration, Health, and Grazing Management: Adapting Conservation Planning for a Changing Climate; and Using Technology to Advance Conservation. The conference program and photos can be found at www.swcs.org/18AC. Presentations will be available within the next couple of weeks.

Mark your calendars for the 74th SWCS International Annual Conference on July 28-31, 2019, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania!



SAVE *the* DATE

THE SWCS ANNUAL CONFERENCE IS HEADED TO
PITTSBURGH, PA

2019

JULY 28-31



Highlights from the 73rd SWCS International Annual Conference

We had a great time networking, sharing research, and learning together in Albuquerque. Take a look!



Sarah P Church, PhD @SPCplanning · Jul 30

Great talk about getting to scale for successful watershed management by Rebecca Power — don't forget about human and social capital! #SWCS18 @northcentralh2o



Iowa Learning Farms @ialearningfarms · Jul 30

Restless Tillage Syndrome and Jackie Comito crushed it with the SWCS conference attendees. #pritchardlecture #swcs18 @WaterRocksISU @SWCSNews @SUAgWaterMgmt @marklicht @jbenning



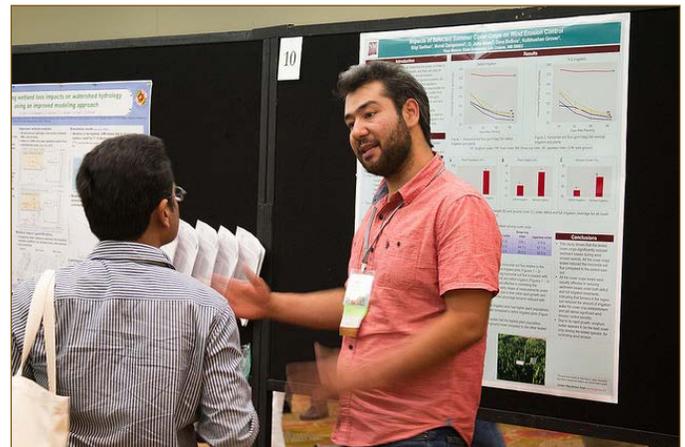
Joby Prince @JobyPrince · Jul 30

Use your passion to be part of the solution, not the problem. Great point from today's Pritchard Keynote speaker. Excited to be part of the solution community! #swcs18



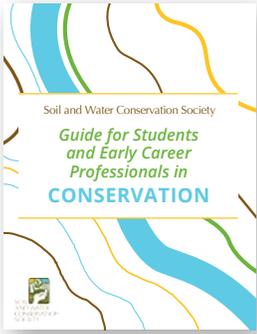
Bonnie McGill @BonnSci · Jul 29

Excited to be at my first Soil and Water Conservation Society conference in #Albuquerque! #SWCS18 #covercrops



New Resources for Students and Young Professionals

The 2018 SWCS Annual Conference launched a new mentor program for students attending the conference. The program matched a few students with professionals working in their field of interest within conservation. Eight mentors volunteered to work with around 20 students. In addition to the new mentor program, we included a few more unique pieces at the conference, such as a career panel and a new *Guide for Students and Early Career Professionals in Conservation* booklet. The career panel featured six professionals at different stages within their careers working in diverse sectors of conservation. The session had an attendance of 35.



We followed all of these additions to the conference with a survey to students to receive their overall feedback on these changes. We hope to continue the positive student momentum from this year's conference and expand the program with feedback from the surveys.



Top: SWCS CEO Clare Lindahl addresses students and first-time attendees of the conference.

Bottom: A panel of six conservation career professionals speak about their experiences.

2018 Photo Contest Winners Announced

Attendees at the 73rd SWCS International Annual Conference had the opportunity to vote in the 3rd SWCS Annual Photo Contest. A panel of judges narrowed the submissions down to the top 12 photos, which were then put on display and voted on by attendees of the conference in Albuquerque. The 2018 People's Choice winner was Tim Durham.



Blenheim, New Zealand. "Middle Earth": A fitting portrait of stewardship at the convergence of "Middle Earth" and civilization.

In addition to the People's Choice, which was chosen by conference attendees, a panel of judges voted the following submission from Elizabeth Burdolski as the photo that most represented the conference theme "Culture, Climate, and Conservation." Congratulations to both of our winners!



Oliver County, North Dakota This photo was taken on a soil health field tour in North Dakota. This hearty barley was flourishing in a continuous, multiyear no-till system, with high plant diversity and cover crops.

Sponsor Spotlight: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Courtesy of Ashley F. Miller, NRCS Public Affairs

Acequias and NRCS: Culture and Water Conservation in New Mexico

The acequias of New Mexico exist at the intersection of culture, history, and conservation. These communal irrigation systems are hundreds of years old, providing much needed water in an arid climate and binding the communities around them together. They hold great historical and cultural significance in New Mexico, promote soil health and water conservation, and serve as important examples of the power of group efforts in water conservation.

During the 2018 SWCS Annual Conference, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) led a tour of acequias in New Mexico. Hosted by NRCS's New Mexico State Resource Conservationist, Steve Kadas, and the Governor of Santa Ana Pueblo, Glenn Tenorio, the tour visited agricultural systems north of Albuquerque in the Rio Grande valley. Attendees were shown how acequias are used for irrigation. The group visited farms and irrigation structures along the Rio Grande to see the maintenance, improvement, and conservation of acequias and how these historic and cultural irrigation systems are supporting conventional and organic production systems.

