



Nebraska Society News

MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER

OFFICERS 2023-2024

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I love this season! Warmer temperatures make me want to run and jump for joy. However, my orthopedic surgeon has made enough money off of me and so therefore, I will hold off!

We had a great time in Nebraska City this past summer at the Annual Tour and Meeting. Congratulations to the planning committee of Dave Bedlan and Corey Brubaker. The Panhandle Committee is working hard to put together a stellar line-up of interesting Technical Talks and a tour. The Membership Committee will send out a SAVE THE DATE once the date has been determined.

I am thankful for the Board of Directors and Officers that serve the members of Nebraska SWCS. If you would like to become an active member on a committee or serve as the President-Elect and then President, reach out. YOU are needed. Our committees are strong, but a new voice is always welcome. Remember, opportunities to improve your resume are just a phone call away.

Go out and save some natural resources!!

Claudia Stevenson
Nebraska SWCS President



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INTERNATIONAL AWARD WINNERS

Four leaders in Nebraska resource conservation, as well as the Nebraska Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS), were recently honored by the International SWCS at the 78th SWCS International Conference in Des Moines, Iowa.

- Commendation Award - **John Gilley**
- Commendation Award - **Jim Culver**
- Commendation Award - **Claudia Stevenson**
- Honorable Mention - **Zamir Libohova**
- Outstanding Chapter Award - **Nebraska**

STATE AWARD WINNERS

Each year, the Nebraska SWCS Chapter recognizes and honors work from people who promote its goals in the state.

- Commendation Award - **Jim Barr**
- Commendation Award - **Paul Zilig**
- Commendation Award - **Dick Ehrman**
- Merit Award - **Lower Platte South NRD**
- Merit Award - **Lincoln Center Kiwanis**
- Innovation Award - **Janet & Mike McDonald**
- Honor Award - **Joanna Pope**

Detailed information and photos regarding each award winner can be found at:

Soil and Water Conservation Society Honors 2023 Award Winners
<https://cropwatch.unl.edu/2023/soil-and-water-conservation-society-honors-2023-award-winners>



More information about the Nebraska SWCS Chapter can be found at nebraskaswcs.org and on Facebook.

SWCS AWARD NOMINATION REQUEST

Don't forget to send your nominations to:

- Anita Nein - anita.nein@gmail.com
- Darwin Hinrichs - hinrichsdm@hotmail.com
- Doug Garrison - sgarriso1@outlook.com
- Claudia Stevenson - bcjbs@msn.com
- Craig Romary - clrpkrne@windstream.net

This group will help the nominee. If you nominate yourself, that is great!! We would just like to know about it.

The group is also seeking nominations for Nebraska Chapter people or non-members that are accomplished in Natural Resources. High emphasis would be in the Panhandle area. Think about community groups, student groups, maybe there is a radio show or podcast that you would like to highlight. Nominate your co-worker!!

Claudia Stevenson, Membership Chair



Apply for SWCS Awards and Scholarships

Take advantage of these great opportunities to receive professional recognition or funding! Are you looking for opportunities to build your resume or recognize a colleague who is doing fantastic work? Apply or nominate someone for one of the prestigious international awards below.

Do you have a desire to further your knowledge but don't have the budget for professional development? Or are you a student looking for financial support for your schooling or research? Either way, we've got you covered. Apply for the scholarship that best suits your needs.

Applications are due by March 27, so don't wait. Apply today!

To learn more, go to www.swcs.org/awardscholarships or contact us at awards@swcs.org.



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Seven Conservation Scholarships Awarded

The Nebraska Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society (SWCS), the Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Foundation (NSWCF), and the Nebraska Chapter SWCS-UNL Foundation are pleased to announce 7 scholarship recipients for the spring 2024 semester. Each recipient was awarded \$1,000.

