



Nebraska Society News

FEBRUARY 2010 NEWSLETTER

OFFICERS 2009-2010

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2010 NEBRASKA SWCS LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

The Nebraska Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society invites you to the 27th Annual Legislative Breakfast to be held **February 18, 2010 7:00 to 8:00 AM**. The meeting will be held in room '1Y' on the first floor of the Nebraska State Office Building, 301 Centennial Mall South in Lincoln.

John Hansen, Nebraska Farmers Union, will be speaking on Farming for the Future: *A Nebraska Carbon Sequestration Update*. Mr. Hansen will discuss how the agriculture sector can help sequester carbon through improved conservation techniques, the markets that serve as incentives to implement these practices, the rates of sequestration for various practices and how they are determined, and the history of the carbon sequestration advisory committee's role in Nebraska.

Please join us on Thursday, February 18th from 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM for rolls, juice and coffee on the first floor of the Nebraska State Office Building, 301 Centennial Mall South, room 1-Y to learn more about the carbon sequestration in Nebraska.

All are welcome. There will be a \$2.00 charge to cover coffee and rolls. If you have questions please call Kris Reed at 402 471-3946 (office) or email Kris at kris.reed@nebraska.gov.

FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Paul Smith - Foundation Committee Chairman

President Krista Reed has released the names of The Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Foundation Scholarship winners for 2010. For the first time both winners attend Chadron State College (CSC).

The winner of the Tina Lorentzen-Carlson Memorial Scholarship is Sara J. Winslow of Kearney. She is a sophomore at CSC majoring in Range Management with an Ecology Option. Sara is the Central Nebraska Ducks Unlimited Chapter-Secretary, CSC Wildlife Society-President, and a member of the Watershed team that is scheduled to present at SWCS Regional Meeting 2010.

She loves the outdoors and says her dream job would be reclaiming wetlands and other important small watersheds to benefit both the land and biota that utilize the system. The funds for this scholarship are made possible by the family of Tina Lorentzen-Carlson in her memory. Tina was an active member of the Society and a supporter of the Scholarship Program.

The winner of the Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Foundation Scholarship is Ethan J. Teter of St. Paul. He is a sophomore also majoring in Range Management at CSC. The activities Ethan has been involved in include being the 2009-2010 Secretary/Treasurer for the CSC Ag Club, the 2008-2009 Campus Activity Board-representatives for the CSC Ag Club, a member of the Cardinal Key National Honors Society, and a Society for Range Management member. Ethan graduated from The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture - Curtis with an Associate of Applied Science in Veterinary Technology in August 2008 and plans to graduate from CSC in December 2010. Ethan has a job lined up with the Game and Parks Commission after graduating from CSC. These scholarship funds are made possible through the support of members of the Nebraska Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society.

Presentations will be made in Chadron by member Robin Foulk with the help of college sponsors and advisers. This is the 21st year that the Nebraska Foundation has made available at least one College Scholarship. "The officers of the Foundation congratulate the winners and encourage them to finish their degrees in Natural Resources," stated President Krista Reed.

SWCS STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS - UNL FOUNDATION DECEMBER 2009

Dave Langermeier - Treasurer

The Nebraska Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society has a scholarship fund at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (UNL) Foundation. The earnings on this investment fund enabled the society to give two \$750 scholarships in December 2009.

The year 2009-2010 scholarship winners are Curtis Thoene and Heather Achterberg.



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Curtis Thoene is an UNL senior majoring in Agricultural Engineering. He grew up on a farm and graduated from Crofton Community Schools. Curtis states that he learned early in life how important the soil was to raising crops and controlling runoff, erosion, and leaching. He has had jobs working for the USDA researching runoff of phosphorus on the soil, working for the Nebraska Tractor Test Lab, and working as a farmhand. Currently, as a senior design project, he is in the process of designing three different plans for restoring a creek in Omaha. After graduation in December 2010, he hopes to find a job in Nebraska dealing with wetlands, creek restoration, or soil management, and the eventually have a family and farm in Nebraska. Curtis is Treasurer of the UNL Soil and Water Resources Club.

