



Healthy Land
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CONSERVOGRAM

The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

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72nd SWCS International Annual Conference

Monona Terrace Convention Center
Madison, Wisconsin
July 30 to August 2, 2017
www.swcs.org/17AC

There Is Still Time to Register!

Online registration will remain open for the SWCS International Annual Conference through **Monday, July 24**. After this date, participants are encouraged to download the paper registration form found at www.swcs.org/17ac, complete the information, and bring it to the conference registration desk for onsite registration. We look forward to seeing you there!

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 is excited to join The Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Meeting to host a panel discussion with Greg Whitmore, Soil Health Partnership farmer from Nebraska, and Mike Zwingman, lead analyst of agronomy research with Central Valley Ag Coop. Early data results and learnings from The Soil Health Partnership Network will be shared and discussed with the panelists and audience members.



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Join Give Journal



Plenary Panel – The Next Farm Bill: Opportunities and Challenges

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Presenters: *John Larson, American Farmland Trust; Alyssa Charney, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition; Pelham Straughn, 9b Group*

Moderator: *Bruce Knight, Strategic Conservation Solutions*

Each farm bill cycle brings a fresh set of opportunities and challenges to the legislative process. Congress considers the interests of farm, commodity, nutrition, conservation, and environmental organizations and enacts what becomes the primary agriculture and food policy instrument of the federal government. An omnibus bill, it authorizes programs and funding for generally a five-year period, subject to annual appropriations. Panel participants will discuss the priorities that different interests bring to the farm bill debate, as well as the current political landscape in terms of Congressional action and opportunities.



John Larson joined American Farmland Trust (AFT) as senior vice president of Policy and Programs in April of 2015, having previously served as the chief executive officer of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). Larson worked directly with Washington State conservation districts for six

years as the executive director of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD), and several years as president of the Washington Association of District Employees (WADE). Before his nearly 20 years with conservation districts, Larson owned and operated his family's irrigated row-crop farm in Royal City, Washington. Prior to moving to the Washington, DC, area, Larson was a lifetime resident of Washington State. He is an alumnus of Washington State University, where he studied agricultural economics.



Alyssa Charney is a policy specialist at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC). She holds an MS in agriculture and food policy and an MPH from Tufts University, as well as a BA in environmental studies from Vassar College. Charney has worked on food and agriculture

policy at the Center for Rural Affairs, New England Farmers Union, and the National Farm to School Network, and was the lead contributor to NSAC's 2015 Farmers' Guide to the Conservation Stewardship Program. Charney staffs NSAC's Conservation, Energy, and Environment Committee.



Pelham Straughn worked for over 17 years on Capitol Hill, which included 13 years with the House Committee on Agriculture. During his final four years on the Hill, Straughn served with distinction as the policy director for the US House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture, leading his policy team

during the formation, debate, and passage of the Agricultural Act of 2014.

During his 13 year tenure on the committee, Straughn worked on three different farm bills and served two subcommittee and three full committee chairmen in many different capacities. His portfolio includes farm and commodity programs, conservation, trade, livestock, crop insurance, disaster programs, sugar, peanut, and tobacco programs. In 2015, Straughn and Dave White, former chief of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS), founded the 9b Group as a Benefit Corporation providing clients with unparalleled expertise in agricultural conservation and sustainability. 9b Group has the purpose of creating a positive impact on the environment and society, and assisting clients in realizing, expanding, and surpassing their conservation and sustainability goals.



Bruce Knight is a nationally recognized expert on conservation, agriculture, and the environment. Knight is the principal and founder of Strategic Conservation Solutions, LLC. From 2002 to 2006, Knight served as chief of USDA NRCS, the lead US agency for conservation on private working agricultural lands. Knight was the undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory

Programs at the USDA from 2006 to 2009. Drawing on his experience as a former association executive, lobbyist, regulator, and Capitol Hill staffer, Knight has a broad understanding of how Washington works. He also brings firsthand knowledge of farming to his national policymaking credentials. A third-generation rancher and farmer and lifelong conservationist, Knight operates a diversified grain and cattle operation in South Dakota using no-till and rest rotation grazing systems. His farming and ranching background gives him the opportunity to practice stewardship and husbandry, providing firsthand knowledge of the interdependency of animal, plant, and human health with the environment.

2017 Annual Conference Sponsor Spotlight: Syngenta

By Caydee Savinelli, Syngenta Pollinator and IPM Stewardship Lead



As the Soil and Water Conservation Society annual conference approaches, my Syngenta

colleagues and I look forward to connecting with you in Madison for a time of learning, sharing, and forging pathways to sustainability. Syngenta is proud to again be the Presenting Sponsor of this dynamic event.

