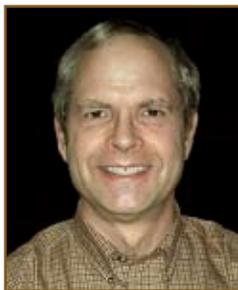
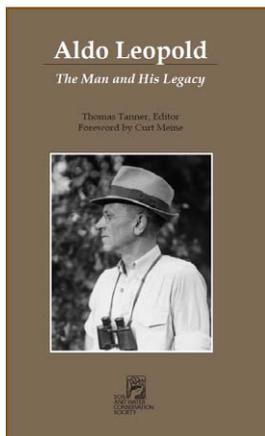


CONSERVOGRAM

The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society



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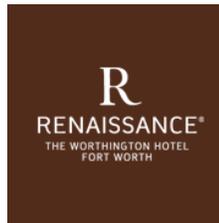
The Annual Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, July 22–25, 2012, is almost here!

Conference Registration: To register online or to print a paper registration form to mail or fax in, please visit this [link](#). Early registration rates have been extended to June 15th.

Preliminary Program: View the [2012 Preliminary Program online](#). This program includes the conference schedule, technical and leadership workshop descriptions, symposia titles, oral and poster presentation topics, and information about educational tour options.

Presentation Schedule: View the [2012 Presentation Schedule](#) online.

Hotel Reservations: Rooms have been reserved at a reduced rate of \$119 per night at the conference site location, the [Worthington Renaissance Hotel](#). Reserve your room [here](#). The group code for the discount is “soisoia.”



Exhibitors and Sponsors: Space is still available in the exhibit hall. Contact Meredith Foley (meredith.foley@swcs.org) for more information.

Tuesday Plenary Panel

Don't miss this year's Tuesday plenary panel! The panel will bring experts from a range of fields together in conversation about considerations for natural resource management and planning. To learn about each speaker before attending, please click their names below:

- Ecology: [Laurie Drinkwater](#), Cornell University
- Economics: [Kitty Smith](#), American Farmland Trust
- Ethics: [Curt Meine](#), Aldo Leopold Foundation
- Industry: [Ray Layton](#), DuPont Pioneer
- Moderator: [Dan Zinkand](#), Dan Zinkand Communications

Fellows Forum: The Long-Term Agro-Ecosystem Research Network for Agriculture

The 2012 Annual Conference Fellows Forum will be held Sunday afternoon, July 22, at 4:00 p.m. and will focus on the Long-Term Agro-Ecosystem Research (LTAR) Network for Agriculture. This network is a concept that has found new life through recent Agricultural Research Service (ARS) efforts and can have a tremendous impact on baseline research for conservation agriculture. We believe this will be a very interesting discussion for attendees on how the work they're doing integrates with this and other networks.

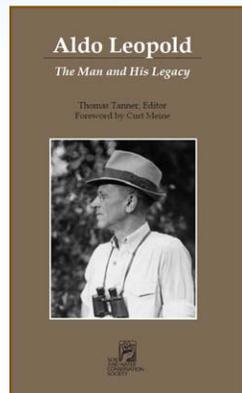
According to the [ARS LTAR Program Summary](#), the network is

urgently needed to answer some of the important large-scale questions posed by the challenges of the impending effects of climate change and water scarcity, including how episodic events such as floods, drought, and pest and pathogen outbreaks might affect an agroecosystem's ability to produce agricultural products or provide valuable ecosystem services. The LTAR network will also be invaluable for detecting important but slow-acting phenomena such as changes in soil carbon, climate, and the effect of land use changes. Such knowledge is vital if we are to achieve our goals for a sustainable agricultural future.

The Fellows Forum will include an overview of the network by Mark Walbridge, USDA ARS, on how it came into being and the vision for program, two 20-minute presentations from participating network partners on their role in the network, and a Q&A panel discussion with the audience including as many of the network partners as possible for the final 40 minutes. Discussion will focus on how this network research integrates with, supports, and enhances other work being performed throughout the United States and abroad.

Special Publication

To mark the 125th anniversary of Aldo Leopold's birth as well as the 25th year since the first publication of the book *Aldo Leopold: The Man and His Legacy*, SWCS is printing a new edition of the essay collection. The book, which honors the significant life of the man who is known to many as the father of the land ethic and game management, includes essays about development of Leopold's ideals, the source of his motivation and his "land ethic." Also in the collection are essays that explore Leopold's influence on other scientists and that provide family member accounts of the conservationist.



This special commemorative edition is printed with a new foreword by Curt Meine (conservation biologist, historian, writer, and the 2012 Annual Conference Keynote Pritchard Lecturer) as well as reprints of both the 1987 and 1995 forewords. Dr. Meine will speak Monday morning, July 23, 2012, and the film *Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time*, narrated by Meine, will screen that evening.

