

# Alabama Chapter SWCS History

(Prepared by Perry Oakes, 2019)

Updated 8/2025

## **Beginnings**

Discussions of an Alabama Chapter began in 1946. An Alabama Chapter had its first President in 1949.

The Charter of the South Alabama Chapter of Soil Conservation Society of America (SCSA) was December 3, 1954, and signed by Mr. R. Y. Bailey, president of the National Association of SCSA.

A. L. Harrell, North Alabama Chapter Chairman, petitioned the National Association of the SCSA for a chapter in North Alabama on September 21, 1954. The petition was approved by the national council of SCSA and presented to the North Alabama Chapter on December 17<sup>th</sup>, by Mr. R. Y. Bailey, president of the National Association of SCSA.

The North and South Alabama Chapters of SCSA had separate annual meetings but often met together.

The two Alabama Chapters were merged in 1981 to form the Alabama Chapter of SCSA.

In August 1987, the SCSA was changed at the national level to the Soil and Water Conservation Society. This same year the By-Laws of the Alabama Chapter were changed to The Alabama Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

## **Interesting Facts**

The SCSA Annual Meeting in 1971 of the North and South Alabama Chapters at the Governor's House Motel in Montgomery consisted of addresses by Jerry Clower, a humorist from Yazoo City, Mississippi; Governor George Wallace; and Congressman Bill Nichols. What an agenda!

In the early years, the Alabama chapters contributed towards a building fund for the national association office.

In 1979, the North AL Chapter developed a "Position Statement on Land Use."

In the early years, Chapters often passed resolutions honoring members who died during the year.

In 1985, a resolution by the chapter was sent to President Reagan and each U.S. Congressman and Senator from Alabama requesting ample funding for the SCS.

For years, the Chapter had a Photo Award Contest that began in 1968 and continued until 1994. Members would compete during the year capturing the best photo in different categories.

During the early years ('80's) Annual Meetings often had as many as 12 sponsors who made monetary donations for the meeting.

In 1990 and 1991, the Chapter developed Position Statements on The Environment, Prime Farmland, Fish and Wildlife, and Forestry.

In 1992, the Chapter passed a Resolution that recognized the need for improved water resource management for the State of Alabama and recommended to Governor Hunt and the Alabama Legislature to fund an Office of Water Resources within ADECA.

In 1995, the Chapter became part of the SWCS blanket tax exemption from the IRS.

### **Annual Meetings**

<b>Date</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
1955, N.AL Chapter	Guntersville			35
1964, S. AL Chapter	Montgomery	Governor's House		100
1965, N.AL Chapter, July 30	Cullman	Holiday Inn	You and the SCSA	106
1965, S.AL Chapter, August 6	Selma	Holiday Inn		100
1966, S. AL Chapter, July 22	Monroeville	Vanity Fair Park	To Advance the Science & Art of Good Land Use	105
1967, S.AL Chapter, July 21	Montgomery	Holiday Inn East		116
1968, N.AL Chapter,			Total Resource Conservation	
1968, S. AL Chapter, July 19	Montgomery	Governor's House Motel	Environmental Improvement	115
1969, N.AL Chapter, August 1	Decatur	Downtown Holiday Inn		125
1969, S.AL Chapter, July 18			Frontiers in Conservation	150
1970, N.AL Chapter, July 31	Guntersville	Val Monte Motel	Developments in our Area	112
1970, S.AL Chapter, July	Montgomery	Governor's House Motel	The Changing Society	250
1971, Joint Meeting North and South AL Chapters, June 18	Montgomery	Governor's House Motel		
1971, S.AL Chapter, August 6	Selma	Holiday Inn		
1972, N.AL Chapter, July 28	Tuscaloosa	Ramada Inn Downtown		
1972, S.AL Chapter, June 23	Montgomery	Governor's House Motel	The Earth Around Us	93
1973, Joint Meeting North and South AL Chapters, June 22	Birmingham	Holiday Inn South		115
1973, S.AL Chapter, June			Plants, Animals and Man	60
1974, S. AL Chapter, June 14	Montgomery	Jefferson Davis Hotel		75
1975, Joint Meeting North and South AL Chapters, June 13	Montgomery	Holiday Inn East		111
1976, S. AL Chapter, June 11	Ozark	Ozark Country Club	Critical Conservation Choices, A Bicentennial Look	90

