



Nebraska Society News

APRIL 2017 NEWSLETTER

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NEBRASKA SWCS CHAPTER AWARDS FIVE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Craig Romary

The Nebraska Chapter Scholarship Committee was once again faced with the very difficult task of awarding 5 individual scholarships out of a pool of 23 applicants. These scholarships totaled \$4,750. The five scholarship recipients are:

Nebraska Chapter SWCS/UNL Foundation:

- Sam Zach, from Humphrey, NE, is a junior Agronomy major at UNL, with minor emphasis in Agribusiness, Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Entrepreneurship.
- Samantha Teten, from Johnson, NE, is a sophomore Agronomy major at UNL.

Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Foundation:

- The Tina Lorentzen Carlson Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Kylie Knigge, a senior at Chadron State College from Verdigre, NE majoring in Range Management with an emphasis in wildlife management.
- The David Langemeier Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Autumn Dunn, a senior at UNL from Elkhorn, NE majoring in Environmental Restoration Science, Wildlife and Fisheries, and Grassland Ecology and Management.
- Seth Wetovick, from Fullerton, NE, is a sophomore Ag Engineering major at UNL.

The Nebraska SWCS Chapter maintains two foundations that are mainly used to award college scholarships. One is set up through the University of Nebraska Foundation, and is solely used for scholarships to students attending the University of Nebraska. The Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Foundation is a separate entity, but is made up of Nebraska Chapter members (see NSWCF article later in this issue).

SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 21-23, 2017

2017 NEBRASKA SWCS ANNUAL MEETING
BEATRICE, NE

More details to come soon!



NEW – NEBRASKA SWCS IS NOW ON FACEBOOK



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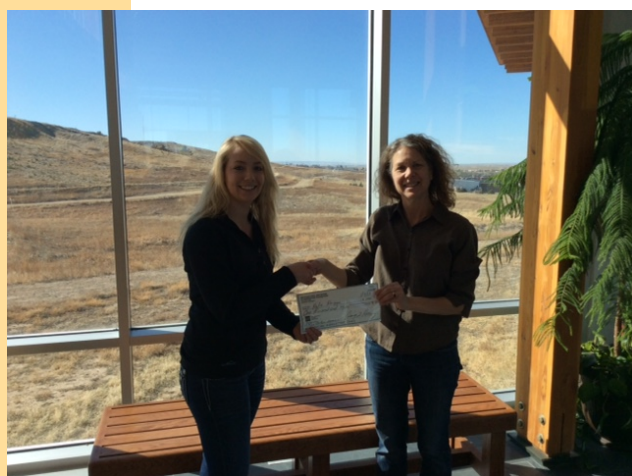
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Applications are ranked based on a combination of financial need, grade point average, leadership skills and the ability to articulate academic and career goals related to natural resources conservation. Applications are ranked by each reviewer, and the combined ranking list is reviewed by the committee.

Thank you to SWCS members who participated in the review process this year: Corey Brubaker, Mike Kucera, Jim Culver, Kris Reed, Ed Harms, Robin Foulk, Dick Ehrman, Craig Romary and Sarah Gray. If you have an interest in helping with this annual process, please contact Craig Romary for more information.



SWCS members and scholarship winners. L to R: Seth Wetovick, Samantha Teten, Mike Kucera, Autumn Dunn, Craig Romary, Dick Ehrman, Kris Reed and Jim Culver.



Robin Foulk (R) presented Kylie Knigge with the Tina Lorentzen Carlson Memorial Scholarship.

Dear Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Foundation,

I am sincerely honored to have been chosen Tina Lorentzen Carlson Family Scholarship. I am a senior majoring in Rangeland Management with an option in Wildlife Management here at Chadron State College and I am on track to graduate in the fall of 2017. My goal is to move back to Northeast Nebraska and pursue a Masters in Natural Resources. Currently, I am an intern with the Upper Niobrara-White Natural Resource District to help fund my education and this summer will be working as a Pathways intern at the Albion, NE office as a Soil Conservation Technician. Thanks to this scholarship, I will be able to reduce my work schedule and focus more on my studies.

Once again, thank you for supporting the students in Nebraska.

