



CONSERVOGRAM

 > The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

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78th SWCS International Annual Conference Updates

Des Moines, Iowa
August 6-9, 2023
www.swcs.org/23AC

Registration is Now Open for the 78th SWCS International Annual Conference!

Join us at the 78th SWCS International Annual Conference, August 6-9, 2023, in Des Moines, Iowa. The conference will assemble a diverse, multigenerational conservation community of researchers, practitioners, industry leaders, farmers, and students from around the world. The agenda will feature the latest ideas, technologies, and practices and foster dialogue around their adoption. Cutting-edge research and practice developments in soil health, water quality, and resource management will be shared through a variety of workshops, sessions, symposia, tours, exhibits, and demonstrations.

For complete conference details, visit www.swcs.org/23AC. The early registration cutoff is **June 26, 2023**, and the online registration cutoff is **July 26, 2023**.



78th SWCS INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

DES MOINES, IOWA

AUGUST 6-9, 2023

Don't Miss Out on Becoming a Conference Exhibitor or Sponsor

Be a part of this one-of-a-kind opportunity to connect with a uniquely targeted group of conservation and environmental professionals. Becoming an exhibitor or sponsor gives you an affordable opportunity to market your products and services to a key audience and maximize your organization's exposure. Put your brand in front of those who are directly involved in the decision-making process of purchasing products or those who influence prospective buyers and conservationists.

Download and review the [Exhibitor and Sponsor Guide](#) for full details and to become an exhibitor or sponsor today! Registration deadline is **June 7, 2023**.

Wear Your SWCS Gear in Des Moines – Order by May 16

SWCS gear is now available to order for a limited time. In addition to the SWCS classics, a few new designs have been added to our online store. We want to see you representing your SWCS gear at the 78th SWCS International Annual Conference in Des Moines on Wednesday, August 9! [Place your order](#) by **May 16**.



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.

Lessons from Leaders: Accelerating the Adoption of Conservation Drainage [webinar series](#) was created to provide a platform for conservation practitioners and producers across disciplines to connect with and learn from leading stakeholders about opportunities and challenges in advancing conservation drainage adoption. The last session titled "Wrap-Up and Recommendations" is May 24, from 3:00 to 4:15 p.m. CT.

This month's **Conservation Matters** webinar will be Thursday, May 25, at 12 p.m. CT. Join us to hear from

authors of a recent *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* paper, who will share highlights from their multistate social science study on the development and implementation of state Nutrient Reduction Strategies. [Register online](#) and share this opportunity with interested colleagues as well!

The next session of the **SWCS Members Only Book Club: A Year with Aldo Leopold** is June 30, at 12 p.m. CT. Participants will resume their discussions in June as they read the May and June segments of Aldo Leopold's classic work, *A Sand County Almanac*. [Registration details](#) will be emailed directly to active members.

Last Opportunity to Submit Your Conservation Photos

Enter our free photo contest by **May 31** for a chance to win a \$50 e-gift card from Amazon, be selected for display during the 78th SWCS International Annual Conference and on the virtual resources platform following the event, and see your photo on the cover of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*!

We want to see photos that display soil and water conservation and people in action, showcase the beauty of the world's natural resources, and/or inspire conservation professionals working to ensure the future of our natural resources on both private and public lands.

View the photo contest information at www.swcs.org/23PC.



Upcoming Chapter Events

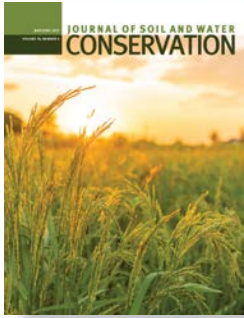
[North Dakota Chapter—Conservation Connections Webinar: Prevented Planting](#)

Virtual Event
May 31, 2023

[Nebraska Chapter Annual Tours and Meeting](#)

Nebraska City, Nebraska
June 28-30, 2023

May/June Journal Highlights



The [May/June issue](#) of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* is here! In this collection, A Section articles include a feature on water resource concerns and farming methods in the [Sahara Desert](#), a summary of the USDA Agricultural Research Service's national [Water Research Vision](#), and an overview of erosion [research progress](#) in Europe. In the Research Section,

[Linder et al.](#) interview rice producers in the southern United States to learn about enrollment in a conservation partnership program and persistence of practices after program participation ended, [Shenk et al.](#) explore the cognitive ecology that resulted from multisession conservation learning circles for women landowners, [Golden et al.](#) analyze findings of a cover crops survey in the western region of the United States, and [Crookston et al.](#) study the effects of cover crops on soil health indicators and assessments to determine if there are short-term indicators of soil health improvement. Find these and more articles in the online journal.

Journal Research Editor Application Deadline: May 31

The JSWC is accepting applications for a new role: Research Co-Editor with a social sciences specialization. All are invited to view the position qualifications and apply.

This addition to the Editorial Board addresses the growing number of social science manuscript submissions and ensures the journal will continue to serve as a high quality, *multidisciplinary* conservation publication that informs members and readers working in a range of disciplines and roles. The two Research Co-Editors will be responsible for overseeing the peer-review of manuscripts within their topic areas, will invite new associate editors to join the Editorial Board, and will serve as Editorial Board Co-Chairs. Editors serve for three-year terms with the possibility of renewal.

