



# Nebraska Society News

DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

OFFICERS 2020-2021

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## **PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

**Dave Bedlan**

Greetings Nebraska Chapter SWCS. I want to thank you all again for this opportunity to serve as chapter President. I am more of a soil-under-the-fingernail kind of guy; more comfortable running a shovel than organizing virtual meetings, conferences etc. However, in my career as a conservationist I have found to benefit most from what is out of my comfort zone. At USDA, it has been fun planning conservation projects with people who want your help. It has been another thing to inform participants that what they are doing in their business violates rules/regulations which can result in them losing money.

I want to personally encourage our members to volunteer for director and other positions as they come open in our Chapter. The unwavering long-term dedication of members was one thing that impressed me when I joined the Nebraska Chapter. What captured my attention was the opportunity to share, learn from, and enjoy the company of like-minded folks interested soil and water conservation. Instantly, I garnered a respect for these pioneering members and that when asked to serve felt in my gut a sense of duty to say yes.

In closing, it is important to remember that SWCS Chapter organizational structure is necessary for the groups ability to function. The fun stuff i.e.: golf tournaments, annual meetings, legislative breakfasts, technical meetings, need to be planned and organized systematically. I have found the system to be welcoming and surely understanding. The term committee or board sometimes conjures up notions of politics, conflict, and burdensome time commitment. My experience has been quite the contrary to these stigmas. Please consider serving your chapter.

Respectfully,

Dave Bedlan

President Nebraska Chapter SWCS

**[CHECK IT OUT](#)**  
**[NEBRASKA SWCS IS NOW ON](#)**  
**[FACEBOOK](#)**



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## 24<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL SWCS DAVE LANGEMEIER MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Corey Brubaker

**Tournament**

**Sponsors**

**Individual Sponsors:**

- Sandy Langemeier
- Roland Langemeier
- Beth O'Farrell
- Teri Loerch
- Becky Keep

24<sup>th</sup> Annual SWCS Golf Event  
Dave Langemeier Memorial Golf Tournament

Highlands Golf Course  
August 28, 2020

The 24th Annual SWCS Dave Langemeier Memorial Golf Tournament was held at the Highlands Golf Course in Lincoln on Friday August 28, 2020. We only had 34 golfers this year but with registrations and donations we still raised \$2,245 for the scholarship fund. Proceeds from the golf tournament will be used to fund two \$1000 scholarships for the 2020-2021 year. One in memory of Dave Langemeier and another in memory of Cam Loerch. The balance of the proceeds will be invested with the University Foundation and the Soil and Water Conservation Foundation. Earnings from those investments will allow us to give three more \$1000 scholarships.

This year's winning team was the team of Mike Kucera, Tom Johnson, Drew Kinney and Dan Kucera with a total score of 93. Members of the second-place team were Norm Kempf, Darwin Hinrichs, Dana Snyder and Jim Fortner with a score of 99. First place for low individual gross was Ryan Kroemer with a score of 66 followed by James Brubaker with a score of 67. First place for low individual net score was Dan Kucera with a 52. Second place went to Radley Breuer and Jim Culver with a net score of 53.

Next year is a big year for the tournament as it will be the 25th tournament. I hope to be a little more proactive in getting ready for that tournament so we can celebrate 25 years.

Thanks to all of the players and our sponsors for making this happen through monetary and gift/prize donations!

### 2020 Sponsors (with links to their Facebook):

- [Advanced Chiropractic Solutions](#)
- [BANK OF BRIDGER, N.A.](#)
- [Frontier Cooperative](#)
- [Green Cover Seed](#)
- [Lincoln USDA Federal Credit Union](#)
- [Lower Platte North NRD](#)
- [Lower Platte South NRD](#)
- [Midwest Laboratories](#)
- [Nebraska Invasive Species Program](#)
- [Shunkwiler Financial](#)
- [The Weyeneth Group - Stifel](#)
- [Stock Seed Farms](#)
- [Ward Laboratories, Inc.](#)

- Sandy Langemeier
- Roland Langemeier
- Beth O'Farrell
- Teri Loerch
- Becky Keep



2020 SWCS Golf Tournament Registration. L – R: Rich Torpin, Tom Mountford, Bryan Euse, Tom Schleif, Daryl Anderson, John Mayberger.