1977, Joint Meeting North and South AL Chapters, June 17	Birmingham	Parliament House Hotel		
1978, N.AL Chapter	Florence	Motel on U.S. 72 East		90
1978, S.AL Chapter, June 16	Auburn	Auburn Union Building		47
1979, Joint Meeting North and South AL Chapters, May 18	Montgomery	Sheraton Motor Inn		140
1980, Joint Meeting North and South AL Chapters, June 27	Birmingham	Holiday Inn 20 <sup>th</sup> Place	Energy and Agriculture	125+
1984, June 21-22	Tuscaloosa	Stafford inn	Alabama's Natural Resources	
1985, June 13-14	Eufaula	Lakepoint State Park		108
1986, June 12-13	Birmingham	The Club		
1987, June 11-12	Foley	Foley Civic Center		
1988, June 10	Decatur	Decatur inn		
1989, June 15-16	Birmingham	Mountain Brook Inn		
1990, June 8	Montgomery	Ramada Inn East		
1991, June 14	Foley	Foley Civic Center		
1992, June 19	Birmingham	Botanical Gardens	Water Resources Management and Protection	
1993, June 24-25	Auburn	Auburn Conference Center and Motor Lodge	Changing Faces of Rural Alabama	
1994, June 24	Foley	Foley Civic Center	Wet and Wild (Wetlands and Wildlife)	
1995, June 15-16	Guntersville	Guntersville State Park	Ecosystems in Alabama – The Lake Guntersville Story	
1996, June 27-28	Eufaula	Lake Point State Park		
1997, June 12-13	Birmingham	Botanical Gardens		
1998, June 24-25	Mobile	Ramada Inn		
1999, June 17-18	Huntsville	? Ramada Inn		
2000, June 14-16	Auburn – First 3 day event	Jovonn – Best Western - Clarionn	Erosion and Sediment Control Products for the Future	
2001, June 13-15	Birmingham	Sheraton Birmingham South Hotel	Our Changing Watersheds: Issues in the Urban/Rural Interface	
2002, June 12-14	Huntsville	Hilton Plaza	Protecting Our Environment – Understanding Phase II Regulations	
2003, June 11-13	Mobile	Airport Plaza Hotel	Watershed Protection from Headwaters to Estuaries	
2004, June 2-4	Opelika	Grand National Conference Center & Lodge	Protecting Our Water Supply	
2005, June 8-10	Birmingham	Birmingham Botanical Gardens	Managing Our Natural Resouces for Multiple Uses	
2006, June 7-9	Huntsville	Holiday Inn Research Park	Conserving Our Soil and Water Resources for Future Generations	
2007, May 17-19	Quincy, FL	North FL Research Center	Tri-State Mtg (AL, FL, GA)	
2007, June 20-22	Mobile	Ashbury Hotel and Suites	Watershed Protection from Headwaters to Estuaries	
2008, June 11-13	Auburn	Ham Wilson Livestock Arena	Our Changing Landscapes 2008	
2009, June 10-12	Birmingham	Double Tree Hilton Hotel	Energy and Water Development for Alabama	
2010, June 9-11	Huntsville	Holiday Inn Research Park	Protecting Our Soil and Water Resources	

2011, June 8-10	Spanish Fort	Five Rivers Delta Center	Restoring and Managing our Natural Landscapes	
2012, May 23-25	Eufaula	Lakepoint State Park and Resort	Water Conservation, Not Water Wars: A Tri-State Perspective	
2013, June 12-14	Birmingham	Doubletree by Hilton Hotel	Got Soil Health?	
2014, June 11-13	Huntsville	Holiday Inn Research Park	Our Changing Landscapes	
2015, June 22-24	Spanish Fort	Five Rivers Delta Center	Creating a Clean Water Future through Water and Soil Conservation	
2016, June 8-10	Auburn	Ham Wilson Livestock Arena	Protecting Alabama's Natural Resources	
2017, June 7-9	Irondale	Associated General Contractors - Alabama	Consumption and Conservation of Natural Resources	
2018, June 20-22	Florence	Marriott Shoals Hotel and Spa	Healthy Land and Clean Water	
2019, June 19-21	Foley	Graham Creek Nature Preserve	Conservation in Action from the Mountains to the Beaches	83
2020, COVID Year	Meeting Cancelled			
2021, August 18-20	Opelika	Opelika Sportsplex	Resource Challenges for the Conservationist: Global, Regional, and Local	80
2022	Oxford	Oxford Civic Center	Farm to Table, and Infrastructure Challenges	
2023	Rogersville	Joe Wheeler State Park	Exploring Technology for the Future on Public and Private Land	
2024	Foley	Graham Creek Nature Preserve	Coastal Urbanization Challenges	
2025, June 11-13	Eufaula	Lakepoint State Park	Stewardship of Our Environment	

