



# CONSERVOGRAM

The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

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### Annual Conference News

71st SWCS International Annual Conference  
Galt House Hotel • Louisville, Kentucky  
July 24-27, 2016  
[www.swcs.org/16ac](http://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](http://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 State 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.
- The National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA) held an information webinar on small acreage conservation programs on Wednesday, July 13. Check out archived webinar footage [here](#).
- 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

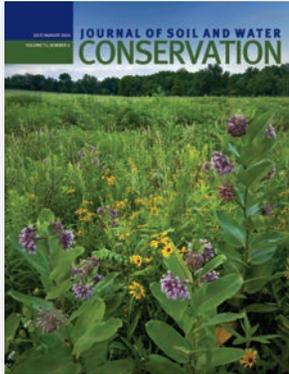
#### [Southern New England Chapter Summer Meeting](#)

Amherst, Massachusetts  
August 5, 2016

#### [North Dakota Chapter Annual Meeting](#)

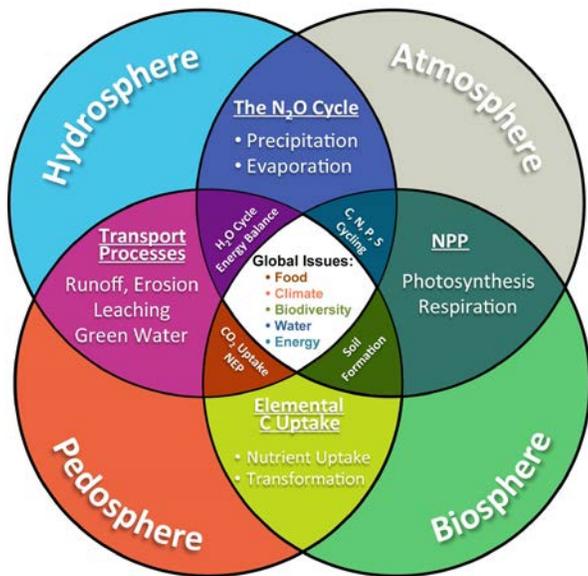
Bismarck, North Dakota  
November 28-29, 2016

## 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](#).



Interactive effects of ecospheres on global issues of twenty-first century. From "Global food security and nexus thinking" by Rattan Lal.

## 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

### West Virginia

Andrea Walker  
Brian Young

### West Virginia—West

**Virginia University**  
**Student Chapter**  
Justin Brackenrich

## Corporate Members

Please contact [corporate.info@swcs.org](mailto:corporate.info@swcs.org) for more details.

### Gold



### Silver



### Bronze