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First place low individual gross winner Ryan Kroemer with a score of 66.



Norm Bottger, getting ready to sail one to the Kawasaki Plant.



Golfers lining up during the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual SWCS Dave Langemeier Memorial Golf Tournament was held at the Highlands Golf Course in Lincoln on Friday August 28, 2020.

## CRAIG DERICKSON RETIRING AFTER OVER 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

Dear Conservation Partners,

After over 35 years as a conservationist, and the past 10 years serving as Nebraska's State Conservationist, I am announcing my retirement effective Dec. 31, 2020.

I want to extend my gratitude for the opportunity to work with you on our shared goal of conserving Nebraska's natural resources.

Nebraska is a special place. My career has taken me to other parts of the U.S. and different levels within the Natural Resources Conservation Service. While all fulfilling and worthwhile, it is my time here, in cooperation with you, that has made my work so rewarding.

Nebraska truly does have an outstanding and strong conservation partnership. It has been my pleasure being a part of this successful collaboration.

I want to add that the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) is the premier international organization for professionals who practice and advance the science and art of natural resource conservation. I encourage all employees to consider becoming a member of SWCS in Nebraska

Sincerely,  
Craig Derickson







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## SWCS GOES VIRTUAL FOR 2020 ANNUAL MEETING

**Darwin Hinrichs and Claudia Stevenson**

In June 2020, the Nebraska SWCS chapter held the Foundation and Annual Meeting, although it was a bit different. We were not able to meet in person due to COVID-19, but we still met by ZOOM.

President Dave Bedlan welcomed everyone to our first Virtual Zoom meeting here in Nebraska. It was with great pleasure for him to introduce the main speaker for our meeting, Clare Lindahl the CEO for the national office of SWCS. What a treat this was. She is energetic, inspirational and goal oriented.

Clare calls herself with pride, a chapter person. She listed the many offices she has held in the Iowa Chapters. She was pleased to see Nebraska was a winner of the SWCS Chapter Award for 2020. For her it was great to see us keeping up with the times especially with the scholarships we offer each year. She was pleased to see Keith Berns, president of Green Cover Seed, attending today's meeting. Keith will be our Northwest Regional Director for the national office and takes over following the upcoming national meeting in July.

Hugh Hammond Bennett means a lot to everyone in conservation and that is especially true for the national office in Ankeny. Clare let us know about his possessions coming from his family which are now at the SWCS office in Ankeny. Some of these will be on display during the upcoming national meeting. She talked about the 75 years of SWCS. We even got a group picture with Hugh Hammond Bennett.

Clare mentioned several upcoming new projects. The first item was a National Grant for conservation work through NRCS with one of the states being Nebraska. The other new idea or project was to offer a reduced membership to group signups. An example of this would be the Nebraska NRD's as a possibility to consider.

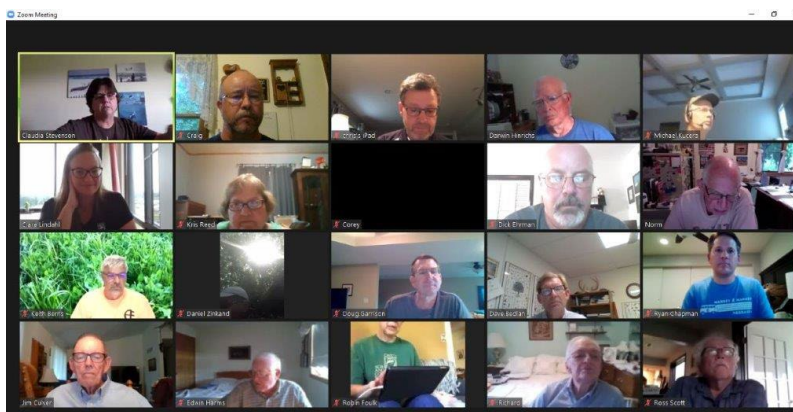
Clare let us know her office has many services available to us if we need help. They are open for ideas on how to move forward. She thanked us for having this virtual meeting and not cancelling it. She invited us to participate in the upcoming National Meeting which will also be a virtual one.

