



CONSERVOGRAM

The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

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75th SWCS International Annual Conference

Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center
Des Moines, Iowa
July 26-29, 2020
www.swcs.org/20AC

Seeking Presentations

SWCS is seeking oral presentations, posters, symposia, and workshops for the 75th International Annual Conference, "Expanding Horizons: Where Conservation Meets Innovation." This year's conference features five submission tracks:

- Applied Data in Agriculture
- Back to the Future
- Edge-of-Field Practices and Monitoring
- The Producer and the Plot
- 2020 General Conference Theme Submissions – Expanding Horizons: Where Conservation Meets Innovation
 - o Adaptive Management of Conservation Efforts
 - o Conservation Economics and Policy
 - o Conservation Models, Tools, and Technologies
 - o Conservation in Organic, Specialty, Small-Scale, or Urban Agriculture
 - o Outreach, Education, and Community Engagement
 - o Social Sciences Informing Conservation
 - o Soil Health Resources, Indicators, Assessment, and Management
 - o Water Resource Assessment and Management

The submission deadline is January 17, 2020, and poster deadline is March 6, 2020. **Please note that due to increased participation there will be no extension this year.** Poster submissions received after January 17, 2020, will not appear in the Preliminary Program.

Visit swcs.org/20AC for more information and to submit your proposal.



SWCS Awarded Inaugural USDA NRCS Conservation Innovation On-Farm Trial Grant

On November 26, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced recipients of its On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials, a newly established component of the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill. As part of this announcement we were thrilled to learn that a joint proposal from the Soil and Water Conservation Society and Truterra (formerly Land O'Lakes SUSTAIN) was one of the inaugural awardees!

Our partnership was awarded over \$1.5 million in funding to work with agricultural retailers in support of innovative on-farm stewardship practices. You can read USDA's press release [here](#).

Through the project, the Society and Truterra aim to accelerate the adoption of precision nutrient management and soil health practices in Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska. Our organizations will work to support agricultural retailers to engage producers in on-farm trials that demonstrate the agronomic, environmental, and economic incentives for conservation practice adoption. Through firsthand experience, the project's objective is to increase producer knowledge of these practices, integrate conservation management programs into retailer services, and broaden and accelerate conservation practice adoption.

Gift a Membership

Have you heard about our great deal on gift memberships? Introduce a friend to the benefits of an SWCS membership with a discounted rate of \$58 for a first-time member. Your gift will not only support local, national, and international soil and water conservation, but will allow the recipient to receive professional education, networking opportunities, and all the other great member benefits you enjoy. Plus, they'll receive an introductory welcome packet, too! Download the [gift membership form](#) and return it by mail with a check to:

Soil and Water Conservation Society
945 SW Ankeny Rd.
Ankeny, IA 50023

Our Annual Giving Campaign is Underway

The SWCS "Grow Conservation" giving campaign kicked-off in November, and donations are rolling in! We appreciate all of the generous gifts we have received so far. When you give to the Society, you are supporting an organization that shares your passion for land stewardship and sustainability, is committed to science, and seeks to continue growing and serving its diverse community of conservation professionals.

Donations can be made online at swcs.org/give, by phone at 1-800-THE-SOIL (1-800-843-7645), or checks can be sent to 945 SW Ankeny Rd., Ankeny, IA, 50023. Thank you!



When you donate, your name is added to our prairie at headquarters. Help our giving garden grow with a donation today!

Combined Federal Campaign

For nearly 75 years, SWCS has been working to educate land managers and promote natural resources conservation practices. These efforts are made possible through contributions from supporters like you. Payroll deductions are an easy way to have a valuable impact on the Society's work. Please show some love for the land during this campaign by supporting the Soil and Water Conservation Society. **The Charity Code for the Society is 11797.** Thank you for supporting the future of soil and water conservation!



Grow community
cover crops pollinator
habitats outreach
professional network
skills soil resiliency
career awareness
involvement
knowledge living soil
prairie strips trees
food water quality

HELP US GROW THE
CONSERVATION
MOVEMENT.

swcs.org/give

Looking Back at 2019

It's been an exciting and busy year for SWCS. Below are some of our favorite moments and achievements from over the past year!

1. **New Memberships.** In 2019, 281 new members joined the Society (remember to renew your membership [here](#)). Additionally, SWCS created new [office-wide memberships](#) for conservation districts, extension groups, and nonprofit and private sector partners.

2. **New Opportunities.** SWCS received the inaugural USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) [On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials grant](#) with Truterra. The \$1.5 million project will work with agricultural retailers in support of innovative on-farm stewardship practices.

3. **Journal of Soil and Water Conservation.** SWCS published [volume 74](#) of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*—that's over 70 articles, including a special issue on "Nutrient Management Databases and Networks for Conservation ([NUOnet](#))."

4. **Local Chapters.** The chapters that make up SWCS across the United States and Canada have had a great year hosting workshops, meetings, and training events for local members. [Connect](#) to your local chapter today!

5. **Winter Webinar.** In January SWCS hosted a [webinar](#) that included tips for chapter leadership on reimagining local chapters, resources, and a Q&A discussion.

6. **Advocacy.** In April SWCS traveled to Washington, DC, to discuss farm bill implementation with federal policy makers and to advocate for conservation professionals. We met with individuals from a wide range of organizations and held a "March Madness" networking event with the SWCS National Capital Chapter.