Acequias are communal systems that carry water from rivers to local communities and farms through earthen ditches, concrete ditches, pipes, and aqueducts. They also serve as an important community touchstone, as everyone who uses the water from an acequia must work together to maintain the ditches and decide how water is distributed among neighbors. The term "acequias" refers both to the irrigation system and the community associations that care for them, highlighting how integral they are not just to individual farmers or landowners, but to entire communities.

Many of these systems date back to the 17th and 18th centuries, and originate with the Pueblo Indians and Spanish explorers. So fundamental were they to success in the area that they were the first systems built when creating a new community. The rest of the town would be built around the acequias because access to water was so important.

NRCS supports farmers and communities who rely on acequias. We provide technical and financial assistance to individuals, or groups of individuals working together, to help maintain their irrigation systems. For acequias, this often means helping with water control structures, pipelines, or concrete ditches.

To learn more about acequias and the work of NRCS, visit our website at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/national/home/>.



This is the Angostura Diversion Structure that directs water from the Middle Rio Grande River into the Albuquerque Main Canal, the main feeder for the acequias on the Santa Ana and Sandia Pueblos. Photo courtesy of Shelby Callaway.



Diverted water from the river feeds a web of irrigation ditches like this one on the Santa Ana Pueblo. Many portions of these acequias date back to the 17th century. Photo courtesy of Shelby Callaway.



Water entering the Albuquerque Main Canal from the Middle Rio Grande through the Angostura Diversion Structure. The water from this canal will be further diverted into a series of smaller canals and ditches that are used to irrigate a vast network of fields and pastures. Photo courtesy of Shelby Callaway.

2018-2019 Board of Directors

Following the 73rd Annual Conference, SWCS transitioned to the 2018-2019 Board of Directors. Each of the Society's five regions is represented by one elected director. Four at-large directors also currently serve on the Board. For additional Board member photos and bios, visit the [SWCS website](#).

2018-2019 Board of Directors

- Rex Martin, Chair and At-Large Director
- Wendi Goldsmith, Vice-Chair and Northeast Region Director
- Dale Threatt-Taylor, Secretary and Southeast Region Director
- Don Wysocki, Treasurer and Northwest Region Director
- Steve Kadas, Southwest Region Director
- Bruce Knight, At-Large Director
- William Kuckuck, At-Large Director
- Rebecca Power, North Central Region Director
- Jason Weller, At-Large Director

Upcoming Events

[North Dakota Chapter Good Bugs Workshop](#)
Larimore and Carrington, North Dakota
August 15-16, 2018

[Iowa Chapter Annual Meeting](#)
Maxwell, Iowa
September 7, 2018

[Wyoming Chapter Annual Technical Workshop](#)
Sheridan, Wyoming
September 24-25, 2018

[California/Nevada Chapter Annual Meeting:
Soil Health in Northern California](#)
Suisun City, California
October 18-19, 2018

[North Central Region One Water Action Forum](#)
Indianapolis, Indiana
December 11-13, 2018

News from DC

Courtesy of SWCS DC Representative John Peterson

- USDA will [move](#) Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), along with its 250+ employees, out of Washington, DC. The ERS will become part of the USDA's Office of the Chief Economist. A new location has yet to be chosen, but the move is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.
- A federal appeals court [orders](#) US Environmental Agency (EPA) to ban chlorpyrifos (trade name: Lorsban) stating, there is "no justification for the EPA's decision in its 2017 order to maintain a tolerance for chlorpyrifos in the face of scientific evidence that its residue on food causes neurodevelopmental damage to children."
- USDA has [approved](#) the first revenue protection insurance policy for dairy producers, allowing them to buy coverage for the first quarter of 2019.
- China has [launched](#) a pilot program to replace farmers with robots, putting millions of people at risk of losing their jobs.
- USDA trade data for June [show](#) that US soybean sales are already shifting sharply away from China to the European Union.
- USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Bill Northey [announced](#) a three-year action plan by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to help agricultural producers improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- The US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation are launching a \$4.3 million [fund](#) to support conservation efforts in the Delaware River watershed.
- USDA's NRCS [celebrated](#) the protection of 43,000 acres of agricultural lands and wetlands through 302 easements during a 25th anniversary easement event.
- Farm Bureau, Farmers Union, the [Soil and Water Conservation Society](#), and 150 other organizations call for swift passage of the Farm Bill with letters to the Senate and House Agriculture committees.
- Farms go through a lengthy certification process to be certified [organic](#), but restaurants can term their food organic as long as they have made a "reasonable" effort to use organic ingredients.
- Recent [heatwaves](#) are leading the world toward its first wheat deficit in six years, which could mean a higher food import bill for countries that don't grow enough of their own wheat, and the potential for food riots similar to those seen in 2008 and 2011.

New Members

Welcome members who joined in July!

California/Nevada

Ryan Cheers
Wendell Gilgert
Celine Morales
Kossi Nouwakpo

Connecticut/Massachusetts/Rhode Island—Southern New England Chapter

Seth Taylor

Florida

Richard Conz
Lincoln Zotarelli

Massachusetts—University of Massachusetts-Amherst Student Chapter

Moussa Siri

Mississippi—Alcorn State University Student Chapter

Worlanyo Segbefia

North Dakota

Douglas Landblom

New Mexico

Allie Heller
Ayush Joshi Gyawali
Cody Stropki

New York—Cornell University Student Chapter

Ritwick Ghosh

Ohio—All Ohio

Samuel Fullen

Oklahoma

Richard Lowrance
Caitlin Rottler

Pennsylvania—Keystone

John Clune

Wisconsin

Anne Nardi

SWCS

Martin Locke

Corporate Members

Please contact corporate.info@swcs.org for more details.

Gold



Silver



Bronze