Our focus at this year's conference will highlight a crucial yet sometimes overlooked contributor to agricultural productivity: pollinators. Since many crops are dependent on bees and other insects for pollination, we owe much to them for the diverse array of food they help produce. There's no question that a healthy pollinator population is essential to meeting the heightened global demand for food.



A pollinator at Syngenta's Greensboro, North Carolina, Operation Pollinator plot. Photo credit Caydee Savinelli.

Beyond the benefits that pollinators bring to crops, we have seen that their habitats help to increase biodiversity, reduce soil erosion, and protect water sources from soil and nutrient pollution. With our global Operation Pollinator program, Syngenta is helping commercial farmers—and other landowners, such as golf course superintendents—incorporate pollinator habitats in a variety of landscapes, in strategic and impactful ways.

By devoting non-crop portions of the farm—such as field borders, hedgerows, buffer strips, and marginal cropland—to pollinator habitat, farmers and landowners can help provide essential habitat and food for native pollinators and managed honey bees, while augmenting biodiversity and environmental benefits.

Within the past three years, nearly 7,000 acres of pollinator forage and habitat have been planted on US commercial farmland under the aegis of Operation Pollinator, in cooperation with R.D. Offutt, Delta F.A.R.M., Pheasants Forever, Project Apis m., The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund,



Operation Pollinator plot at Syngenta Greensboro, North Carolina, location. Photo credit Caydee Savinelli.

Trees Forever, and Applewood Seed Company. Additionally, Operation Pollinator sites have been established on more than 200 golf courses across 29 states.

During last year's conference, we provided a glimpse into the technology platform that is helping farmers make critical decisions about their operations and ultimately be more sustainable. Among the capabilities afforded by this whole-farm program—AgriEdge Excelsior®, which is enabled by Land.db® software—farmers can identify areas of land that would be more suitable to plant as pollinator habitat than to cultivate as cropland.

On behalf of Syngenta, I invite you to stop by the Syngenta booth (#209-210) during exhibit hours to pick up a copy of the Operation Pollinator quick guide Syngenta recently developed to promote the successful establishment of pollinator habitats on farmland. Since it is imperative that product stewardship be at the heart of every discus-



Western pollinator mix.

sion we have regarding pollinator health on the farm, this guide promotes sound agronomics and best management practices. We'll also be handing out pollinator-mixture wildflower seed packets that we hope you'll use to plant your own pollinator habitat in your yard or garden.

To learn more about Operation Pollinator and Syngenta's commitment to pollinator health, visit www.beehealth.org. Follow the conversation on social media using #OperationPollinator.

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SWCS Welcomes New CEO

We are pleased to announce that Clare Lindahl will be joining SWCS as chief executive officer this August.



Since 2012, Lindahl has served as executive director for Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI), a nonprofit organization that informs, educates, and supports the 500 soil and water conservation district commissioners within the state. She has earned recognition among her peers for her talent in engaging and uniting diverse

stakeholders to achieve conservation goals and has been selected to chair the Watershed Planning Advisory Council, a legislative-appointed board with divergent views, for two straight terms. She is also the current chair of the Iowa Source Water Ag Collaborative.

In addition to her conservation work for these and other organizations, Lindahl has served in a leadership role for the SWCS Iowa Chapter since 2012. She is currently serving as the chapter's president until the fall of 2017. In this role she has organized state-wide educational meetings, developed the chapter's strategic plan, and recruited nearly 100 new members since October of 2016 through a series of innovative membership drives and events.

We are excited to have Clare Lindahl join the SWCS team and welcome her leadership as we continue fostering the art and science of natural resource conservation.

Upcoming Events

[Oklahoma Chapter Annual Meeting](#)

Woodward, Oklahoma
July 20-21, 2017

[72nd SWCS International Annual Conference](#)

Madison, Wisconsin
July 30-August 2, 2017

[Southern New England Chapter Summer Meeting](#)

Taunton, Massachusetts
August 11, 2017

[Nebraska Chapter 21st Annual Golf Scholarship Fundraiser](#)

Lincoln, Nebraska
September 8, 2017

[Wyoming Chapter Annual Technical Workshop](#)

Green River, Wyoming
September 13, 2017

Individual Awards and Scholarships

Through the Awards and Scholarships Program, SWCS honors individuals, organizations, and chapters who have exhibited exemplary service to the conservation community. This year's award and scholarship recipients join us in our mission to advance soil, water, and natural resource conservation efforts to achieve sustainability. Nominees and applicants competed on an international and national level against others who demonstrated leadership, creativity, and dedication in conservation efforts by delivering assistance to landowners, communities, or local governments. Awards and scholarships will be presented at an awards luncheon at noon on Tuesday, August 1, 2017, during the Annual Conference in Madison, Wisconsin. All conference attendees are invited to attend.

Hugh Hammond Bennett Award

The Hugh Hammond Bennett Award recognizes extraordinary national and international accomplishments in the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources.