She finished by asking for questions from all of the participants. After answering these questions, Clare who has lots of energy, said it is exciting to have interaction from groups as we strive to move forward with new ideas and perspectives.

We thanked her for giving us time out of her busy schedule for us to see and hear her commitment and leadership for conservation.

We are still planning to hold the 2021 Annual Chapter and Foundation Meeting June 2021 in Ogallala. We will tour the Morning Glory Hydroelectric plant at the Lake McConaughy. We plan to tour the Research Station of UNL in Grant and tour a High Tunnel in Madrid, Nebraska. More specific details will be released in the next issue of the newsletter.

Annual business meeting minutes for the Foundation and Nebraska SWCS Chapter available for viewing online at <http://nebraskaswcs.org/past-events---information.html>.





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## SWCS RECOGNIZES INTERNATIONAL LEADERS IN CONSERVATION

The SWCS would like to congratulate the winners of the 2020 awards. Awards are presented annually to individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions in advocating and advancing the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources. Additional information about each recognition can also be found at [www.swcs.org/awards](http://www.swcs.org/awards). Congratulations to those recognized from Nebraska!

### 75th Anniversary Conservation Professional of the Year Honorable Mention

In recognition of outstanding accomplishments in practicing and advancing the science and art of natural resource conservation. Additional awards are given in 2020 in honor of the Soil and Water Conservation Society's 75th Anniversary.

- Cari Williams, Oklahoma
- Herb Winters, Oregon
- **James Culver, Nebraska**
- Krista Kirkham, Illinois
- **Norm Helzer, Nebraska**

### Conservation Research Award

In recognition of Society members or teams of members whose research has led to exceptional improvements in soil conservation, water conservation, and/or related natural resources research.

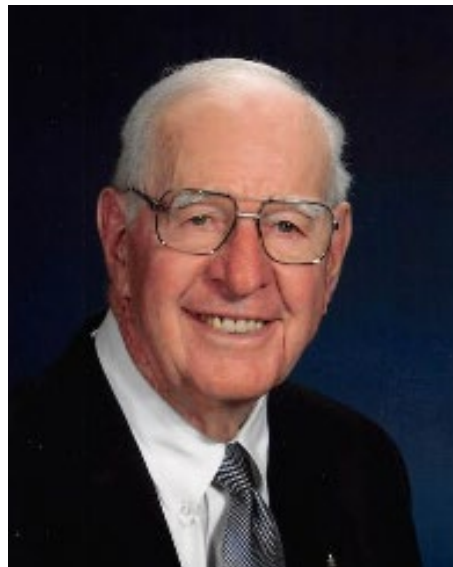
- J. Arbuckle, Iowa
- **John Gilley, Nebraska**
- Mark Tomer, Iowa

### Outstanding Chapter Award

In recognition for the chapter's success in carrying out its overall program during the past year.

- Arizona Chapter
- California Nevada Chapter
- Hoosier Chapter
- Iowa Chapter
- Michigan Chapter
- National Capital Chapter
- **Nebraska Chapter**
- North Dakota Chapter
- Southern New England Chapter

## REMEMBERING TONY VRANA



[Verlon K. "Tony" Vrana \(1925 – 2020\)](#) passed away on November 8, 2020 in Lincoln, NE. The Seward native began working for USDA Soil Conservation Service in 1948. In 1958 he transferred with SCS to Lincoln. In 1962 he was promoted to USDA SCS national headquarters in Washington D.C. He advanced to the Senior Executive Service as SCS Associate Deputy Chief for Administration.

Following over 32 years of federal service, Tony served as Director of the Planning Division for the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission for 9 years. He then served for three years as Executive Vice President of the International Soil and Water Conservation Society in Ankeny, IA. Tony was a strong supporter of SWCS.

Tony was ahead of his time in his dedication to environmental conservation. He was passionate about sustainable agriculture and preservation of native prairies. Tony was liked by all and he will be greatly missed.