Heather Achterberg is an UNL senior majoring in Plant Biology and Geography. She graduated from Deshler High School and has studied geography, horticulture, wildlife conservation, and general biology at South Dakota State University (SDSU) before transferring to UNL in 2008. Heather has been employed at UNL in various fields including being an UNL assistant in soil fertility research, in geology, and in the veterinary diagnostics center. She has also worked as a quality control tech at Tetra Micronutrients, SDSU soil physics department, and as a computer lab technician at the SD state climate office computer lab. Heather wants to use her rural upbringing, training, and work experience to work with farmers in helping them better take care of their land and resources. She states that she cares deeply about conserving the earth's resources and using them efficiently.

The Nebraska SWCS chapter is pleased to announce these two scholarship winners. Please congratulate them when you see them and encourage them as they pursue careers in the natural resource field.

NEBRASKA CONSIDERING CO-HOSTING THE 2013 INTERNATIONAL SWCS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Nebraska is considering co-hosting the 2013 International SWCS Annual Conference with Iowa. Proposed locations for the conference are Omaha, Nebraska or Council Bluffs, Iowa. More information about the application to host the conference and selection process can be found at http://www.swcs.org/documents/filelibrary/conferences_pages/ConferenceFAQv4b_0A19F78536634.pdf. If the conference is co-hosted by Nebraska please consider helping to make the event a success. If you have questions please contact Darwin Hinrichs at

Darwin.Hinrichs@ne.usda.gov.

The 65th International SWCS Annual Conference will be held in St. Louis, Missouri. Primary conference dates are July 18-21, 2010. The 2011 SWCS Annual Conference is scheduled for July 16-20 in Washington, DC and the 2012 SWCS Annual Conference will be held July 22-25 in Ft. Worth, TX.

More information on the 2010 conference can be found at http://www.swcs.org/en/conferences/2010_annual_conference/.



NEBRASKA 2010 SWCS ANNUAL STATE MEETING TO BE HELD IN NORTHEAST NEBRASKA

Plans are starting to come together for the 2010 Nebraska SWCS Annual State Meeting which will be held in Northeast Nebraska. The tentative date for the meeting is the second week of June. Scott Bohaty, Northeast Nebraska SWCS Chapter Director, is leading the effort to organize this meeting. The meeting will include speaker and tours in the Northeast portion of the state. More information will be coming on this meeting. Please plan to attend in June!



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HELP STOP INVASIVE PESTS! USE LOCAL FIREWOOD!

Constance Miller

Our forests are threatened by nonnative insects that can kill large numbers of trees. Introduced species from Asia, such as emerald ash borer (affecting all types of ash trees), Asian longhorned beetle (prefers maple, but has infested 17 other kinds of trees to date), and Sirex woodwasp (prefers pines)—are wood-infesting insects that can be transported long distances in firewood. Once transported into new areas, these insects can become established and kill local trees.

You can help stop the spread of these insects and protect our forests and trees. How?

- Leave firewood at home – do not transport it to campgrounds or parks.
- Use firewood from local sources.
- If you have moved firewood, burn all of it before leaving your campsite.

For more information visit the following web sites:

www.emeraldashborer.info
www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp
www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ep

HOW COMMON IS COMMON MULLEIN?

Stephanie King

A portion of the poem “Pastoral” by Edna St. Vincent Millay:

On, Grey Hill,
Where the grazing herd
Licks the purple blossom,
Crops the spiky weed!
Oh, Stony pasture,
Where the tall mullein
Stands up so sturdy
On it's little seed!

Although Common Mullein (CM) may not be the stuff that most poems are written about, it has been a topic of discussion for many this past summer. About midsummer, CM tall flower stalk poke up and become highly visible and identifiable. It is one of the few plants I can identify driving down the hwy at 70 mph.

It is a pioneer plant, so it is often the first to grow after a fire or other disturbance. It will not grow in shade and

seed cannot be planted to deep. CM is not an overly aggressive plant and is usually not considered to be significant. However, there are conditions when it can displace natives and prevent the establishment of native forbs and grasses.

CM is a biennial, which means that it takes two or more years to flower and die. The first year's growth is a low growing rosette. The leaves are bluish-green with a soft felt like texture. The rosette must reach a critical size and it has to vernalize (exposure to cold) over the winter. Plants that survive the winter will bolt in the spring to produce a mature flowering plant in the second year. Large fuzzy leaves and a single stout erect stem, 2-8 ft tall will emerge. Usually there is only one flower stalk per stem. The flowers of CM are small, yellow and very fragrant. They will bloom a few at a time starting at the base of the flower spike. Flowers will bloom from June through September.

