Annual Conference News
71st SWCS International Annual Conference
Galt House Hotel • Louisville, Kentucky
July 24-27, 2016
www.swcs.org/16ac

There Is Still Time to Register!
Online registration will remain open for the SWCS International Annual Conference through Monday, July 18. After this date, participants are encouraged to download the paper registration form found at www.swcs.org/16ac, complete the information, and bring it to the conference registration desk for onsite registration.

Keynote Speaker to Offer Discounted Book Sales at Conference
SWCS will host a book signing event in the Exhibit Hall following Chad Pregracke’s keynote presentation. His hardcover book will be available at the discounted conference rate of $20.

Tuesday Plenary Sessions Announced
Soil Health Partnership Farmer Panel
8:00 – 8:45 a.m.

Moderator: Nick Goeser, Soil Health Partnership/National Corn Growers Association

The Soil Health Partnership will present a short summary of the latest updates on the program along with a featured paired farmer and agronomist panel. Paired farmers and agronomists on the panel will provide insights into the agronomic, business, marketing, and environmental aspects of improving soil health. In addition, the panelists will provide perspectives on how members of the research community can aid in providing the most useful management information to farmers and agronomists more broadly.
Plenary Panel: Creating Watershed Programs That Actually Work—For Farmers and the Environment
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Presenters: Shanon Phillips, Oklahoma Conservation Commission; Vicky Drew, USDA NRCS
Moderator: Deanna Osmond, North Carolina State University
Reponder: Larry Elworth, RESOLVE

This plenary will offer insights into the key factors that lead to successful watershed projects, drawing on recent studies and the experiences of practitioners who run effective watershed quality programs. The discussion will explore how effective watershed projects are organized and what we can do to substantially improve public and private sector programs intended to help farmers adopt conservation practices on a scale commensurate with the water quality challenges and the level of investments being made to address them.

Shanon Phillips is the water quality division director for the Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC). She earned her bachelor’s degree in biology from Kansas State University and her master’s in zoology from Oklahoma State University, studying nutrient impacts in lakes. She’s been working on water quality protection programs in Oklahoma state government for over twenty years. Her agency is the lead agency for nonpoint source pollution. Much of the OCC’s work focuses on collaboration with landowners, conservation districts, and USDA NRCS to help agricultural producers protect water quality and reduce soil erosion. The OCC’s water quality programs have been recognized nationally for efficiency, innovation, leadership, and success.

Vicky Drew has served as Vermont NRCS state conservationist since June of 2010. She leads a staff of 70 employees around the state located in 11 offices and manages an annual operating budget of $20 million per year. She is also responsible for directing technical and financial assistance to protect and improve soil and water quality in the impaired Lake Champlain Basin. A native of southeastern California, she graduated Summa Cum Laude with a BS in agronomy from the University of Georgia in 1985. She started her career with SCS/NRCS as a student intern in 1983 and worked in six field offices in both Georgia and Rhode Island. She began her tenure in Vermont in 2006 as assistant state conservationist for programs.

Deanna Osmond works at the interface of nutrient management, conservation practices, and water quality in the Crop and Soil Science Department at North Carolina University. She received her BS degree in agronomy and anthropology from Kansas State University, her MS in soil science from North Carolina State University, and her PhD in agronomy from Cornell University. For the past 25 years she has conducted field- and watershed-scale experiments to find conservation practices that reduce nutrient loading, especially in impaired watersheds; as an extension specialist she has then used these research results for farmers and agency personnel.

Larry Elworth is agriculture program director at Resolve, a nonprofit public policy group. Resolve’s Ag Program is focused on supporting sustainability efforts in the agricultural supply chain and increasing the effectiveness of watershed-scale projects to improve water quality in the Delaware River Basin, Chesapeake Bay, and Iowa. In more than 35 years in public service and agriculture, Larry has served as a senior advisor at the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Agriculture, and the White House Domestic Policy Council, combining extensive senior executive branch policy experience with agricultural management and production knowledge. As founder and executive director of the nonprofit Center for Agricultural Partnerships, he worked with farmers and organizations in 15 states to implement environmentally and economically sound practices on more than 500,000 acres.
2016 Annual Conference Sponsor Spotlight: Soil Health Partnership

The Soil Health Partnership (SHP) is joining Monsanto again as cosponsors for the Soil and Water Conservation Society’s International Annual Conference. SHP will host an exciting paired farmer and agronomist panel session on Tuesday morning to support this year’s SWCS Annual Conference. The session will feature SHP farmers and their agronomists to provide perspectives on benefits and barriers to conservation system adoption—including a focus on business case development for on-farm management for soil improvement, soil health agronomic service offerings, and research needs to enhance recommendations for optimizing soil health.

The SHP has developed a farmer-led network of 65 research and outreach locations across nine upper Midwestern states (expanding to 100 by 2017). On-farm SHP research and communication efforts address localized needs for conservation tillage, advanced nutrient management, and cover cropping decision enablement. SHP Network farmers evaluate advanced agronomic systems techniques to improve soil health and economic profitability; serve as peer-to-peer farmer mentors interested in adopting sustainable cropping system practices; and host hands-on outreach events and field days to highlight the latest integrated agronomic technologies, such as cover cropping, no-till, crop rotation, nutrient management, and precision agriculture technology.

