

**Monthly Meeting Call-
in Information**

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**National Capital Chapter
February 15, 2012**



Agenda Items

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Treasurer's Report
3. NCC's 2012 Membership Status
4. NCC's Website Status
5. Open Discussion
 - a. Professional Development Activities
 1. Other societies' speaker series
 2. SWCS scholarship ideas
 3. Spring event: panel discussion on food security and conservation
 - b. Stewardship & Service Activities
 1. People's garden idea
 2. National arboretum idea
 - c. Social & Networking Activities
 1. NCC – SWCS dinner Wednesday the 15th at The Hamilton's (14th & F near Metro Center)
 2. Environmental film festival and Earth Day ideas

Action Items

- Lynn will email photos of past events to Larry, who will reduce the file size so that the pictures can be posted to the NCC website. Lynn will post to the website.
- To increase membership, each NCC member will identify one or more persons to recruit via the "Press the Palm" approach. In addition, NCC officers will collaborate to implement the "Value-Added" approach to membership by organizing two events in the Spring: a socializing event (Environmental Film Festival get-together) and a professional development event (food security panel discussion).
- Becky and Michelle will work on a flyer for the March environmental film festival event.
- Andy will continue organizing the food security panel event.
- Carol Kramer-LeBlanc should be replaced as a Council member.

Meeting Summary

1. Introductions

The Executive Board of the National Capital Chapter (NCC) of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) met by teleconference on February 15, 2012. President Michelle Perez presided and called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m. The following members were present:

Dr. Michelle Perez
Lynn Knight
Becky Mitschele

Larry Holmes
Phil Spinelli
Andy Manale

Michelle Laur

2. Treasurer's Report – Larry Holmes, Treasurer

As of January 1, 2012, the NCC had the following funds:

Checking Account:	\$ 1,554
	(\$834.50 remaining)
	(\$719 from new membership dues for calendar year 2011)
Savings Account:	\$ 10,045
Total:	\$ 11,599

National Headquarters changed their policy, and the due fee to the Chapters will occur once a year instead of quarterly. The NCC gets only a portion of the membership dues. For example, for the membership level, Conservationist, the NCC gets \$6.50, the Leader level, \$8.50, and \$12 for the top level.

Therefore, if NCC wants to raise money, membership would not be the way to generate funds.

3. NCC's 2012 Membership Status – Lynn, Membership Chair

Lynn shared that the NCC has 94 members, and there are a number of them that are retired, or take jobs elsewhere. Lynn asked everyone to think about what are the membership goals for this year. Should the Chapter try to maintain membership or increase membership?

For the USDA economist group, they increased the membership from less than 30 to 150 members with an aggressive membership campaign. However, membership is only \$15/year (as opposed to the minimum level with SWCS around \$80).

Membership in SWCS, and specifically the NCC, was expected to increase as a result of last year's conference. However, because USDA NRCS did not pay for conference registration last year, numbers were likely affected. The Chapter should look into having video conferencing this year with reduced fees. In addition, the American Farmland Trust paid for a lot of members, but they do not appear to be in the NCC. They may be in other chapters, or just joined SWCS and not a specific chapter.

The NCC should consider doing a recruitment campaign targeting new employees or employees that are doing details in the Washington D.C. area. Speakers at last year's conference could re-do their presentations to raise interest and increase the Chapter's visibility. This was successful in the past. Similarly, the Chapter should continue to explore ways to liaison with other organizations to do joint events.

The NCC also could hold an event, like a membership drive, where the Chapter offers reduced membership fees. The Chapter would use its own funds to make up the difference when submitting these fees to Headquarters.

Michelle suggested that the NCC take two approaches to increasing membership. First, NCC officers should think about who in their organizations and communities they can individually reach out to and encourage them to join SWCS-NCC. In particular, members suggested that new

employees be targeted and Michelle said she would target the Conservation Coalition groups and see if they were NCC members yet or not. This approach was coined the “Press the Palm” approach. Second, the group recognized that the most effective approach to increasing membership was to provide value to members and thus the groups agreed to work on producing various events that would offer professional development, service, and socializing opportunities.

4. NCC’s Website Status – Becky and Lynn, Web Contacts

The NCC website address is http://www.swcs.org/en/national_capital_chapter/. With the exception of last month’s meeting notes (January 2012), the website has not been updated since last June.

Training is required before new documents can be uploaded to the website. Lynn arranged training for Becky, Lynn and Michelle for February 16, 2012 with Oksana Giesman.¹

Lynn has a list of questions, including if the style sheets can be changed and allowing for the website to have more bells and whistles. The website can be linked to you-tube videos. The Chapter could buy a camera and film speakers or events (like tours) to put up on the website.

5. Open Discussion: - Michelle Perez

a. Professional Development

- Update on other speaker series – (3 page document on all of the links with groups that most likely offer speakers series; Andy will send hyperlink to the National Center for Environmental Economists, which host speaker series)
- Scholarship – Bruce was not on the call to discuss.
- Food security panel discussion - spring event; Andy

For the upcoming Spring Event (sometime in April), the NCC could have a panel discussion about the impacts of the expanding world population demands for increasing food supply and conservation. There is a small organizing committee formed, but others are welcome. Possible speakers include Mike Dicks, Bruce Knight, Ralph Heimlich, and Bob Thompson.

b. Stewardship and Service Activities

- Peoples garden – Larry

Leslie Burks is receptive to working with the Chapter. In the past, a Masters Gardeners club was involved in maintaining the garden, and the garden sponsor school kids for environmental education. Larry will follow-up with Leslie to see if a group of 5 to 10 people will be helpful with their plans this year. The People’s Garden is separate from the farmer’s market. Larry has a contact that he will follow-up with, but the Chapter would need people to volunteer at the booth. The Chapter

¹ Publication Director, Soil and Water Conservation Society and Editor, Journal of Soil and Water Conservation; oksana.gieseman@swcs.org

has a banner, which could be used at the booth, but no one seems to know where the banner went. If the Chapter did have a booth, this could be one way to recruit new members.

d. Social and Networking Activities

- NCC – SWCS dinner Wednesday the 15th at The Hamilton's (14th & F near Metro Center)
- 2012 Environmental Film Festival Theme is the role the environment plays in human health.

Option 1: *Expedition Blue Plant: North America* and *Potomac: American Reflections*. The first film investigates water issues including water conservation, great water treasures, and people who are trying to solve the global water crisis. Includes clips about the Potomac River and lands in VA.

Option 2: *Last Call at the Oasis*. The film illuminates the vital role water plays in our lives, exposes the defects in the current system, and shows communities already struggling. The film talks about shifting behaviors and creating policy.

Option 3: *Symphony of the Soil* - which examines the role of healthy soil in creating nutritious food. This film was selected as option 3 because it is on a Saturday.

Michelle and Becky will put together a flyer and send out to the group since the films occur before the next Chapter meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

Next Teleconference scheduled for Wednesday, March 21, 2012, noon to 1:00pm