Scholarship recipients in alphabetical order, including major course of study, university, and hometown, are:

*Amanda Cline, from Axtell, is a junior fisheries and wildlife major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and received a Tina Lorentzen Carlson Memorial Scholarship;

*Caitlin Faust, from Lincoln, is a senior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln majoring in regional & community forestry, and received a SWCS-UNL Foundation Scholarship;

*Dominic Giannini, Grayslake, IL, is a senior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln majoring in environmental science/water science, and received the Dave Langemeier Memorial Scholarship;

*Jack Krebs, Monticello, WI, is a senior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln majoring in water science/environmental science, and received the Cam Loerch Memorial Scholarship;

*Truett Nelson, Grand Island, is a sophomore at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln majoring in regional & community forestry, and received a SWCS-UNL Foundation Scholarship;

*Nobel Nothstine, Omaha, is a senior at the University of Nebraska-Omaha majoring in environmental science/sustainability, and received a NSWCF scholarship;

*Sheridan Wilson, Lemoyne, is a junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln majoring in grassland/grazing systems, and received a Tina Lorentzen Carlson Memorial Scholarship;

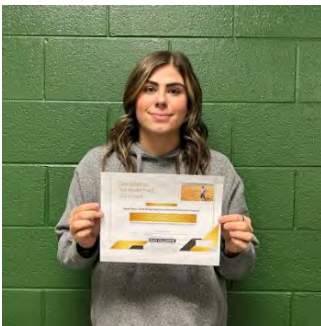
Nebraska SWCS Provided Scholarships to 7 Students

Here's our press release on the scholarship recipients for the 2023-24 school year.

We had 65 applicants this year!!!

<https://krgi.com/news/seven-conservation-scholarships-awarded>

The Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Foundation and the Nebraska Chapter SWCS-UNL Foundation are supported by Nebraska SWCS Chapter members and friends through an annual golf tournament, silent auction, and direct memorial donations. SWCS is a nonprofit, multidisciplinary organization for anyone interested in natural resource management and conservation. Its mission is to advocate the protection, enhancement, and wise use of soil, water, and related natural resources. More information about the Nebraska SWCS Chapter can be found at nebraskaswcs.org.



Gillespie Award Winner - Bush

Akeyli Bush, Central City, Neb., High School student received a \$500 grant from the Dan Gillespie Soil Health Fund.

She plan son using her award to fund metoagenomics tests and other microbial tests in her soil research.

The Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Foundation (NSWCF) and SWCS Chapter received 65 scholarship applications this year and will select several just like these students from the past.

The SWCS scholarship and other scholarships opened the door to UNL and the opportunity to enhance my NCTA degree by earning a B.S. in Agriculture. Those degrees opened many doors for me to save soil and protect water for over 25 years. Thank you Paul Smith and SWCS!

Tim Schaaf, NRCS (1993)

The SWCS scholarship was an important part of what made it possible for me to earn a B.S. degree in Agricultural Sciences at UNL, continue my NRCS career as a Student Intern, and accept a permanent full-time position with the agency after graduation. I am very appreciative of the support SWCS has provided to me and to other students who share the common passion for natural resources conservation across the nation.

James Huntwork, NRCS (1990)

NSWCF is supported by dedicated SWCS members and friends through direct donations and participation in SWCS activities.

Students from UNL, UNO, Concordia, UNK, Chadron State, & NCTA have benefitted from your generosity.

Contact us for more information. [NSWCF](http://NSWCF.org) [Foundation - Nebraska SWCS Chapter](http://Foundation-Nebraska-SWCS-Chapter.org)



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DAVE LANGEMEIER MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT by Corey Brubaker

The 27th Annual SWCS Dave Langemeier Memorial Golf Tournament was held at the Highlands Golf Course in Lincoln on Friday, September 8th.



We had 66 golfers this year which is a record since I have been organizing the tournament and raised over \$3,300 for the scholarship fund. Proceeds from the golf tournament will be used to fund two \$1000 scholarships next spring. 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 next spring.

This year's winning team was the team of Riley Hackbart, Mason Koebernick, Jacob Miller, and Jack Hornung with a total score of 96. The second-place team consisted of Frank Schmal, Ryan Kroemer, Doug Wagner, and Grant Deisley with a score of 108.



First place for low individual gross was Ryan Kroemer with a score of 68 followed by Jake Bliven with a score of 69. First place for low individual net score was Jacob Miller with a 49 followed by Jack Hornung with a 54.



There were several winners of the long putt contest this year including James Brubaker, Jim Culver, Gary Nichols, John Rissetto and Frank Schmal.