Sincerely,
Kylie Knigge

DAVE LANGEMEIER MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Corey Brubaker

The 20th Annual SWCS Golf Tournament was held on August 26, 2016 at the Highlands Golf Course in Lincoln, NE. The golf tournament was begun in 1997 by former Nebraska SWCS Chapter treasurer Dave Langemeier to raise money for scholarships for students pursuing degrees in natural resources related fields.

A total of 11 4-member teams registered for the event which raised about \$2500 for the scholarship funds. Norm Bottger, Dick Erhman, Phil Erhman and Craig Romary made up the winning team while second place went to the team of Corey Brubaker, James Brubaker, Bryan Euse and Tom Schleif. The low gross individual score went to Ryan Kroemer and the low net individual score went to Tom Schleif.

Thanks goes out to all those that participated and contributed to the scholarship fund.



Golfers participate in the putting competition prior to teeing off at the 20th Annual SWCS Golf Tournament.

NEBRASKA 34TH ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

Doug Garrison / Darwin Hinrichs

The Nebraska SWCS held the Annual Legislative Breakfast in Lincoln January 27, 2017. Thirty-one were in attendance including Senators Lydia Brasch District 16, Tom Brewer District 43, Loguen Blazek (for Bruce Bostelman District 23), Joni Albrecht District 17, Steve Erdman District 47 and John Lowe District 37.

UNL's Randy Prior (Saline County) and Rick Koelsch (Animal Science) presented on the Field to Market initiative (F2M). F2M is a field assessment to help farmers improve efficiency at the field level. F2M has the backing of 120 plus organizations to help define production sustainability claims to products.

Farmers are encouraged to participate in F2M to help:

- Quantify environmental indicators that effect profit of a field
- Compare production efficiency with peers in a close region
- Help uncover areas of efficiency and inefficiency in management
- Identify opportunities to improve efficiency and sustainability

The 120 plus organizations involved range from farm groups, academia, government, industry and retail. The

ultimate goal is for industry to be able to insure consumers that the products they are purchasing meet a certain threshold of sustainability as defined by the Field to Market initiative. Consumers are asking how their food is produced, this is a tool that is being developed to answer those questions.

The F2M tool looks at production level inputs versus stewardship threshold values and computes an efficiency ranking from 0 to 100 for 7 key areas: Water Quality, Land Use, Energy Use, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Soil Loss, Soil Carbon and Irrigation Use.

Rick and Randy emphasized that the overall goal is to provide value to the farmer and ag industry leaders. "The tool does not say this farm is sustainable and this farm is not. It provides each producer with the ability to track their overall efficiency and develop a trend with a focus on improvement." The presentation and handouts from the legislative breakfast can be viewed on the Nebraska SWCS Chapter website (<http://nebraskaswcs.org>) under past events – information.



Randy Prior (front L) and Rick Koelsch (front R) with the University of Nebraska – Lincoln presented on the Field to Market initiative at the 34th Nebraska SWCS Legislative Breakfast held in Lincoln January 27, 2017.

Interested in learning more about sustainably and related topics? Check out this [blog](#) from Agren - Considerations in Certifying Sustainable Food.

REMEMBERING CAMERON LOERCH



[J. Cameron Loerch \(1955 – 2017\)](#) passed away in February at home surrounded by family. Cam retired after 37 years with the NRCS as a soil scientist. He enjoyed spending time with family, canoeing, playing golf and woodworking. Cam formerly served as chapter secretary, and more recently as our chapter treasurer and as golf tourney coordinator. He will be greatly missed by all.

A note to the Nebraska Chapter and Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Foundation from Teri Loerch & Family –

Cameron had a passion for all he was involved in... his work, his friends and especially his family. Over the years we learned a lot about every layer of soil "not dirt" and how it worked in the land. We made fun of him but we did ~~at~~ actually learn some too!

The golf tournament meant a lot to him and he was always proud of what was earned towards the scholarship. Please accept this donation in Cameron's name and apply it where you think it would mean the most to him. He may not be here in body but his spirit is around us all.

Teri, Chad, Renee, Quinn & Jo.

