



Overview

The Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) advocates for conservation professionals and their work, and promotes science-based conservation practices, programs, and policies. We identify our role as follows:

SWCS collaborates with scientists and policymakers to produce results-oriented guidance for conservation stakeholders. We engage government and nongovernment partners in conversation through conferences, hold blue-ribbon panels, and provide recommendations to legislative committees. Issues of interest include farm bill conservation programs, climate change policy, conservation compliance, and research funding.

Our Special Projects and Policy Director tracks legislative issues to inform our membership of current political action and serves as a link to lawmakers and other national conservation organizations.

The SWCS Science and Policy Committee meets monthly to present and discuss topics of current and ongoing interest within the scientific community. The committee's work includes the creation of topic-specific task forces, publication of journal articles and white papers, and guidance for the annual conference planning committee. Past committee meeting minutes and presentations are available to the public, and all members are invited to join this active committee.

The SWCS Board of Directors informs staff on policy areas of interest, contributes to goal setting, guides engagement, provides representation on the Science and Policy Committee and approves all final policy statements prior to distribution.

This document seeks to create a clear, action oriented path for policy statements developed by the Society.

Identify an advocacy goal for items produced

Setting a goal for policy statements and other works that include policy recommendations enables achievements in the advocacy space and values the time of those involved in advocating with and for SWCS. The goal should identify audiences and be specific (simple, sensible, significant), measurable (meaningful, motivating), achievable (agreed, attainable), relevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based) and time bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive). Having a goal in mind as policy items are being crafted enables the work to be shaped for the biggest impact and influence. The capacity and capabilities of SWCS should be considered when setting this goal. This goal should be revisited after distribution in order to evaluate the success of the policy statement and its distribution.

Members

Policy statements serve as a way to advocate for and inform our members. Policy statements should be shared with members first and foremost. This can be done through email distribution, press release on SWCS's website, publication SWCS's monthly newsletter the *Conservogram*, and the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*.

Partners

Policy statements are a way to alert partners of SWCS's stance on current and forthcoming policy. This can open up opportunities for strategic alignment that can further goals with likeminded partners. An external facing press release, posting on our website, distribution through email and social media, phone and teleconference outreach and discussion during face to face meetings are a way to engage partners with SWCS's advocacy efforts.

Congress

Often, policy statements aim to educate members of congress. Congressional outreach should be strategic and individualized. The "ask" and offer for SWCS assistance should be clear to recipients. The capacity and capabilities of SWCS should be considered when identifying a plan to distribute information to members of congress.

Other audiences

Other audiences, as identified during the generation of a topical policy goal, may benefit from learning about SWCS's stance and statements and as such, should receive individualized outreach and an opportunity for follow up.

Evaluation

After distribution, SWCS staff, board of directors, and Science and Policy Committee members should revisit the goal and determine what was achieved. Achievements and recommendations for future improvements should be documented, shared with members, and revisited prior to advancing the next policy initiative.