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2023 SWCS NEBRASKA STATE MEETING

The 2023 Nebraska State SWCS Meeting was held June 28-30, 2023 at the Lied Lodge and Conference Center in Nebraska City.



SWCS Group during Buck and Duck Creek Lake Tour

The annual meeting included technical presentations and tour of Arbor Day Farm highlighting its agronomic pursuits and management, a tour of the Buck & Duck Watershed Project, SWCS Awards Banquet and Council Meeting.



Buck Creek Reservoir Tour

NEBRASKA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION FOUNDATION NEWS Craig Romary



Agnes Lorentzen and Doug Carlson, 2023

Tina Carlson was a Nebraska Chapter member who passed away in 2007, and her husband, Doug Carlson, and mother, Agnes Lorentzen, have been contributing funds to the Foundation for student scholarships since that time.

Many of you may have met Doug and Agnes a few years ago at our annual meeting in Ogallala. I received a nice note and picture from Doug, who visited Agnes recently for a family wedding. Doug says, "She is exceptionally well", and "LOVES getting mail of any sort." If you'd like to send her a note, please contact me.

SWCS CHAPTER ARCHIVES Craig Romary

Reminder: If you see or hear of news about Nebraska Chapter Members, please send a photo, web link, or newspaper scan to Craig for inclusion in the Chapter archives.



SCSA Table Display

Also, if you'd like to help review pictures from the

past to put names to faces, please let me know. Several members have helped with this in the recent past, including Jim Barr, Norm Helzer, Craig Derickson, Jim Culver, and Mike Kucera – Thank You!

And they've made a big dent in this job, but there are still unidentified people.

Lastly, if you have any interest in seeing what's in the archives – just to look through, please get in touch with me. That's what this project is for!



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Nebraska Soil Health Coalition

A new non-profit organization called the Nebraska Soil Health Coalition has been established in Nebraska. The purpose of the new Coalition is "to advance producer-centered education, outreach, and adoption of soil health principles to build resilient farms, ranches, and communities across Nebraska. This effort was started by a group of committed conservationists who decided that an independent non-profit organization would enhance Nebraska's current efforts to increase the adoption of soil health management systems. Nebraska now joins 27 other states with independent non-profit Soil Health organizations. The Coalition's founding members are: Thomas Hoegemeyer, Craig Derickson, Mike McDonald, Keith Berns, Alan Moeller, Bruce Johnson, Paul Jasa and David Meyer. The Coalition has worked hard over the past few months to become established and hopes to soon have a website, email, and other communication materials. The Coalition is excited for the opportunity to partner and collaborate with other organizations and agencies working to improve the condition of our natural resources. The new Coalition will largely focus on implementation of the Nebraska Healthy Soils Task Force report that was completed in 2020, as a result of the Legislature passage of LB 243. For more information on the Task Force report see : https://nda.nebraska.gov/healthysoils/HSTF_FinalReport.pdf.

MOU between NRCS and retiree association

A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been established between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees. The MOU was signed by leaders of the organizations at the SWCS annual conference in Iowa In August of 2023. One of the main components of the MOU is to allow ARCSE members to provide mentoring services to new NRCS employees. Over the past couple of years NRRS has hired more than 2,000 new employees and expects to hire as many as 4,000 new employees in the months ahead.

The ARCSE organization is made up primarily of NRCS retirees, but the name reflects that Conservation District employees are also eligible to be members. As a sign of changing times and demographics in the U.S, many new employees at NRCS and other related organizations don't have a direct farm or ranch background. These employees could benefit greatly in a mentoring relationship with an NRCS or District retiree to help them reach their full potential. This mentoring arrangement is all new and is in the process of being rolled out to NRCS and ARCSE members. Leaders are urged to watch for additional information on the opportunity for retirees to be involved in mentoring activities.

Honor Roll of Memorials

Memorials have been updated through 2023. Take a look at those who have been honored with a memorial or recognition by having a donation made to the Foundation in their name

<https://nebraskaswcs.org/nswc-foundation.html>

NEW SWCS BROCHURES

Two brochures on the Foundation have been added to our website at <https://nebraskaswcs.org/nswc-foundation.html>

Please print and share with others!

