



Nebraska Society News

Soil and Water Conservation Society

January 2000 Newsletter

Officers 1999-2000

President	S. Corey Brubaker	402-441-6753
Vice President	Jerry Baysinger	
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<http://incolor.inetnebr.com/dougg/swcs/>

From the President's Desk

Greetings and Happy New Year! I hope that all of you had a wonderful holiday season and that the year 2000 will bring you peace, joy and prosperity. For me the New Year is a time of reflection and renewal. A time to reflect on the past year's successes and failures, on what we accomplished and what we didn't accomplish, and a time to evaluate our goals and priorities. It is also a time to start over, to learn from our failures, set new goals, re-establish priorities and resolve to do better. In the previous newsletter I outlined my goals for the Nebraska Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society. First, to provide for a smoother transition of power within the organization after the annual meeting, and second, to identify ways to get members more involved.

Addressing the first issue was one of the main items on our agenda when the officers and board of directors met in December. Following the annual meeting in June we had asked Gus to look at the by-laws to see if we could come up with a way to elect officers so that they could take office immediately following the close of the annual meeting. Gus identified and drafted several potential changes to the by-laws and we discussed those at length at our December board meeting. The proposed changes include:

- Having the Nominations Committee provide the Board of Directors with a list of potential candidates for officer 30 days prior to the annual meeting.
- Having the existing Board of Directors meet prior to the annual meeting to confirm the election of new directors and elect officers for the upcoming year. The new officers and directors would then take office at the close of the annual business meeting.
- Allowing the Executive Committee (officers) to become voting members of the Board of Directors. Presently, only elected Directors are allowed to vote at meetings of the Board. However, since the Executive Committee has the authority to handle routine and emergency business of the chapter it seemed to make sense that they should also be voting members of the Board.
- Including the Past-President as a member of the Executive Committee. It was felt that this would help with continuity and transition of power.

A few other minor changes were discussed. Those changes, along with those listed above, will be included in a special ballot that will be mailed to you later this month.

As far as member involvement is concerned we have two events scheduled for the year. The Legislative Breakfast will be held on Wednesday, January 26th at 6:45 am. in

Conference Room A on the lower level of the State Office Building and our Annual Meeting which is scheduled for June 14-17 at Fort Robinson State Park. Information regarding both activities is included in this newsletter and I encourage your participation.

I would also like to make you aware of a couple of workshops that are planned for this spring. On January 19-20 the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension along with NRCS, the Pappas-Missouri River NRD and the Lower Platte South NRD are hosting a workshop on Urban Conservation at Mahoney Park. While SWCS is not an official sponsor of the workshop we hope to have a presence there. If you are interested in attending contact me at (402)-441-6753. On March 23, SWCS is co-sponsoring a workshop on Carbon Sequestration at Chadron State College. For more information on that workshop contact Robin Foulk at (308)-432-4616. While we don't have money in the budget currently to help sponsor many workshops such as these, I think it is something we seriously need to consider doing.

Finally, I want to mention our fund raising effort for the year. We will be raffling off a silver belt buckle commemorating the 100th anniversary of soil survey. The drawing will be held at our annual meeting at Ft. Robinson. Please help us make this a successful venture by selling as many tickets as you can.

S. Corey Brubaker

Val Bohaty Recognized By Kiwanis

Valerian Bohaty, retired Soil Conservationist from Lancaster County was presented with the Northeast Lincoln Kiwanis Club Soil and Water Conservation Award in 1999. The award reads "Kiwanis Club of Lincoln Northeast Recognizes Valerian Bohaty for his dedication to Soil and Water Conservation in Lancaster County". The club has given the award each year since 1971. Val is the first "urbanite" to receive this award it usually goes to practicing farmers and ranchers.

Over the years Val has shared his expertise in soil conservation with Kiwanis. He and his colleagues have provided a list of farm operators who have practiced outstanding soil conservation programs for past award nominations. Val's input to soil and water conservation is very visible as you drive through Lancaster and surrounding counties.

Respectively Submitted Rollin D. Schnieder, Chairman, Ag & Conservation Committee, Northeast Lincoln Kiwanis.

LEADERS NEEDED FOR NEW MILLENNIUM

As we have all heard, the new millennium does not actually start until next year. So it seems appropriate that we take this opportunity to ask for members who want to lead the Society into that new era.

In an effort to ensure a smooth transition, we are asking for self-nominations for Society officers for next year. Any member of the Nebraska Chapter of SWCS is eligible. The positions we are seeking are President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. If you are willing to serve the Society in any of these positions, please contact Gus Hughbanks at the address listed at the bottom of this article.

The officers serve a one-year term beginning immediately following the annual meeting (June 16, 2000), and can serve consecutive terms. They take guidance from the Board of Directors and are responsible for the routine and emergency operations of the Society. The Board of Directors will make the final selections based upon nominations. If you would like additional information, contact any of the current officers or Gus. Please submit your self-nominations by March 30, 2000.

