



COLORADO SWCS

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

C O L O R A D O S W C S

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By: Anita Nein, SWCS Director, Northern Plains Region



News of the Region

All Northern Plains State Chapters have submitted their delegates for the International Conference in Washington, D.C. That is good news for our region because every chapter will be able to vote in the House of Delegates. No chapter submitted a proposed policy statement for vote, but the general discussion will be on biofuels and energy. If you are a delegate, you may want to brush up on the topic or consider some statements before the delegates meeting.

The topic of "Climate Change" submitted as a policy statement in the House of Delegates last year has been reviewed by the International Policy and Science Committee to be finalized this year. We reviewed the progress at directors' meetings.

A new Student Chapter has been initiated at Laramie on the University of Wyoming Campus. The Wyoming Chapter has been very diligent in making this a success. Sister Chapter Nebraska helped with the Wyoming student financial project.

The Southeastern Region is hosting The Nebraska Chapter Annual Meeting and Technical Workshop on June 16-18 at Beatrice, Nebraska. Registration information is at <http://incolor.inetnebr.com/dougg/swcs>

Among other awards, the North Dakota Chapter will be receiving the Sustained Performance Award and the Chapter Achievement Award; Diane Olson will receive the Honor Award; Richard Webb will receive the Commendation Award; Robin Foulk will be receiving the Fellow Award and the Northern Great Plains Research Lab will be receiving the Merit Award at Washington, D. C.

Steve Young has been elected to the International "At Large" Director Position. Steve is from Eastern Nebraska. Though Steve will be serving all the chapters in the United States, Steve's election gives us two directors from the Northern Plains Region. His term begins in July.

Your Executive Director Jim Gulliford and Board of Directors have been working on updating the annual plan of operations, legacy gift options, investment portfolios, and the roles of directors. All the awards and scholarships have been reviewed and selected for 2011.

Don't forget to register before June 3 for the cheaper "EARLY RATES" for the SWCS International Conference July 17-20 (www.swcs.org/11AC). Delaying will cost you big bucks. Plan to bring an item from your chapter for the Silent Auction in Washington, D.C.

SHERRI BRANDT—
NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Why are you a Member of SWCS?

By: Kristi Gay, CO SWCS Membership Chair

In recent years, the national leadership of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) evaluated the 'Chapter Leader Guides' that are available to local chapters on the SWCS website. The leader guides were developed to provide guidance that would contribute to the strength and success of local SWCS chapter programming.

In the membership leader guide, 'Ensuring Growth and Vitality' many general reasons are given as to why people would want to join and become active in a local chapter. These reasons were collected as a result of a voluntary survey of the SWCS membership.

Some of the reasons given why people join SWCS:

- Easy to obtain professional development outside the job by attending workshops and tours on locally important topics.
- Attendance at SWCS events can help tap useful ideas that may or may not be present in the work environment.
- Members are able to approach current jobs with a broader perspective from interaction with other members from diverse disciplines and work experience.
- Opportunity to participate in organizing activities or programs for SWCS, as well as, the opportunity to develop, expand, or practice leadership skills as committee members, committee chairs, or chapter officers.

How many of these reasons apply to you? How many of you are actively working on one or more of these goals you may have set for yourself? The Colorado Chapter would benefit from active members who are interested in taking on new leadership positions that would likely provide an infusion of new ideas. Active members are the key to diligently recruiting new members and the foundation of a strong local chapter. Officer election information will be available in August 2011.

By volunteering as the Colorado Chapter membership chair, I have additional opportunities to communicate with all members by distributing chapter information through the electronic database. For many members, this is the primary contact for news about chapter activities. I usually contact those whose membership is scheduled to expire to send a 'friendly reminder' about renewal; it's always nice to receive a note back! Other times, I learn about an impending retirement or other reason for the change in membership which gives insight into why folks do not renew. From this 'informal feedback' from Colorado members, retirement seems to be the primary reason given for members who choose not to renew. Another response will be that the person has become involved in other activities and no longer feel they have the time to participate in chapter activities. There are also a few members who do not renew, and do not respond with a reason.

Is the Colorado Chapter meeting your needs as an SWCS chapter member? Is there a workshop or tour topic you would like to suggest? As a current member, are you inviting potential members to learn more about SWCS by attending a future tour or workshop? Are you recruiting new people to contribute new energy when organizing chapter activities?

The leadership of the Colorado Chapter is interested in hearing from you! Any member interested in participating in a focus group to discuss membership strategies is asked to contact Kristi Gay at kristi.gay@co.usda.gov by **July 1, 2011**.