Dan Gillespie Soil Health Fund Information

The Dan Gillespie Soil Health Fund was established to honor Dan Gillespie, a lifelong farmer and a long-time no-till farming practitioner and advocate who passed in February 2022 following a long battle with ALS. Led by a volunteer Fund Advisory Committee, the fund raises money and makes grants to support charitable causes and organizations furthering education and educational practices related to soil health and regenerative agriculture such as no-till farming, water conservation, tree conservation, and planting cover crops in Nebraska and surrounding states. Nebraska SWCS members Craig Derickson and Keith Berns are both members of the Fund Advisory Committee.

Since both the Nebraska SWCS and the SWCS Foundation have supported the Fund, we wanted to share this newsletter update with you to show where Grants have been awarded so far and to encourage you to be thinking of worthy organizations or individuals who should apply for funding for future projects.

Of course, the work depends on the generosity of those who share the vision and passion for promoting more sustainable agricultural practices. The newsletter has information if you are interested in contributing to further the work of the Dan Gillespie Soil Health Fund. Ray Ward, Ward Laboratories Kearney, will donate a personal handmade clock (with wood from his farm in Saline County) to any donor of \$1,000 or more to the Dan Gillespie Soil Health Fund.

Please feel free to share this with your friends, families, and organizations.

<https://www.nebcommfound.org/give/dan-gillespie-soil-health-fund/>



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2024 ANNUAL NEBRASKA SWCS MEETING

June 11-13 - Scottsbluff NE

The 2024 Annual Meeting location will be in Scottsbluff, NE - June 11-13, 2024. The planning committee is focusing on important subject matter which is in line with present conservation concerns and training needs. Subjects include cover crops, nutrient/pest management, soil health, carbon sequestration, etc.

Planning Committee
Ed Harms, Robin Foulk co-chair



79th SWCS International Annual Conference

July 21-24, 2024

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

This year's conference theme is "Rising Together: Collaborative Conservation for All"

Call for presentation submissions and more details regarding the event will be posted in www.swcs.org/24AC

LINKS OF INTEREST.....

- ❖ **ICYMI SWCS Annual Report 2022-2023**
(contains SWCS activities at the National scale)
<https://bit.ly/22-23SWCSannualreport>
- ❖ **University of Nebraska wins 2023 Regional Collegiate Soil Judging Contest**
<https://ianrnews.unl.edu/nebraska-wins-2023-regional-collegiate-soil-judging-contest>
- ❖ **Peterson named associate director of West Central Research, Extension and Education Center**
<https://ianrnews.unl.edu/peterson-named-associate-director-west-central-research-extension-and-education-center>
- ❖ **Announcing: The Soil Health Exchange**
<https://cropwatch.unl.edu/2023/announcing-soil-health-exchange>
- ❖ **Thomas Franti Retires from UNL Department of Biological Systems Engineering** *(former SWCS member who conducted research and Extension education programs related to protecting surface water quality and served as advisor to the student Soil and Water Resources Club for years)*
<https://events.unl.edu/ianr/2023/12/13/177029/>
- ❖ **Q&A with Conservation Photographer Ethan Freese**
(Ethan was a 2015-'16 SWCS scholarship recipient)
<https://ianrnews.unl.edu/qa-conservation-photographer-ethan-freese>
- ❖ **Battling a Green Glacier; How a Native Tree Became a Threat to Nebraska's Grasslands**
<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/battling-a-green-glacier-how-a-native-tree-became-a-threat-to-nebraskas-grasslands/>
- ❖ **Educational Resource Links by Gary Stone**
(Gary Stone, Nebraska Extension Educator and Nebraska Chapter member recently created three, six-part series', the first, Water Law 101, the second, Dams, Reservoirs and Power Generation along the North Platte River, and the third, Major Rivers in Nebraska and Their Drainages
 - **Water Law 101**
<https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/panhandle/panhandle-perspectives-water-law-101-part-1-the-basic>
 - **Dams, Reservoirs, and Power Generation along the North Platte River**
<https://cropwatch.unl.edu/2022/north-platte-river-multiuse-water>
 - **Major Nebraska Rivers and Their Drainages**
<https://cropwatch.unl.edu/2023/major-nebraska-rivers-and-their-drainages-part-1>