

# CONSERVOGRAM

The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

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## The Soil and Water Conservation Society and COVID-19

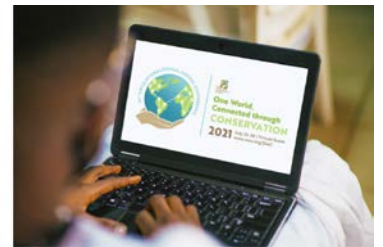
As COVID-19 has impacted all of our lives, at work and at home, we want to let you know your professional society is thinking of you and your families. As staff are working remotely, [please use email](#) to connect with SWCS at this time.

## 76<sup>th</sup> SWCS International Annual Conference

Virtual Event  
July 26–28, 2021  
[www.swcs.org/21AC](http://www.swcs.org/21AC)

### Get Excited for the Virtual 76th SWCS International Annual Conference!

7 REASONS TO  
**GET  
EXCITED**  
TO BE VIRTUAL!



The SWCS 76th International Annual Conference, to be held virtually July 26-28, 2021, will bring the latest industry research, tools, and technical information, from far and wide, right into the offices and homes of attendees.

1. A reduced registration fee and saving on travel and lodging.
2. An easy-to-use, virtual platform.
3. A potential for greater reach with the ability for attendees to tune in from their home or office.
4. Live sessions, including 140 presentations, 2 workshops, and 3 general sessions.
5. Exclusive access for presenters and attendees to view all recorded presentations concluding the event.
6. Virtual open networking and social opportunities, as well as games and contests with prizes.
7. Opportunity to live chat with sponsors and poster presenters, view the resource library, award winners, and more!

This year's keynote sessions include:

- Leadership at USDA and EPA will share a vision for the future of working lands conservation.
- Attendees will view global soil, water, and agriculture through the lens of esteemed National Geographic photographer Jim Richardson.
- Government, nonprofit, and private sector leaders will share how conservation can be measured leading to new income streams to pay for producers.

Personal and professional development sessions will accompany the science and practice presentations, and continuing education units will be available for certified crop advisors, professional agronomists, professionals in erosion and sediment control, and others.

To learn more about activities at the SWCS International Annual Conference or to register, visit [www.swcs.org/21AC](http://www.swcs.org/21AC). Registration will close July 16, 2021. In order to prepare speakers and attendees for the best event possible, no registrations will be accepted after the July 16 deadline.

## Thank You to Our 76th SWCS International Annual Conference Sponsors

Presenting Sponsor:



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Field to Market®



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## Presenting Sponsor Spotlight: Syngenta

By Caydee Savinelli, Stewardship Team & Pollinator Lead

Soil and water have been described as the two most essential natural resources on the Earth's surface. As this year's SWCS International Annual Conference theme—"One World, Connected through Conservation"—articulates so well, collective efforts are essential to protecting and sustaining these precious resources.

Together, we can help farmers practice good stewardship, meeting society's demands for food while protecting the environment. To do so, it is imperative that we raise awareness regarding the challenges facing modern agriculture and promote the adoption of sustainable soil management practices with stakeholders across the food chain. It is also essential that we work with partner organizations to raise awareness among policymakers on the benefits of these practices.

Stewardship is much more than any one project or program, though. Rather, it is the culmination of these efforts. It includes conservation but also biodiversity, pollinator health, and product use and pesticide education, to name a few. Stewardship encompasses the interconnectedness of agriculture, the natural world, and society. The intersection of these areas is collaboration.

We have long worked with farmers, for example, to increase soil health and biodiversity, two key pillars of sustainable agriculture. Under our new [Good Growth Plan](#), we are now extending our focus to measure the amount of carbon dioxide that is captured in the soil, helping farmers manage and reduce the greenhouse gases contributed by agriculture. We will also continue our long-standing work to enhance biodiversity on agricultural land and improve soil health.

At the same time, we will reduce the emissions from our own operations and those of our entire supply chain, adding to our efforts toward carbon neutral agriculture. We have set three targets and will measure and publish our progress against them each year in our [ESG Report](#):

- Measure and enable carbon capture and mitigation in agriculture
- Enhance biodiversity and soil health on 3 million hectares of rural farmland every year
- Reduce the carbon intensity of our operations by 50% by 2030

We are also committed to a safe, healthy, and fair working environment for all employees in our operations and for the farm workers across all farms we are associated with. Our products are vital to allow farmers to grow the world's food, and they must be made, transported, and used in a safe way. For this reason, we take responsibility for stewardship from the factories to the farms.

As we work to accelerate innovation across the agricultural industry, Syngenta is committed to building on our rich network of strategic sustainability partnerships with academic institutions, the food value chain, agricultural businesses, and farmers to increase the impact we can make together.

