



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. Click [here](#) for COVID-19 SWCS Annual Conference Impacts and Organizational Updates.

75th SWCS International Annual Conference

Virtual Event
July 27-29, 2020
www.swcs.org/20AC

Final Chance to Register by July 15!



REGISTRATION WILL CLOSE JULY, 15, 2020.

In order to prepare speakers and attendees for the best event possible, no registrations will be accepted after the July 15 deadline.

Registration for the 75th SWCS International Annual Conference, to be held virtually July 27-29, 2020, will close **July, 15, 2020**. In order to prepare speakers and attendees for the best event possible, no registrations will be accepted after the July 15 deadline.

Registrants will receive *exclusive access* to all presentation recordings concluding the event. Continuing education units will be available for certified crop advisors, professional agronomists, professionals in erosion and sediment control, and others.

For more information and to register, visit www.swcs.org/20AC.



Thank you to our 75th SWCS International Annual Conference Sponsors!



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Platinum Sponsor Spotlight: Iowa NRCS—Demand for Conservation Assistance Keeps Growing

by Jason Johnson, NRCS Public Affairs Specialist

Due to the density and intensity of farming and our location sandwiched between two major rivers—the Mississippi on the east and the Missouri on the west—Iowa is a hotspot for soil and water conservation.

As the country's primary private lands conservation agency, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works closely with farmers, local and state governments, other federal agencies, agricultural organizations, and private industry ag companies to conserve our natural resources.

Iowa is home to some of the most productive soils in the world and the NRCS staff is committed to helping farmers and other rural landowners keep it healthy, productive, stable, and out of local waterbodies.



NRCS District Conservationist Abby Beltz takes a look at soybean growth through the terminated cereal rye cover crop with farmer Dick Sloan in Buchanan County, Iowa.

Iowa: A Leader in Agriculture

According to the Census of Agriculture, Iowa ranks first in the nation in the production of corn, eggs, and hogs; second in soybeans; and third for the total number of farms.

Consequently, Iowa NRCS is second only to Texas in the number of staff members, with about 500. We have 100 field offices in Iowa's 99 counties, each at centrally located USDA Service Centers. About 300 conservation partners from the Iowa Department of Agriculture, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Pheasants Forever, and other groups work side-by-side with our staff to plan and implement conservation practices.

The NRCS staff includes soil conservationists, engineers, technicians, biologists, agronomists, and other specialists who provide technical expertise and conservation

planning for farmers and forest landowners who want to make environmental improvements on their land. We also provide financial assistance and easement programs through the Farm Bill to help private landowners implement conservation practices.

In 2019, Iowa NRCS employees wrote 13,720 conservation plans and contracted with farmers to treat natural resource concerns on more than 315,000 acres, obligating \$53 million in financial assistance. The most adopted conservation practices last year through conservation planning and programs in Iowa included cover crops, no-till farming, terraces, and pasture/hay planting.



An Eastern Iowa farmer grows oats with clover on a small grain marketing pilot for Practical Farmers of Iowa that will study the barriers and opportunities for small grains rotations and support producer adoption and awareness of the agronomic, economic, and conservation benefits of small grains rotations.

NRCS has Fields of Opportunities in Iowa!

Earlier this year, Iowa NRCS implemented a staff reorganization to help improve customer service and allow for more flexibility to manage workload. The new structure is also allowing for an increase in staff on our new four-county resource teams.

If you are interested in a career in conservation, visit www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov to learn more about our agency. To view job vacancies and the fields of opportunities with Iowa NRCS, go to usajobs.gov.

If you are interested in working with NRCS staff to help plan and implement voluntary conservation practices on your land, visit <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=ia> to find your local office information.

Upcoming Events

[SWCS 75th International Annual Conference](#)

Virtual Event
July 27-29, 2020

Congratulations to the 2020 SWCS Award Winners!

Through the Awards Program, SWCS honors individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions in advocating and advancing the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources. All award winners will be showcased within the 75th SWCS International Annual Conference virtual platform during the July 27-29, 2020, event. Additional information about each recognition can also be found at www.swcs.org/awards.

This year's award 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.

