



Science & Policy Committee

Tuesday, May 2, 2017

Call to Order at 3:00 CDT. There were 8 committee members on the call.

Lindsay Yasarer initiated discussion on the essential nature of research in the areas of agriculture and conservation in light of recent March for Science and Earth Day events. Partly because of this there is an increased awareness of the need for continued advocacy for science. Promoting the use of good science in any decision-making process and policy activity has always been a goal of SWCS, which has become more critical recently. Based on these themes we had the following discussion;

- In keeping science in the public eye, how can we better communicate the benefits of our work? This might for example, be done via messaging case studies and examples.
- There is a need to look at new platforms of disseminating this information to the public. For example, podcasts.
- Updates or nuggets of what science means to the public. How they benefit from our science and our research. Perhaps we could create a new part of the SCWS website to address this “science advocacy” or “science that matters.”
- Make available videos of Symposium presentations at SCWS meetings. These could concentrate on science as it relates to the public. There may be other interactive ideas that might be used, such as lightening sessions. We could highlight several presentations in 5 minute (at the most) videos of what the research or sciences means and why it is impactful, etc. People have short attention spans and shorter podcast, videos are needed as well as the full presentation.
- It was suggested that there might be a designated symposia in 2018 on this issue; i.e., the relevancy of science, disseminating and communicating science to the public, and the power of science in policy making.
- Several members were interested in being involved in a white paper on this issue.
- Identify key policy questions the U.S. confronts and how we might highlight how soil research and conservation are important elements of these discussions. For example, flooding and climate change.
- Highlighting the relationship among soils and soil conservation to various key issues.
- The Committee felt this discussion should continue into the call next month, which will be Tuesday, June 6th and that key Headquarter people be involved as relevant to moving this discussion to the next level, such as Jim Gulliford, Annie Binder, and Kim Johnson.
- The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 CDT.