2011 Northern Plains Workshop

By: Anita Nein, SWCS Director, Northern Plains Region

All six states were represented at the Northern Plains Workshop that was held on March 10-12, 2011 in Mandan, ND. The weather was very nice for the trip to and from the workshop for the 39 participants.

The technical workshop, "Soil Critters & Waste", hosted and presented by the **North Dakota Chapter** under the chairmanship of Lena Bohm was terrific! It began Thursday evening at the N.D Heritage Center with a superb paleontology/geology showing. On Friday, the meeting was held at the Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Mandan. Blizzard conditions limited the amount of field visits, but the presentations were outstanding and the participants did get snow covered trotting around the campus to view the on-going projects. However, the blizzard did not stop the lunch time BBQ of steaks with all the trimmings.

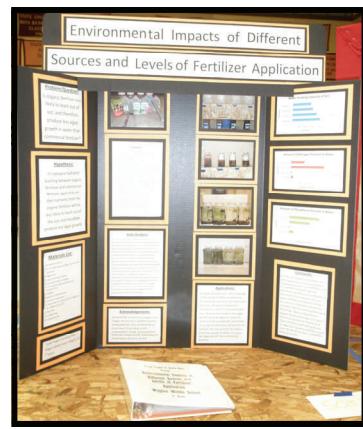
Everyone enjoyed the Banquet Friday evening at the Best Western Seven Seas Hotel with a speaker describing the extensive oil development "Bakken Black Gold" in NW North Dakota.

The Saturday morning successful business meeting included reports from the SWCS International Committees, chapter presidents or their representatives, chapter activities in the future, discussion of chapter reports and an update of the developing student chapter at Laramie, Wyoming. The Northern Plains Workshop will be held in Colorado next March 2012.

Science Fairs— An Annual Favorite

By: Travis McKay, CO SWCS Science Fair

The Colorado Chapter SWCS recently participated in thirteen regional science fairs by providing judges, cash prizes, certificates and ribbons. These science fairs are organized by Colorado Science and Engineering Fair, Inc and are organized to honor excellence in science, engineering, and technology and promote professional skills and high ethical standards in Colorado high school students. The chapter awarded prizes to the outstanding junior and senior projects and second place projects at each fair. The awards went to projects that were related to the Society's goals of fostering the science and art of natural resource conservation. The Chapter received a variety of thank-you notes from students for our contributions. The Colorado Chapter would like to thank all of the volunteer judges and their commitment to contributing to the positive development of tomorrow's conservationists.



The Old Sharpshooter Rides Again

Mr. Wes Robbins referred to as the “Old Sharpshooter” for reasons that will become obvious, and his wife, Helen, joined our group at the Longhorn Steakhouse on October 6, 2010 for lunch and a presentation on soils and certain problems caused by compaction from tillage operations and possible solutions. Wes was a long time employee of the NRCS prior to his retirement. Since that time he has operating a consulting service and currently living in Guymon OK.

Wes’s presentation started with a slide presentation of case studies and events that illustrated some of the problems that he had encountered during his 37 year career. The obvious symptom of the problems encountered were a lack of growth in crop situations where there should have been adequate moisture and fertility. Upon investigation, it turns out that the problem was often a hard pan in the soil created by the tillage equipment used in the farming operation. This hard plan would inhibit root growth for the plant and prevent those roots from reaching moisture and nutrients that may have been found below it. It would also have prevented the infiltration of water into the soil. The shallow soil above the hard pan would become saturated and any additional precipitation would have run off the field rather than moving to the deeper layers of soil.



Wes discussed the various implement in use in the farming operation in our general area and the tendency of each to cause such hard pan. The down pressure exerted on the point or blade of the implement against the underlying soil causes it to harden to the point that it may be impermeable to both roots and moisture. Multiple hard pans can often be at different levels indicating the various tillage operations performed over a period of time.

After lunch and the slide presentation, the group moved to the Larry Bishop Farm south of Springfield where Wes showed how to determine the presence of hard pans by digging a hole in the field with a sharpshooter spade. By clearing the hole down to a depth of approximately 8 to 9 inches and then taking another slice from the back of the hole, one can “read” the soil profile taking notice of the hard layers generally at depth of 3 to 6 inches.

We certainly appreciate Wes and Helen Robbins spending the afternoon with us and delivering this timeless information from which we can all benefit.

