



COLORADO SWCS

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

COLORADO SWCS

JULY 2020

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President's Message

By: Patrick O'Neill



SWCS-Colorado continues working to advance soil health and water conservation education to our members and the communities in which we work. We are excited about the opportunity of this year having the 75th International Annual Soil and Water Conservation Society Conference happening online, at a very modest cost to participate for both members. Registration for this event should be completed soon as the sign-up period closes on July 15th. Cost is just \$75.

<https://www.cvent.com/events/2020-swcs-international-annual-conference/registration-f304f0f691734f8db49fdee8b71242a4.aspx?fqp=true>

Membership in our Society allows us to provide you with ongoing connection with the great work of conservation professionals from around Colorado, and around the world. The International Annual Conference is a **great** place to do this.

According to our current By-Laws, which we are hoping to up-date this year, "No member shall be elected to the same office for more than two successive terms". Our Chapter has struggled for membership and participation for several years. Those of us on the Executive Board have traded around positions and two people served as President for 2 years. Please consider becoming involved.

We would like to hear from you on how you would like to engage the resources of SWCS in your work.

Best Regards,
Patrick O'Neill
President

CO Chapter Activities

BY: Maysoon Mikha, East Slope Director

2019 SWCS Annual Workshop – Tragic Fire Ecosystem – 2018 Spring Creek Fire

In October 2019, the SWCS hosted a one-day workshop on the effects that fire disturbance has on forest and rangeland ecosystems as well as ecosystem recovery. The workshop was held in La Veta and included presentations, a panel discussion and tours of two areas affected by the 2018 Spring Creek Fire.

The mayor of La Veta, Doug Brgoch, opened the workshop with background on the Spring Creek Fire and its impact on the La Veta community. The workshop included speakers with various backgrounds on the effects that fire has on watersheds, flooding, erosion, insect community and plant recovery. Paul Branson, (Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator, La Veta), Tony Arnold (District Conservationist, NRCS, Walsenburg) and Manuel Molles (La Veta Landowner and retired Ecosystem Ecologist, University of New Mexico) volunteered to serve on the panel and provided insight to areas affected by the Spring Creek Fire. The panel discussion included pre-fire planning, fire mitigation and response network, availability of government assistant programs and post fire recovery. Steve Keppers conducted a tour on the wildfire mitigation and recovery activities at Tres Valles West area where approximately 800 acres was burned. Tony Arnold led the second tour which occurred at the Paradise Acres Subdivision. Several thousand acres burned within the subdivision and around 20 homes were lost. Approximately 20 non-members and eight SWCS members attended the annual workshop where we also provided morning refreshments and lunch. The list of presenters and title of presentations are listed below.

Doug Brgoch, Mayor, La Veta, CO

Introductory Speaker provided background on Spring Creek Fire

Chuck Rhoades, PhD, Rocky Mountain Research Station, USFS, Fort Collins, CO

Short and Long-Term Watershed Changes After Severe Wildfire

Stephanie Kampf, PhD, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO

Post-Fire Flooding, Erosion and Sedimentation

Ben Berlinger, Ret. NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist, Rocky Ford, CO

Plant Recovery Following Disturbances

Christine Mott, PhD Student Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ

Arthropod Communities in Restoration of High-Severity Fire Scars

The [Colorado Post-Fire Recovery Playbook](#) is now available as a practical worksheet and guide to assist municipalities, counties, tribes, and water providers in post-fire rehabilitation. This useable Playbook includes:

- 12 specific steps these entities can take before, during, and within the first 30-days of a wildfire to facilitate post-fire rehabilitation,
- a fillable list of critical contacts, allowing users to know exactly who to contact and when, and graphics that clearly communicate roles and responsibilities and key funding sources.





SOIL HEALTH TUNNEL

Chapter member, Laura Craven, headed up a soils exhibit at the State Fair again last year. They had the Soil Health Tunnel available for visitors to walk through and learn about the soil web, how to improve soil health and much more. She had several other activities visitors could take part in to learn about soils.




BY: Beth Fortman, Director at Large

Maysoon Mikah and I attended the 74th International Conference last July in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Conference title was **“Bridging the Divide: Uniting Rural and urban landscapes for Conservation”**.

Home to three rivers and 446 bridges, Pittsburgh is known as “The City of Bridges.” These bridges play an important role in connecting the valleys, hillsides, river plains, and communities. This city of linkages sets the stage for connections around eight general conservation research and practice topics.

There were, and always are, very informative symposia sessions and oral presentations, not to mention the Plenary Sessions! There appears to be a big “connection” between the SWCS and NRCS. I found many of the sessions/presentations by various NRCS personnel from around the country.

This is the poster Maysoon developed and had made to hang in the exhibitor and poster reception hall.



Colorado Chapter Committee and Activities

Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS)

About US

The mission of the Colorado Chapter of SWCS is to promote the wise use of soil, water, and related resources through scientific, educational, and service-oriented functions. The members promote a stewardship ethic that recognizes the interdependence of people and natural resources.