The SHP field staff provide expert support to SHP Network farmers and agronomists for collection of all baseline soil samples, documentation of economic information, collection of yield data, enrollment of SHP Network farmers in the AgSolver Profit Zone Manager, and enrollment in the Field to Market FieldPrint Calculator.

SHP communications staff has excelled at broadening coverage of recommendations for soil health improvement, enabling SHP Network farmers to share their stories of conservation transitions, and reaching agricultural and nonagricultural audiences to raise awareness of the positive efforts in continuous improvement across Midwestern agricultural systems.

SHP is excited to participate in the SWCS Annual Conference and looks forward to the discussions surrounding conservation agricultural practices.

News from DC

Courtesy of SWCS DC Representative John Peterson

• In efforts to reinvigorate the conservation planning process, a new evaluation tool is being sharpened in the field. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Resource Stewardship Evaluation (RSE) tool evaluates an operation’s current management and conservation activities compared to stewardship thresholds in five natural resources categories: soil health, water quality, water quantity, air quality, and wildlife habitat.

• Looking toward the next Farm Bill it is critical to address soil health more effectively. In his latest Agri-Pulse blog, Bruce Knight, former NRCS chief, notes the need to dig deeper into soil health to expand the current knowledge base, improve testing efficacy, and better position conservation programs to optimize soil health.

• The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued its final rule on the use of unmanned aircraft systems, also known as drones. The potential for drones in precision agriculture is huge—but the possibilities for drones don’t stop there—they can be used for conservation, too.

• Researchers at the US Geological Survey and the USDA have published a new study that demonstrates that agricultural conservation practices in the Upper Mississippi River watershed can reduce nitrogen inputs to area streams and rivers by as much as 34%.

• The Hill reports, “A coalition of states is again suing to stop President Obama’s carbon dioxide rule for newly built power plants.” The 23-state group filed a lawsuit in the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Upcoming Events

71st SWCS International Annual Conference
Louisville, Kentucky
July 24-27, 2016

Southern New England Chapter Summer Meeting
Amherst, Massachusetts
August 5, 2016

North Dakota Chapter Annual Meeting
Bismarck, North Dakota
November 28-29, 2016
The July/August Issue of the Journal is Here!

Has your copy arrived?

In the current issue of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*, check out the feature article by Lal illustrating the importance of nexus thinking for addressing global issues and finding solutions to environmental degradation. The Research Section includes an editorial by Cela et al. that compares the experiences and opinions of nutrient manager planners from New York and Pennsylvania to evaluate the viability of a transition to a single, physiographic region phosphorus index. Also in the Research Section, Poudel analyzes the impacts of best management practices on water quality in the Coulee Baton watershed of Louisiana, and Molatudi et al. report on changes in soil characteristics following switchgrass plantings from a study in Inner Mongolia. Find these and many more articles in the online journal.

Conservation NewsBriefs: Popular Articles from June

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 over the past month:

- [Drought prompts debate on Cuba’s irrigation problems](Caribbean 360)
- [The enormous threat to America’s last grasslands](The Washington Post)
- [EPA blasted for atrazine risk assessment](High Plains Journal)
- [The drought solution that’s under our feet](KQED)
- [Microbes may be the new gold rush of agriculture](Southwest Farm Press)

Click here to sign up and start receiving your weekly *Conservation NewsBriefs* today!

“Like” the Soil and Water Conservation Society on Facebook to keep up with the latest Society news and conservation current events!
New Members

Welcome members who joined in June!

International
Mohsen Bohluli
Byron Rath

Alabama
Blake Garner
Rohi White

California/Nevada
Roger Tompkins

Canada—Alberta
Sharon Reedyk

Canada—Atlantic Canada
Zisheng Xing

Canada—Ontario
Dorienne Cushman
Natalie Feisthauer
Deanna Nemeth

DC—National Capital Chapter
Anjali Locussol
Kyra Reumann-Moore

Delaware/Maryland—Pokomoke
Michael Brown

Florida
David Mahnken

Iowa
Justin Bisinger
Evan Del Val

Iowa—Iowa State University
Student Chapter
Spencer Pech

Kansas
Joseph Jakubek

Kentucky—Bluegrass
Lacey Gaw

Massachusetts—University of
Massachusetts-Amherst
Joseph Pellegrino

Minnesota
Joe Magner
Jeffrey Peterson

Missouri—Show Me
Nick Goeser

Montana
Alyson Christians
Theresa Galhouse

North Carolina—North Carolina
State University Student Chapter
Richard Feiss

New York—Empire State
Chad Klotzbach
Nicole Kubiczki

Ohio—All Ohio
Curtis Hanstine
Kayla Miller
Chadwick VanSickle

Pennsylvania—Keystone
Jennifer Weld

South Carolina
Michael Marshall
Jose Payero

Texas—East Texas
Terry Gentry
Ward Ling

Virginia
Zach Easton
Julie Knight
Kelsey Pieper
Alison Williams

Wisconsin
Logan Ahlers
Lee Boles
Emily Sorenson

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West Virginia—West
Virginia University
Student Chapter
Justin Brackenrich

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