



Wyoming Chapter— SWCS News Fall 2013

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Our Mission

Foster the science and art of natural resource conservation. Targeting conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources on working land—the land used to produce food, fiber, and other services that improve the quality of life people experience in rural and urban communities. Working to discover, develop, implement, and constantly improve ways to use land that sustains its productive capacity and enhances the environment at the same time.

President's Message

Hello Everyone!

Thanks to everyone who attended and participated in *Know Your Rights: Water Rights and Current Issues in the Region*, in Cheyenne on October 1. Overwhelmingly participants expressed interest in future learning and networking opportunities. Next year Area 3 will be the host region (NW WY) for our annual technical workshop. If you have ideas or training needs, let us know. And keep your eyes peeled for that event on the calendar.

In addition to the excellent slate of presentations, and that I won a silent auction item(!), I came away from the day feeling completely re-energized, largely as a result of 1. observing the thoughtful discussions that continued among participants during breaks and lunch and 2. the focused participation of just a few, but a few clearly committed, members of the chapter during our Annual Meeting. We enjoyed a meal together and discussed the future of the chapter.

I admit that some days as President and Area Director (especially this year, coordinating the Area 2-hosted workshop) and Public Relations and Me-

dia Committee Chair, responsible for publishing this newsletter, I get a little overwhelmed. And this year also, as we discussed at dinner, I am a little concerned that we have not had a leader step forward as President-Elect. However, as I drove back to Laramie from Cheyenne, I felt completely refreshed and ready to tackle the next steps for our chapter.

As I mentioned in our Summer issue of this newsletter, the Leadership Committee of the Society will be tasked again with chapter development, especially working on resuscitating weak chapters around the country. And Wyoming is not one of those. We remain small but stable in number. I firmly believe that some strategic planning around our mission will help keep us healthy, and encourage us to thrive. Our commitment as a Board to reinstating Annual Technical Workshops is one way we can do this. I have asked the board to consider a strategic planning meeting, or retreat, this winter, and would love to see every single member involved in the process. I'll be putting together an online survey to see what you all envision as our goals and our future. I hope you all will take some time to speak up.



Congratulations to our 2015 award recipients:

*Outstanding Conservation News Reporter: Emilene Ostlund (Laramie, WY), Reporter and Editor, Western Confluence

*Outstanding Contribution to Conservation: Platte River Revival (Casper, WY), for restoration of N Platte River

*Chapter Horizon Award: Mike Kasten (Gillette, WY), former Education and Outreach Committee Chair, WY Chapter SWCS.

Chapter award nominations will be due again this winter. Your winter newsletter

(Continued on page 6.)

Calendar of Events

December 8 (Wheatland), December 9 (Riverton) and December 10 (Greybull), 2015: Soil Health Workshop. See details next page.

February 1, 2016, IECA Environmental Connection 2016 - Free Expo Passes for SWCS Members:

The International Erosion Control Association (IECA) is hosting its annual conference, Environmental Connection 2016, in San Antonio, Texas February 16-19. Click [here](#) for details. All SWCS members will receive complimentary expo hall passes if you register for them by February 1, 2016. To claim your free expo hall pass, email laura@ieca.org with the subject line "SWCS Expo Hall Pass."

July 24—27, 2016: 71st Annual SWCS International Conference, Louisville, KY. Details to come.

Your SWCS Board News

Annual Meeting was held this year in Cheyenne on October 1, following our annual Technical Workshop. Those present discussed a number of items, including membership and retention, including student chapter, leadership including committee participation, and strategic planning. Your Board met by teleconference on Monday, November 9 to continue discussions and planning.

It was decided to approach SRM and WyRED with a suggested change in our previous agreement, in which the Chapter would provide a \$500 sponsorship annually, as well as instruction and prizes for land judging. Dan Mattke, Area 3 Director, will approach Marji Patz, who heads WyRED, about this proposed recommitment to the event.