PASSING OF JOSH LEAR

[Josh Lear \(1959 – 2017\)](#), a former SWCS member (1986-2000), passed away in March from complications in surgery. Josh worked for SCS/NRCS very early in his career at Blair, NE (Washington County) and worked approximately the last 20 years for the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources as a natural resources planner. He was heavily involved in mapping/GIS projects, was a member and former officer of the Nebraska GIS/LIS Committee and was a longtime member of Toastmasters in Lincoln.

2016 NEBRASKA SWCS AWARDS

Anita Nein

During the 2016 Nebraska SWCS Annual Meeting and Technical Workshop held in Norfolk five chapter awards were presented:

- **Michael Lance Commendation Award**
- **James Culver Commendation Award**
- **Michael Kucera Commendation Award**
- **Scott & Pam Heinemann Honor Award**
- **Gary & Carmen Godbersen Honor Award**

The commendation award is given to members of the Society for professional achievement and for service to the society at the state level. The honor award recognizes non-members for outstanding accomplishments compatible with the objectives of the society.

Details about each award winner can be viewed on the Nebraska SWCS Chapter website (<http://nebraskaswcs.org>) under past events – information.

The Soil and Water Conservation Society is a private scientific and educational association dedicated to advancing the science and art of good land use and improvement of natural resources. The awards committee is Anita Nein, Wally Valasek and Doug Garrison.



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ROMARY AND GRAY RECEIVE AWARDS AT THE 71ST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL SWCS CONFERENCE

Anita Nein

Nebraska Chapter members Craig Romary and Sarah Gray were recognized for their contribution to the chapter and the SWCS mission at the 2016 SWCS International Conference. Craig Romary received the Outstanding Service Award, which is given to Society members in recognition of distinguished service in helping the society to develop and carry out its program over a long and sustained period of time. Sarah Gray received the Commendation Award, which gives international recognition to society members for service to their chapter or council of chapters.

2016 - International SWCS Outstanding Service Award - Craig Romary

Craig began work as an environmental specialist for the Nebraska Department of Agriculture's pesticide program in late 1998. Although this is a regulatory program for pesticide use and distribution, the emphasis in Craig's area is on maintaining and improving water quality and protecting endangered species from pesticides in coordination with many state agencies, University Extension, commodity groups, pesticide industry and others.

Craig administers the Nebraska Buffer Strip Program, intended for filter strips and riparian forest buffer strips adjacent to stream, rivers, wetlands and other waterbodies.

In conjunction with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture has funded the Quality-Assessed Agrichemical Database for Nebraska Ground Water. With Craig's assistance and determination, the department has continued this project despite cutbacks in program funds changes in priorities.

Shortly after coming to Nebraska, Craig became the editor of the Department of Agriculture's *Pesticide & Noxious Weed Newsletter*. Topics on protecting water quality and the environment in general, have been frequently included.

Craig assisted the Blue River water quality subcommittee made of state and Federal agencies, in applying and receiving grant funds for a national EPA Water Quality Initiative Project to address water quality issues in the basin.

Since 2004, Craig has been actively involved in a project that has given local Natural Resources Districts the capability to analyze groundwater and surface water for specific pesticide active ingredients. This data will assist the Department of Agriculture, Department of Environmental Quality and NRDs in better assessing pesticide impacts in groundwater.

Craig served from 2002-2006 and 2011-2012 on the State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group that advises the US EPA at a national level on water quality, endangered species and other environmental issues in relation to pesticide use, label directions and regulations.

Craig has been the SWCS Nebraska Chapter President, the Foundation Treasurer, the University of Nebraska Chapter/ Nebraska Chapter Liaison, among many other contributions to SWCS. Craig is a dedicated SWCS member and is highly deserving of the 2016 SWCS Outstanding Service Award.

2016 - International SWCS Commendation Award - Sarah Gray

Sarah Gray, a Harrison, Nebraska native was raised on a family ranch and from a young age gained an appreciation for agriculture, livestock and natural resources. Sarah started her career with the NRCS in 2004 and is currently the District Conservationist in Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

Sarah served as the Nebraska SWCS Vice President in 2012-2013, and President in 2013-2014. She has served as the newsletter editor since 2009. This service has been a great way to keep informed of the chapter activities as well as build additional skills. She encourages all members to volunteer and be active with the chapter. Even the smallest volunteer efforts and activities make a difference.

