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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

SWCS Annual Conference REVAMPED and RECHARGED

If you haven't already noticed, this year's SWCS International Annual Conference agenda underwent an exciting facelift. After listening to feedback received from our conference participants and planning committee, we heard loud and clear that participants were having to make difficult decisions between sessions taking place concurrently. With so many great options on the agenda, there was not enough time to take everything in, so this year, we've given you more time! By rearranging the agenda and adding a half day on Wednesday, we were able to minimize the number of breakout sessions occurring simultaneously and lessen the overlap on the first day of the conference. This will allow participants to more easily narrow down their selection, attend more sessions, and as an added bonus, earn more CEUs!

As part of the revamp, we have moved the Fellows Forum to Sunday evening, making it the official kick-off event for the Annual Conference. This year's Fellows Forum includes a thoughtfully planned program complemented by light snacks and refreshments. Following the Forum, SWCS will host a meet and greet with Ken Olson and Lois Wright Morton, the authors of our newest publication, *Managing Mississippi and Ohio River Landscapes*.

Fellows Forum

Changing River Landscapes: The Past is the Key to Future
Sunday, July 24, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Controlling the Mississippi River is a mighty task, and the 2011 flooding of its alluvial valley is a reminder of



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just how difficult this task can be. The Fellows Forum will kick off this year's "Managing Great Rivers" conference theme with Charles Camillo, US Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi River Commission executive director and author of the book *Divine Providence*, who will talk about the tough decisions needed to manage the Ohio and Mississippi rivers during the 2011 Great Flood and the post-flood efforts to repair and strengthen the vast system of levees and wetlands along these rivers. The Mississippi and Ohio Inland Waterway, representing 40% of the United States, is an ecological, social, political, and economic force that affects farmland, rural places, and urban centers. Following the keynote, a panel will address local and river-wide challenges associated with managing these great rivers and their tributaries for navigation, flood control, ecological health, and recreational activities.

Early Registration Deadline—Last Call!

The early registration deadline for the Annual Conference is Monday, June 20. After this date, conference fees will increase by up to \$100.

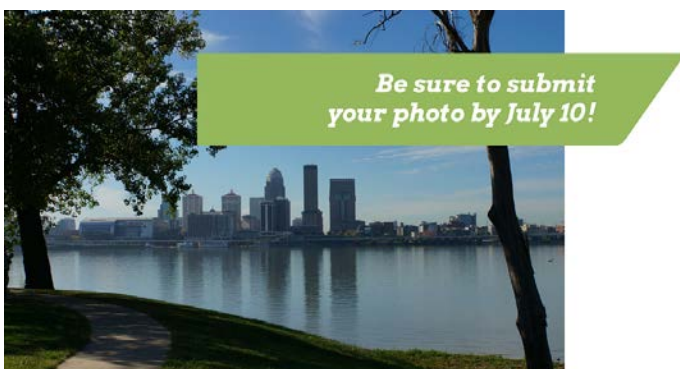
Exhibitor and Sponsorship Opportunities Available

Do you have an organization or a business or know of one that could benefit from increased exposure to over 400 conservation professionals? If so, please visit www.swcs.org/16ac for details on becoming an exhibitor or sponsor of the 71st SWCS Annual Conference.

You may also contact corporatate.info@swcs.org or call 515-289-2331 ext. 114 to receive further details or to discuss a customized sponsorship package. Exhibitor and sponsor referrals are also greatly appreciated!

Great River Landscapes Photo Contest

Want to share your love of water? Need a creative challenge? Enter our first-ever SWCS Annual Conference Photo Contest! In line with our 2016 conference theme, we want to see your river landscapes. Top photos will be displayed at the conference and will compete for an award. Enter now through July 10, 2016. Details and entry instructions may be found at www.swcs.org/16ac.



Louisville skyline as viewed across the Ohio River from the Falls of Ohio Park, Indiana. Photograph by Lois Wright Morton.

Corporate Sponsor Spotlight: USDA NRCS

By Sylvia Rainford, Public Affairs Specialist, NRCS, Washington, DC



See USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Innovation Grants in action July 25 through 27 at the 2016 SWCS Annual Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

Discover how...

- The Flint River Partnership in Georgia works with landowners to use soil moisture sensors and a model to enhance the wise use of irrigation water on 50 fields throughout the Lower Flint River Basin. The Flint River is one of the most ecologically rich river systems in the United States and is the epicenter of Georgia's agricultural economy.
- Michigan State University and the University of Arizona are designing technology that doubles both the retention of water in soil and nutrients in plant root zones to protect groundwater from contamination.
- University of Missouri experts are studying the economic and natural resource benefits of using cover crops on selected fields in the state. The study quantifies these benefits in eight small watersheds, compared to two control watersheds.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIGs) administered by the USDA NRCS spark new concepts, ideas, and approaches to conservation. NRCS funds CIGs through its popular Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The agency's partners match that funding.