Chapter membership, leadership and strategic planning were key topics on the agenda for the An-

nual Meeting. Though as mentioned before, WY Chapter remains stable, with changes in Society structure and decreased membership of federal employees, your Board has been reaching out to other government agencies, as well as private sector and non profit professionals with membership and learning opportunities. We are building a base, but there is still work to be done.

Keep your eyes peeled for a brief survey asking members to identify the reasons they joined and remain members of WY SWCS, or why they have dropped membership, as well as key incentives for being involved with the chapter and the Society. Your Board will reconvene in January by teleconference to continue discussion and strategic planning for future success of your Wyoming Chapter.

Education Update

Scholarship application time is on the way. Scholarship Chair Dicksie Michael will have application information available after the holidays. We had seen a decrease in applications over the past couple years, and voted in Annual Meeting 2014 to raise the scholarship amount to \$750, in keeping with increasing costs of a post secondary education.

Undergraduate students at Wyoming colleges can apply. If you have a student in mind, please share the scholarship information this coming year. The application process is quite

easy, and worth the time and effort for the possibility of earning \$750 to help defray college expenses.

Jerry Shuman and Lisa Cox will meet with Scott Miller, new Department Head of the Ecosystems Science and Management Department at UWyo, about regenerating the Student Chapter of our WY SWCS. Former faculty advisor Professor Larry Munn retired recently, and his replacement may be a good fit for taking on faculty advisement of the chapter. Stay tuned for news on that front.

Soil Health Workshop December 8—10

Restorative Soil Health Principles - Improving How Your Soil Functions

Does it seem like agricultural production has become a giant game of “whack-a-mole”? Do you just get one problem corrected and another one pops up? You have always had to adjust to what Mother Nature gives you, but have you ever thought “if I could just work with Mother Nature instead of against her”? Many producers are finding it possible to do this by increasing plant diversity and protecting the biologic life in the soil. Within five years of changing their management, they are finding dramatic reduction of erosion and purchased inputs while maintaining or increasing yield. After all, the main objective is to sign more checks on the back and less on the front.

Audience members will learn through visual demonstration “How Soil Functions”. Improving soil health on your farm is a process or journey and the more we emulate nature, we can start to decrease inputs. Managing for soil health is one of the easiest and most effective ways for farmers to increase crop productivity and profitability while improving the environment. Results are often realized immediately, and last well into the future. Using these five basic principles is the key to improving the health of your soil. 1. Keep the soil covered as much as possible. 2. Disturb the soil as little as possible. 3. Keep

plants growing throughout the year to feed the soil microbes. 4. Diversify as much as possible using crop rotation and cover crops. 5. Integrate livestock into the cropping system.

Come learn how this management can work for you at one of three workshops Sponsored by the Plank Stewardship Initiative, Wyoming NRCS, local Conservation Districts and local UW County Extension offices.

Speaker Information

Brendon Rockey is a biotic farmer in Colorado showing producers across the nation how to end their chemical dependencies.

Brendon’s approach focuses on life. On his farm, biological inputs, companion crops, animals, cover crops and flowers replace synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides and insecticides. His system sustains yields, has greater water efficiency and it supports a flourishing ecosystem encouraging beneficial insects, soil microbes and carbon cycling.

The third generation potato grower teamed up with Woody Thorpe and Mark Inness to form Soil Guys. The homegrown business is a combined vision to increase the industry’s access to biological inputs and the methods Brendon practices on his farm, which continue to improve its soil health and crops every season.

Marlon Winger earned a MS and BS degree at Utah State University in Plant Science. He grew up on a family owned dairy farm in Dayton Idaho, where he found his passion for life (Agriculture). He worked as a County Agricultural Agent for Utah State University Extension service for 9 years in Price, Utah. He has been working for the USDA - Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for about 11 years, currently as the Regional Soil Health Specialist in WY, ID and MT. He has been spearheading soil health by teaching workshops throughout the region. Marlon lives on a small ranchette in Kuna, Idaho

where the family raises sheep, hogs, a few calves and a large garden.