Chuck Rice is this year's Hugh Hammond Bennett Award recipient.



Rice, a university distinguished professor of agronomy at Kansas State University, has made significant contributions to the fields of agronomy and soil science through teaching, research, and service. He is exceptionally well known for his research on the impacts of climate change on agriculture, soil carbon, and nitrogen cycling. He has conducted long-term research on soil organic matter dynamics, nitrogen transformations, and

microbial ecology. Recently, his work has focused on soil and global climate change, including carbon and nitrogen emissions in agricultural and grassland ecosystems, and soil carbon sequestration and its potential benefits to the ecosystem. Rice has published over 100 peer-reviewed journal articles, many with international collaborators. Most notable is his work on the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (2007, 2014), for which the authors received the 2007 Nobel Prize.

In addition to an excellent research record, Rice has had an impact as an educator. He has led multiple international teaching activities by way of formal classroom teaching and informal student tours. The Kansas State University Department of Agronomy now has a regular course for international experience as a direct result of Rice's effort. Recently, he has been named the first recipient of the Mary L. Vanier University Professorship, an award that honors and supports innovative faculty members across the academy who are doing exceptional work.

Rice has also made significant and continued contributions to conservation through service. He serves on the Board of Trustees for the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). He has been elected to chair one of the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) commissions and serves as the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) liaison to the Global Soil Partnership. Recently, he was a co-principal investigator on a grant to establish a graduate program in soil science at the Asuncion National University in Paraguay. It is evident that Rice is committed to international soil science by endowing an international agronomy lecture at Kansas State University. Through his influence and active participation in conservation efforts, Chuck Rice has touched many lives from around the world and across all levels from undergraduate students to fellow scientists to policy makers. Charles Rice is well deserving of this year's Hugh Hammond Bennett Award.

Presidential Leadership Award

Lois Wright Morton
Deanna Osmond
Kentucky Chapter

Fellow Award

Clark Gantzer
Francisco Arriaga
Barbara McWhorter
Jeff Strock

Harold and Kay Scholl Excellence in Conservation Award

Josh Dukart

Merit Award

Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Soil and Water Conservation Program
USDA NRCS Bismarck Plant Materials Center
Humboldt-Tiyabe National Forest Watershed Management Team

Outstanding Service Award

Becky Bowers
Larry Cihacek
Colby Moorberg

Honor Award

Justin Zahradka

Commendation Award

Amanda Brandt
Claudia Stevenson
Kimberly Worth

Donald A. Williams Soil Conservation Scholarship

Cory James Cole—University of Alaska

Journal of Soil and Water Conservation Awards

Best Research Paper Award for Impact and Quality

Basche, A.D., F.E. Miguez, T.C. Kaspar, and M.J. Castellano. 2014. Do cover crops increase or decrease nitrous oxide emissions? A meta-analysis. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 69(6):471-482.

Best Research Paper Award for Impact and Quality—Honorable Mention

Poudel, D.D., T. Lee, R. Srinivasan, K. Abbaspour, and C.Y. Jeong. 2013. Assessment of seasonal and spatial variation of surface water quality, identification of factors associated with water quality variability, and the modeling of critical nonpoint source pollution areas in an agricultural watershed. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 68(3):155-171.

Editor's Choice Award

Chambers, A., R. Lal, and K. Paustian. 2016. Soil carbon sequestration potential of US croplands and grasslands: Implementing the 4 per Thousand Initiative. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 71(3):68A-74A.

Editor's Choice Award—Honorable Mention

Olson, K.R., L. Wright Morton, and D. Speidel. 2016. Missouri Ozark Plateau Headwaters Diversion engineering feat. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 71(1):13A-19A.

Chapter Awards

SWCS would like to congratulate chapters receiving awards at the 2017 Annual Conference. Awards will be presented at an awards luncheon at noon on Tuesday, August 1, 2017, during the Annual Conference in Madison, Wisconsin. All conference attendees are invited to attend.

Outstanding Chapter Award

Nebraska Chapter
Hoosier (Indiana) Chapter

Chapter Achievement Award

Michigan Chapter
Hoosier (Indiana) Chapter

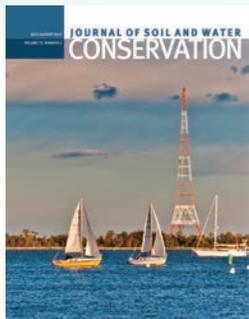
Sustained Performance Award

Wyoming Chapter

Chapter Professional Development Award

Hoosier (Indiana) Chapter
Wyoming Chapter

July/August Issue of the Journal



The July/August issue of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* is available online and will arrive in mailboxes soon! In this issue, Aiken's feature article reviews the complexity of addressing water pollution under the Clean Water Act, with a focus on the Chesapeake Bay total maximum daily load program, and Smith et al. investigate the possibility of a connection between

changes in precipitation chemistry due to Clean Air Act regulations and increased phosphorus loads in Lake Erie. The Research Section includes articles by Peterson et al. and Schilling et al. regarding nutrient load quantification and watershed conservation planning for improved water quality. Additionally, an article by Finney et al. investigates how specific cover crop species affect soil microbial communities and soil health. Find these and many more articles in the [online Journal](#).