Modeling Summit 2011

By: Anita Nein, SWCS Director, Northern Plains Region

Advancing the Science of Modeling was the purpose of the Modeling Summit that was held at the Renaissance Denver Hotel March 29—31, 2011. About 70 private, university, policy, and agency persons attended hoping to learn and make good use of others' experiences in developing data bases and running various models to predict and track effects on the land. There was also discussion of how to modify data bases that never were intended for modeling. It turns out that there is an art in developing and creating these science based models.

Three considerations among many others that were vigorously discussed in smaller group sessions were as follows:

1. What are the issues for data managers?
2. How can we utilize the power of complex models in a practical fashion?
3. What concerns are there about misuse, misinterpretations, or inappropriate application of model output as a basis for policy decisions?

A wide variety of presenters helped the participant get a broad feel for the vast knowledge, patience, survey, and broad scientific background needed to massage the data into something usable with reasonable or realistic numbers. The organizing committee itself consisted of 24 members. The topics were actual models to research data sets, soils data, weather/climate data to name just a few.

The important concepts pointed out are the huge challenges we have in the sediment and nutrient loads going into the Chesapeake Bay, the Gulf of Mexico through the Mississippi River Basin, and other areas of concern. Modeling has been developed and used as a tool to try to limit and define the challenge spots to improve water quality. The conference was presented by SWCS to help address the important goal of improving water quality in the Gulf of Mexico.

The enthusiastic participants demonstrated how modelers need and would like a facilitator to share, develop, and standardize models and modeling data to improve water quality, without so much "reinventing of the wheel".



2011 SWCS Annual Conference

The 2011 SWCS Annual Conference will be held at the Omni Shoreham in Washington DC July 17—20. The theme for this year's conference is "Conservation Science and Policy: Global Perspectives and Applications". You may register for this conference on line at www.swcs.org/11AC. Early registration rates expire on June 3, 2011.

The Fellows Forum, "How Globalization Affects Conservation Science, Policy and Practice", will discuss how countries have shared conservation knowledge with each other in a effort to learn practices that would be applicable for their use. The forum will explore the following issues, The USDA role in International Conservation; Reports from a Soil and Water advisor in Afghanistan; Efforts and impacts of developing a Global Soil Map and How international research cooperation in Africa, Asia and Latin America is benefiting US efforts to address land use change and management.

Former Ag Secretary, Dan Glickman, will be delivering the Keynote Address during the opening session on Monday, July 18. Secretary Glickman will share his thoughts and personal experiences on the long-term implications of food and agricultural policy on conservation in the United States and around the world.

The plenary session on Tuesday will focus on two of our most critical global resources, food supply and water. The panel will address issues related to our work, including the need to increase agricultural production with a compromise to water quality and good supply; what we can learn from different approaches to food production and soil and water conservation and the interactions between global programs and local conservation efforts.

Wednesday mornings Farm Bill Forum will include two panel discussions on the conservation aspects of the 2010 farm bill. The first panel will discuss policy topics and the second panel will address the importance and effectiveness of farm bill programs. Wednesday afternoon will be a participatory workshop titled, "Pay for Performance: Improving the Performance of Farm Bill Conservation Programs".

Please visit the SWCS website at www.swcs.org for more detailed information on Annual Conference happenings.



**Conservation Science and Policy:
Global Perspectives and Applications**
66th International Annual Conference
Washington DC • July 17-20, 2011 • www.swcs.org/11AC

2011 SWCS Board of Directors Election Results

The following individuals were winners in the recent 2011 SWCS Board of Directors election.

Bill Boyer: reelected as the Northeastern Region Director for a second term July 2011 to 2014.

Pete Nowak: elected as the West North Central Region Director from July 2011 to 2014.

Mark Steffek: elected as the Western Region Director from July 2011 to 2014.

Steve Young: elected as the At-Large Director from July 2011 to 2014.

Andrew Paxson: elected as the Student Director from July 2011 to 2014.

Profiles of the new board members will be published in upcoming issues of the Conservation Program.



EVENTS TO WATCH FOR



😊 **NORTH AMERICAN INVASIVE PLANT ECOLOGY & MANAGEMENT SHORT COURSE**
JULY 6-8, 2011 NORTH PLATTE, NE

😊 **SWCS INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE**
JULY 17-20, 2011 WASHINGTON D.C.

😊 **WEST SLOPE SWCS TOUR AND BBQ**
AUGUST 2011

😊 **EAST SLOPE SWCS TOUR AND BBQ**
SUMMER 2011

2011 COLORADO CHAPTER LEADERS



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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Colorado Chapter of SWCS is to promote the wise use of soil, water and related resources through scientific, educational and service oriented functions. The members promote a stewardship ethic that recognizes the interdependence of people and natural resources.