### **Presidents (Chairman)**

1949 – J. J. Stroup

1950 thru 1954 - John K. Howard

1955 – A. L. Harrell, North AL Chapter

1956 thru 1957 – John M. Cross, North AL Chapter

1958 thru 1959 Harold Benford, North AL Chapter

1960 – C. T. Hallmark, North AL Chapter

1961 – Roger M. Chapman, North AL Chapter

1962 thru 1963 - Kermit N. Tucker, North AL Chapter

1964 thru 1965 - John K. Howard, North AL Chapter

1966 – Dyer N. Ruggles, North AL Chapter; Luther Gowder, South AL Chapter

1967 – Robert M. Cargile, North AL Chapter; G. L. Edwards, South AL Chapter

1968 – Joe O. Cleland, North AL Chapter; Elvin V. Wright, South AL Chapter

1969 – Jack P. Harper, North AL Chapter; O. D. Fincher, South AL Chapter

1970 – W. J. King, North AL Chapter; Ed Gingles, South AL Chapter

1971 – Henry C. DeBardeleben, North AL Chapter; D. M. Harris, South AL Chapter

1972 – James A. Green, North AL Chapter; Henry Harrison, South AL Chapter

1973 – Byron Oliver, North AL Chapter; Lewis D. Williams, South AL Chapter  
1974 – Charles T. Mathews, North AL Chapter; Lewis D. Williams, South AL Chapter  
1975 – Samuel H. Geiger, North AL Chapter; James Holland, South AL Chapter  
1976 – Marlyn F. Hester, South AL Chapter  
1977 – Joe Dent, South AL Chapter  
1978 – James Norris, South AL Chapter  
1979 – Glenn Hickman, South AL Chapter  
1980 – W. F. Patterson, South AL Chapter  
1981 – Bobby Moody, South AL Chapter  
1982 – Charles Bowen  
1983 – Joe Hood  
1984 – Robert Kelley  
1985 – Randy Hale  
1986 – Jerry Johnson  
1987 – Rick Zellner  
1988 – Jim Brown  
1989 – John Harper  
1990 – Bill Hughes  
1991 – Gary Kobylski  
1992 – Clifford Jones  
1993 – Greg Mullins  
1994 – Greg Mullins  
1995 – John Meetze  
1996 – Dr. Wayne Reeves  
1998 – Randall East  
1999 – Paul Kennedy  
2000 – Mary Miller  
2001 – Foy Kirkland  
2002 – Rod Goode  
2003 – Carl Pinyard  
2004 – Jeff Holloway  
2005 – Ben Moore  
2006 – Tracy Cole  
2007 – Kirk Iverson  
2008 – Steve Musser  
2009 – Monday Mbila  
2010 – Perry Oakes  
2011 – Renea Dyer  
2012 – Brian Lassiter  
2013 – Andrew Price  
2014 – Gary Banks  
2015 – Monday Mbila

2016 – Leslie Gahagan  
2017 – Jason Gardner  
2018 – Randy Sims  
2019 – Kathy Gotcher  
2020 – Leslie Gahagan  
2021 – Leslie Gahagan  
2022 – Jesse Joiner  
2023 – Rick Nichols  
2024 – Blake Garner  
2025 – Ashley Campbell  
2026 – Earl Norton

**Membership (individual)**

1961 73 (South AL)  
1965 94 (South AL)  
1967 110 (South AL)  
1968 111 (South AL)  
1969 85 (South AL)  
1973 113 (South AL)  
1974 117 (South AL)  
1975 108 (South AL)  
1976 119 (South AL)  
1977 94 (South AL)  
1978 120 (South AL)  
1979 119 (South AL)  
1984 194  
1985 169  
1986 154  
1987 136  
1988 131  
1989 116  
1991 106  
1993 100  
1995 103  
1996 100  
1999 123  
2000 122  
2002 176  
2005 153  
2006 145

2007	118
2008	127
2009	
2010	
2011	116
2012	101
2013	93
2014	94
2015	92
2016	92
2017	89
2018	80
2019	66
2020	48
2021	56
2022	63
2023	65
2024	57

## **Constitution and By-Laws**

The South Alabama Chapter adopted by-laws in 1974.

