

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION SOCIETY

NEWS RELEASE

For additional information:

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President

Membership Chair

Ogallala, NE – The Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Society held its annual Technical Tours and Awards banquet on June 25, 2021. We are pleased to announce the following winners.

In recognition for the chapter's success in carrying out its overall program during the past year. The **Outstanding Chapter Award** goes to Nebraska SWCS. The chapter will receive official recognition at International SWCS meeting in July. The Chapter is one of nine chapters in the USA to receive the international award.

SWCS State Award Winners

Each year the Nebraska Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society recognizes and honors work that honors its goals.

Commendation Award Kris Reed (left), President of SWCS Foundation, presents award to Dave Bedlan, President of SWCS Chapter.



Commendation Award to Dave Bedlan of Fairbury, Nebraska. Dave Bedlan Nebraska Chapter SWCS President 2019-2021. The Commendation Award recognizes SWCS members for service to their chapter or council of chapters

Dave Bedlan first joined SWCS when he first was hired by NRCS in Iowa. It was suggested as a good way to develop his career and meet other conservationists. Dave discovered that it was indeed a way to collaborate and learn from other professionals in the field of soil and water conservation. Dave served as Vice President for the Nebraska Chapter of SWCS prior to serving



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as President the last two years. Dave has promoted SWCS to his fellow employees at NRCS. It is a subject that he is eager to bring up and bore new employees about the old days in Iowa when his boss said, “Welcome aboard, and by the way, here is your application for SWCS.” He regularly requests time on the agenda at Little Blue NRD NRCS staff meetings for promoting the Nebraska Chapter SWCS. A couple new members have recently joined from Dave’s NRD, and he is very proud of their interest.

While serving as President Dave has reached outside of NRCS to promote SWCS for example having a table at the Spring Event at Homestead National Monument in 2019. Dave handed out SWCS coloring books to kids and old copies of the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation to interested adults. Dave assisted in reaching out directly to Nebraska NRDs encouraging Conservation Community Memberships, which allows an entity to share the perks of SWCS membership with all employees.

The Innovation Award is given in recognition of an outstanding activity, product, or service by a group, business, firm, corporation, or organization that promotes natural resource conservation.

Innovation Award to Ryan and Lonetta Zimmerman of Madrid, NE.

The Prairie Garden is a small farm owned and operated by Ryan and Lonetta Zimmerman. They started taking produce to the farmers market in North Platte in 2015 and have grown the farm



until today, they are at three farmers markets in North Platte, McCook and Ogallala. They also have an online store offering home delivery and they supply four wholesale accounts to grocery stores. They are also in the process of building an on-farm certified kitchen where they will make salad dressings, sauerkraut, pickles, salsa, and other value-added products from their vegetables. The biggest challenge they face is finding enough help to manage all of the day-to-day tasks along with Nebraska weather. They are thankful for all the support of their customers.

Merit Award

The Merit Award is presented in recognition of an outstanding activity, product, or service by a group, business firm, corporation, or organization that promotes the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources. Listed below are the winners of this year’s Merit Awards.

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Merit Award to:

Dave Bedlan, SWCS President, (right), presents Merit Award to Corey Anderson, (left), of KOGA



KOGA radio station located in Ogallala, NE, serves the Nebraska High Plains. KOGA (930 AM) broadcasts a classic country format that is licensed to Ogallala, Nebraska. It is owned by iHeartMedia and features programming from ABC Radio and Westwood One.

KOGA partners with Don Day Weather in Cheyenne to provide their listeners timely and accurate forecasts. Day Weather provides weather for the High Plains and is highly respected by the farmers and ranchers of the area. They measure precipitation in the rain gauge and reports it to their listeners. KOGA visits with Don Day on the morning show once every 3-4 months to have him talk about the latest weather trends and make an educated prediction on what weather we can expect for the next few months

When necessary, KOGA interrupts regular programming with Severe Weather updates in the area to warn people where storms are occurring and where they are headed.

KOGA also visits with Ron Regier of Regier Equipment in Madrid 3 times a week about what is top of mind for area ag producers

Merit Award to:

Dave Bedlan, President of SWCS presents award to Twin Platte Natural Resources District. Accepting for the TPNRD is Jim Meismer, TPNRD Board of Directors Treasurer,



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The Twin Platte Natural Resources District (TPNRD) began operations in July 1972, with the merger of several soil & water conservation and watershed conservancy districts.

