



**CONSERVOGRAM** > The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

**In This Issue**

78th SWCS International Annual Conference Updates	1
Congratulations to the 2023 Award Winners	1
Thank You to Our 78th SWCS International Annual Conference Sponsors	2
Sponsor Spotlight: USDA NRCS	2
SWCS Emerging Leaders Program	3
July/August Issue of the Journal	4
New Member Welcome	4
Upcoming Chapter Events	4
Season 2: Student Professional Development Series	4
Upcoming Webinar Series	5
Exploring the SWCS Headquarters	5
New Members	6
Corporate Partners	6

**78th SWCS International Annual Conference Updates**

Des Moines, Iowa  
August 6-9, 2023  
[www.swcs.org/23AC](http://www.swcs.org/23AC)

**Register by July 26**

Registration for the 78th SWCS international Annual Conference, August 6-9, 2023, in Des Moines, Iowa, ends **July 26**.

The agenda will feature the latest conservation ideas, technologies, and practices, and foster a dialogue around their adoption. Through workshops, sessions, symposia, tours, exhibits, and demonstrations, cutting-edge research and practice developments in soil health, water quality, and resource management will be shared.

For complete conference details and to register, visit [www.swcs.org/23AC](http://www.swcs.org/23AC). Once your registration is completed, be sure to make your hotel reservation before the discounted room block ends **July 14**.

**Congratulations to the 2023 Award Winners**

SWCS would like to congratulate the winners of the 2023 SWCS awards. Awards are presented annually to individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions in advocating and advancing the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources.

View the [full press release](#) and visit [www.swcs.org/awards](http://www.swcs.org/awards) for additional information on this year's award recognitions.

All award winners will be showcased during the awards luncheon at the 2023 SWCS International Annual Conference on August 8, 2023, in Des Moines, Iowa. [Register](#) by **July 26** to join us for the event!

## Thank You to Our 78th SWCS International Annual Conference Sponsors

### Presenting Sponsor



### Platinum Sponsors



### Gold Sponsor



### Silver Sponsor



### Bronze Sponsors



### Student Leader Development Sponsor



Association Of Retired Conservation Service Employees

### Tour Luncheon Sponsor



## Sponsor Spotlight: USDA NRCS

### Growing Conservation in Iowa

*Courtesy of the USDA NRCS*

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.



*Mills County farmer Jon Bakehouse (right) talks to NRCS District Conservationist Andrew Welch about the cover cereal rye is providing the soil as his 2023 corn crop grows. Bakehouse has a Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) with NRCS that includes several conservation practice enhancements.*

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.

## 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 450. We have 100 field offices in Iowa's 99 counties, each at centrally located USDA Service Centers. About 250 conservation partners from the Iowa Department of Agriculture, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and other

conservation groups work side-by-side with our staff to plan and implement conservation practices.

The NRCS staff includes soil conservationists, engineers, technicians, biologists, agronomists, farm bill program specialists, and other field experts who provide technical assistance 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 2022, Iowa NRCS employees wrote more than 12,000 conservation plans and contracted with farmers to treat natural resource concerns on nearly 900,000 acres, obligating \$70 million in financial assistance. The most adopted conservation practices last year through conservation planning and programs in Iowa included cover crops, brush management, prescribed grazing, and no-till.

## NRCS has Fields of Opportunities in Iowa!

If you are interested in a career in conservation, visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.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](http://usajobs.gov).

If you are interested in working with NRCS staff to help plan and implement voluntary conservation practices on your land, [click here](#) to find your local office information.

## SWCS Emerging Leaders Program

*By Emma Harper, SWCS Communications Coordinator*

Do you remember your first day on the job? You were eager, excited, and maybe a little terrified. You were coming out of college feeling at least relatively prepared with “all the knowledge you need to be successful...” Then this industry’s alphabet soup and paperwork hit, and reality set in. You realized there was so much left to learn, and it might have felt isolating, overwhelming, and chaotic.

SWCS member Lauren Haygood is a few years into her career at Oklahoma State University and talks about her struggles with imposter syndrome and experiencing setbacks: “It can be quite difficult when you feel like you are not good enough or qualified for something, but in reality, you are. Failure also isn’t talked about enough in the sciences. People, including myself, tended to believe that all their professors had just sailed through school, and that wasn’t the case. I feel that it could be talked about more to show people early in their career that you will have setbacks, but it’s all a part of being a scientist.”

