The Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) is seeking posters presentations for the 75th SWCS International Annual Conference, taking place in Des Moines, Iowa, July 26-29, 2020. The four-day event will pay tribute to the rich history of the soil and water conservation movement while providing insight into the future of the profession.

This year’s conference theme is “Expanding Horizons: Where Conservation Meets Innovation.” Visit www.swcs.org/20AC for more information.

SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL: www.swcs.org/20AC

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: March 6, 2020

If you have questions, contact events@swcs.org or call 515.289.2331 x 112

Poster presentations report the results of research or lessons learned from professional experience. They entail affixing printed materials (typed information, photos, graphs, etc.) to a 4’ x 8’ poster board. Poster presenters are expected to be at their posters during all conference refreshment breaks and during the exhibitor and poster reception to answer questions and explain experiences and results.

NEW THIS YEAR! The SWCS Iowa Chapter will be sponsoring a student poster contest by offering four awards (most creative, peoples’ choice—student, peoples’ choice—non-student, and most effective) in the amount of $100 each.

Abstracts should include the following:
1) A statement of current relevance or need
2) General methods and data analysis information
3) Results or predicted results if the work has not yet been completed
4) Explanation of how the results or outcomes contribute to science and society

Inclusion of tentative or final conclusions will greatly strengthen presentation proposals.

All presenters who indicate intent to participate in the conference imply agreement to register for the conference at the appropriate fee, attend the conference, and make the presentation in person.

SWCS does not reimburse presenters for expenses incurred for travel to the conference.
Submissions are being accepted for four special and eight general topic areas. Abstracts submitted within the general conference track should cater toward the conference theme.

**Applied Data in Agriculture**

Modern agriculture has access to ever-increasing amounts of data. While the information contained in these data presents major opportunities for conservation, analyzing, sharing, and employing it effectively to inform land management decisions can present challenges. This topic area seeks examples where information is utilized to better understand and manage our land and water resources. Topics include but are not limited to:

- Adoption of precision agriculture to increase efficiencies in agricultural production and meet environmental goals
- Use of “big data” to analyze and monitor crops, soils, climate, water quality, and other environmental factors
- Use of new technologies including, but not limited to, drones, robotics, software, artificial intelligence, and machine learning
- Partnerships to increase access and utilization of data

**Back to the Future**

In honor of the Soil and Water Conservation Society’s 75th Anniversary, we are seeking presentations that showcase conservation strategies and innovations for the future. This topic area recognizes lessons from the past while envisioning future scenarios for conservation and engaging future stewards of the land. Topics submitted in this area could include:

- Strategies to include the next generation in agriculture and conservation
- Innovative technologies, policies, and projects that involve the next generation and encourage their engagement on the future of food production and natural resource conservation
- Past innovations that are integral to conservation or have the potential to inspire greater conservation adoption
- Multigenerational panels of producers, leaders, and conservation professionals sharing lessons learned

**Edge-of-Field Practices and Monitoring**

Edge-of-field practices, including wetlands, bioreactors, saturated buffers, drainage water management, and others, have been identified as integral components of nutrient reduction strategies in the Mississippi River Basin. Edge-of-field technologies are being actively developed, and the science around their adoption and benefits is evolving. Topics in this area could include:

- Use of edge-of-field monitoring to engage stakeholders, measure and target practices, and improve water quality
- Research on the water quality and other environmental impacts of edge-of-field practices
- Implementation of edge-of-field practices and monitoring at various scales
- Unique partnerships to scale up the implementation and monitoring of edge-of-field practices

**The Producer and the Plot**

On-farm trials and demonstrations can help answer on-farm questions, engage landowners and producers in the scientific method, and deliver farm-scale information to stakeholders. This topic area seeks examples of science meeting practice, where researchers/practioners and producers/landowners work collectively to expand conservation or answer a management query. We are seeking paired talks in which conservation professionals and producers/landowners share their lessons learned. Topics include but are not limited to:

- On-farm trials or demonstrations that facilitated changes in conservation adoption
- Research or programs that engaged farm decision makers
- Networks and unique partnerships to enhance on-farm trials
- Evaluation and information sharing from on-farm trials
The following eight ongoing areas of emphasis comprise the core work of SWCS to foster the science and art of natural resource conservation. Please choose one of these focus areas when submitting an abstract. Special consideration will be given to new insights, techniques, or approaches in addressing each of these general topic areas.

