

# CONSERVOGRAM

The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

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## 74th SWCS International Annual Conference

Wyndham Grand Downtown  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
July 28–31, 2019

[www.swcs.org/19AC](http://www.swcs.org/19AC)

### Get Ready, Pennsylvania—Here We Come!

This summer we'll be holding our 74th SWCS International Annual Conference in beautiful Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Take advantage of summer vacation and bring the whole family to Pittsburgh!

Pittsburgh offers so many fun, family-oriented attractions including history museums, visual or performing arts, tours and sights, shopping, sports teams, and more. Check out the list of things to do compiled by [Visit Pittsburgh](#) to create your very own way to experience the city!



### Conference Hotel Accommodations

This year's conference will take place at the Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown, the SWCS headquarters hotel. The Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh is located at the point where the Monongahela, Allegheny, and Ohio rivers meet, providing beautiful views of the waterscapes and Point State Park from the heart of downtown.

SWCS has negotiated a discounted conference rate of \$155 for single and double occupancy rooms. This block



is available on a first-come, first-served basis, and the discounted rate is available through July 4, 2019. Room rates for reservations booked after July 4 are at the hotel's discretion and are based on availability. Make your reservation [online](#) or call 412-391-4600 for the discounted group rate under the Soil and Water Conservation Society, code 07226781SO.

Visit [www.swcs.org/19AC](http://www.swcs.org/19AC) for additional information.


## Transportation

The Wyndham Grand is located approximately 25 minutes from the Pittsburgh International Airport. Our recommended economical method of travel to and from the airport is to take a taxi, Uber, or Lyft. You may also wish to arrange a rental car or private shuttle service, such as Super Shuttle ([www.supershuttle.com](http://www.supershuttle.com)).

[Additional transportation information](#) is available online.

## Exhibitor and Sponsor Opportunities Available

Do you have an organization or know of one that could benefit from increased exposure to over 400 conservation professionals? If so, view the opportunities in our [Exhibitor and Sponsor Guide](#) for details on becoming an exhibitor or sponsor of the 74th SWCS International Annual Conference, "Bridging the Divide: Uniting Rural and Urban Landscapes for Conservation." Contact [events@swcs.org](mailto:events@swcs.org) with any questions.



SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION SOCIETY

# BRIDGING the DIVIDE:

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## Uniting Rural and Urban Landscapes for Conservation

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74th SWCS International Annual Conference  
July 28-31, 2019 • Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

## Individual Awards and Scholarships Deadline: March 29

The SWCS awards program is designed to recognize individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions in advocating the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources. Nominate an individual today! Visit [www.swcs.org/awards](http://www.swcs.org/awards) for more information and to submit your nomination.

SWCS has three scholarship opportunities for all members. Take advantage today and apply! Visit [www.swcs.org/scholarships](http://www.swcs.org/scholarships) for additional information and to fill out your application

Submission deadline for individual awards and scholarships is **March 29, 2019**.

## Chapter Activity Report and Awards Nomination Form

Show off your chapter's achievements and conservation efforts through an SWCS Chapter Award! Our Chapter Awards Nomination Form is combined with the mandatory Chapter Activity Report, allowing chapters to easily apply for two annual awards when filling out the report. This report can be filled out, saved, and continued at a later time as well. If you'd like your chapter to be considered for an award, please contact your local chapter officers and make sure they fill out the activity report by **March 29, 2019**.

Details about the Chapter Activity Report and Awards Nomination Form are [online](#). Questions? Contact your chapter leader or email [memberservices@swcs.org](mailto:memberservices@swcs.org).

### Upcoming Events

#### [Southern New England Chapter Annual Winter Conference](#)

Berlin, Connecticut  
March 22, 2019

#### [California/Nevada Chapter Conference: Women in Conservation](#)

Reno, Nevada  
May 23-24, 2019

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

Davis, Oklahoma  
June 6-7, 2019

#### [SWCS 74th International Annual Conference](#)

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
July 28-31, 2019



## March/April Issue of the Journal is Now Available



The March/April issue of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* is now available online and will be delivered to mailboxes soon. Feature articles in this issue include work completed by the University of Tennessee to develop the Stormwater Treatment Assessment Resource (STAR), a comprehensive program that assists in determining whether proposed stormwater

management designs meet regulatory targets in order to ease the design-review process. The lessons described may be applicable for future developers of similar natural resource management tools. Also in the A Section, Olson and Morton examine historical and current water resource and land management decisions in northwestern Pennsylvania. In the Research Section, Hendricks et al. find that excess fertilization of tomato crops in Florida is not economically or environmentally sustainable given expected future increases in extreme weather conditions, and Hilimire and Greenberg discuss results of a survey exploring water conservation practices among beginning farmers in the western United States. Find these and many more articles in the [online Journal](#).