The TPNRD total land area is 4,157 square miles (2,660,480 acres) and includes Arthur County, Keith County, the northern approximately three-fourths of Lincoln County, and the western two-thirds of McPherson County.

The TPNRD provides an organized approach to the management, utilization, and development of the land and water resources within the TPNRD in cooperation with supporting agencies.

Three major river basins are included in the NRD: North Platte River Basin, South Platte River Basin, and Platte River Basin.

The TPNRD has developed programs for the landowners and the growers in the TPNRD such as the following: Comprehensive soil and water resources programs, prevention of damage from flood water, conservation of ground and surface water, development of wildlife habitat, and recreation areas and assisting landowners with range and forestry management

Merit Award to Rowe Sanctuary

Accepting the award for Rowe Sanctuary is Darwin Heinrichs, (left) a volunteer at Rowe Sanctuary. Dave Bedlan, SWCS President congratulates him.

The sanctuary, located south of Gibbon, is one of the main stopover sites along the Platte River for the Sandhill Cranes. Each spring there are up to 1,000,000 cranes stopping in roughly a 100 mile stretch of the river, spending 4 to 5 weeks preparing for their flight north to Canada, Alaska or Siberia. It is estimated 80 percent of the world's cranes funnel into this stretch of the river each spring.



Bill Taddicken is the director of Rowe Sanctuary and has supervised many conservation projects and education programs here and it has been a significant economic boost for Kearney and surrounding areas. Some of these activities are:

1. The economic benefit to these areas is estimated to be twenty-five million dollars each year.
2. There are eight to nine thousand total visitors from sixty countries going on tours offered each spring to see cranes resting on

river sandbars.

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3. The sanctuary has 2800 acres of which 500 acres have recently been restored from cropland to grass and wildflower habitat.
4. A Wetland Reserve Project has also been completed on their property.
5. They have used burning on small areas to improve wildlife habitat.
6. Every two or three years they scoured the sandbars in the river near them to keep the vegetation off as the cranes like the open sandbars the best.
7. Each year they collect wildflower seeds of pollinator plants for redistributing in needed areas.
8. They host many local school groups throughout the school year and summer to show kids the plants and wildlife in this area.

Honor Award to Agnes Lorentzen, Doug Carlson

Dave Bedlan, SWCS President, sits with Agnes Lorentzen and Doug Carlson.

"This award is in recognition of all you do to make sustained contributions consisting of scholarships for natural resource students in memory of Tina Carlson." Tina Carlson was a



member of SWCS and an employee of Natural Resources Conservation Service. Tina died of cancer in 2007. Anita Nein, Award Committee Chair, asked her mother, Agnes why they chose to support the scholarships. Agnes replied, "This is what Tina would have wanted. I feel this is a way to keep her memory alive. Conservation was very important to her."

Anita Nein went on to say, "These scholarships are very helpful to students. This family has been very consistent in funding scholarships for us, and we can plan on it. More students are applying for them each year. The scholarship winners this year are, Lily Woitaszewski, and Taylor Sayer, Taylor Brumley"

Merit Award to Deke Jones

Deke Jones of Keith County (left) accepts Merit Award from Dave Bedlan, SWCS President.



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After college, Deke came back to farm with his dad, which is half dryland and half irrigated. They use no-till and strip-till to plant corn, soybeans, popcorn, wheat, rye and yellow field peas.

In 2012 they first tried cover crops using a mixture of barley, oats, turnips and canola. After a really dry August and September, to their surprise, there was good moisture and the ground was soft, and they were able to drill their wheat easily, compared to fields that didn't have cover crops. That's when they became believers in the use of cover crops.

Now their goal with cover crops is to help with soil erosion, weed suppression, increase organic matter and help with water infiltration rates. So, they put together cover crop mixes that will break up compaction, scavenge nutrients, produce Nitrogen and create as much biomass above and below ground as possible. They are trying to keep something growing all the time.

They also utilize wireless soil moisture probes to help not over apply water but keep the plant from stressing. They have weather stations scattered throughout the farm to help them track rain fall, temperature and humidity. They also run variable rate irrigation through pivot telemetry, so they are not over applying in some areas and under applying in others.

All of this does not come without its challenges, such as when margins are tight, in dry years when the covers do not get a good stand, or in wet years when it is hard to get planted. There is extra time involved in making the plans, but he feels the time is worth it.

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