The Hugh Hammond Bennett Award, the Society's most prestigious award, recognizes extraordinary accomplishments in the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources.

The 2020 Hugh Hammond Bennett Award is presented to Jean L. Steiner of Manhattan, Kansas, who is recognized internationally as an authority on irrigated and rainfed cropping, crop residue management, evapotranspiration, watershed management, and integrated systems research.



Dr. Jean L. Steiner

During her career with the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Steiner led research at multiple locations and provided crucial leadership within three major initiatives: the Conservation Effects Assessment Project, in which she set the framework for a new approach to data management for more than a dozen watershed projects; the Southern Plains Climate Hub, a robust regional partnership between government agencies, universities, and private sector entities to develop and deliver improved adaptation and mitigation strategies for Southern Plains agriculture; and the Long-Term Agroecosystem Research network. Steiner also co-led the Grazing Coordinated Agricultural Project, a regional project focused on resilience of beef grazing systems in the face of a variable and changing climate. Additionally, she has served as president of both the Soil and Water Conservation Society (2004 to 2006) and the American Society of Agronomy (2015).

Three **Society Fellow Awards** are given this year, in recognition of SWCS members who have performed exceptional service in advocating the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources. Fellowship is an honor bestowed upon the best in the conservation profession. This year's Fellow awardees include:

- Chris Gross, Maryland
- David Lobb, Manitoba, Canada
- Deanna Osmond, North Carolina

Additional awards presented in 2020 are listed below.

Conservation Innovation Award

In recognition of an outstanding activity, product, or service by a group, business, firm, corporation, or organization that promotes natural resource conservation.

- Rice Irrigation Water Management Field Day Team, Arkansas
- Science-Based Trials of Rowcrops Integrated with Prairie Strips, Iowa State University and Partners Research Group, Iowa

Harold and Kay Scholl Excellence in Conservation Award

In recognition of individuals who work on the ground to provide direct and personal delivery or conservation planning and technical assistance.

- Neil Shaffer, Iowa

Conservation Professional of the Year Award

In recognition of outstanding accomplishments in practicing and advancing the science and art of natural resource conservation.

- Jay Fuhrer, North Dakota

75th Anniversary Conservation Professional of the Year Honorable Mention

In recognition of outstanding accomplishments in practicing and advancing the science and art of natural resource conservation. Additional awards are given in 2020 in honor of the Soil and Water Conservation Society's 75th Anniversary.

- Cari Williams, Oklahoma
- Herb Winters, Oregon
- James Culver, Nebraska
- Krista Kirkham, Illinois
- Norm Helzer, Nebraska

Society Service Award

In recognition of Society members for service to their chapter or to the Society.

- Hugh Brown, Washington
- Sharon Hartzold, Illinois

Chair's Leadership Award

In recognition of exemplary assistance in helping to carry out the goals and objectives of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

- Clare Lindahl, Iowa
- Jeff Strock, Minnesota
- Juan Herrera, Argentina
- Keystone Chapter, Pennsylvania

Conservation Research Award

In recognition of Society members or teams of members whose research has led to exceptional improvements in soil conservation, water conservation, and/or related natural resources research.

- J. Arbuckle, Iowa
- John Gilley, Nebraska
- Mark Tomer, Iowa

Best Research Paper for Impact and Quality Award

In recognition of the impact and quality of the following research paper:

Arbuckle, J.G., and G. Roesch-McNally. 2015. Cover crop adoption in Iowa: The role of perceived practice characteristics. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 70(6):418-429, [doi:10.2489/jswc.70.6.418](https://doi.org/10.2489/jswc.70.6.418).

- J. Arbuckle, Iowa
- Gabrielle Roesch-McNally, Iowa

Best Research Paper for Impact and Quality Honorable Mention

In recognition of the impact and quality of the following research paper:

Lal, R. 2015. Soil carbon sequestration and aggregation by cover cropping. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 70(6):329-339, [doi:10.2489/jswc.70.6.329](https://doi.org/10.2489/jswc.70.6.329).