Each conference attendee will receive a free copy of the new book.

SWCS Award Recipients

President's Leadership Awards

The SWCS President's Leadership Award is given at the discretion of the SWCS president in recognition of exemplary assistance to the president in helping to carry out the goals and objectives of the Society.

Perry Oakes—This award is being given in recognition of Oakes's exceptional support provided to the student chapters within Alabama, and more specifically, his effort in starting the Tuskegee University Student Chapter.

Rebecca Power—This award is offered in recognition of Power's outstanding service to the Society as Program Committee Chair over the past three years.

Rebecca Roose—Roose earned this award in recognition of her outstanding work as a volunteer coordinator for the 2011 SWCS International Annual Conference.

Dan Towery—Towery was selected for this award for his outstanding effort in planning for and executing the SWCS Cover Crops Conference in 2011.

Individual Awards

Honor Award—Kristin Brennan

Commendation Awards—David Clapp, John Clausen, Penny Doty, Kelly Goward, Yvonne Haefner, Darwin Hinrichs, Dawn Jackson

Chapter Awards

Chapter Professional Development Award—Southern New England Chapter

Outstanding Chapter Awards—Alabama Chapter, Hoosier (Indiana) Chapter, and Oklahoma Chapter

Chapter Achievement Awards—Iowa State University Student Chapter and South Carolina Chapter



SWCS Farm Bill Action

In the last month, SWCS has signed two letters encouraging Congress to consider conservation issues when working toward a new Farm Bill. The first [letter](#), drafted by [The Nature Conservancy](#), urged Congress to support a strong Conservation Title in the Farm Bill and to “hold the line” on conservation program cuts. The other letter, an organizational support letter to be circulated through Congress by Representatives Kristi Noem and Timothy Walz, urges inclusion of their [Sodsaver legislation](#) within the Farm Bill. This legislation would reduce crop insurance assistance for the first four years for crops grown on native sod and certain grasslands converted to cropland. According to the Congressional Budget Office, this could save taxpayers nearly US\$200 million over 10 years.

On Tuesday, May 29th, SWCS Representative in Washington, DC, John Peterson, participated in the SWCS Science and Policy Committee teleconference and reported on the status of the 2012 Farm Bill. The information he provided to the committee included the following:

- A listing on the 15 titles in the [2008 Farm Bill](#).
- A copy of a letter signed by 44 Senators to Senate Majority Leader Reid urging him to bring the Senate Version of the Farm Bill, S 3240, to the floor.
- A side-by-side comparison of the 2012 Senate Farm Bill to the 2008 Farm Bill. This side-by-side comparison was prepared by the [National Association of Conservation Districts \(NACD\)](#).
- A copy of a note from a representative of the Dairy Industry asking that a Farm Bill Amendment proposed by Senator Bennet (D-CO) be supported.
- A [news article](#) about how Senate-proposed Farm Bill subsidy reforms, the Shallow-Loss Program, could backfire.
- A link to the [Congressional Budget Office \(CBO\) scoring of the Senate’s Farm Bill](#). The CBO estimated US\$6.4 billion in savings for the Conservation Title (addressed on pages 6 through 7 and 13 through 15).
- Information on the NACD-hosted Farm Bill Fly-In on March 19 and 20.

Peterson summed up his observations on Farm Bill progress at that time:

Most of the people I work with here in DC hope we will get a Farm Bill this year. If we do not, nothing good happens for the ag and conservation community. With the current economy and efforts to cut the federal budget, any delay will likely mean even more cuts (more than the US\$23 billion now proposed in the Senate Bill) in the Farm Bill.

As the debates progress, SWCS will continue to work with conservation and agricultural organizations to keep Farm Bill conservation programs viable and effective.

Resources for Developing and Updating Chapter Web Sites

Chapter Web sites are an easy, cost-effective, and interactive way to attract, retain, and inform members. As you create a new chapter Web site or update and redesign your old site, the SWCS headquarters would like to encourage you to adopt the SWCS brand template in order to create a consistent and recognizable appearance throughout the organization. The SWCS logo, tagline, and other images have recently been made available online for chapter use. Also provided are brand guidelines (color, logo, and typography information) that will help you make the most of promoting the SWCS and ensure a consistent look, feel, and tone for all promotional and informative materials. The SWCS brand reflects the professionalism, innovation, and leadership spirit of the Society. By upholding these guidelines, you are upholding the promise of our important organization.

Please take the time to [view these resources](#) and plan to integrate them into your Web site. If you do not have a chapter Web site and would like to develop one, please read more about creating SWCS chapter Web sites [here](#). Any questions or requests for additional Web site materials can be directed to annie.binder@swcs.org.