Roger Stockton is the Wyoming NRCS State Conservation Agronomist. Roger farmed and ranched in western Oklahoma for 20 years, before beginning graduate study. He got a MS in Agronomy at Oklahoma State University and a PhD in Crop Physiology and Production at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He was NW Area Extension Agronomist at Kansas State University for 5 years before joining NRCS as the SW Nebraska Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator for 7 years. He has served in his current position since then.

Among Roger’s interests are soil health, erosion control, nutrient management, crop productivity and profitability, and reasonable and realistic responses to climate change. His experience and education give him a solid understanding of plant stress and management alternatives to alleviate the stress, making the crop more productive.

Agenda and registration information page 7.

Sponsored by

NRCS, Plank Stewardship Initiative, Local Conservation Districts and Local UWyo Extension Offices

The Ancient Rule -
“Whatever is affixed
to the soil belongs to
the soil” - (Anglo-
Saxon Law)

Wyoming Chapter Leaders

Committee Chairs:

Annual Meeting Program –
Vacant

Awards –
Vacant

Education and Outreach –
Vacant

Fundraising –
Vacant

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Nominations and Elections –
Vacant

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Technical Workshop Summary

This year's Wyoming Chapter SWCS Technical Workshop, hosted by Area 2, was held at the Holiday Inn in Cheyenne on October 1. The theme: Know Your Rights: Water Rights and Current Issues in the region, was timely, and the audience consisted of SWCS members, agency professionals from NRCS, State Engineers, WY DEQ and Game and Fish; students and staff from University of Wyoming; legal, geology and environmental professionals from around the state and region, including participants from South Dakota and Colorado.

The day began with Wyoming State Engineer Pat Tyrell giving opening remarks and setting the tone for a day of learning and networking about water issues and law in the region, from local, state and federal perspectives.

Bren Hinckley, a consulting geologist who lives in Laramie, spoke on Aquifer Geology and Groundwater, offering a quantitative and qualitative look at the issue in the region. Bren was followed by Attorney Reba Epler, who spoke of conserving this resource, from an agricultural and legal perspective.

Jim Pike and Jim Corcoran, of NRCS and Laramie County Conservation District, spoke briefly to the audience about energy audits for ag producers. They were followed by Barb Sahl of WY DEQ, who presented on storm water management, including some discussion of upcoming changes to the rules.

Although a keynote talk was scheduled for lunch, participants enjoyed an extended time to discuss the morning's talks with each other while piling their plates at the buffet. Barry Lawrence, Deputy Director of the Wyoming Water Development Office, and Roy Rasmussen, Lead Scientist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research, gave an interesting and entertaining keynote presentation on the Wyoming Weather Modification Program while the audience finished eating.

Afternoon talks began with Ryan Donovan, Platte River Authority Associate General Counsel, who offered a great deal of legal information about Current Federal Developments with Hydropower. Aaron Maier, Senior Ecologist with Trihydro, followed with a presentation on Clean Water Acts Effects on Energy Development. The closing talk was an entertaining and informative look at In-stream Flow: Concepts, Applications and Opportunities by Tom Annear of Wyoming Game and Fish.

“Nature is not a
place to visit. It
is home.”

— Gary Snyder

The workshop wrapped up with a very thoughtful discussion among participants of the issues presented throughout the day, and a voicing of interest in continuing the exchange of information and ideas.

We would like to thank our sponsors once again: Platte Valley Bank (morning break), University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources (speaker lunches), BKS Environmental Associates (afternoon break) and Lone Iron Site Assessments (student helpers.)

Next year’s Technical Workshop will be held in Area 3 (the northwest part of the state.) Stay tuned for another opportunity for professional development and networking around issues of natural resources conservation pertinent to our state.