- Rattan Lal, Ohio

Editor's Choice Award Winner

In recognition of the following article of excellence appearing in the "A" Section of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* in the previous year:

Sharpley, A., M.J. Helmers, P. Kleinman, K. King, A. Leytem, and N. Nelson. 2019. Managing crop nutrients to achieve water quality goals. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 74(5):91A-101A, [doi:10.2489/jswc.74.5.91A](https://doi.org/10.2489/jswc.74.5.91A).

- Andrew Sharpley, Arkansas
- Matthew Helmers, Iowa
- Peter Kleinman, Pennsylvania
- Kevin King, Ohio
- April Leytem, Idaho
- Nathan Nelson, Kansas

Editor's Choice Honorable Mention

In recognition of the following article of excellence appearing in the "A" Section of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* in the previous year:

Fleming, P.M., D.J. Merritts, and R.C. Walter 2019. Legacy sediment erosion hot spots: A cost-effective approach for targeting water quality improvements. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 74(4):67A-73A, [doi:10.2489/jswc.74.4.67A](https://doi.org/10.2489/jswc.74.4.67A).

- Patrick Fleming, Pennsylvania
- Dorothy J. Merritts, Pennsylvania
- Robert C. Walter, Pennsylvania

Associate Editor Excellence Award

In recognition of associate editors for their contributions to the success and development of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*.

- Daniel Moriasi, Oklahoma
- Gretchen Sassenrath, Kansas
- Zeyuan Qiu, New Jersey

Chapter Achievement Award

In recognition of chapters for significant achievements through a single activity conducted during the year.

- California Nevada Chapter
- Hoosier Chapter
- Iowa Chapter
- Land of Lincoln Chapter
- Montana Chapter

Outstanding Chapter Award

In recognition for the chapter's success in carrying out its overall program during the past year.

- Arizona Chapter
- California Nevada Chapter
- Hoosier Chapter
- Iowa Chapter
- Michigan Chapter
- National Capital Chapter
- Nebraska Chapter
- North Dakota Chapter
- Southern New England Chapter

WiN Conservationist of the Year Award

In recognition of an outstanding woman/farmer/producer/conservationist.

- Sara Creech, Indiana

WiN Award of Excellence Recipient

In recognition of an individual woman who, over a period of time, has contributed substantially and creatively to our Natural Resources Conservation profession.

- Karen Brinkman, Missouri

Opportunity for SWCS Members: Engagement Workshop Series

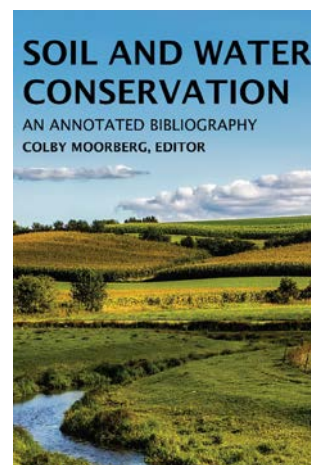
A USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) funded project is seeking out participants for a professionally facilitated Engagement Workshop Series to assess the "science of engagement" and address socio-environmental problems on working landscapes. The project team is seeking a multidisciplinary group of researchers, community stakeholders, practitioners, students, funders, and policymakers to participate in virtual meetings in winter/spring 2021 and a two-day (potential) in-person workshop at Penn State University in June of 2021. The deadline to request to participate is August 3, 2020. More information can be found [here](#).

Long-time SWCS member J. Arbuckle is a team member on this project. SWCS is excited to be embarking on a new project with J., the Conservation Practitioner Poll, which will be an inaugural survey of conservation practitioners in the Mississippi River Basin to assess their needs and gain insights from their on-the-ground work.

An Annotated Bibliography for Soil and Water Conservation

By SWCS Member Colby J. Moorberg

The open textbook, *Soil and Water Conservation: An Annotated Bibliography*, was recently published by New Prairie Press in December of 2019. This book was designed for college students in soil and water conservation courses, as well as for conservation practitioners.