While college provides the important technical knowledge about conservation, applying that knowledge is a skill that can only be learned on the job. Colby Moorberg,

SWCS member and associate professor at Kansas State University, shared, “One thing that was the hardest to learn, but likely the most important for long-term success, is working toward a work-life balance.” Everyone will develop these skills differently, but no one should have to do it alone. **Mentorship and building a community are crucial to future success.** Lauren shared, “My mentors helped me be confident in who I am as a scientist. Without that confidence, it would be much harder to get things accomplished.” Colby also spoke highly of the value of mentorship. “Their guidance helped me ‘learn the ropes’ as I entered academia and helped to reduce some of the heartburn I could have experienced along the way.”

**SWCS is here to help.** We recently launched a brand-new Emerging Leaders Program designed to provide professionals in the first five years of their conservation careers the skills, mentorship, and tools they need to be tomorrow’s leaders in conservation.

**Program activities and benefits include the following:**

- Receive one year of complimentary SWCS membership and access to all membership benefits
- Attend quarterly virtual modules to receive training and resources from SWCS staff and partners
- Complete the Conservation Events Planning Workshop, earn a certification, receive an events toolkit, and host an in-person event with virtual SWCS staff support
- Gain professional skills like virtual communications, basic graphic design, event planning, and community building with professionals in their region
- Receive guidance and mentorship from leaders across disciplines to develop their leadership style
- Attend the 79th SWCS International Annual Conference in 2024 with a free registration

Would you or someone you know be interested in applying? Learn more and apply at [www.swcs.org/growconservation](http://www.swcs.org/growconservation) by **August 16**. Program space is limited!

If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact Renee Bouldin at [renee.bouldin@swcs.org](mailto:renee.bouldin@swcs.org).





## July/August Issue of the Journal



The most recent *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* is here, and this issue is packed with the latest in natural resource conservation research and practice. In the journal's A Section, economist Clayton Ogg argues that "[USDA's climate-smart initiatives](#) are only as good as the practices they support" and makes recommendations for program success.

Additionally, Zhou et al.

consider the benefits of a implementing a [circular nutrient economy](#) in the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River basin. Research articles include work by Kaur et al. to investigate the impacts of [drainage water recycling](#) for irrigation on soil properties, conservation practice adoption studies by Guo et al. (in the [upper Midwest](#)) and Rudnick et al. (in [California](#)), and an examination by Luo et al. of [water conservation versus consumption](#) across ecosystems in the Dongjiang River basin in China. Find these and articles on many more topics in the [online journal](#).

## New Member Welcome

SWCS headquarters will host a virtual New Member Welcome on Wednesday, August 2, from 12:00 to 12:30 p.m. CT. This event is to welcome new members who joined after April 15, 2023. SWCS Chapter and Community Builder Renee Bouldin and Membership Director Erika Crady will present this welcome via Zoom. They will share tips for making the most of your SWCS membership and connecting with fellow conservationists.

Advanced registration is required. [Register today!](#)

## Season 2: Student Professional Development Series

### Registration is Open!

SWCS has teamed up with the National Society for Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS), the National Association of Conservation Districts, and the Soil Health Institute to host a second season of our virtual Student Professional Development Series. Join leading experts in natural resources, conservation, agriculture, and related STEM sciences as they share insights to help you develop your career.

Attendees will

- Connect with speakers
- Gain exposure to conservation organizations
- Build their network
- Develop their professional skill set

All are welcome to attend! Learn more and register at [www.swcs.org/studentevents](http://www.swcs.org/studentevents).

### Save the Dates for Season 2

- Session 5: Time Management — September 20, 2023
- Session 6: Managing Burnout — October 25, 2023
- Session 7: Effective Public Speaking — November 29, 2023
- Session 8: Combatting Imposter Syndrome — January 24, 2024
- Session 9: Creating a Personal Mission — February 21, 2024

## Upcoming Chapter Events

[Northwest Conservation Professionals: SWCS Lunch and Learn](#)

Virtual Event  
July 25, 2023



## Upcoming Webinar Series

SWCS hosts several educational webinar series, all of which are free or exclusive to members. Learn more at [www.swcs.org/events/webinars](http://www.swcs.org/events/webinars).