A LEGACY OF THE LAND – LONGTIME MEMBER OF SOIL CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA LEAVES CONSERVATION LEGACY

Sue Kohles



A historical photo of Walter Bagley as an SCS employee in 1949.

Walter Thaine Bagley was a life member of the Soil Conservation Society of America. He was the 1964 president of the Lincoln Nebraska Chapter No. 4 that was organized in 1945, four years after the national society was formed. He served in numerous positions with the chapter. He received the Society's Honor and Commendation Awards. Bagley, who passed away in 2016 at the age of 99, was a University of Nebraska Department of Forestry Associate Professor Emeritus. Previous to that he followed a trail of land and wildlife conservation that together with the efforts of wife Virginia, resulted in the creation of Prairie Pines Nature Preserve. Prairie Pines Nature Preserve is a 145-acre property in Northeast Lincoln that represents a lifetime of conservation practices with respect for the land and wildlife habitat. Bagley's actions and work followed the thread of conservation, spun and woven through a lifetime.

Walter Thaine Bagley was rooted in the land from his very beginnings. The son of parents who ventured from Iowa to the high plains of Northeast Colorado in 1910 to take two 160-acre claims as a result of the Homestead Act. The Homestead Act, signed into law by Abraham Lincoln in 1862, opened up federal land in the Western United States to homesteading. In order to "prove up" and

gain the land the homesteader paid a small fee after living on and working the land for five years. And work they did, the oldest of five children, Thaine took on the work ethic of his parents. They eked out a living with livestock and crops of sorghum, wheat and rye on the wind-blown plains during the Great Depression; a time of necessary self-sufficiency that required the cooperation of the collective/family, a time when self-service was secondary. Living and subsisting on the high plains was fashioned to a large extent by the soil, weather and natural environment, and these shaped each day. Thaine, as he was called by his family, likely gained first hand understanding of soil erosion as a teenager during the Dust Bowl years of the 1930's. He would later observe that out of need, his father's farming practices extracted as much from the land as possible, leading to its detriment. He recalled learning about stewardship of the land from his grandfather in Missouri who showed him farms that had been abandoned due to practices that resulted in gullied and infertile land. With his witness to these influences, along with the childhood companionship with the natural world, his conservation and land ethic sprouted. These no doubt influenced his life's vocational and avocational pursuits.

Thinking he had had enough of the plains, Walt obtained a Forestry degree from Colorado A&M. An emerging conservationist as a student, he wrote an article published in the Colorado Wildlife Society bulletin in 1938 regarding loss of habitat and decreasing number of big game.

His first job after graduation was with the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) in Wyoming. The CCC was a public works program signed into law by FDR in 1933 to provide employment during the Depression. It focused on forestry, flood control and soil erosion prevention projects on public lands. According to a 1985 article in *The Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*, by Douglas Helms, National Historian for the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and his 1992 *People Protecting Their Land: Proceedings Volume 1*, International Soil Conservation Organization conference, the benefits of work done by the CCC ushered in the creation of the SCS. This, along with the efforts of Hugh Hammond Bennett, Soil Scientist for the USDA and subsequent Director of the Department of Interior Soil Erosion Service (1933), Congress created the SCS with the Soil Conservation Act of 1935. Bennet had utilized the CCC public works program to demonstrate soil and water conservation methods that would later allow comprehensive plans for conservation farming on



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private lands. The SCS would later become the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) of today.

Walt remained a part of the conservation movement and its evolution throughout his career. After obtaining a master's degree at Iowa State University he worked for the Lake States Forest Experiment Station of the Prairie States Forestry Project known as the Great Plains Shelter Belt Project from 1940-1941. The intent of the program was to plant 1150 miles of shelterbelts one mile apart paralleling the 100th Meridian from Canada to Texas. The US Forest Service, along with other agencies including the SCS and the Works Projects Administration (WPA), were involved. The goal was to "ameliorate" drought by preventing blowing snow to retain soil moisture, and decreasing wind velocity and soil erosion.