The Colorado Chapter membership consists of people working in many phases of agriculture and natural resources. Colorado SWCS members are committed, informed, effective conservation leaders. SWCS members use the Chapter's multi-disciplinary structure to create and convey a land and water ethic to the people in Colorado.


How We Work

Our team meets by teleconference about once a month to collaborate on our plan of work and projects.


Members contribute to discussions, take on assignments when needed and offer support.

Most of all we try to always have fun!


Who We Are




Maysoon Mikha
President
USDA-ARS
Akron, CO



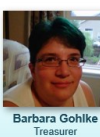
Beth Fortman
Director at Large
NRCS
Silver Cliff, CO




Patrick O'Neill
West Slope Director
President Elect
Alamosa, CO



John Spring
East Slope Director
Colorado State University
Julesburg, CO



Barbara Gohlke
Treasurer
NRCS
Colorado Spring, CO



Amber Mason
Award Chair
CO

Chapter Activities

- ❖ **Workshops**
- ❖ **Awards**
- ❖ **Science fairs contribution:**
 - Regional Science Fairs (High school & middle school)
 - Colorado Science & Engineering Fair (High school & middle school)
- ❖ **Sponsor:** Arkansas River Basin Water Forum
- ❖ **Support Grant:** Haxton Conservation District's Farming Evolution Workshop

Get Involved

For the Chapter to grow big, strong, and serve Colorado conservation needs, it requires everyone's efforts, even small involvement can make an impact. After all, "you must be the change you wish to see in the world"- Mahatma Gandhi

Are you interested in

- Providing input?
- Sign as a member?

Contact us at <https://www.swcs.org>

The CO SWCS Chapter also helped to sponsor the following in 2019:

- ⇒ Farming Evolution Workshop in Haxton
- ⇒ 4th and 5th Grade Regional Science Fairs
- ⇒ The Arkansas River Basin Water Forum in La Junta

2019/2020 CO SWCS Awards

BY: Amber Wyndham, Awards/Scholarship Chair



Junior Conservationist of the Year

The 2019 SWCS Junior Conservationist of the Year was awarded to Josh Waller. Josh was a Senior at Hoehne High School and was very active in his Ag classes and FFA. Josh placed 1st at the SE CO Regional Districts FFA Range Judging event in September of 2019 and was awarded 2nd highest individual score at the state FFA range judging in Fall 2019. Josh also participated in the SRM High School Youth Forum in Minneapolis, MN as one of the delegates to the forum representing the CO Section of the SRM.

Conservationist of the Year

The 2019 SWCS Conservationist of the year was awarded to Pattie Becker of the Fletcher/Becker Ranch located near Agate. Pattie operates 754 acres that has been in her family since 1923 when her grandparents, Joel and Eva Fletcher arrived in Elbert county. Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher grew beans, corn, oats and wheat and after the flood in 1965 they became supportive of the flood control dams, diversions, terraces and grass seeding which were supported by the Agriculture Conservation Program.

Pattie's father, Jack Fletcher worked the ranch raising wheat, barley and cattle with his wife Ruth both of whom were selected as the Agate Conservationists of the Year in 1989. Pattie grew up on the ranch and learned about conservation from her grandparents and parents who implemented conservation practices including diversions, terraces, dams, wells, fencing and woodland harvesting. Pattie and her late husband Dick began farming the ranch in 1972. Pattie and Dick built flood control dams, numerous stockwater dams, diversions and terraces for erosion control as well as a grass seeding project.

Pattie has entered into CSP contracts to add more practices to her conservation plan. In 2012 she added a living snow fence and 200 Rocky Mountain Junipers. She also installed a windbreak planting with more than 630 trees planted. The results of her conservation efforts have promoted abundant wildlife on her land including ducks, turkeys, mule deer and mountain lion. Some of her current conservation plan practices include on farm forage based grazing system, the utilization of bird ladders in all tanks, monitoring the nutritional status of ruminant livestock using NUTBAL system, windbreaks, and monitoring key grazing areas to improve grazing management.

Pattie's past and current conservation practices, as well as her involvement with 4-H, Elbert/Douglas Livestock Association, Farm Bureau and the Elbert County Cattlewoman has awarded her the 2019 Colorado SWCS Conservationist of the Year Award.



The Chapter did not have a College Scholarship recipient for 2019. Each year we have two \$500 scholarships available to a Junior or Senior attending a Colorado college or university in a natural resource field. The Chapter also offers grants. If you see a need where a SWCS fund can help or encourage conservation, please contact us.

This year, 2020, our recipient is pending notification.

Visit the CO Chapter website at http://www.swcs.org/en/colorado_chapter/ and click on Awards if you know of any college junior or seniors in natural resource related fields attending a 4 year Colorado College that may be interested in applying for our scholarship

The National Soil and Water Conservation Society 75th Annual Conference



**The 75th Annual Conference will be virtual this year, July 27-29, 2020
from Des Moines, Iowa**

This year's conference theme, "Expanding Horizons: Where Conservation Meets Innovation," evokes images of the expansive views of the region and the deep and varied soil horizons that make Iowa's farmland some of the most productive in the world. This year's theme also speaks to the broadening of individual perceptions and experiences as attendees discover new concepts, partners, and advancements in soil and water research.