As with most biennials, CM produces solely by seed – and can it ever! Oval plant fruits will harden after flowering a produce between 180-268 seeds each, enabling one plant to produce between 100,000 – 240,000 seeds. As if that were not enough, these seeds can remain viable for over 100 years. Viable seed has been found in soil samples that dated from A.D. 1300. The sheer number of seeds is what can make this plant a formidable opponent.

CM was introduced into Virginia from Europe/Asia in the mid 1700's, probably as a medicinal plant. Its fast growth and deep tap root allow it crowd out other plants. However, later when grasses take over the field, mullein can't compete, so they die, leaving only their dead stalks and a very large seed depository lying in wait. This existing seed supply will produce plants when soil is exposed. Currently mullein exists in every state and is considered to be noxious in 20 of them. SD, WY, CO and MO all have listed it on their state noxious weed lists.

The seeds are small and can be translocated by stalk, wind, water or large animals. However, there is no mechanism for long distance dispersal, so most plants establish within 16" of the parent plants.

Only a few animals use mullein and livestock find it unpalatable. Certain insect species: thrips; stinkbugs; weevil and leaf bugs will eat mullein leaves. Some native grasshoppers will munch on the leaves and some birds will eat the seeds.

Over the years CM has gone by many names. Usually these names stem from some use past or present. Names <http://incolor.inetnebr.com/dougg/swcs>

such as Candle Wick Plant and Torches were attached to the plant as the leaves were folded and used as lamp wicks. The dead stalks were soaked in fat/oil and used as torches. Woolly Mullein, Flannel or Felt Plant all revolve around the soft fuzzy leaves. Beggar's Blanket was because the leaves were warm and soft and made good bedding or soles for shoes. Finally, Quakers Rouge came about as many a young lady would rub the leaves on their faces to redden their cheeks.

In ancient times CM was used as a medicinal herb. Teas, ointments and extracts were all used to treat respiratory problems, skin conditions and sooth earaches. Today it is being tested for its antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal properties. A methane extract has shown to be effective against mosquito larvae

CM can be difficult to control because of its long-lived seed bank. The best strategy is always to control plant populations when they are low. Densities can increase from a mere few to hundreds of plants in just a few years. CM has no livestock value so ranchers should control CM, especially after these drought years. According to UNL, heavy stands of CM can reduce grass population by 50%.

Several methods of control are available. Depending on the site, density and preference, one or all of these methods could be utilized. Prevention is always the best policy, so always minimize soil disturbances and keep pasture conditions competitive. Early detection is vital. Light infestations can be treated effectively, manually, such as: hand pulling, digging or hoeing before seed set or cutting off the head just as flowering begins. If soil is moist, plants are easily pulled. Mowing is not a recommended treatment as rosettes will increase in size.

For larger infestations, chemical applications will provide good season long control. Chemical control is only possible during the rosette stage and a good surfactant is essential, due to the plants hairy surface. Apply chemical when rosettes have 6-12 leaves and before the stem elongates. In Nebraska, this is usually in May. According the 2009 UNL Extension Weed Management Guide, effective herbicides and their rates are as follows: Cimarron Plus or Escort (5 oz/ac); Grazon P+D (4 pts/ac)

or Overdrive (6 oz/ac). Add 1-2 quarts of surfactant/ac. to help penetrate the wooly coat and **ALWAYS** read the label instructions before applying.

In summary, CM does not have to be a problem. It is easily controlled if disturbances are minimal and treatments are timely, repeated and thorough. Once CM is established, it will be more difficult, more expensive and more time consuming to control. Common Mullein's seed bank is ever present and always awaiting its next opportunity.



Common Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*)

NEBRASKA SWCS WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

Mitch Paine
Charles Wortmann
Kevin Breece
Steve Young
Rich Wilson
Dana Snyder
Kathy Buttle
Ronald Zelt



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2010 NORTHERN PLAINS REGIONAL SWCS MEETING HOSTED BY NEBRASKA – Darwin Hinrichs - President

The 2010 Northern Plains Regional SWCS Meeting will be held in Chadron, Nebraska March 18-20, 2010. Robin Foulk has organized an excellent meeting that will focus on revitalizing SWCS chapters, building partnerships, networking with other organizations, and interacting with fellow SWCS members. This meeting will be a good opportunity to learn new ideas about professional development and leadership, all are encouraged to attend. Being the host, Nebraska SWCS is hoping for strong SWCS representation at the meeting. Please thank Robin Foulk as you see her for all the hard work put into this meeting. Hope to see you in Chadron March 18-20!