There are varying accounts of the benefit of the Prairie States Forestry Project – the "Great Plains Shelterbelt", but according to an article written by R. Douglas Hunt, of Kansas State University, *Forestry on the Great Plains – 1902-1942*, 30,233 shelterbelts containing 220 million trees were scattered across 18,600 miles on the Great Plains. The proclaimed success of the program is also variable, but it was generally contended that the project had decreased moisture evaporation and soil erosion, protected farmsteads, livestock and fields, increased production and benefitted wildlife habitat. When the US entered WWII work relief projects were not needed and the project was transferred to the SCS. When Walt returned from military service in the Army his employment was transferred to the SCS. He worked with farmers in southwest and northeast Nebraska until 1955 when he began work at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (UNL).

During his time at UNL from 1955-2001 he taught horticulture classes and was involved in research on tree improvement and provenance, shelter belt planting and windbreak influences. Outside of his work at UNL he was involved in efforts to promote "green" sustainable development of Lancaster County, help to preserve Wilderness Park, and was a founding member of Wachiska Audubon and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. He and wife Virginia worked with state legislators to draft Nebraska legislation that created Conservation Easement law and soon after, their beloved Prairie Pines became the first Conservation Easement in the state of Nebraska. He started the first choose-and-cut Christmas Tree Farm in the state to help pay for the 145-acre property that was transformed from cropland to

woodland and grassland habitat for diverse species. Beyond Nebraska, he donated wooded land in Mercer County Missouri that he inherited from his mother to the state for wildlife habitat.

Bagley was given numerous conservation awards and recognition throughout his life, but his greatest reward was in the realization of Prairie Pines with wife Virginia and son Gary. They created a forest in a lifetime containing an arboretum and diverse woody plantings throughout, they preserved a 10-acre remnant tallgrass prairie, and replaced row crops with grasslands of native species. One of the first windbreaks planted on the property is home to the threatened long-eared bat, and wildlife flourish on the site that is dedicated to habitat, research and education. Wildlife species surveys confirm 14 herpetofauna species, 22 mammals, 66 birds, over 180 woody plant species and diverse herbaceous grasses and forbs.

The Bagley's donated their life's work to the University of Nebraska Foundation to forever be "a refuge for all living things". With the help of the UNL Institute of Agricultural and Natural Resources, Nebraska Forest Service and the Prairie Pines Partners nonprofit, the site is being managed for wildlife, UNL research and education, and is programmed to benefit public environmental education and nature experience. Plans include a Visitor Center and a connection of the City of Lincoln Murdock Trail to the Prairie Pines trail system. Nonpublic onsite use and collaboration at Prairie Pines has existed for several years. These include UNL classes and research, NRCS Conservation Planning Boot Camp and Community Crops Farmers Training program, part of the local foods movement. Various other woodland tours and family events to introduce the public to the site have been conducted by the Prairie Pines Partners.

On June 11, 2017, the Prairie Pines Partner's "Second Saturdays" will kick off the opening of the site to the public on a regular basis, the second Saturday of each month. Prairie Pines and its trails will be open for community visitation and will include family activities and events. These events, expanded access and nature experience as the Prairie Pines Nature Preserve seeks to focus on its mission to, "Sustain Prairie Pines habitat for all living things through conservation, education and experience to promote a lasting connection with the natural world and its resources". To learn more about Prairie Pines and its initiatives and events, and to watch



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videos of Walt and Prairie Pines wildlife, visit the Prairie Pines website at prairiepines.org

We begin as a collection of our ancestors – their DNA, experiences and choices involving people, places and circumstances, together with their hopes/visions for the future. Along with the intrinsic influence of nature we are shaped, and we are carved by our human failings and success. Our individual story unfolds as Walt’s did, as we accumulate our own unique experiences, encounters and realizations along life’s path through the natural world. Rooted in the land, inspired by its uniqueness, learned of its processes and committed to its conservation, was Walter Thaine Bagley.

There is whispering in the white pine, there are signs: a child’s wonder in examining wildlife scat, in nature’s restoration to the hurried adult, in the student’s nature inspired art, in the adaptive fox and the noisy turkey; signs of a place where nature’s rules outweigh human rules. I brush the burs from a child’s pants after he has been running in the woods; I tell him how seeds travel, and that when he grows up to be a biologist he will know what kind of pants to wear so seeds do not stick. “Oh no!” he says, “I am going to be an entomologist!” The legacy lives on.



One of many beautiful views, indian grass with wood land background at Prairie Pines.