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## **FOOD CROP ROTATIONS AND SOIL HEALTH** **Charles Francis and Ali Loker**

Ninety percent of food consumed in Nebraska comes from outside the state. Replacing even ten percent of this imported food with local production could provide up to \$600 million more income to Nebraska farmers. A new federal five-year research project *Regenerating the Nebraska Breadbasket: Agroecology Research and Education for Innovative Food Systems* in the Department of Agronomy & Horticulture at UNL introduces new emphasis to our current work on new crops, nutritional value of cereals, and integration of vegetables and other high-value products to the farmer's array of options. One step is the conversion of a long-term rotation project at ENREC in Saunders County to entirely food-grade crops and complementary cover crops. The experiment was initiated by the late Dr Warren Sahs in 1975 and includes comparisons of two organic with one conventional rotation. Together with data from a nine-year on-farm rotation at Grain Place Foundation in Marquette, we will analyze results and provide recommendations to farmers on resilience of crop yields in a changing climate, on soil quality in different systems, and on economics of food crops compared to continuous corn and corn-soybean rotations. County average yields and current prices for conventional and organic grains are used as a baseline. The research will contribute to our understanding the soil health -- plant health -- human health interactions that are among our department's priorities, including those in the Doctor of Plant Health [DPH] degree program directed by Dr Gary Hein.

The connections between soil health, plant health, and animal and human health are ripe for exploration. There are two primary routes by which soil health can impact human health; both are opportunities for trans-disciplinary study. The first pathway is the impact of soil health on plant health, and the effect on human health via increased nutritional content, quality, and quantity of food. The second pathway is via ecosystem services that healthier soils can deliver, including enhanced environmental quality parameters such as water and air quality, and the impact of these ecoservices on human health. We plan to compile indicators for healthy soils, plants, and humans and further explore their interconnections. This is one step to better understanding the interactions between soil, plant, and human health. Knowing more about these connections can contribute to a future where we all have enough high-quality food to eat, access to clean air and

water, and economically thriving rural communities.

In the near future we will be seeking cooperation with SWCS farmer members who have long-term rotation data from their farms and have interest in sharing this with others. We also welcome suggestions on what farmers consider useful indicators of soil, plant, and human health -- including viability of rural communities. Please communicate with us, and we look forward to your ideas as we plan this new program [cfrancis2@unl.edu, ali.loker@gmail.com].

Charles Francis is Professor of Agronomy & Horticulture; Ali Loker is a student in DPH

## **PRESERVING NEBRASKA SWCS ARCHIVES** **Doug Garrison**

We need your help! Several members have taken on the task of scanning documents and pictures from our archives. But it became apparent that there are likely stores of historical documents in the far reaches of the state - from the individual chapters that made up the current Nebraska Chapter (the Blue-Nemaha, Lincoln, Mid-America, Northeast, Panhandle, Sandhills, Southwest, and South Central Chapters).

Do you or someone you know have a box of stuff hidden away? If so, please contact Robin Foulk ([robin.foulk@usda.gov](mailto:robin.foulk@usda.gov)) or Craig Romary ([clrpkrne@windstream.net](mailto:clrpkrne@windstream.net)) to work out an arrangement to get them digitized!

We also want to encourage you to send pictures, newsletters, newspaper articles, etc. about stuff as it happens – new stuff – so that our archive will be somewhat up to date into the future! Thank you in advance for helping to preserve SWCS history!



## NAME THIS CONSERVATIONIST, WIN A PRIZE!



We have two sweet SWCS notebooks, perfect for field notes, weather records, love letters, a diary, you name it. Plus two SWCS window clings for your vehicle or living room window. Be the first person to name the conservationist below and it's all yours! But there's a catch. Your answer needs to be as a comment to the Nebraska SWCS Chapter's Facebook post with this person's picture. Everyone is eligible, except the person in the picture!



Is this Tom Cruise? Whoever it is, he's outstanding in the trees.

In addition to making your guess, like our Facebook and be on the lookout for future posts with more chances to win with pictures from our archives.