The Growing Matters coalition is one example of how we are partnering for impact. This coalition, comprised of Syngenta and the other registrants of neonicotinoid insecticides, has worked together to promote pollinator stewardship practices during planting and foliar applications through the *BeSure!* program.

For the past three years, the *BeSure!* campaign has reminded farmers and applicators across the United States to use best management practices when using these important crop protection products to protect pollinators, maintain environmental sustainability, and preserve soil and water quality. Collectively, we can better ensure these technologies are used responsibly so they remain viable. Together, across disciplines and industries, we can help secure a sustainable food supply while preserving land and protecting pollinators. Collaboration helps ensure that no matter the role we play, important tools remain available to help farmers provide us with food while creating a world in which biodiversity and conservation thrive.

Please stop by our virtual Syngenta booth at the SWCS International Annual Conference next month. We are eager to hear about your soil and water conservation efforts, and discuss how together we can help farmers grow more from less while protecting the environment.



### Upcoming Events

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

Virtual Event  
June 18, 2021

#### [Nebraska Chapter Annual Meeting](#)

Ogallala, Nebraska  
June 24-26, 2021

#### [76th SWCS International Annual Conference](#)

Virtual Event  
July 26-28, 2021

## National Capital Chapter Hosts First In-Person Event since COVID-19

The SWCS National Capital Chapter (NCC) hosted a successful chapter educational event on May 2, 2021, at the [Neabsco Creek Wetlands Boardwalk](#) at the Julie J. Metz Wetland Mitigation Bank in Woodbridge, Virginia. Several COVID-19 precautions were put in place by the NCC Officers in order to safely host the event. Neabsco Creek is a tributary of the Potomac River. The site included 213 acres of upland buffers and existing wetlands. Nearly 40 participants attended the event, the first in-person event for the NCC in more than a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic risks and limitations. Participants included SWCS NCC Board members, chapter members, and their families. The NCC also invited Webelo Cub Scouts from a nearby pack to join, working on their “Into the Woods” adventure—conservationists of the future!

SWCS-NCC Chapter President Lisa Duriancik welcomed participants. Two guest speakers, SWCS members Dr. Joe Prenger (a new member to NCC) of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Dr. Greg McCarty of USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), gave presentations on wetlands. Dr. Prenger discussed the significance of the Julie J. Metz Wetland Mitigation Bank, the first private wetlands mitigation bank in Virginia, and its monitoring for nearly 20 years. He also discussed wetland food webs with the younger attendees. Dr. McCarty of ARS presented poster boards of project descriptions and findings from the CEAP Wetlands Mid-Atlantic Regional Assessment, established in 2008 and the Choptank CEAP Watershed Assessment Study, established in 2005. Participants learned about wetlands ecosystem services in the broader Delmarva region, water quality in the Choptank River watershed on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and about a Chesapeake Bay riparian buffer effectiveness assessment of 150 buffers across three states: Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

SWCS spirit wear was raffled off in a fun fact Q&A after the talks! Following the short presentations, guests walked the wetlands boardwalk to view the wetlands and wildlife in the habitat. Examples of species observed included muskrats, many painted turtles, several snakeheads (a now common invasive species in the nearby Potomac River), a bald eagle, red tail hawks, barn swallows, great blue heron, osprey (the “fisherman of the Bay”), tree frogs, bull frogs, and snakes.



## The Conservation Practitioner Poll

On May 26, 2021, the Soil and Water Conservation Society released the Conservation Practitioner Poll. If you received an email from [swcs@qualtrics-survey.com](mailto:swcs@qualtrics-survey.com), congratulations! You have been specially selected to participate in this inaugural poll.

SWCS has been working with Iowa State University and the Walton Family Foundation for the last year to create the Conservation Practitioner Poll, a survey to regularly collect data on the needs and recommendations of conservation practitioners. Conservation practitioners are those who work hand-in-hand with farmers to put conservation practices on the ground: they are the delivery system for conservation across the nation. They provide technical assistance, target and implement funding, work with farmers to understand their land and resource concerns, and translate the farmer’s long-term goals to the landscape. Yet, the voice of conservation practitioners is largely absent. We’d like to change that.

Because the inaugural poll seeks to reach conservation practitioners, those who offer technical assistance to farmers, the poll was sent to NRCS Soil Conservationists and Soil Conservation Technicians, Soil and Water Conservation District/Department employees, watershed coordinators, and state soil and water conservation agency staff in the Mississippi River Basin.

We look forward to sharing the results with our members!

