



Nebraska Society News

SoilandWaterConservationSociety

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May 2006 Newsletter Officers 2005-2006

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President's Message

By the time you read this, the 2006 Annual Nebraska Chapter Meeting will be underway in Sidney Nebraska (June 1 - 3rd). You received all the information needed to join fellow conservationists from across the state at this exciting and informative meeting either through our email list or through the mail. The Annual Meeting planning committee headed by Tina Carlson has been working hard since our last meeting in Beatrice.

In Beatrice last fall Jim Harder and Rob Glidden lead us through a Strategic Planning Process. That process identified ideas that the group felt needed to be implemented right away, while the planning process continues on other items. One idea that the group felt strongly about was ramping up the technical training at our Annual Meeting in conjunction with providing Continuing Education Units (CEUs). The planning committee responded and we have submitted an application for a total of 5.5 CEU hours at the Sidney Meeting.

Does this mean all work and no play at the Annual Meeting? The answer to this question is simply NO. My sons can hardly wait for the Wagon Ride on the Oregon Trail in the shadows of Chimney Rock! I never thought our SWCS crew would beat the ride our family had on picnic tables in the back of 4 wheel drive pickup trucks looking for Buffalo, but this trip just might do it.

Next time you see Tina Carlson, Robin Foulk, Anita Nein, Sean Brown or Tina Baker, thank them for the time and effort they put forth to make us feel welcome in the Panhandle. To imagine the excellent program they have put together as a group of volunteers is just overwhelming.

Over the past year I have noted some new member names showing up on the Nebraska roster. Some names are of those who left the state and are now returning to Nebraska and our Chapter. "Welcome" to those new SWCS Members and "Welcome Back" to those of you returning. In addition to the excitement of these members becoming part of our Nebraska Team, some are ready to step to the plate and serve as Officers!

I look forward to seeing you in Sidney, and for those that miss out, I look forward to working with you in 2006-2007. *Doug Garrison*

23rd Annual SWCS Legislative Breakfast Held February 2, 2006

Where do you find a group that includes individuals from USDA, NE Dept. Ag/DNR, NRDs, Farming, retired folks and some current University Students? Throw in a few State Senators and a U.S. Senator Aid and you have the formula for the Annual SWCS Legislative Breakfast! This years featured speaker was Ann Bleed, Acting Director of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.



Ann Bleed discusses LB962 and the conflicts between surface water and ground water use.

Ann lead an open discussion of topics related to LB962 and the current conflicts we are experiencing between surface water and ground water use. One topic of interest is the question of how traditional soil and water conservation practices influence the balance between water supply and use. There is a current void in understanding and hard scientific data to explain where water is going from applying conservation practices.

If water is going to aquifer recharge, excellent. If water is going to consumptive use in growing the crop, then the question becomes "how will that consumptive use be mitigated?"

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Points of discussion from the group in attendance included:

- No one is advocating eliminating conservation practices.
- Best cropland under conservation still provides more runoff than native rangeland.
- The issue is we are currently over used in certain basins, so what do we do?
- FACTS are needed concerning conservation practices impacts and no one is afraid of facts.
- Once we have the facts we can look at trade offs and find areas where we can all agree to move forward.

After reading the above information from the Annual Legislative Breakfast the question is: What can NE SWCS do to help facilitate the current issues being raised about traditional soil and water conservation practices?

Here is an opportunity for you to become involved. Contact your SWCS Officers and volunteer to help make NE SWCS a player in the ongoing discussions and resolution to the questions being raised.

Scholarship Winners Announced:

The Legislative Breakfast is a great time to introduce the outstanding students that our members support through scholarship activities. The Nebraska Chapter and the Northeast Nebraska Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society have a scholarship fund at the **University of Nebraska - Lincoln Foundation**. The interest on this investment fund enabled us to give two \$700 scholarships in December 2005. The year 2005-2006 scholarship winners are Julie A. George and Richard D. Wilson.

Julie is a UNL junior majoring in Fisheries and Wildlife and is a native of Alliance. She has had summer jobs which allowed her to work directly with agricultural sciences and natural resources both in Western Nebraska and Southern Colorado. From these experiences she states "Most importantly I found out that helping in the conservation, management, and restoration of natural resource is truly what I want to do for the rest of my life."