The annotated bibliography is focused on conservation within the United States, due to the unique history and policies that influence US conservation efforts. It was created by a team of 25 collaborators, and was developed using a different approach than most traditional textbooks. Rather than having all of the information be contained within the textbook, this annotated bibliography leverages the many

excellent publications on soil and water conservation that are already available online for free. The cited resources

were created by credible scientists and conservationists within the discipline, and include extension publications, technical bulletins, government reports, conservation practice standards, and more. While these resources are available for free, most are not openly licensed, and thus are not easily incorporated into more traditionally formatted open textbooks. *Soil and Water Conservation: An Annotated Bibliography*, as the title implies, uses an annotated bibliography format to provide full citations and links to these resource while following a traditional chapter/section format. In addition, annotations for each citation provide context and a brief summary of the resource to readers and educators. More information on the creation of *Soil and Water Conservation: An Annotated Bibliography* is provided by [Moorberg \(2020\)](#).

If you are interested in reading the book, it can be [accessed via New Prairie Press](#) where it can be downloaded as a PDF and various eBook formats, and viewed as a web book. If you teach a college course on soil and water conservation and would like to adopt the book for use in your course, please fill out the [textbook adoption form](#).

Seeking Feedback

We are seeking instructors who have adopted *Soil and Water Conservation: An Annotated Bibliography* for use in their classroom to collaborate on a study to assess how use of the annotated bibliography influences student perceptions of the credibility of different types of information resources. If you are interested in collaborating on the assessment project, please [contact Colby Moorberg](#).

Journal Special Section: Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework



The July/August *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* is here, and in addition to the regular dose of conservation research, this issue includes a special section of open access articles related to development and application of the Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework (ACPF). The ACPF, a public domain tool developed by the

USDA Agricultural Conservation Service with support from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, uses high-resolution watershed data, including spatial land use detail, soil survey, and topography, to identify potential placement of various conservation practices. These practice placement options can then be considered by landowners and partners for site selection and practice implementation. The [overview article by Lewandowski et al.](#) provides

information regarding ACPF development, use, training, and anticipated challenges. Research articles evaluate ACPF results as well as [farmer attitudes](#) toward using a decision support tool, such as the ACPF. Additionally, in the A Section, a [practitioner article by Gesch et al.](#) of the Iowa Soybean Association describes use of the ACPF when collaborating with farmers and landowners to create watershed plans and site conservation practices.

Find the ACPF special section and much more in the [July/August JSWC](#).

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.

- [House Agriculture Appropriations](#) Committee approves fiscal year 2021 bill
- How House version of [ag spending bill](#) would impact rural America
- Additional commodities eligible for [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program](#)
- Small Business Administration [Paycheck Protection Program](#) reports on where loans went
- Tyson [meatpackers](#) said to need more protection from Coronavirus
- Federal report shows [bark beetles](#), disease kills trees across Southwest
- Spreading [rock dust](#) on fields could remove vast amounts of CO₂ from air
- [Florida's](#) Governor DeSantis signs environmental bills, penalties to polluters
- Ag role in [House Climate Plan](#): Biofuel groups see positives in push for low-carbon fuels standard, but criticism and silence remain
- Senate bill would help farmers get into [carbon markets](#), say backers
- ["Carbon farming"](#) could make agriculture truly green
- The [Lake Erie](#) Bill of Rights is dead. A voluntary effort will pay farmers to reduce runoff instead.
- Opinion: Rolling back [environmental](#) protections under cover of the pandemic
- US Secretary of Agriculture Perdue says United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement ([USMCA](#)) huge win for US agriculture

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.

New Members

Welcome members who joined in June!

California/Nevada

Katy Lam
Katlyn Lonergan

Colorado

Jack Carlson

DC—National Capital Chapter

Joseph Prenger

Florida

Edrick Marrero

Georgia

Nicholas Hill

Iowa

Christopher Hiher
Matt McAndrew

Iowa—Iowa State University Student Chapter

Yusu St. Cyr

Illinois

Heidi Hartmann

Minnesota

Dan Maxbauer

Missouri—Show Me

Amanda Wolfgeher

Montana

Susan Tallman

New Mexico

Luna Natoli

Ohio—All Ohio

Beth Diesch

South Dakota

Ben Brockmueller

Tennessee

Elise Comeaux
Christopher Wilson

Virginia

Caitlin Caitlin

Wisconsin

Shelly Gradwell-Brenneman
Brian Resch

Corporate Partners

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

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