In the Annual Conference's main exhibit hall, CIG grantees will display 10 posters spotlighting their projects. SWCS will feature abstracts about these projects in the conference agenda and on the Society's website. NRCS will discuss the innovations funded through CIG in oral presentations.

Three CIG breakout sessions will be held on Monday, July 25, from 10:30 a.m. to noon; 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.; and 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Have an innovative idea you want to explore? NRCS's national CIG team and several project grantees from across the nation will be on hand to talk with you at the conference. NRCS CIG team members attending the conference are Conservation Engineering Division Director Noller Herbert; CIG Program Manager Mike Bennett (Mike.Bennett@wdc.usda.gov); Program Analyst Melleny Cotton (Melleny.Cotton@wdc.usda.gov) and Natural Resource Specialist Phil "Kipp" Cherry (Phil.Cherry@wdc.usda.gov).

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, July 26, 2016, during the Annual Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. 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.



Jerry Hatfield is this year's Hugh Hammond Bennett Award recipient.

Jerry Hatfield is a plant physiologist and the laboratory director at the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) National Lab for Agriculture and the Environment. Hatfield's career has been devoted to soil and water conservation issues,

and he travels and speaks tirelessly to raise awareness of the links between climate, agricultural management, production, and soil and water quality. While he did not create a new institution, he has managed a large research laboratory for a quarter of a century and has provided significant leadership to the USDA ARS, academic societies, organizations focused on conservation, as well as to multi-institutional and multi-national research efforts. Hatfield has been responsible for providing the technical management for such multi-agency, multi-location, and multi-disciplinary programs, such as the Management Systems Evaluation Areas (MSEA) and Agricultural Systems for Environmental Quality (AWEQ) across the Midwest. Hatfield has also led efforts in livestock and cropping systems research, as well as the impacts of climate change on agriculture. Hatfield's character and demeanor is outstanding. He is honest, persistent, and has great integrity. Like Hugh Hammond Bennett, Jerry Hatfield has tirelessly spent his career raising awareness in conservation and supporting and defending soil and water conservation issues. To this end, Jerry is well deserving of this year's Hugh Hammond Bennett Award.

Fellow Award

Kenneth R. Olson

Harold and Kay Scholl Excellence in Conservation Award

Hal Weiser

Conservation Research Award

Larry Cihacek

Merit Award

Nevada Creeks and Communities Team

Outstanding Service Award

Craig Romary

Commendation Award

Penny Galinat

Sarah Gray

Lance Loken

Melissa Merritt

Cathy O'Neil

Melville H. Cohee Student Leader Conservation Scholarship

Cory James Cole—University of Alaska

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

White, M.J., C. Santhi, N. Kannan, J.G. Arnold, D. Harmel, L. Norfleet, P. Allen, M. DiLuzio, X. Want, J. Atwood, E. Haney, and M. Vaughn Johnson. 2014. Nutrient delivery from the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico and effects of cropland conservation. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 69(1):26-40.

Best Research Paper Award for Impact and Quality—Honorable Mention

Galzki, J.C., A.S. Birr, and D.J. Mulla. 2011. Identifying critical agricultural area with three-meter LiDAR elevation data for precision conservation. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 66(6):423-430.

Editor's Choice Award

Smith, D.R., K.W. King, and M.R. Williams. 2015. What is causing the harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie? *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 70(2):27-29.

Editor's Choice Award—Honorable Mention

Don C. Reicosky. 2015. Conservation tillage is not conservation agriculture. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 70(5):103-108.

Chapter Awards

SWCS would like to congratulate chapters receiving awards at the 2016 Annual Conference. Awards will be presented at an awards luncheon at noon on Tuesday, July 26, 2016, during the Annual Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. All conference attendees are invited to attend.

Outstanding Chapter Award
North Dakota Chapter

Chapter Achievement Award
Hoosier (Indiana) Chapter

Sustained Performance Award
Michigan Chapter

Chapter Spotlight: Mississippi State University Student Chapter

Chapter location: Mississippi State University (MSU), Starkville, Mississippi

Current chapter president: Steely Martin

Please provide a short history of the chapter. The MSU Chapter was reestablished in 2015 after about five years of inactivity. To date, the chapter has completed numerous activities including a stream cleanup, research activities, fundraisers, publishing of a conservation journal, and Soil and Water Day.



Members with some of the trash removed during the stream cleanup.

Please describe your most successful chapter event in the last year. What did members gain from this experience?

Soil and Water Day was our most successful event last year. It was held on campus and hosted by the SWCS MSU Chapter. It included poster presentations, booths from different professionals in the field of conservation, and more information about our organization. Members were able to support the event by creating posters to be displayed and by helping set up the informational booths. Student members not only learned by visiting the professionals' booths, but also by teaching others about local and global conservation issues.

What other activities has your chapter been involved in this year? The MSU Chapter has participated in a number of recruitment events as well. We have had booths set up at organization fairs and environmental fairs. We also hold biweekly meetings and have had guest speakers from the field present to the student members and any guests present at the meetings.

What is your membership's preferred method of communication? The group communicates through emails, but we hope to establish a Facebook page to help boost communication.