The next session of the **SWCS Members Only Book Club: A Year with Aldo Leopold** is July 28, at 12 p.m. CT. Participants will resume their discussions of Aldo Leopold's classic work, *A Sand County Almanac*. [Registration details](#) will be emailed directly to active members.

The **Conservation Matters** webinar series is taking a break in July and will return Thursday, August 24, at 12 p.m. CT. In this webinar, presented by the SWCS Science and Policy Committee, we will explore the role of nutrient and water management in climate-smart soil and water conservation. [Register online](#) and share this opportunity with interested colleagues as well!

## Exploring the SWCS Headquarters

By Joe Otto, SWCS Special Projects and Partnerships Director/Historian

Coming full circle can be surprising and unexpected. When I arrived at SWCS headquarters as an intern in the spring of 2019, my job was to archive the organization's important documents and artifacts for posterity. This meant combing through three-ring binders, file cabinets, and cardboard boxes of every size and description. SWCS has been around a long time, so of course we have a long history to tell and share, which comes with an equally long paper trail needing followed. Retracing members' early steps to join and lead the conservation movement through analysis of historical documents and artifacts was my job—at first.

Once the boxes were opened and the file cabinets cataloged, I turned my attention to the headquarters building itself. The original Board of Directors' meeting room had been converted into cubicle space sometime in the mid-1990s. The professionalized desk-driver turn that happened during the Soil Conservation Service (SCS)-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) transition impacted SWCS as well. However, that was 30 years ago, when our staff was larger and we published many materials in-house. So why not collapse those cubes and bring back the meeting room? The day I found the Allen wrench that came with the cubicles was a momentous day. The cube walls came down very quickly after that! This was the first step toward a larger rehabilitation effort to bring back the historic functionality and aesthetics of SWCS headquarters.

As I explored every nook and cranny of headquarters I developed a sincere appreciation for the building itself. Some say it looks like a church, others an airplane, and still for others it looks like something straight out of a 1960s *Jetsons* cartoon. It is many things to many people. For me, it is not only a permanent home for SWCS staff

and property, but it is also a historic monument to the conservation movement and SWCS's place as a leader of it. It was built by members in the early 1960s and dedicated to the memory of Hugh Hammond Bennett—the first chief of NRCS and founder of SWCS. The place itself is historic as a setting for the growth and maturation of SWCS as the premiere organization for conservation professionals.

Every member should take a pilgrimage to headquarters at least once in their lives, and what better time to do so than next month during our annual conference? The event will be held in Des Moines, Iowa, from August 6-9, just a stone's throw from headquarters. There are two opportunities to see headquarters during conference. The first is on Sunday, August 6. We will be holding an open house from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. It is free to attend and no RSVP is required. If you are in town, please drop in and say hello. The second is on Wednesday, August 9. As part of the all-day tour "Voyage Through Town, Country, and History," you will be given a tour of the headquarters building and grounds and also be provided a lunch. Registration is required for the tour.

To return to the point made at the outset of this column about coming full circle—in preparing to open our doors to members, we at SWCS headquarters have tidied nearly every square inch of the property. From those early steps to preserve our documented history, we have come full circle to rehabilitating our historic building. Not only rearranging furniture, but also deep cleaning the dark corners, landscaping the grounds, and generally making every effort to show off our beautiful, historic home to you. You helped us build it, after all, so you should enjoy it, too. If you do visit us for the first time this August, please let us know what you think it looks like.



## New Members

Welcome members who joined in June!

### Alabama

Laura Beth

### DC—National Capital Chapter

Dana Ashford-Kornburger

### Georgia

Robert Amos  
Matthew Carter  
Meg Seidel

### Iowa

Derek Hommer  
Alec Matthew

### Indiana—Purdue University Student Chapter

Kanru Chen

### Kansas

Joshua Brown

### Maryland—Maryland Old Line

Caroline Harper

### Nebraska

Chrystal Houston

### South Dakota

Varshith Kommineni

### Tennessee

Shannon Miller

## Corporate Partners

Please visit [www.swcs.org/corporatepartner](http://www.swcs.org/corporatepartner) for more information on how to become a corporate partner.

### Platinum

---



### Gold

---



### Silver

---



### Bronze

---