SWCS Special Project

4R Approach as Part of the Revised Natural Resources Conservation Service 590 Standard

By Theo Gunther, SWCS Project Coordinator

This is the second installment of a series of articles by SWCS Project Coordinator Theo Gunther. Theo is working in partnership with [The Fertilizer Institute](#) on a USDA Conservation Innovation Grant project to examine the impact of nutrient management on nitrous oxide emissions and potential reductions from adoption of improved management practices. This article describes the public and private collaborations taking place to encourage implementation of 4R nutrient stewardship.

In December of 2011, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced a revision of the National 590 Nutrient Management Standard. This revision put greater emphasis on protecting soil, water, and air resources through focus on efficient use of fertilizers through a comprehensive assessment of the source, rate, placement, and timing of nutrient applications.

Though the 4R nutrient stewardship effort is an industry-led effort, the recognition of common goals for both industry and public agencies is a promising step towards realizing potential gains of improved nutrient management on the environment. Finding the right combination of these four parts (right source, right rate, right place, and right time) of nutrient management will help to improve the efficiency of fertilizer use while meeting the rising global demand for agricultural goods.

The Fertilizer Institute, NRCS, Iowa State University, and the International Plant Nutrition Institute are partnering to develop documentation and educational resources to help NRCS employees and agronomic service providers implement the 4Rs within the 590 Standard and related programs. These jointly developed resources will serve to facilitate greater implementation of improvements to nutrient management.

This public-private partnership stands to engage greater participation than would have been possible with parallel efforts. The cooperative effort serves as a great step in realizing the common goal of improved environmental quality using a comprehensive, science-based approach.

New Corporate Member: The Fertilizer Institute

The Fertilizer Institute represents the nation's fertilizer industry. Producers, wholesalers, retailers, and trading firms that comprise its membership are served by a full-time Washington, DC, staff in various legislative, educational, and technical areas and are provided with information and public relations programs. Further information on the Institute is available at www.tfi.org.

The fertilizer industry supports sustainable nutrient use based on 4R stewardship (use of the right fertilizer source at the right rate, the right time, and in the right place). Through 4R nutrient stewardship, farmers are implementing best management practices that optimize the efficiency of fertilizer use by matching nutrient supply with crop requirements and minimizing nutrient losses. Further information on this science-based system is available at www.nutrientstewardship.org.

Current Corporate Members

GOLD

[Agri Drain Corporation](#)

[Dow AgroSciences LLC](#)

[Hickenbottom Inc.](#)

[Pioneer Hi-Bred, A DuPont Business](#)

SILVER

[Agren Inc.](#)

[The Fertilizer Institute](#)

[The Nature Conservancy](#)

BRONZE

[Ag Business Consultants](#)

[Agricultural Engineering Services PLLC](#)

[Aspinwall & Co. Ltd.](#)

[Conservation Technology Information Center](#)

[Ecosystem Services Exchange](#)

[EnSave Inc.](#)

[Forrest Keeling Nursery](#)

[Logiag Inc.](#)

[Propane Education and Research Council](#)

[Stock Seed Farms](#)

[Validus Ventures LLC](#)

For more information about corporate membership, please contact

Meredith Foley

515-289-2331 x 112

corporate.info@swcs.org

Chapter News

Oklahoma Chapter: Communicating with New Producers Workshop Videos Available Online

The face of agriculture is changing.

Agricultural educators, public agencies, consultants, and extension agents are seeing new types of farmers and ranchers needing their services. Some of these producers have been successful in other walks of life and now want to try their hand at farming. Some are retirees looking to start a new life on the land. Others are simply seeking refuge from the pace of the city and desire a quieter rural lifestyle.

Without traditional agricultural backgrounds, these emerging producers face many challenges in learning the skills necessary to successfully manage a modern farming operation. As agents, educators, and consultants serving the state's producers, we must change with the times and learn how to reach out to and serve the needs of these new farmers and ranchers.

The Oklahoma Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society hosted a one-day workshop in Oklahoma City, Communicating with New Producers: How to Reach Them, How to Teach Them, to address these challenges. The workshop explored the changing demographics of the Oklahoma farmer and the best methods for engaging those of different ages and interests. There was also discussion of the pros and cons of both traditional outreach through flyers and press releases versus new tools such as websites, social media, and alternative print products.

View the [workshop agenda](#) or watch [workshop videos](#) online. For questions about the workshop, contact [Oklahoma SWCS](#).

Iowa Chapter Summer Meeting

The Iowa Chapter will hold its summer meeting on Friday, June 22, 2012, at Bailey's Ford Nature Center in Manchester, Iowa. The meeting will begin with lectures on the 2010 Delhi Dam breach and the impacts to fisheries below the dam. Tours of the Lake Delhi Dam site, grade control structures, sedimentation, and stream habitat projects will follow.