Richard is a UNL junior majoring in Water Science and plans to specialize in Water Quality. He grew up near Benkleman and currently is President of



Julie George, President Doug Garrison and Richard Wilson.

the UNL Soil and Water Resources Club. He states that "The club has had activities that have shown us the new research and issues that deal with natural resources." After graduation, he would like to be a part of a contracting company that deals in water quality issues and applies methods in protecting and ensuring good water quality.

Michelle A. Taylor of Taylor, Nebraska was awarded the **Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Foundation** Scholarship for 2005. The award was presented at a luncheon held in Lincoln in December with several SWCS members in attendance. The award was presented by President Val Bohaty.

Michelle is a freshman at UN'L majoring in Rangeland Ecosystems. She is a graduate of Burwell High School and was President of her senior class. She worked part time for NRCS on the Natural Resources Inventory and this past summer was accepted into the NRCS Student Career Experience Program and will continue through her college years.

If you know of a well deserving student for these Soil and Water Conservation Society related Scholarships in 2006, please direct them to our website (printed on each page of the newsletter) for a Scholarship Application Form.



Michelle Taylor

2005 President Rob Glidden Presents Annual Meeting Awards

Honor Award – Mary Cave, Chappell NE. Mary owns and operates Cave Ranch Company with a long running pledge to conservation on the land. A good picture of Mary's operation would be to envision a neat farm yard encircled by rangeland, the nature of which is both riparian and rolling upland. Mary and her late husband Harold have been practicing conservation since beginning farming in 1944. Their approach has included both traditional (terraces, grass planting and no-till) and nontraditional (biological weed control with insects - goats & llamas plus riparian zone management) conservation practices.



Merit Award – Mary Harding, Executive Director, NE Environmental Trust.

The Nebraska Environmental Trust was established in 1992 to conserve, enhance and restore the natural environments of Nebraska. It was created on the conviction that a prosperous future is dependent on a sound natural environment, and that Nebraskans could collectively achieve real progress on real environmental issues if seed money were provided.

Merit Award – Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Group (Gene Wisenberg pictured with Rob). The Shell Creek Watershed improvement Group (SCWIG) was formed in 1999. The group is made up of landowners, agricultural producers, community residents and businesses. The group was formed to address poor water quality in the Shell Creek area. The SCWIG feels it is essential for landowners to start managing their natural resources to improve the quality of Shell Creek and have developed a Management Plan with numerous conservation based objectives.



Merit Award – Peter Berthelsen, Director of Conservation Programs, NE Pheasants Forever. NE Pheasants Forever was created in 1986 and has grown to 59 Chapters with over 11,000 members who are working together to make a difference for wildlife. The simple objective of Pheasants Forever is to raise funds for local habitat projects, conservation education and other worthy conservation causes. Pheasants Forever is the most cost effective wildlife conservation group in the country with 93 percent of every dollar raised going to program services.

50 + Years of Conservation Award – Dwight Dell, Beatrice Nebraska. Dwight served on the Mud Creek watershed board since its beginning. The Work Plan for the watershed was approved in 1958 while Dwight was the chairman of the board. Dwight was involved extensively in the work to amend the Work Plan in 1969 to include what is now Rockford Lake. Dwight served on the Lower Big Blue NRD Board from its beginning in 1972 until January 1987. Dwight is active in a family farming and Dairy operation.



Nebraska SWCS Chapter
13550 W US HWY 34
Malcolm, NE 68402

SWCS Regional Meeting - Cody Wyoming

Robin Foulk sent the friendly looking SWCS group picture below at the end of the Regional Meeting. Robin noted that the group put in 10 hour days and they were still smiling! Some interesting topics covered included a personal story by Terry Everard, District Conservationist from Sundance WY who was attacked by a grizzly bear 10 years ago. Jeff Vanuga, District Conservationist from Dubois WY, who has served in the past as a photographer for NRCS, National Geographic and other magazines gave an excellent power point program on nature. The group completed a morning tour where Robin saw her first wild grizzly bear (coming out of hibernation). The group reviewed excellent soils displays and several educational programs on soils which can be easily presented at local functions.



Terry Everard discussing bear attack prevention.

International Soil and Water Conservation Society's 2006 Annual Conference
Saturday, July 22, 2006 - Wednesday, July 26, 2006
Keystone Colorado
<http://www.swcs.org/>