Sue Kohles is the Coordinator of the Prairie Pines Partners 501(c) (3) nonprofit. A horticulturist, naturalist and friend of Walt Bagley, she assisted him in recording his history. She can be contacted at prairiepinespartners@gmail.com

IN THE NEWS.....

An interesting read about soils, ecology, nematodes, Antarctica and carbon
http://www.nature.com/news/secrets-of-life-in-the-soil-1.20575?WT.mc_id=TWT_NatureNews

SWCS Members Keith and Brian Berns - NACD - Soil Health Champions
<http://www.nacdnet.org/soil-champs/northern-plains/keith-brian-berns/>

It Doesn’t Take Long for a Change in Grazing to Make a Difference
<http://onpasture.com/2016/10/03/it-doesnt-take-long-for-a-change-in-grazing-to-make-a-difference/>

Ray Ward (pg. 16) and Gary Wells (pg. 15) featured in the Fall 2016 issue of the ‘Growing a Healthy Future’ magazine, from the UNL IANR
<http://ianr.unl.edu/img/magazine/IANR-Growing-Fall-2016.pdf>

Nebraska State Fair Living Soils Exhibit
<http://www.nebraskafarmer.com/story-new-raising-nebraska-exhibit-focus-soil-health-9-144782>

GREENING MOUNT RUSHMORE

Edwin O. Harms

It does not take much for us in Western Nebraska to make the short drive to Keystone, South Dakota where the iconic Mount Rushmore is located. While there a few months ago with family, I saw a listing of ways the Mount Rushmore National Memorial has worked to attain Climate Friendly Park status. The goals of the program include measuring park-based greenhouse gas emissions, initiation actions to address sustainability challenges and providing public education on potential impacts.

In reaching this goal, a number of things have been done. Relative to night lighting on the faces of Mount Rushmore, new light LED light fixtures have been installed. The new lights use less than 10% of the electricity of the old lights which amounts to a 90.5% savings in electricity costs over the last year. This translates to a huge reduction of CO2 emissions.



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The heating, ventilation and cooling systems, including controls, monitors and thermostats have been overhauled resulting in reduced propane and electricity use. On-demand water heaters, new insulation and lighting system motion sensors have been installed on new LED lights.

New construction with sustainable or recyclable materials are used. "Beetle Kill" wood with the characteristic striking colors is a priority material.

In the cafeteria, standard recycling of plastics, glass, aluminum and paper materials is the norm. Additionally, there is sanitary recycling of snack bag, cooking oils and unsellable t-shirts. There are hydration stations where visitors can refill their water bottles, thus reducing single use plastic bottles. When possible, waste materials are composted for local gardeners. Visitors are even encouraged to properly dispose of cigarette butts and chewing gum and refrain from using soda straws when possible.

These are all great ideas in an effort to reduce CO2 emissions. We as citizens can do the same in our homes, churches and businesses.

RECYCLE YOUR CYCLE

Edwin O. Harms

At the recent "Recycle your Cycle" event in Scottsbluff, area residents brought their rundown or broken bikes to be repaired or donated to somebody in need. The event was hosted by the Western Nebraska Bicycling Club. Tools and the repair knowledge was provided by 30 volunteers. This is an annual event and in 2016, 89 bikes were refurbished, of which many were donated to others who needed a bike. Those bikes which were beyond repair were scrapped which amounted to 3,900 pounds of metal and rubber that was recycled. One Korean War veteran who was no longer able to ride a bicycle, traded his bike in for an adult tricycle.

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Kris Reed

All Nebraska SWCS Chapter members are members of the Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Foundation, and the Foundation Board of Directors would like to hear from you regarding ideas for educational or

demonstration type projects. Look around your office or those you associate with to see if you know someone who would benefit from a grant or scholarship.

If you have not done so, please help promote these scholarship opportunities to students and colleges in your area. The Scholarship Committee will be reviewing student applications in December. See how our donations are working in the scholarship article in this issue, and consider a donation to help the next round of scholarship recipients.

As always, Foundation "tribute cards" can be used to make a donation to the Foundation by recognizing someone with a memorial or to recognize a memorable milestone in their career or family life. Please see the updated Foundation brochure at nebraskaswcs.org for more information. The Nebraska SWCS Honor Roll of Memorials and Honor Roll of Recognition can also be viewed on our website, along with the Foundation Treasurer's report for 2015-16. These will be updated after this year's annual meeting.

