

## About the Project



**Mike Collins** was a long-time member of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS), serving the Society in a variety of capacities for nearly 30 years. During his membership he served as President of the Wyoming Chapter, Fundraising Chair for the North Dakota Chapter, and eventually became an active member of the Colorado and New Mexico chapters. He was elected to the SWCS Board of Directors in 2013, serving as the Southwest Region Director. Mike's term ended unexpectedly in 2016 when he was involved in a snowmobile accident that took his life.

As a career USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employee and overall steward of the land, Mike was passionate about helping farmers and ranchers use soil health to gain sustainability in an uncertain market. As a member of SWCS, Mike wanted to build strong local chapters and deliver regional programs that could reach as many people as possible. He believed in leveraging new technologies to bring SWCS events and conservation research to members and partners in more accessible ways. Whether he was uploading videos to YouTube or streaming live meetings online, Mike was at the forefront of using visual media to engage conservationists in his region and around the country.

To honor Mike's memory, SWCS staff traveled to Alamosa, Colorado, to produce a set of short films that could tell the story of soil health in a region facing challenges such as water shortages, wind erosion, and high soil salinity, as well as showcase the value of creating a community where conservation professionals work together to overcome these challenges. The farmers, ranchers, and conservationists featured in the films all worked with Mike at various points in their careers, and it was an honor to listen to their stories.

We hope you find these films to be both informative and inspirational, and are reminded that soil and water conservation challenges look different all around the world; it is through building a diverse network of researchers, planners, policymakers, technical advisors, teachers, students, farmers, and ranchers that we find solutions. Through the sharing of experiences, skills, and knowledge, we can leave a legacy of land stewardship that will continue to benefit generations to come, just as Mike Collins' work in the West continues to inspire and impact the conservation community today.

Visit [www.swcs.org/watch](http://www.swcs.org/watch) to view both films. We encourage you to share them with friends and colleagues, and to tag **@SWCSnews** when sharing on social media.

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*These films were produced in part through contributions to the Mike Collins Memorial Fund.*