The first “dated” By-Laws of the Alabama Chapter was dated 6/85 at which time they were revised to align with the 5 areas of the Soil Conservation Service. Previous By-Laws existed for both chapters but were undated. The By-Laws were revised in 6/93.

The By-Laws were amended in 1986 to require the Nominating Committee to develop a slate of candidates (at least 2 for each office except for the President, which is filled by the President-Elect) at least 60 days before the annual meeting. The slate will be mailed to the membership for voting at least 45 days prior to the annual meeting.

In 1983, changes were made to the By-Laws making the Secretary/Treasurer’s position two separate positions. In 1993, the Treasurer’s position was made a permanent position.

In 1996, changes were made so that Vice Presidents from areas 1, 3, and 5 were elected in odd years while Vice Presidents for area 2 and 4, Secretary, and Treasurer were elected in even years. Terms were for 2 years.

## **Strategic Plan 2005-2009**

The original Strategic Plan was done in 1999 and considered a working document.

## **CPESC**

In 1981, the national SCSA joined with the American Registry of Certified Professionals in Agronomy, Crops and Soils in initiating a program for certifying individuals qualified in the area of erosion and sediment control. An individual certified in this program is known as a Certified Professional Erosion and Sediment Control Specialist (CPESC). The name was changed later to Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control.

The Chapter established a CPESC Committee in 1995 and offered tutorials, workshops, and proctored exams for certification at the annual meeting through the 2000 annual meeting. In 2001 the Chapter began sponsoring the CPESC Exam Review Course and the Exam twice annually at a site near Clanton and did this through 2013. Beginning in 2014, instructors could no longer proctor the exam so the Chapter has co-sponsored the Exam Review Course with others, i.e. ALDOT, Volkert at various locations. The need for CPESCs to attain continuing education encouraged attendance by CPESCs and helped in attaining members. Earl Norton, CPESC Committee Chair, estimated that between 1995 and 2016 over 200 CPESCs, including candidates from Georgia, Tennessee, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and South Carolina have been certified with the support of the Alabama Chapter’s courses and exam proctors.

### **Certified Crop advisors**

A CCA Committee met with the Chapter in January 1998 to determine ways the Committee and Alabama Chapter of SWCS can support and enhance the CCA Program. The 1990 SWCS program included training sessions for CCA's to provide continuing education. The Chapter continues today to ensure that annual meetings are pre-approved for CCA continuing education credits.

### **Agreements**

In early 2001, a vision plan for a state-wide erosion and sediment control program was developed by Chapter members Robert Berry and Earl Norton and resulted in establishing a program led by the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee with strong support of the Chapter, Alabama Association of Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Alabama Department of Environmental Management. The program formally began in September 2001 and continues today. Additional partners were added over the years and include the Alabama Department of Transportation, Alabama Associated General Contractors, Home Builders Association of Alabama, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and Auburn University. The program has provided the Alabama Handbook for Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater Management on Construction Sites and Urban Areas, the Field Guide for Erosion and Sediment Control in Alabama, the brochure Let's Look at Sediment, numerous Red Water Blues and Clear Water Alabama events, and numerous seminars through Auburn University. This program has provided many benefits to the citizens and environment of Alabama and, incidentally, provided accomplishments for the Chapter to recognize in the Annual Reports to SWCS Headquarters.

### **Student Chapter History**

#### **Auburn University**

In June 1964, information was provided for the formation of a student chapter.

The Auburn University Student Chapter of SWCS was chartered in 1998 with 15 members.

The first meeting of the Auburn Student chapter was held January 12, 1998, with 30 students attending from at least 8 majors.

The Chapter was still active in 2002.

The Chapter is inactive until 2025 when it became an affiliated student chapter with the Crop, Soil & Environmental Sciences Club.

#### **Alabama A&M**

The Alabama A&M Chapter is known as the **Environmental Science Club (ESC)**

**Founding:**

The Alabama A & M University Student Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society was founded in Fall 2002 by Monday Mbila in association with the Alabama Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

**Need for the Club:**

The club was needed because as concerns for the quality of the environment increased, the need to recruit and involve more and more youths through initiatives that give the youths a sense of service and responsibility to their local communities became imperative.