Applications are due **May 31, 2023**. Learn more on the [journal website](#) and contact annie.binder@swcs.org with any questions.

SWCS Board of Directors Visit Headquarters for Spring Meeting

Last month, the SWCS Board of Directors traveled to the SWCS headquarters office in Ankeny, Iowa, and got their hands dirty! In addition to brainstorming ways to enhance SWCS member engagement, they also took a tour of the property and helped plant a mix of flower seed in our flower beds (thank you to Keith Berns with Green Cover Seed for bringing the seed!). We are looking forward to showing you all the headquarters this summer during the 78th International Annual Conference in Des Moines, Iowa.



Conservation at the Co-op: Key Findings

A recently completed project by the Soil and Water Conservation Society explored new ways to deliver conservation products and services to farmers in Iowa—by offering them through their local agricultural cooperative, or co-op. Co-ops have been a fixture in Iowa's agricultural economy for over a century and have supported farmers' production of food and fuel via the retail sale of many things needed to run a farm—seed, fertilizer, storage capacity for grain, and transportation of that grain once it is sold. More recently, co-ops have begun offering technical services such as agronomic consulting around the collection of on-farm data that can lower a farmer's bottom line by limiting the amount of inputs needing purchased.

The two-year project ran through the 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023 growing seasons and was funded through Iowa USDA Natural Resource's Conservation Service (NRCS)'s Conservation Innovation Grant Program (Agreement # NR206114XXXXG002). Awarded in 2020, the approximately \$200,000 in project funding supported co-op personnel as they developed and delivered conservation services for eight clients and 640 acres of conventionally managed farmland. The services included cover crop and reduced tillage management. The cover crop management trials included fall seeding cereal rye into a corn-soybean rotation followed by a spring termination. The reduced tillage management trials included strip tilling the fields in the fall after harvest. Both trial types also included soil sampling, yield data collection and analysis, and a return-on-investment analysis.

A key component of this project was to connect with conservation professionals working in agricultural retail and learn about their unique needs. To do this, SWCS surveyed retailer project personnel about their attitudes about conservation, knowledge of conservation practices, and perceptions of trusted advisors to provide conservation planning guidance. Below is a member-exclusive look at our findings.

Finding 1: On participation in an NRCS-funded project, the retailers prioritized “ground truthing” the economic viability of conservation practices over answering specific questions about their usage. This aligns with the retailer-driven mindset of selling products and services first and exploring the benefits of the practices second.

Finding 2: On knowledge of specific practices, the retailers were more knowledgeable about reduced tillage than cover crops. This suggests that reduced tillage may be an easier adopted practice for retailers considering expansion of their business models to include conservation.

Finding 3: On who to turn to for conservation planning guidance, the retailers' most-valued relationships were with local people in their own business, business networks, and communities. Public agencies came next, which was comparable to the level of trust they place in commodity groups such as the state corn and soybean growers' associations. Having the least level of influence were a variety of actors, some local and some not, including lenders, insurance agents, and farmer advocacy organizations.

The results indicate that retailers prioritize hands-on experience with the conservation practices they are selling over externally provided resources. When crafting outreach opportunities with retailers, publicly employed conservation professionals working locally are well-positioned to shepherd retailers into the movement. Effective startup strategies might include relationship building and community networking that then lead into information sharing that is practice or program specific. There can be no downside to a local retailer knowing someone at the local service center and being confident enough to call them up when making a recommendation to a client about possible enrollment in an NRCS program.

For more information about this and other SWCS projects, please contact Joe Otto, Director of Special Projects and Partnerships, at joe.otto@swcs.org.

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.

- USDA hiring [soil conservationists](#) across the United States
- Biden-Harris Administration announces \$36M to improve roads, trails, and [water quality](#)
- [Precision agriculture](#) technology helps farmers, but they need help
- US agency takes unprecedented action to tackle PFAS [water pollution](#)
- Dredged [lake sediment](#) could nourish new crops
- Growing crops with less [groundwater](#)
- Deadly [dust storm](#) in Illinois blamed on shortsighted industrial farming methods

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 April!

Alabama

Jessica Kelton

Arkansas—Razorback

Natalee Frensley

California/Nevada

Genevieve Landucci

Connecticut/Massachusetts/Rhode Island— Southern New England Chapter

Alison Holmes

Georgia

Seth McAllister

Iowa

Spencer Giddings

Lance Schlicher

Iowa—Iowa State University Student Chapter

Lia Carrillo

Casey Luke

Idaho

Jayne Boehme

Illinois

Milcah Kigoni

Terri Lake

Kyla Muhammad

George Oganda

Kansas—Kansas State University Student Chapter

Mikaela Lawrence

Lauren Stanton

Maryland—Maryland Old Line

Bradley Kennedy

Minnesota

Gurparteeet Singh

Aaryn Wilson

North Dakota

Maria Batool

Nebraska—University of Nebraska-Lincoln Student Chapter

Will Hernandez

New York—Empire State

Elizabeth Marks

Oregon

Watts Jennings

South Dakota

Krecia Leddy

Wisconsin—University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Student Chapter

Rosalind Remsen

Wisconsin

Guolong Liang

Korede Olugbenle

Corporate Partners

Please visit www.swcs.org/corporatepartner for more information on how to become a corporate partner.

Platinum



Gold



Silver



Bronze