What would you say are the most important current conservation concerns for your region? Our chapter of SWCS focuses on water quality. Catalpa Creek is located on our campus and beyond and is polluted and in need of improvement. The research focused on the creek is what sparked the reestablishment of the chapter, and we have focused on water quality since then. This is an issue



"Like" the Soil and Water Conservation Society on Facebook to keep up with the latest Society news and conservation current events!



Upcoming Events

[Finding Environmental Synergy in the Oil Field: Strategies and Lessons Learned](#)

Medora, North Dakota
June 14-15, 2016

[Nebraska Chapter Annual Meeting](#)

Norfolk, Nebraska
June 23-25, 2016

[Oklahoma Chapter Annual Meeting](#)

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
June 23-24, 2016

[Empire Chapter Edge of Field Training](#)

Mt. Morris, New York
June 28, 2016

[71st SWCS International Annual Conference](#)

Louisville, Kentucky
July 24-27, 2016

[North Dakota Chapter Annual Meeting](#)

Bismarck, North Dakota
November 28-29, 2016

not only on our campus, but in the surrounding areas as well. As the chapter grows, we hope to be able to take on additional projects and focus our efforts on more conservation concerns in our area.

What is your favorite part of membership in SWCS? The ability to learn from professors and professionals in the field



Members conducting research on Catalpa Creek.

has been one of my favorite parts of my involvement with SWCS. We are able to participate in more hands-on learning than typical in the classroom. I have learned a great deal from the guest speakers and presenters and hope to one day support students' learning in the same way. It has

also been a great opportunity to gain more experience in leadership, especially since we are growing a new chapter.

What advice would you give to a new chapter? Since we are a new chapter, I speak from recent experience when I say that it is important to be satisfied with any level of success. Although our chapter is still small, we have more and more people at each meeting. It is great to see the chapter growing and it is important to understand that it will not be a huge chapter overnight. Just work on keeping your members engaged and making sure that there are plenty of opportunities to keep them interested and to help attract others to the organization.



Former President Laura Wilson and Vice President Emily Farrar conducting research on Catalpa Creek.

Is there any other information you'd like to share about your chapter? We are excited about the upcoming year and hope to continue to grow and offer new opportunities for our members.

Contact name and email address for questions about the chapter/membership.

Laura Wilson: lw794@msstate.edu

Steely Martin: shm151@msstate.edu

News from DC

Courtesy of SWCS DC Representative John Peterson

- Local conservation districts and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are using new technology called [DamWatch](#) to help monitor 12,000 dams across the nation that have been constructed with assistance from the USDA NRCS Watershed program.
- US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack shared the first results of USDA's [Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry](#) on May 12, one year after he unveiled the plan. Vilsack also announced a new \$72.3 million investment to boost carbon storage in healthy soils.
- On May 18, the White House hosted a roundtable on wildfire in the wildland-urban interface.
- The Senate Committee on Appropriations approved the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for the 2017 fiscal year on May 19. In the bill, \$864.474 million is appropriated for Conservation Operations.
- The Supreme Court handed a loss to the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) in a case addressing whether property owners must obtain use permits. The court ruled unanimously that a "landowner can appeal through the federal court system a determination from the Army Corps of Engineers that a water body is subject to federal jurisdiction and permit requirements under the Clean Water Act."
- USEPA proposed specific changes to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations. You can read more about the proposed rule and submit your comments [here](#).
- The American Farmland Trust announced that John Piotti, formally of Maine Farmland Trust, has been selected as their [new President](#).
- On June 1, the California House endorsed a plan (H.R. 2898) to divert more water from northern California to farmers in the San Joaquin Valley. The [247-169 vote](#) amended the Senate Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2016.

New Members

Welcome members who joined in May!

International

Cecilia M. Armas-Herrera
Brian Sofa Azane
Uriel Figueroa-Viramontes
Karin Mueller

Alabama

Stacey Riggins
William Smith

Arkansas—Razorback

Joshua Barnhill

California/Nevada

Hudson Minshew

Colorado

Patrick O'Neill

Iowa

Eric Adam
Raymond Arritt
Emily Zimmerman

Iowa—Iowa State University

Student Chapter
Dawn Henderson

Illinois

Tracy Evans

Indiana—Hoosier

Darrell Nicholson
Benjamin Reinhart

Kentucky—Bluegrass

Paulette Akers
Amanda Gumbert

Louisiana

Sarah Trichel

Minnesota

Julia Olmstead

Missouri—Show Me

Amberly Schulz

Ohio—Ohio State University

TerrAqua Student Chapter
Jesse Blanton

Oklahoma

Robert Hathorne
Cynthia Ward

Oregon

Susanna Pearlstein
East Multnomah SWCD

Tennessee

Timothy Grant
Brian Leib
Lindsey Yasarer

Texas—East Texas

Katrin Bieger

Virginia

Lincoln Boykin

West Virginia

Cheyenne Conrath

Corporate Members

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

Gold



Silver



Bronze