**Adaptive Management of Conservation Efforts**

Adaptive management is an interactive, structured process of management with the goal of enhancing learning and reducing uncertainty. Adaptive management for soil and water conservation, climate resiliency, and biodiversity management is appropriate when uncertainty is high but management is possible. Abstracts in this track may include but are not limited to:

- Aspects of water and soil management
- Maintaining and enhancing ecosystem services
- Plant and animal responses to management
- Monitoring to inform decision-making
- Scientific and technical advances in targeting conservation and in precision conservation
- Effective use of human capital to increase conservation success
- Climate resilience strategies
- Community and regional planning

**Conservation Economics and Policy**

This subject area focuses on economic, policy, and related drivers of conservation adoption, demand, and maintenance. It addresses how programs, markets, private investment, and policy translate into resource conservation and environmental benefits, or hinder greater conservation adoption. Abstracts in this track may include but are not limited to:

- Voluntary or regulatory environmental policy
- Decision support tools for program design and implementation
- Monitoring and assessment of conservation needs
- The role of innovative funding methods, environmental markets, and trading development in conservation demand and funding
- Evaluation of market- and regulatory-based approaches to natural resource management

**Conservation Models, Tools, and Technologies**

In the implementation, planning, management, and development of conservation practices, we rely on models and tools that provide decision support through analysis, visualization, and evaluation. Development of new tools and technologies, results of evaluation, and application experiences all provide valuable information. Abstracts in this track may include but are not limited to:

- Development and testing of conservation practices
- Quantification of the environmental and conservation effects of best management practices (BMPs) and systems
- Advances in science and technology for predicting, monitoring, and/or evaluating effects of alternative resource management practices and systems (soil, water, nutrient, grazing, manure, pest, plant, and landscape management)
- Decision support tools and platforms for conservation planning and implementation
- Geographic information systems and innovative data visualization

**Conservation in Organic, Specialty, Small-Scale, or Urban Agriculture**

This subject area focuses on organic, specialty, urban, and small-scale agricultural and forest systems. It also includes agricultural management that mimics natural systems and enhances and protects biodiversity. Abstracts submitted in this area could include:

- Conservation and management in small- and medium-scale enterprises
- Local foods, community supported agriculture, and market and supply chain development and analysis
- Opportunities for unique enterprises to implement conservation supporting a triple bottom-line of sustainability (people, planet, and profit)
- Natural systems agriculture: polycultures, continuous living cover, perennials, and pollinator-friendly management
GENERAL TOPIC DESCRIPTIONS

Outreach, Education, and Community Engagement

Outreach, education, and engagement help integrate quantitative data with qualitative knowledge and social concerns, thereby strengthening the decision-making process and achieving equitable solutions. Abstracts may address:

- Applied research and model programs demonstrating effective methods for engaging decision-makers
- Programs fostering cooperative stakeholder-based decision-making
- Innovative outreach strategies that incorporate artists, teachers, and youth
- Educational needs assessment
- New technologies and methods to include and collaborate with underrepresented, new, and diverse audiences
- Evaluation of the impacts of outreach activities, including technical assistance

Social Sciences Informing Conservation

Understanding what motivates landowners, land managers, and other stakeholders to pursue (or not pursue) conservation practices is essential. The human dimensions of soil and water conservation are a critical component to sustainable conservation adoption. Abstracts in this track may include:

- A focus on sociology, political science, economics, anthropology, and communications, and how they contribute to conservation adoption and persistence
- The use of social sciences to inform critical conservation challenges facing the nation and world
- Evaluation of stakeholder decision-making, social networks, and information sources

Soil Health Resources, Indicators, Assessment, and Management

The use of soil resources is required to provide the food, fiber, energy, and other ecosystem services needed for a growing world population. Soil and environmental degradation have made the development of technologies and practices for sustainable and regenerative soil management a high priority. We are seeking presentations that consider:

- Soil health measurement, assessment, and management
- Soil conservation and management
- Soil survey, assessment, and analysis
- Water and wind erosion prediction and management
- Carbon sequestration and implications of climate change for soil health, conservation, and management
- The soil’s role in global cycles (water, energy, carbon)
- Soil health implications for human health and the microbiome

Water Resource Assessment and Management

This area addresses the social, economic, environmental, and technical dimensions of water resource management. Abstracts in this area should disseminate results, information, lessons learned, and/or shared experiences of research, testing, monitoring, and/or evaluation/demonstration projects on water resource issues. Abstracts may include:

- International and transboundary water resource management
- Watershed-scale research and planning methods and tools
- Development and implementation of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs)
- Water quality, quantity, supply, source water protection, and conservation
- Stormwater management and design or green infrastructure
- Irrigation and drainage
- Watershed restoration and targeted watershed management interventions
- Flooding and other implications of climate change for water resource conservation and management
- Institutional collaborations in water resource management