## Welcome Newly Elected SWCS Board Members!

*Christopher Hartley will officially begin his term as the Northeast Regional Director, Rebecca Power will continue serving as the North Central Regional Director, and Ellen Gilinsky will be taking the At-Large Director role beginning August 1, 2021.*

### Northeast Regional Director: Christopher Hartley



Christopher Hartley is the senior environmental markets analyst with the USDA’s Office of Environmental Markets. He is responsible for the development of policy, tools, and metrics to facilitate private investment in conservation and the participation of farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners in emerging environmental markets. He previously worked for the Natural

Resources Conservation Service in Washington, DC, and in California. He is a member of the National Capital Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, where he has served in numerous leadership positions.

Hartley is a certified crop advisor and a licensed pest control advisor with more than 25 years of experience working in support of production agriculture and the promotion of clean air, clean water, and a safe and abundant food supply. He earned a doctorate in agricultural ecology and master's degrees in agronomy and international agricultural development from the University of California–Davis. He also served with the US Peace Corps in Senegal, West Africa, from 1993 to 1996.

### North Central Regional Director: Rebecca Power



Rebecca Power is Director of the 12-state North Central Region Water Network and leads a range of other water outreach programs at the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Extension. During her 20 years with UW-Extension, she co-directed the six-state Great Lakes Regional Water Program and served as a local natural resource educator in the Upper Fox and Wolf River Basins. In each of these positions, her role has been to work with

natural resource leaders locally, across the Upper Midwest, and nationally to identify strategic opportunities and develop teams and programs to address those opportunities. ([Read full bio here](#))

### At-Large Director: Ellen Gilinsky



Ellen Gilinsky, PhD, is president of Ellen Gilinsky, LLC, which she started in January of 2017 to work with government, industry, and the private sector on finding environmental solutions to water challenges. Her clients include Resources for the Future, National Great Rivers Research and

Education Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Environmental Defense Fund, SERA-46 Land Grant Universities, and National Academy of Sciences. As part of the Obama Administration from 2011 through 2016, she was the Associate Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water at the US Environmental Protection Agency, where she played a key role in water programs at the federal, state, and local levels, working closely with diverse stakeholders in the water quality, quantity, and agriculture sectors, and serving as co-chair of the Mississippi River/ Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Task Force. Prior to this appointment, Gilinsky served as director of the Water Division at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and in the early 1980s she was part of Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Program staff. ([Read full bio here](#))

## 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.

- [Agrivoltaics](#) may offer fresh way to produce food and energy
- US trade representative [hosts](#) first United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) meeting
- Swift River to get less swift in effort to abate slow-moving Sumas Mountain [landslide](#)
- Secret subsidies: [Payments](#) to farms allowed to stretch far beyond rural America, sowing concern about who gets what
- US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) wants [Roundup redo](#)
- Biden signs EO to evaluate and mitigate climate-related [financial risk](#)
- [Carbon storage](#) offers hope for climate, cash for farmers
- [Debt relief](#) for US minority farmers coming in June
- [Water crisis](#) “couldn’t be worse” on Oregon-California border
- Preventing the spread of [plant pandemics](#)
- More communities are finding [toxic chemicals](#) in their drinking water
- Agriculture emits a “forgotten greenhouse gas.” Scientists are looking for [solutions](#) in the soil
- Mexican judge rejects industry bid to [halt GMO](#) corn, glyphosate ban
- US [organic sales](#) soar to new high
- Historic [flooding](#) cripples Mississippi farmlands
- Some eastern Wyoming farmers testing new intermediate [wheatgrass](#)

*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 May

### California/Nevada

Nate Hutt  
David Lewis

### Colorado

Kathy Griffiee

### DC—National Capital Chapter

Brianna Henry

### Delaware/Maryland—Pokomoke

Ousmane Diallo

### Iowa

Carissa Shoemaker

### Illinois

Alison Volk

### Indiana—Hoosier

John Dixon

### Louisiana

Josh Anderson  
James Boyett

### Massachusetts—University of Massachusetts- Amherst Student Chapter

James Rigney

### Michigan

Joet Reoma

### Minnesota

Gustavo Merten

### Montana

Jennifer Gallus

### Nebraska

Jonathon Sliva

### Tennessee

Peyton Harper

### Virginia

Tim Fink  
Laura Muhs

### Wisconsin

Kara O'Connor  
April Opatik

### Wyoming

Ellen Yeatman

## New Conservation Community Members

Welcome community members who joined in May! Learn how to become a conservation community member [here](#).

### South Carolina

Sumter SWCD

## Corporate Partners

Please contact [memberservices@swcs.org](mailto:memberservices@swcs.org) or visit [swcs.org/corporatepartner](http://swcs.org/corporatepartner) for more details.

### Platinum



### Gold



### Silver



### Bronze