The conference will feature the latest ideas, technologies, and practices and foster a dialogue around their adoption. Through virtual workshops, sessions, symposia, exhibits, and galleries, cutting-edge research and practice developments in soil health, water quality, and resource management will be shared. Scientists and practitioners will present their work at the field, farm, and watershed scale across an array of private and public arenas. Researchers and conservationists will team up with farmers to share lessons learned and the environmental outcomes of on-farm trials, monitoring, and state-of-the-art precision agricultural tools. Applications of social theories and examples of successful outreach and education will enable attendees to identify ways to scale up grassroots efforts. Participants will also hear about policy and economic developments that build a framework to increase conservation adoption and support future generations.

The Soil and Water Conservation Society's 75th International Annual Conference will assemble a diverse, multigenerational conservation community of researchers, practitioners, industry leaders, farmers, and students from around the world. Join us virtually as we recognize lessons from the past, expand our professional and personal horizons, and shape the future of conservation.

Registration is only \$75 this year since it is virtual. Once registered there is access to all the sessions and also the recordings afterward to view the ones missed!

This is a great opportunity. For more information go to www.swcs.org/20AC to view the detailed agenda!

BY: Beth Fortman, Director at Large

CO SWCS 2020 Officer Elections



I know it's just July but fall and the end of the year will be here before we know it! That means it's time to consider election of new officers for the 2020 calendar year. Positions to be filled for 2020 are President Elect, West Slope Director and East Slope Director.

The past couple of years have been hard for our chapter. We haven't had anyone step up to fill positions on the Board for a couple of years. Those of us on the Board have served for a number of years because we didn't want to see it fizzle. We can't keep doing this.

Please, please, please consider one of these positions. It doesn't take much of your time in a year; monthly teleconferences, co-planning and implementing a workshop, tour or conference.

Get involved!!

President — Serves a 1 year term as president and a 1 year term as Past President. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Chapter, the Board and shall appoint all committees and shall perform all other duties incident to his or her office.

East & West Slope Directors — Serve a 2 year term as a member of the board of directors. Attends regular and special meetings of the Executive Board. Represents the needs and interests of the membership in their respective areas. Works with the Executive Board to develop an annual plan and budget. Helps to carry out Chapter operations and

For more information on the duties relating to each of these offices go to the Chapter website at <https://www.swcs.org/about-us/our-chapters/southwest/colorado-chapter/>. please contact the current officer

The chapter is also looking for interested individuals to fill the positions of **Membership Committee Chair and Web Committee Chair**. You can contact any of the Board members for more information or if interested in either of these positions.

Any Colorado Chapter SWCS member is eligible for consideration on the ballot. You can contact Patrick O'Neill, President, at kpjoneill@gmail.com or Beth Fortman, Director at Large and a Past President, elizabeth.fortman@usda.gov or any member of the executive council with questions you may have and/or to notify the executive council of your interest. Ballots will be sent out the middle of October. Please be sure to vote! **(you may want to pay close attention to the ballots as YOU just may be nominated!!)**





EVENTS TO WATCH FOR



If you have upcoming events, please email them to newsletter editor, Beth Fortman for placement in future newsletters.



2020 COLORADO CHAPTER LEADERS



OFFICERS

Patrick O'Neill,
President
73 State Ave
Alamosa, CO 81101
719-588-0836
kpjoneill@gmail.com



Barbara Gohlke,
Secretary-Treasurer
5610 Industrial Pl., Suite 100
Colorado Springs, CO 80916
719-
Barbara.gohlke@usda.gov



Maysoon Mikha,
Past President,
East Slope Director
40335 County Road GG
Akron, CO 80720
970-345-2259
Maysoon.mikha@usda.gov

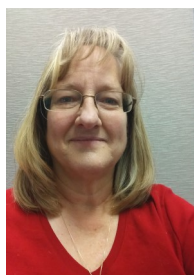


West Slope Director– Vacant

Amber Wyndham,
President Elect
214-529-8906
amazon28@gmail.com



Beth Fortman,
Director-at-Large
1510 Grand Ave.
Canon City, CO 81212
719-735-3023
Elizabeth.fortman@usda.gov



COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Amber Wyndham, Awards
214-529-8906
amazon28@gmail.com

Barbara Gohlke, Financial, Science Fair
719-600-4712
barbara.gohlke@usda.gov

Beth Fortman, Newsletter Editor
Membership
719-735-3009
elizabeth.fortman@usda.gov

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Colorado Chapter of SWCS is to promote the wise use of soil, water and related resources through scientific, educational and service oriented functions. The members promote a stewardship ethic that recognizes the interdependence of people and natural resources.