**Northern Plains
Regional Meeting:
Student Center
on
Chadron State
College
Chadron, NE**

**March 18-20th,
2010**

Thursday- March 18, 2010- CSC – Student Center-Ballroom

- 1:00 pm (MST) Introductions
- 1:30 pm Speaker: Lee Messersmith- Pollinator Habitat
- 2:00 pm Break
- 2:15 pm 2006 Forest Fire-Forest Health/Rehabilitation techniques
- Speakers: Chuck Butterfield; Doak Nickerson & Forest Service;
- 3:30 pm Turf grass project
- 5:30 pm Reception (tentative)
- 7:00 pm Banquet Sandoz Center (Hen House Buffet)

Friday – March 19, 2010- CSC - Student Center-Ballroom

- 8:00 am (MST) Speakers: CSC Watershed Assessment Team presentation/Turf grass/ and or Doak Nickerson
- 9:30 am Break: Poster presentation of Watershed Team- Ponderosa Room
- 10:30 am Speakers: Biofuels/alternative energy; Straw bale house
- 11:30 am Gourmet Box Lunch
- 12:30 -3:30 pm Walking Tour of Boiler System and Rehabilitation of Fire Damage
- 3:30-4:00 pm Lyndon Vogt- Upper Niobrara White Natural Resource District
(Explain district operation and Partnership Activities)

*Supper -Place and Food to be determined - Chapter and Committee Reports

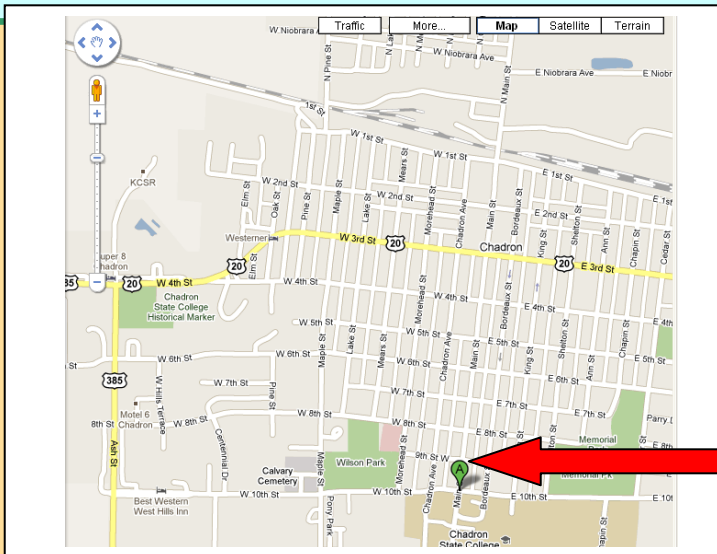
Saturday – March 20, 2010

8:00 am (MST) to Noon
Breakfast Buffet

SWCS Business Topics:

- *Rejuvenate and motivate Members
- *Professional Development
- *Membership
- *Partnerships

CHADRON STATE COLLEGE



REGISTRATION: **Due March 5 –No refunds after 3/9/2010** _____ NO X \$15.00 = _____

MEALS: THURSDAY BANQUET (CHICKEN BUFFET) _____ NO X \$7.80 = _____

RECEPTION Included in Registration

FRIDAY BOX LUNCH _____ NO X \$7.10 = _____

FRIDAY WORKING SUPPER (PIZZA) Included in Registration

SATURDAY BREAKFAST BUFFET. _____ NO X \$5.25 = _____

Motels: Best Western (\$70.00) 1-877-432-3305; Westerner (\$37.00)308-432-5577;

Total Submitted

Hotel 6(\$51.99)308-432-3000; Super 8 308-432-4471

Send Payment To: David Langemeier; 700 N 81st; Lincoln, NE 68505/ Write Checks to NE SWCS Chapter

Name/Address:



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