Gus Hughbanks, 6201 Chiswick Court, Lincoln, NE 68516, (402)437-4111, Raymond.Hughbanks@ne.usda.gov

Foundation Selects Scholarship Winner

The Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Foundation has announced their scholarship winner for the second semester. "Robert L. Schieffer of Crofton, Nebraska has been selected winner of our most recent scholarship," announced Norman Helzer President of the Foundation. "Mr. Schieffer met with several society members at a luncheon recently and was presented a check," he added.

Robert Schieffer attends the University of Nebraska, Lincoln majoring in Agricultural Engineering with an emphasis in soil and water conservation. He grew up on a dairy farm near Crofton in Cedar County and attended Crofton High School.



Robert Schieffer receives the scholarship check from Paul Smith.

The Foundation annually presents a scholarship to students in natural resources and related fields of study. The Soil and Water Conservation Society supports education, research and conservation of our natural resources.

SWCS Student Scholarships UN-L Foundation

The Nebraska Chapter and the Northeast Nebraska Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society have a scholarship fund at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Foundation. The interest on this fund currently enables us to give two \$500 scholarships per year. The two 1999-2000 scholarship winners are Dean D. Brame and Branden J. Strahm. They both attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Dean is a Junior majoring in Water Science with emphasis in water quality and policy. He comes from the rural setting of Springfield, Nebraska. Dean is gaining experience in natural resources through his internship with the Nebraska Environmental Trust fund. Goals include a masters degree in water policy and law. He is the President of the UNL Soil and Water Resources Club.

Branden is a Senior majoring in Ag Engineering, emphasizing water and soil science. He comes from the rural setting of Pender, Nebraska. He has worked with Dr. Eisenhower on several projects and is currently working with him in the hydraulics laboratory. Educational goals include graduate school with an interest in Environmental Engineering. He is the Secretary-Treasurer of the UNL Soil and Water Resources Club.

Please congratulate them when you see them and encourage them to pursue a natural resources career.

!!!RAFFLE!!!

The Nebraska Chapter, SWCS is going to have a raffle again. In keeping with the "Soil Survey Centennial" we are going to raffle two belt buckles. These buckles were specially commissioned for the Soil Survey Centennial. They have the Centennial logo, the words "National Cooperative Soil Survey" across the top and "1899 Centennial 1999" along the bottom.

The first prize buckle is of sterling silver, and has the serial number of "1". It has a value of \$120.00. Second prize is the same buckle in bronze. It has a value of \$16.50. Tickets are \$1.00 each or six (6) for \$5.00 and a supply is included with this newsletter. Plans are to have the raffle at the annual meeting at Fort Robinson.

Tickets have been included in this newsletter. Additional tickets can be downloaded and printed from our website at: <http://incolor.inetnebr.com/dougg/swcs/raffle2000.pdf>

Send or deliver the filled out tickets and money to any of the listed: S. Cory Brubaker, Chapter President, Dave Langemeier, treasure, or Ron Bauer, raffle coordinator.

The proceeds from this activity will go into the Nebraska Chapter to be used for Chapter projects.

An ultimate new crop for agriculture

By Craig Cox, executive vice president of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. Reprinted with permission from *Conservation Voices* magazine.

As we come to the end of the 20th century, I find myself looking ahead. Agriculture is in yet another farm crisis with low farm commodity prices, but less visible - and certainly less talked about - is the growing conservation crisis.

I've heard it suggested that now is no time to talk about conservation when farmers are worried about how to stay in business. But this response pits farmers against the land they depend on and against consumers who buy their products.

Pitting these two fundamental crises - conservation vs. economics - portends a future of increasing litigation, stalemate, and declining public support for farmers.

The solution? We need to begin thinking about the environment as the ultimate new crop for agriculture. And begin thinking about conservation as the way we grow and market that crop.

In the past, we - consumers and policy makers - have asked farmers and ranchers to produce abundant, high-quality food and fiber at the lowest cost possible. And farmers have responded in spades. We are awash in food and fiber. Walk down any supermarket aisle and it's hard to see that the crisis on the farm is a crisis for anyone other than those farm families suffering from low prices.

But, what if we asked farmers to produce clean water, wildlife habitat, and flood protection just like we have asked them - AND PAID THEM - for food and fiber?

Conservation is the perfect value-added crop for agriculture. First, there are no middlemen. Farmers can harvest nearly all of the value from conservation as a benefit of agricultural production. Second, conservation commodities don't have to compete with land and resources for food and fiber production. For the most part, clean water, wildlife habitat, and flood protection can be produced at the same time we produce corn or livestock. Conservation commodities are simply added to the crop mix and the income opportunities for farmers. Finally, conservation commodities are a great opportunity to rebuild links between people - whether rural or urban.