## Intern Insights

We're using the hashtag **#InternInsights** on Twitter to show-off some of the historical artifacts our intern Whitney has been discovering at SWCS headquarters. Follow along as she uncovers new conservation treasures weekly!



*Historical photo taken by Jim Page for the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development, now North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality.*

## Illinois Chapter Hosts Prescribed Burn Workshop

*Courtesy of Illinois Chapter Membership Chair Duane Friend*

Prairie restoration is slowly increasing in Illinois. These new prairie acres will eventually need planned, periodic burns to maintain their vitality. To accomplish these controlled burns, people must have the knowledge, skills, and equipment to succeed.

The SWCS Illinois Chapter addressed this need by hosting a Prescribed Burn workshop on February 22, 2019, in Montgomery County, Illinois. Over 45 participants heard burn managers and specialists discuss prairie burn ecology, burn planning, permits and paperwork, equipment and safety, and interagency cooperation. Speakers were from Western Illinois University, The Nature Conservancy, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Although the weather did not permit an actual burn demonstration, participants were divided into groups in the afternoon to look at burn units at Bremer Sanctuary, an area managed by the Audubon Society.

The chapter is considering extending the workshop to other areas of the state.



*Members of the SWCS Illinois Chapter gather for the prescribed burn workshop in Montgomery County, Illinois.*

## Career Profile: Naveen Adusumilli

You can read Naveen Adusumilli's career profile in its entirety [online](#).



**Naveen Adusumilli**, Assistant Professor, Louisiana State University (LSU)

**Career Sector:** Academia

**Degrees:** PhD in Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University; MS from West Texas A&M University; Bachelors in Systems Agriculture, N.G. Ranga Agricultural University, India

**Briefly describe your career path from college until today.** I finished my bachelors, which was in general agriculture, but I definitely had an interest in agricultural economics, and that's what I wanted to pursue. I applied for a masters at West Texas A&M, and that was my first step into learning about conservation.

For my masters, I worked on the Ogallala Aquifer, which is the only water resource in the area for agriculture. I, along with many others, was looking into what we should grow and how much we should irrigate. Then we did what is called a "dynamic optimization analysis," looking into the production alternatives for the region and the overall returns if farmers change their production mix.

After my masters, I had the opportunity to go for a PhD at Texas A&M, and I'm very proud to be an "Aggie." There I worked with Ron Lacewell and Ed Rister. Both of them are resource and production economists, and that is where I got introduced to the policy surrounding conservation. After I finished my PhD I worked for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) in Washington, DC, in their water program for two years. Then Louisiana State University (LSU) was putting together a faculty cohort in the area of water resources, and I moved there.

**What was the best advice you received regarding your career?** One, for sure, I still keep in mind was from Ed Rister. He always told me to keep your head high and keep moving forward and do something. Don't sit down and worry about what you're going to do, just do it. I follow that, even today. You've got to do something. I keep learning, keep my head high, and move forward.

I was lucky enough to have good mentors, along with my parents, all my life. My wife has always been a great support. When I joined LSU, I started my career at the research station instead of on campus; it was a blessing

in disguise because the research center director was an excellent mentor, Patrick Colyer. He told me all the time: go talk to farmers. You sit in front of the computer and you look at model after model and they start to tell you exactly what you want them to tell you, but then you talk to the farmer and you learn why they do what they do. The majority of my appointment is extension. It definitely helped me to communicate with the farmers and learn the kind of practices they're putting on the ground. It helped me develop my research and extension goals.