## MEMBERS AND SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS IN THE NEWS

- ❖ [IANR Student spotlight: Callie McCright](#)  
2019-20 SWCS scholarship recipient
- ❖ [Lower Platte South NRD podcasts](#), featuring member Cindy Spilinek, NRD resources technician (Twice in May, 2020) and member Dick Ehrman, (Twice in November 2018) and member Paul Zillig, NRD general manager, (Fall 2018 and summer 2020)
- ❖ Jessica Milby past SWCS scholarship winner co-author [Native Plant Communities provide shelter, food and refuge for a wide range of beneficial insects](#)  
\*\* Point of Interest - Checkout the [Sandhill Rangeland Monitoring](#) project referenced in this article.
- ❖ Former SWCS scholarship recipient Samantha Teten featured in a [short video](#) on nitrogen management research using various sensors.
- ❖ Taylor Sayer was awarded a 2020 Lower Republican NRD Scholarship. Taylor is a past (2019) SWCS scholarship winner.
- ❖ [FarmBits podcast](#) co-hosted by Samantha Teten (past SWCS scholarship winner) graduate student in the Department of Biological Systems Engineering at UNL and member of the Nebraska Extension Digital Agriculture team.
- ❖ [A Tribute to Lisa Jasa, Crop Watch Editor Since the Beginning](#)
- ❖ [With travel restrictions in place, soil comes to UNL's Soil Judging Team for this year's competition](#)
- ❖ [Nebraska digs in to offer remote instruction](#)



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## SWCS DIRECTOR NEEDED

The Nebraska SWCS is in need of nominations for a director for the period from 7/1/2020 to 6/30/2023.

There is a need for a director position in the Blue Nemaha section. This is a three-year term and the director must reside in the respective section.

Anyone interested in this position or wanting to nominate someone can contact Dave Bedlan at [dave.bedlan@usda.gov](mailto:dave.bedlan@usda.gov). Thank you for your consideration and nominations.

## 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. Please consider a donation to help the next round of scholarship recipients and those in the years to come.

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. Tribute cards can be requested from any Foundation member. Please see the updated Foundation brochure at [nebraskaswcs.org](http://nebraskaswcs.org) for more information. In addition, take a look at the Honor Roll of Memorials and Recognition (updated through 2019).

2019-20 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 – Dave Bedlan (non-voting member)

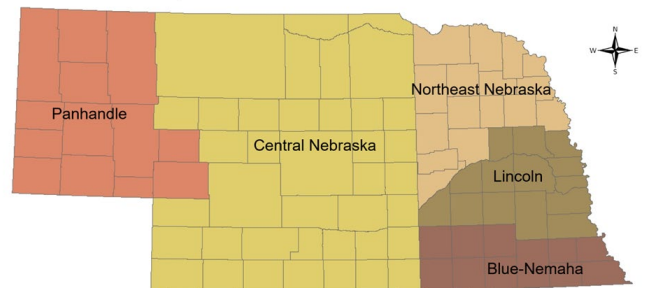
## NEBRASKA CHAPTER SWCS OFFICERS

- President - Dave Bedlan [dave.bedlan@usda.gov](mailto:dave.bedlan@usda.gov)
- Vice President - Claudia Stevenson [bcjbs@msn.com](mailto:bcjbs@msn.com)
- Secretary - Darwin Hinrichs [hinrichsdm@hotmail.com](mailto:hinrichsdm@hotmail.com)
- Treasurer - Corey Brubaker [corey.brubaker@usda.gov](mailto:corey.brubaker@usda.gov)

## NEBRASKA CHAPTER SWCS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Northeast – Patrick Cowsert
- Lincoln – Corey Brubaker
- Blue Nemaha – Vacant\*
- Panhandle – Ed Harms
- Central – Darwin Hinrichs
- At Large - Claudia Stevenson
- At Large – Sean Elliott
- Student – Vacant\*

Nebraska Chapter SWCS – Board of Director Sections



## NEBRASKA CHAPTER SWCS COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- Awards - Anita Nein
- Scholarship - Craig Romary
- Membership - Robin Foulk
- Elections - Paul Zillig
- Nominations – Vacant\*
- History - Vacant\*
- Environmental Ed. (Student Chapter) - Tom Franti
- Student Chapter Liaison - Craig Romary
- Bylaws - Vacant\*
- Newsletter - Sarah Gray
- Website - Doug Garrison

\*Volunteers needed to fill vacant positions. Anyone interested please contact Sarah Gray for more information.





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Nebraska SWCS Chapter  
4967 Lariat Loop  
Torrington, WY 82240

This fun photo was used in the annual meeting 'game' for old pictures. It goes along with the picture on page 7.