News from DC

Courtesy of SWCS DC Representative John Peterson

- [The Washington Examiner](#) reports, "The Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) announced Tuesday that it is ready to halt the Obama administration's emission rules for fracking by two years, instead of the initial 90-day stay that it had announced weeks earlier."
- Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue doesn't expect a deputy secretary or undersecretaries to be in place at the Agriculture Department before September. Potential nominees are being held up because they have yet to be cleared by the FBI and the Office of Government Ethics.
- Perdue named Jason Hafemeister as his acting Deputy Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agriculture Affairs as he continues the [reorganization plan](#) he announced a month ago. Robert Johansson was appointed acting Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, and Dan Jiron will fill the role of acting Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment.
- USDA's National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will invest \$22.6 million in 33 projects through the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program.
- The USEPA is proposing a [two-year stay](#) of the Obama administration's methane emissions standards for the oil and gas industry to allow USEPA time to reconsider the regulations.
- Some of the biggest names in agricultural research defended the importance of government science fund-

ing at a [Senate Agriculture Committee hearing](#) where lawmakers expressed resistance to proposed spending cuts from the White House.

- USEPA Administrator Scott Pruitt committed to publishing a new rule establishing which waters would be regulated under the Clean Water Act by the first three months of next year at the latest, in testimony before House appropriators. The schedule seems ambitious, given that USEPA and the Army Corps of Engineers have only recently released a proposed rule that would officially rescind the Waters of the US rule.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed that the [air is cleaner in rural areas](#) than in the city. However, drinking water quality could be better in urban areas than rural.
- NRCS [released a two-year implementation strategy](#) to help private landowners restore and protect 400,000 acres of longleaf pine forests across Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia.

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:

- [Michigan ag chief: Lake Erie 'impaired' listing not important](#) (MLive)
- [US pays farmers billions to save the soil. But it's blowing away](#) (NPR)
- [The economics of soil health](#) (Wallaces Farmer)
- [Opinion: The economics of soil health](#) (Ag Professional)

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

New Members

Welcome members who joined in June!

Alabama

Samantha Daniell
Alex Johnson
Gerald Martin
Rachel Ratchford Luker

Arkansas—Razorback

Rebecca Cooper

California/Nevada

Nick Owens
Sherman Swanson
Suzette Turner

Iowa

Tyler Dursky
Emily Martin

Iowa—Iowa State University

Student Chapter
Lijing Gao

Illinois

Olga Lyandres

Indiana—Hoosier

Sarah Church
Brian MacGowan
Pranay Ranjan
Ben Wicker

Louisiana—University of

Louisiana-Lafayette Student Chapter
Micah Muir

Maryland Old Line

Alisha Spears Mulkey

Michigan

Elaine Brown

Minnesota

Michael DeWeese
Kris Johnson

Missouri—Show Me

Duncan Hughes
Shirley Hughes

New Jersey—Firman E. Bear

Sophie Benaroya

Ohio—All Ohio

Jordan Hoewischer
Lindsay Pease

Oklahoma

Stephen Lira

Pennsylvania—Keystone

Jill Ott

South Carolina

Marian Jordan
Beau Sorenson

Texas—Heart of Texas

Kristin Carlton
Juan Enciso
Partson Mubvumba

Texas—Texas A&M University

Student Chapter
Onder Ozal

Virginia

Rebecca Miller
Brian Strahm

Wisconsin—University of

Wisconsin-Platteville Student Chapter

Colton Asche
Catherine Behrens
Bailey Hermenson
Allyson Jaeck
Katelynn Mauk
David McGuire
Ashton Nelson
Samuel Peetz
Josh Pickel
Caris Quakkelaar

Wisconsin

Jane Anklam
Joseph Britt
Kalyn Diederich
Kevin Fermanich
John Grabber
Taylor Groby
Anna Gudjonsdottir
Krista Marshall
Molly Meyers
William Osterholz
Stella Pey
Marie Raboin
Greg Richardson
Nancy DeLong
Ken Schroeder
Paul Tietz

Corporate Members

Please contact corporate.info@swcs.org for more details.

Gold



Hickenbottom Inc.
Look for the bright orange inlet - Hickenbottom's Trademark®

Silver



The
Fertilizer Institute



DAIRY MANAGEMENT INC.™

Bronze