**How has SWCS impacted your career, or contributed to your continued education and/or professional development?** For the past four years, I've attended the SWCS's Annual Conference. I've learned a great deal from the other participants, like Linda Prokopy—she's faculty at Purdue. I met her and I started to follow her research. I found I had a lot to learn. I'm also part of the Science and Policy Committee, and I've learned a lot from those folks. When I go to the meeting and see other members present their material, it gives me ideas and other objectives I want to pursue from an economic standpoint. It's been truly valuable.

**What changes in required skillsets do you foresee?** Early on I always assumed that agricultural economists spend a lot of time in their offices, in front of computers, doing modeling and data analysis. However, I have learned that we need to step out of the office and interact with the farmers and other conservation folks. That will help you come up with research ideas and outcomes that are more pragmatic and realistic. I would encourage that shift in thinking. We can come up with 100 different solutions, but what works for farmers is what they'll actually implement. I personally feel that as much as research is important, getting accessible materials to the farmer is just as important. I'm proud of the extension work I do, and I'm proud of all the extension folks.

**What advice would you give to college students who want to go into agricultural economics?** First, some general advice: I think you need to be ready to learn. Once you're in the real world it is important to identify groups, individuals, and agencies that are in your line of work. For example, I work very closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Louisiana and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts. You need to have that interaction because they will tell you why a particular policy is in place, and is written the way it is, and how you can take that message to the farmer. Make an effort to start that conversation. No meeting or phone call is useless. It will pay back, either now or sometime in the future, but that connection will have value.

## 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.

- For the third straight year, President Trump's [budget](#) proposes massive cuts to USDA.
- US Food and Drug Administration lifts import restrictions on genetically engineered [salmon](#).
- Trump budget proposes steep [subsidy](#) cuts to farmers as they grapple with crisis.
- US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) abandons legal challenge of Waters of the United States ([WOTUS](#)) applicability rule.
- Government study clarifies US [beef's](#) resource use and gas emission.
- USDA is seeking public comments on its [conservation practice standards](#) by April 25, 2019.
- States are taking action and not waiting on USEPA to regulate polyfluoroalkyl substances ([PFAS](#)).
- New [market](#) planned to pay farmers for soil carbon and water quality.
- A massive aquifer lies beneath the [Mojave Desert](#); could it help solve California's water quantity problem?
- How crop insurance is evolving for [cover crops](#).
- USDA narrows National Institute of Food and Agriculture and Economic Research Service [relocation](#) city list, but critics are still opposed.
- One rainy season doesn't mean California's [drought](#) problems are over.

*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.*

## Conservation NewsBriefs: Popular Articles from February



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 the past month:

- [Indigenous knowledge, key to a successful ecosystem restoration](#) (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona via ScienceDaily)
- [Turning salt-damaged fields into marshes could save Maryland farmland — and the Chesapeake Bay](#) (Civil Eats)
- [A very small number of crops are dominating globally: That's bad news for sustainable agriculture](#) (University of Toronto via ScienceDaily)
- [In need of water, an Idaho town turns to its neighbors](#) (High Country News)

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



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## New Members

Welcome members who joined in February!

### Arkansas—Razorback

Justine Chester

### Connecticut/Massachusetts/Rhode Island—Southern New England Chapter

Jay Fain

### Iowa

MB Binder  
Leah Daniels  
John Jones

### Indiana—Hoosier

Sheila Schroeder

### Kansas

Ashley Visovsky

### Kentucky—Bluegrass

Danny Kay Hughes Jr

### Louisiana

Drew Coombs  
Marybeth Guillory

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

Alexandra Rinaldi

### Maryland—Maryland Old Line

Julie McGivern

### Missouri—Show Me

Daniel Bockhold  
Kurt Boeckmann  
Ryan Lock

### Montana

Tracy Cumber

### North Carolina—Hugh Hammond Bennett

Byron Currin

### North Dakota

Roberto Luciano

### Nebraska—University of Nebraska-Lincoln Student Chapter

Samuel Hansen  
Cadence Hernandez  
Ema Muslic

### New York—Empire State

Felicia Johnson

### Oklahoma

Marian Tolen

### Tennessee

Surendra Singh

### Utah

Jeff Schick

## Corporate Members

Please contact [corporate.info@swcs.org](mailto:corporate.info@swcs.org) for more details.

### Gold



### Silver



### Bronze