2016-17 NSWC Foundation board members are:

- President- Kris Reed
- Vice President - Ed Harms
- Secretary – Mike Kucera
- Treasurer and Registered Agent – Craig Romary
- Director – Dick Ehrman
- Chapter President - Doug Garrison (non-voting member)

The Foundation and Chapter business meeting minutes from the June 2016 annual meeting are now posted on the Chapter web site (<http://nebraskaswcs.org/>).

SWCS ANNUAL MEETING SILENT AUCTION

Darwin Hinrichs

It is time once again to ask for your help in soliciting items for the annual silent auction to be held during the state SWCS meeting. Previous items that have been donated for this event have been crafts, wine baskets, books, pictures, gift certificates and plants. The money raised with this silent auction is used to help fund our annual scholarships. Please let Darwin Hinrichs know what you plan to bring or if you need help getting your item to the meeting. Please contact Darwin at 308-340-5226 or hinrichsdm@hotmail.com with any questions.

<http://www.nebraskaswcs.org/>



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SWCS DIRECTOR NEEDED

Wally Valasek

The Nebraska SWCS is in need of officers for 2017/2018, and directors for the period from 7/1/2017 to 6/30/2020.

The officer positions that are up for election are President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. These are one year terms and the vice-president is expected to move on to the presidency the following year.

Three director positions will expire this year. These are three year terms.

The three vacancies are in the Blue Nemaha, Panhandle sections and the At Large Director that can be filled by anyone in Nebraska. Directors for the two section positions need to reside in the respective section. The Sandhills section is also currently vacant. This director position will run until 6/30/2019.

Anyone interested in these positions or wanting to nominate someone can contact Wally Valasek at wbvalasek@gmail.com or 402-223-2874. Please make contact by May 10, 2017. Thank you for your consideration and nominations.

BECOME A CORPORATE MEMBER

Do you belong to a business or organization looking to support natural resources and SWCS? Check out the benefits of corporate SWCS membership at bit.ly/SWCScorp, including international exposure and identity at SWCS events, in publications and with social media.

WEBSITE UPDATE

2016 Annual Business Meeting minutes have been posted to the web site (<http://nebraskaswcs.org/>) under "past events – information. Minutes from the upcoming 2017 meetings will be posted later this year.

2016 ANNUAL MEETING

Darwin Hinrichs

Twenty-two members and 2 non-members attended the 2016 Nebraska Chapter annual meeting in Norfolk. The Nebraska state meeting banquet featured several awards presented to members and non-members. Two National SWCS awards were given to our members, a Commendation award and an Outstanding Service Award (see page 5). Also, the Nebraska Chapter gave out three Commendation Awards, and Honor Awards were given to each of two couples for their conservation farming activities (see page 4). The silent auction, held to raise money for student scholarships, brought in two hundred dollars.

The annual meeting tour included a great stop to see the endangered western prairie fringed orchid. The orchid is found in native wet meadow prairies which have disappeared due to agriculture and other impacts. Survival in the remaining areas is dependent on unique pollinators, and is threatened by noxious weeds, including leafy spurge. Land managers have difficulty in controlling the weed yet not impacting the endangered orchid – herbicide and grazing are options, but finding the right mix and timing is difficult.

Next, the group stopped at Dennis Wacker's organic operation and heard about his crop rotations and how he deals with pests and potential erosion. This stop included viewing his plantings of wildflowers for butterflies and other pollinating insects. Dennis is a director and former president of the [Northeast Nebraska RC&D](#). A short presentation on DriftWatch/BeeCheck, a communication tool for commercial specialty crop growers and pesticide applicators, was given at this stop on the tour.

The following stop was at Nebraska's oldest winery, [Cuthills Vineyard](#), where Ed Swanson showed the damage that 2-4,D and other herbicide products can do to his grapes from drift. He also explained his attempts to breed and graft hybrid grapes that are less susceptible to these herbicides. This was another successful annual meeting. Thank you to those that organized the meeting including Patrick Cowser and Scott Bohaty.



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