Upcoming Events

[Nebraska Chapter Annual Meeting](#)
Kimball, Nebraska
June 14–16, 2012

[Iowa Chapter Summer Meeting](#)
Manchester, Iowa
June 22, 2012

[2012 Annual SWCS International Conference](#)
Fort Worth, Texas
July 22–25, 2012



Members News

In Memoriam

We remember those friends who have passed on and keep their families in our thoughts.

Ray Walke was a member of the Georgia Chapter.
John Clark was a member of the All Ohio Chapter.

New Members

Welcome members who joined in May!

Alabama

Luis Cruz
Erika Justiniano-Velez
Jessica Mills

Arizona

Kelly Wolff-Krauter

California/Nevada

Augustine Awunudiogba
Dennis Chessman
Bridget Whitney

Connecticut/Maryland/Rhode Island—Southern New England

Eric Dias

Washington, DC—National Capital

Janet Perry

Florida

Clifford Starling
Caitlin Tourangeau

Georgia

Leticia Sonon

Iowa

Ben Gleason

Illinois

William Gradle

Kansas

Hubert Lagae

Massachusetts—University of Massachusetts-Amherst
Glenda Williamson

Minnesota

Thomas Miller
Ann O'Neill

Missouri—Show Me

Beth Fry

Mississippi

Brian Deschamp

Nebraska—University of Nebraska-Lincoln Student Chapter

Vivek Sharma

New York—Empire State

Robert Blanchard

Ohio—All Ohio

Chris Gauger

Oklahoma

Colby Gregg

Oklahoma—Oklahoma State University Student Chapter

Kyle Risser
Tracy Wilson

South Dakota

Christine Lousias

Tennessee

Mitchell Aman
Janet Coleman
Kevin Hart
Frank Sagona

Texas—North Texas

Jason McAlister
Evelyn Steglich

Wisconsin

Dick Gorder



From the Leadership

Avoiding the Cycle of Soil Erosion

By Clark Gantzer, At-Large Director

I started working on soil and water conservation problems in 1970. It was the time of the first Earth Day. The Cuyahoga River caught on fire. Soil washed off Midwestern farms, partly because of federal encouragement for producers to farm “fence line to fence line” on highly erodible soils.



Earth Day promoted the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972. The promise of “swimmable, fishable water” in ten years was given, but now, even after 40 years, that promise has not been realized. While we made great strides in reducing point source pollution, the vexing problem of nonpoint source pollution has been just too difficult. Soil, fertilizer, and pesticides wash off farm fields, the Mississippi Basin collects this runoff and moves it to the Gulf of Mexico, and unfortunately, it seems that government decisions will not help much in solving this problem.

Craig Cox, the former Executive Director of the SWCS, said,

Unfortunately, the newly proposed Senate Agriculture Committee-approved five-year Farm Bill...will do more harm than good;...the Committee did not address the impact of fence-row to fence-row agricultural production, which is putting unprecedented pressure on our land, water, and wildlife. Although the Committee extended conservation compliance to the revenue guarantee program, we are disappointed that the Committee failed to require that farmers protect wetlands, grasslands, and soil health in exchange for insurance subsidies.

I ask, “What is the real problem in keeping soil erosion rates low?” The answer, “If a practice doesn’t make money, soil and water conservation will not be done,” is not satisfactory. I am worried that our current recession will incline producers to limit or even stop their participation in many of the effective soil and water practices that have advanced one of the most successful efforts at reducing soil erosion and nonpoint source pollution since the Dirty Thirties.

Aldo Leopold in his landmark essay, “The Land Ethic,” said,

To sum up: a system of conservation based solely on economic self-interest is hopelessly lopsided. It tends to ignore, and eventually, to eliminate, many elements in the land community that lack commercial value, but that are (as far as we know) essential to its healthy functioning. It assumes, falsely, I think, that the economic parts of the biotic clock will function without the uneconomic parts. It tends to relegate to government many functions eventually, too large, too complex, or too widely dispersed to be performed by government.

An ethical obligation on the part of the private owner is the only visible remedy for these situations.

What are the sources of the solutions? One is the SWCS. We are the professional organization dedicated to the work of soil and water conservation. As members of the SWCS, we all have pledged to work to advance our mission to foster the science and art of natural resource conservation, conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources on working land—the land used to produce food, fiber, and other services that improve the quality of life people experience in rural and urban communities.

Whatever your profession, I urge you to sustain or even increase your effort in advancing our mission and thereby help farmers solve their dilemma of an “ethical obligation.” Solutions to soil erosion and water pollution do exist across the gambit from science to local, state, and federal government. For those who can help, a first step could be to tell your US Senators that their proposed bill (scheduled to be finalized in June) as written will likely be a giant step backward in that it will allow the high levels of soil erosion of the 1980s or even the 1930s to return once again.

Whatever the result of the final Farm Bill, I urge you to work as hard as Hugh Bennett or Aldo Leopold did to develop new and creative ways to advance soil and water conservation. There really is no choice.