



CONSERVOGRAM

The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

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The Soil and Water Conservation Society and COVID-19

As COVID-19 has impacted all of our lives, at work and at home, we want to let you know your professional society is thinking of you and your families. As staff are working remotely, [please use email](#) to connect with SWCS at this time.

76th SWCS International Annual Conference

Virtual Event
July 26–28, 2021
www.swcs.org/21AC

SWCS invites the submission of live demos, virtual tours, field days, workshops, oral presentations, symposia, and posters for the 76th SWCS International Annual Conference, taking place virtually, July 26-28, 2021.

The submission deadline is **Wednesday, February 17**. Please note that due to increased participation there will be no extension this year.

This year's conference features five submission tracks:

- 3, 2, 1 ... ACTION!
- Adapting Landscapes to Climate Change
- Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- One World, Connected through Conservation
- 2021 General Conference Theme Submissions
 - Adaptive Management of Conservation Efforts
 - Conservation Economics and Policy
 - Conservation Models, Tools, and Technologies
 - Conservation in Organic, Specialty, Small-Scale, or Urban Agriculture
 - Outreach, Education, and Community Engagement
 - Social Sciences Informing Conservation
 - Soil Health Resources, Indicators, Assessment, and Management
 - Water Resource Assessment and Management

Visit www.swcs.org/21AC for more information and to submit your proposal by February 17.





Become a Sponsor!

The virtual 76th SWCS International Annual Conference is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to connect with a uniquely targeted group of conservation and environmental professionals. Becoming a sponsor gives you an affordable opportunity to market your products and services to a key audience and maximize your organization's exposure. Allow us to help connect your organization with our audience of nearly a thousand conservation professionals.

Download and review the [Sponsor Guide](#) for more information. If sponsorship is secured by **April 2**, recognition will also be included in the preliminary program.

New Student Rep Joins Science and Policy Committee

Welcome, Lauren Haygood! Lauren is the new Student Representative to the Science and Policy Committee.



Lauren is a graduate student at the University of Tulsa where she studies metal biogeochemical cycling in the Kiamichi River in Southeastern Oklahoma. Lauren is also an active member of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) as part of their Voices for Science Policy cohort and Thriving Earth Exchange

where she started a water quality citizen science project called "What's in Your Water?"

"I applied because I am passionate about science policy, especially pertaining to freshwater systems in the United States," says Lauren. "I'm excited to learn more about policy conservation issues, advocate for legislation that will contribute to a sustainable future, and get more people involved in science policy."

Lauren is engaged in conservation, water availability, and water quality issues, both in Oklahoma and the United States in general. Her favorite phrase is "mussels are livers for rivers."

Science and Policy Committee Selects New Chair and Climate Change Focus for the Year

Naveen Adusumilli, assistant professor of agricultural economics at Louisiana State University, is the new chair of the Science and Policy Committee. To learn more about Naveen check out his Career Profile [here](#).

Each Science and Policy Committee meeting features a presentation from an expert on a topic of interest. In 2021, the committee has chosen "Climate Change" as their focus.

The climate change focus was kicked off in December with a presentation on the USDA-ARS Long-Term Agroecosystem Research Network, a partnership among 18 premiere long-term research sites across the United States. This presentation, as well as future ones, to the committee can be found [here](#).

January/February Issue of the Journal

The [January/February issue](#) of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* is now available! In the A Section,



Feature articles include an exploration of challenges to conservation practice adoption on rented farmland by [Masuda et al.](#) and a discussion of talking points for researchers to best communicate modeling results to policymakers by [Mason et al.](#) Additionally, Viewpoint articles address benefits of regenerative grazing ([Spratt et al.](#)) and future plans for biochar research ([Amonette et al.](#)). The Research

Section includes work on diverse topics, such as sediment contributions from different land uses ([Liu et al.](#)), how the duration of conservation tillage use impacts farmers' views of the practice's benefits ([Saak et al.](#)), and farmers' soil conservation behaviors on rented land in Austria ([Leonhardt et al.](#)). Find these and many more articles in the online journal.

Join Webinar to Learn More about SWCS's Work on "Edge of Field Roadmap"

For the past year SWCS has been working with The Nature Conservancy, the Meridian Institute, and a host of other stakeholders on a collaborative initiative to create a "roadmap" for scaling up edge of field practices across the nation. Join us Friday, February 5, from 11 am to noon CST to learn more about the project and how you can help accelerate adoption. Register [here](#).

Conservation Media Library Adds Bioreactors

Bioreactors are an innovative conservation practice that filters drainage tile water through woodchips to remove nutrients and protect water quality, and they are the newest addition to the [Conservation Media Library](#).

The Conservation Media Library is a visual toolkit for farmers, landowners, conservation professionals and anyone else interested in learning more about conservation practices. The Library contains over 600 high resolution, professional photographs of conservation in action on farms across the Midwest. Each photo collection was curated to lead the viewer from the initiation of a conservation practice to its completion. And all the resources within the Conservation Media Library can be viewed, and downloaded for free, from the comfort of your own home.