So, what are the steps for making conservation a new crop for agriculture? First, we need a way to pay producers for the clean water and other environmental values we want. This isn't such a stretch. We pay farmers now to produce conservation commodities through programs like CRP, EQIP, and WRP.

Second, and more difficult, we need to decide as a community, are we willing to pay all farmers and ranchers to produce conservation crops or only those with small operations? Are we willing to pay for all conservation practices or are there basic practices that producers should implement as part of their responsibility as good neighbors?

Third, we need to ensure that a highly trained infrastructure of conservationists comes with the package. This is the most difficult of the three to achieve. Yet making the environment a crop will never happen without people providing the technical advice and knowledge needed.

I don't underestimate the difficulty in achieving these three things. But I also know it's worth a try.

Read on page 20, about Gene Mack in Nebraska, LuAnn Rolling in Iowa and Paul Sheffer in California, who are going "belly-to-belly" with producers to get conservation on the land. On page 16, you can read about Steve Diercks, who is harvesting all the value of reducing his pesticide use on his potato fields-conservation value and economic value.

And the urban connection strengthens when a developer like Jerry Mobley (page 12) is building an environmentally sustainable town. The waiting list of buyers is a testament that urban people are concerned about conservation too.

So am I dreaming when I think the environment can be a new crop for agriculture? Maybe, but as we enter the 21st century, I think it's time to dream a little.

Members In Action!

The Panhandle Trash Pick Up Gang received \$157 (\$150 grant and \$7.00 in recyclables) for their local efforts in the Keep America Beautiful program. Some of the

income will be turned into the NE Chapter with the remaining income held by the Panhandle group for future activities.

Those involved included Don & Robin Foulk (family and friends), Anita Nein, Stephanie King and family.

At break the group grilled hamburgers and hotdogs. Anita Nien impressed all with her watermelon seed spitting abilities.



Legislative Breakfast

The 17th Annual Legislative Breakfast hosted by the Nebraska Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) will be held Wednesday January 26, 2000 from 6:45 to 8:00 AM. The breakfast will be held in Conference Room A in the basement of the State Office Building at 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE.

The topic for discussion will be Carbon Sequestration in Nebraska and an update on Turkey Creek activities in SE Nebraska. Senators from the Nebraska Unicameral are invited as guests. All SWCS members are invited, but you do not need to be a member to come. EVERYONE IS WELCOME. Rolls and coffee will be served, cost \$2.00.

Carbon Sequestration Workshop

The Panhandle Section of Nebraska SWCS Chapter is co-sponsoring a Carbon Sequestration Workshop for area farmers and ranchers on March 23, 2000 from 1pm to 4pm at Chadron State College.

John Brenner and Nathan McCaleb (both with NRCS) are tentatively scheduled to speak. Currently, John Brenner is working at Colorado State University with the creator of the model to be used in Nebraska to estimate the levels of carbon captured or sequestered in the soil.

Robin Foulk, Panhandle Section member, decided after attending a session on carbon sequestration that landowners needed an opportunity to learn more about carbon sequestration. She felt it was an excellent opportunity for SWCS to help out.

In addition to NE SWCS, several others have stepped forward to sponsor the event, they are Chadron State College (CSC), Upper Niobrara White NRD, Ag Club at CSC, and Wyoming SWCS.

Carbon sequestration is a complicated issue which

encompasses varied topics. A poster session is also being planned for the workshop.

Update on the Annual Meeting at Ft. Robinson

The Foundation loaned the NE Chapter money for a deposit on Comanche Hall. I would like to express my gratitude for this gesture. It certainly has made making arrangements a great deal easier. Now it is up to the chapter. To date, there has only been a few reservations made for lodging at Comanche Hall. The Fort fills up early, so don't wait.

A point of interest for all members is that we must pay the full amount for Comanche Hall even if we do not fill all the rooms. The committee booked this Hall in an attempt to have lodging available on the grounds. There are a number of activities going on that should make it a nice situation for family members who may not wish to participate in the meeting. The bottom line is that it will increase our meeting costs if we do not fill the rooms. We would greatly appreciate hearing from you soon. Please call Stephanie King for reservations at (308) 327-2141 ext.108. Refer to the November Newsletter for a layout of Comanche Hall. The layout can be viewed at: <http://incolor.inetnebr.com/dougg/swcs/Nov1999.pdf>

The committee has identified the following areas that we need help with:

- Registration table
- Wednesday BBQ
- Agate lunch
- Drifter lunch
- Chuck wagon Cookout
- Post Playhouse
- Meeting breakfast

Please contact either Stephanie King (308) 327-2141 ext. 108 or Robin Foulk at (308) 432-4161 ext. 103, to help out.