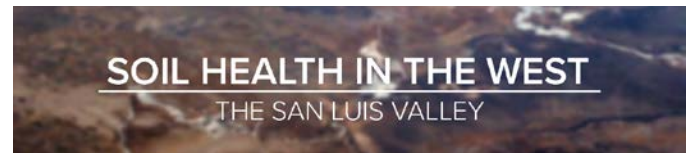
SWCS CEO Clare Lindahl (left) and Special Projects Director Catherine DeLong (right) with NRCS Chief (and SWCS member!) Matt Lohr (center).

7. **Wetlands Nutrient Reduction.** "Optimized Water Quality Wetlands Integrated with In-Field Nutrient Management Practices" was a [special project](#) that convened academic, agency, and private sector partners to identify barriers around edge-of-field wetlands and to create and demonstrate an approach to implement solutions, reduce in-field nutrient losses, and provide edge-of-field treatment. Due to the project's success it was extended with increased funding, and broadened to include additional edge-of-field practices such as saturated buffers and bioreactors.

8. **PED Talks.** SWCS partnered with the Conservation Technology Information Center, Soil Health Partnership,

Soil Health Institute, and NRCS to bring PED talks to the 74th SWCS Annual Conference. [PED talks](#) is a new series of engaging and educational video presentations on the benefits of soil health.

9. **Two Short Films.** In July SWCS premiered two original short films: "[Soil Health in the West: The San Luis Valley](#)" and "[Conservation Professionals: Inspiring a Movement](#)" in memory of Society member [Mike Collins](#).



10. **Annual Conference.** The [74th SWCS International Annual Conference](#) was held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. There were over 415 attendees representing 7 countries and 46 states. Thank you to the SWCS Keystone Chapter for all the work they put in to help make the event a success!

11. **New Faces.** SWCS welcomed new employee [Joe Otto](#) as historian to headquarters. We also had the pleasure of hiring Whitney Bugni and Autumn Mohler as winter and summer interns. [Jane Hardisty](#) joined the Board of Directors in August as the newest At-Large Director.



SWCS Historian Joe Otto



At-Large Director Jane Hardisty

12. **Special Events.** In November SWCS in partnership with the Sand County Foundation, North Central Region Water Network, American Farmland Trust, and the Iowa Soybean Association coordinated the [Leadership for Midwestern Watersheds](#) (LMW) in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with 85 attendees representing 7 states. LMW is a network for knowledge exchange among agricultural watershed management professionals.

13. **New Partnership.** SWCS became the 29th member of the [Source Water Collaborative](#), a national effort to further the goals of protecting sources of drinking water.

14. **Professional Services.** As the professional association for conservationists, SWCS began offering [conservation professional services](#) in 2019 such as meeting facilitation and event planning to our members and partners.

We look forward to celebrating our 75th anniversary in 2020—we can't wait to see what the next year will bring!

Science and Policy News

Below you will find a list of some of the latest conservation science and policy news. Links to full articles on the different subjects are included.

- USDA announces awards to put conservation [innovation](#) to work on US farms
- Democrats, White House forge new North American [trade deal](#)
- [United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement](#) (USMCA) debated on Twitter, praised by ag groups
- Chairman Peterson statement on delayed [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP) farm bill conservation program payments
- Deadline nears to comment on [CSP changes](#)
- ‘They’re trying to wipe us off the map.’ Small American [farmers](#) are nearing extinction
- USDA has opened signup for [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) on December 9
- Unprecedented [sagebrush die-off](#), recovery reveals threat of weather swings
- UN [Climate Conference](#) opens in Madrid
- 40,000 farmers on tractors block [Berlin](#) in protest at new agricultural policy
- [French farmers](#) clog highways to protest at “agri-bashing”
- The [water wars](#) that defined the American West are heading East
- Italian pasta increasingly is made of [wheat](#) from US and Canada
- How the world’s demand for [palm oil](#) is driving deforestation in Indonesia
- Trade war squeezes the juice out of Maine’s wild [blueberry](#) business
- America’s [cattle ranchers](#) are fighting back against fake meat
- Opinion: [Farm income](#) is highest in six years due to Trump’s trade-war bailout
- Scientists use agricultural waste to develop new [road de-icer](#)
- [Presidential candidates](#) wouldn’t touch this radical idea to transform agriculture—until now
- Changes to crop insurance for [sugarbeets](#) in 2020

The opinions expressed in these articles are meant to keep SWCS members informed of current conservation conversations and do not necessarily represent the views of SWCS.

Conservation NewsBriefs: Popular Articles from November



Are you up-to-date with news about soil and water conservation research and policy? *Conservation NewsBriefs* is a highly informative e-news brief that delivers the most relevant content to your inbox each and every Thursday. Below are links to some of the most read articles from the past month:

- [USDA announces awards to put conservation innovation to work on US farms](#) (NRCS)
- [Gone with the wind: How to lose a lifetime of soil health](#) (Ag Web)
- [The West’s water shortage is fueled by human error](#) (Outside)
- [Can farmers sow their way out of climate change?](#) (CBS News)

[Click here](#) to sign up and start receiving your weekly *Conservation NewsBriefs* today!



SWCS is on Instagram!
Follow @SWCSnews for inspirational quotes and photos, and feel free to tag us in your conservation shots!



@SWCSnews

New Members

Welcome members who joined in November!

International

Junpeng Zhang

Connecticut/Massachusetts/Rhode Island—Southern

New England Chapter

Renee Bouldin

Delaware/Maryland—Pokomoke

Heather Beaven

Ohio—All Ohio

Sakthi Kumaran Subburayalu

South Dakota

Sandeep Kumar

Tyler Tran

Cory Zirbel

Texas—Texas A&M University Student Chapter

Samantha Martin

Corporate Partners

Please contact memberservices@swcs.org or visit swcs.org/corporatepartner for more details.

Gold



Silver