**The Club has the following goals:**

- To encourage, educate, and share information concerning issues in soil and water conservation.
- To enhance student awareness concerning educational and professional opportunities.
- To participate in both campus and community services and activities that promote environmental awareness.

**Affiliations:**

- Up till date, the club receives funding from the AL SWCS to help in carrying out the Chapter activities.
- The Student Chapter became a member of the Students of Agronomy, Soils and Environmental Sciences (SASES) of the American Society of Agronomy. Membership to this organization gives our students access to professionally associate with other Agronomy/Soils/Environmental Science students across the United States and the world.

**Past Activities/Accomplishments:**

- At the 2005, American Society of Agronomy Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, the Alabama A& M Student Chapter participated with 12 other universities in a nationwide Students of Agronomy, Soils and Environmental Sciences (SASES) poster contest. The AAMU-Student Chapter was placed 4th after the University of Arkansas, Kansas State University, and the University of Florida.
- Participation in state Soil and Water Conservation Activities including annual meetings and poster presentations.
- Adopt-a-mile program on Memorial Parkway in front of the AAMU Campus -Club members help in keeping that portion of the highway clean. Obtained clearance from City for this program.

- Volunteer with other organizations in Northern Alabama (Operation Green Team, Redstone Arsenal, Wheeler Wildlife Refuge, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and City of Huntsville, Mayor's Office) area to help cleanup the Huntsville Spring Branch.
- Participates in the Huntsville Panoply Arts festival to promote the talents of young and mature artists throughout the nation.
- Participate in a "Printer Cartridge Recycling" program with Green School, a non-profit organization that allows schools and businesses to recycle empty printer, fax, and copier cartridges.
- Embarks on an AAMU Campus wide recycling program to recycle papers that are being generated from the University offices.
- Inviting speakers to speak to the club on different issues that interest the members.
- Organized water chemical testing certification training to members of the Club.

**Advisors:**

- Dr. Elica Moss
- Dr. Kozma Naka
- Dr. Monday Mbila

The chapter is currently inactive

**Tuskegee University**

The chapter is currently inactive

**Scholarships**

In 1991, the Chapter began discussion of a Scholarship fund to award a \$500 scholarship each year (if funds are available) to an undergraduate student in the field of agriculture or related curriculum. In 1992, the scholarship was established with eligibility criteria. Auburn University, Alabama A&M, and Tuskegee University would determine potential recipients and the Executive Committee of the chapter would determine the recipient.

In 1993, the Chapter established an Agreement with the School of Agriculture and Home Economics at Alabama A&M University to award a \$500 scholarship every 3<sup>rd</sup> year to an eligible student at A&M.

Since 2010, the Chapter has given an annual scholarship to an eligible student in an Alabama College or University. Student apply to the Chapter and the selection is made by the Executive Committee. The scholarship began as \$1,000 and was increased to \$2,000 in 2013. This scholarship is still active.

## **Chapter Awards**

The Alabama Chapter has received numerous National Awards throughout the years. Most of the awards were not found for this review of history.

1970 – North AL Chapter, National Winner of the SCSA membership development campaign

1999 – Outstanding Chapter for the South Central Region

2002 – Outstanding Chapter and Chapter Achievement Award

2005 – Outstanding Chapter Award, Chapter Achievement Award, and Chapter Professional Development Award.

2006 – The Chapter was part of a Team effort with Georgia SWCS, the University of Georgia, and Auburn University to promote Conservation Tillage. The Team received a Merit Award from the National SWCS.

2006 – Sustained Performance Award

2007 – Chapter Professional Development Award and Chapter Achievement Award

2008 – Outstanding Chapter Award

## **Chapter Sponsorships**

Over the years, the Chapter has sponsored or co-sponsored numerous workshops and events including: an advanced course in erosion and sediment control taught by Jerry Fifield, Ph.D.,

There is no record or when it was started, but the Chapter has supported regional and state Science Fairs by providing awards. This activity has been spotty but continues today.

## **Newsletters**

Newsletter for the Chapter members were regularly issued from 1996 until 2008. Sporadic newsletters have been developed since this time.

## **Home Page**

Discussion began of developing a Chapter homepage in 1997. A home page was initiated through Auburn University ACES in 2001. The affiliation with Auburn as the home page provider was changed in 2017, with services provided by Sunshine Supplies. In 2018, the Chapter Treasurer began providing the services for maintaining the Chapter homepage and maintains it today.