Bioreactor being installed in Polk County, Iowa, by City of Des Moines employees. The bioreactor was designed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. SWCS/IDALS Photo by Lynn Betts.

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.

- White House appears to conclude review of US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) “secret science” [rule](#)
- Wall Street eyes billions in the [Colorado’s](#) water
- USDA taps IBM to help modernize [conservation programs](#) that support US farmers and ranchers
- Opinion: America’s grand bargain on [agriculture](#) is in danger
- USDA seeking members for panel on [urban agriculture](#)
- US federal spending bill includes funding to combat [climate change](#)
- Report on [Chesapeake Bay](#) health remains at a D-plus grade
- Build back better? [USDA’s](#) turmoil shows Biden’s challenge ahead
- A new study on [regenerative grazing](#) complicates climate optimism
- Water rule future remains in question: [Navigable waters](#) protection rule continues to face legal hurdles
- What is [USDA’s](#) most important function? The answer may surprise you
- Editorial: Eastern Shore farms are getting [salty](#): Here’s why everyone should care
- Does regenerative agriculture have a [race](#) problem?
- [Farmers](#) got a government bailout in 2020, even those who didn’t need it
- Ag leader hopes new Congress, President can pass [ag worker](#) reforms
- Opinion: Proven [programs](#), not false hopes — engaging farmers in climate solutions
- Mexico farm lobby blasts ban on [GMO](#) corn; organic growers welcome it
- Farmers still face barriers in their quest to becoming certified [organic](#)
- One in three [US rivers](#) have changed color since 1984
- USDA extends [crop insurance](#) flexibilities amid continuing COVID-19 pandemic

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.

From the Leadership

Courtesy of Clare Lindahl, SWCS CEO



Clare Lindahl, SWCS CEO

In early 2020, as SWCS embarked on celebrating the history of the Society and the valuable role conservation professionals have played in the movement, we wanted to ensure actions taken throughout the 75th Anniversary provided a thoughtful dialogue on the future of conservation. As we dug in and archived the history of our organization, we discovered, we shared, and we asked ourselves, “What does this mean for the future of SWCS and the conservation professional?”

In reviewing an incredible body of historical knowledge, we learned the world has changed a lot in the last 75 years and so has our profession and those who practice it. SWCS too must change in order to continue to foster an organization of informed, dynamic individuals whose efforts create a bright future for agriculture, the environment, and society in the next 75 years.

No matter how deep we dug, however, we found that one thing has not changed: It is the community of conservation professionals—individuals who work tirelessly to understand, protect, and improve our natural resources—that is at the center of the conservation movement today, just as it was 75 years ago. Research continues to reinforce the important influence of their work, showing that in terms of conservation, interaction with a conservation professional was the most consistent predictor of practice adoption (Morris and Arbuckle 2019).*

In the coming year, we are looking forward to going to greater lengths to understand the needs of today’s conservation professionals. We will be conducting

market research and analysis; holding listening sessions, interviews, and surveys with experts and SWCS existing and prospective members and partners; and developing an understanding that will allow us to provide greater value to and support of our members and the conservation community.

We will also be launching the inaugural Conservation Practitioner’s Poll, a survey of conservation practitioners in the Mississippi River Basin. Despite the integral role conservation practitioners have and continue to play in conservation adoption, the voice of conservation practitioners is almost completely absent from policy discussions for various reasons. This poll will be the first of its kind and serve to enhance the effectiveness of conservation programs, augment the valuation of conservation practitioners, and increase the resources being directed to conservation adoption.

Our upcoming projects will keep us connected to the on-the-ground conservation community; assess the needs of conservation professionals; serve and broaden the conservation community; and enhance, adapt, and streamline conservation practices for wider adoption.

Just like conservation professionals, we will use good data to deploy strategy. We are working to develop a plan for organizational evolution, which will include a strategy for identifying, prioritizing, and implementing recommendations, alternatives, and fresh, bold ideas over the next three years. Our project goals include:

- Providing greater services to our members, our local chapters, and the constituencies they serve.
- Finding innovative ways to share successes and research to be emulated in the field.
- Amplifying the voice of the conservation professional, from the field to the desks of leadership.

We will seek diverse voices, actively listen, engage in dialogue, think critically, and take meaningful action toward creating institutions and systems that serve and value people equally.

Our efforts in 2021 to position SWCS for success will be undertaken with knowledge of our past, for today’s conservation professional, and for the natural resources integral to our future.

*Morris, C., and J. Arbuckle Jr. 2021. Conservation plans and soil and water conservation practice use: Evidence from Iowa. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*. In review.



“Successful conservation will require diverse collaborations, sound science, and bold action. SWCS will support and represent the community of conservation professionals who lead the way.”

Dale Threatt-Taylor, SWCS Chair

New Members

Welcome members who joined in December

Arkansas—Razorback

Archie Flanders

California/Nevada

Carrie Adams
Valerie Bullard
Julie Fair
Veronica Rivera Vega

Florida

Mike Loizzo

Michigan

Nathan McNett

North Dakota

Julie Meissner

Nebraska

Ryan Johnson
Ali Loker

Corporate Partners

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

Platinum



Gold



Silver



Bronze