Last column, top to bottom:

State Engineer Pat Tyrell gives opening remarks; Consulting Geologist Bern Hinckley speaks to the audience.

This column, top to bottom:

Attorney Reba Epler speaks on legal issues surrounding water rights and use; Barry Lawrence and Roy Rasmussen, lunch keynote speakers; Tom Annear with WY Game and Fish wraps up the presentations for the day, with a look at in-stream flow.

Wyoming Chapter Leaders

Officers:

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Vacant, President-Elect

Vacant, Past President

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“Land, then, is not merely soil; it is a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals.” - Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*,

We're on the Web!

<http://wyswcs.weebly.com>

“Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches or its romance.”

– Theodore Roosevelt

SUPPORT YOUR WYOMING CHAPTER SWCS!

Wyoming Chapter has hoodies for sale. They are a light, versatile sand color, with the SWCS logo on the chest. Quality Gildjian heavy blend 50/50 cotton/poly for warmth, durability and ease of cleaning.

Proceeds for these sweatshirts go straight to your chapter to fund workshops, scholarships, awards, and other Wyoming activities.

\$40.00 includes shipping to you.

Order your sweatshirt today! Specify quantity and size (M, L or XL)

We also have backpacks for sale with the SWCS logo, just in time for school. These packs are rugged nylon in a dark forest green, and are available for \$25 with shipping.

Contact Lisa Cox at bebetterwriter@gmail.com to place your order. Checks can be made to WY SWCS.



(Continued from page 1.)

will contain all you need to know to nominate for chapter, or also for Society,

awards. Two years in a row now at International Conference, the issue has been raised that we are receiving fewer award nominations in the Society. Please consider taking the little time required to nominate those you know are working to conserve our natural resources here in Wyoming.

Happy holidays, and thanks as always to your commitment to natural resources conservation in our Great State.

Respectfully,

Lisa Cox

Soil Health Workshop

Agenda and Registration Information

AGENDA

Dec. 8th Wheatland First State Bank meeting room,
1405 W. 16th St.

Dec. 9th Riverton Central WY College, Student Center RM 103

Dec. 10th Greybull Extension Building, 4782 Highway 310, Greybull

9:00 Coffee and Registration

9:30 Welcome, John Heyneman, Plank Stewardship Initiative

9:35 Roger Stockton and Marlon Winger, USDA - NRCS

Soil Demonstrations: Aggregate Stability, Infiltration, Porosphere

Soil Health Basics, How Does Soil Function

10:15 Questions

10:30 Break

10:45 Marlon Winger, USDA-NRCS: **How do I know if my soil is healthy?**

11:45 Questions

12:00 Lunch

12:45 Brendon Rockey, Potato Producer, Alamosa, Colorado **Biotic Farming Systems**

2:15 Questions

2:30 Break

2:45 Open forum Questions, Evaluation

December 8 Wheatland contact:
mmckinl@uwyo.edu
307-322-3667

December 9 Riverton contact:
cathy.meyer@nacdn.net
307-856-7524 x107

December 10 Greybull contact:
maep@uwyo.edu
307-765-2868

Cost of workshops is \$10, and includes lunch.

“I gave my heart to the mountains the minute I stood beside this river with its spray in my face and watched it thunder into foam, smooth to green glass over sunken rocks, shatter to foam again. I was fascinated by how it sped by and yet was always there; its roar shook both the earth and me.”

—Wallace Stegner

Spread the Word.

Talk with your fellow co-workers, students, and those individuals you know who have an interest in our natural resources. If you would like some brochures that answer the following questions...

Who Belongs to SWCS?

What does the Wyoming Chapter Do?

Why Join?

How Do I Become a Member?

Where Can I Learn More?

When did SWCS Organize?

contact any of the Wyoming SWCS Chapter leaders listed in this newsletter, and we will get some brochures to you.

Wyoming Chapter of SWCS
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED