



Wyoming Chapter— SWCS NewsSpring 2016

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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!

It was with great sadness that I learned of the passing in late February of Mike Collins, NRCS, Southwest Region Director, former Northern Plains Director, and a tremendously warm hearted and knowledgeable mentor over the few years I have served the Wyoming Chapter. In case you missed the tribute to Mike in the March Conservogram, I have copied that here on page 2.

Mike was a champion of the Wyoming Chapter, having lived and worked here in the State, a reliable source of information and opportunity to learn about soil, water and natural resources conservation, and a friend to his colleagues. I will miss his wisdom, warmth and leadership. The field has lost a great friend.

Dan Mattke, Area 3 Director, has been working hard to set up this year's Technical Workshop, which will be hosted by Area 3 at Central Wyoming College in Riverton. Details will follow, but mark your calendars for Wednesday, September 28. This year's topic will be Soil Salinity and Irrigation Issues.

Ah, irrigation issues. I think often, working on the farm, about how much water we use here in semi-arid southeastern Wyoming. Last weekend a water line broke underground on the farm, and we didn't see a sign until Tuesday evening, when flooding appeared in the corner of House 1 near the hydrant. By Wednesday morning the flooding had increased, and we finally determined that the water line was broken underground. Two of us spent much of the morning assembling hoses so we could



water manually in both hoop houses until the break could be fixed. Friday, two more spent much of the day digging. I was at the farm this morning watering by hand, a task that takes about 2 1/2 hours, and found myself thankful that the weather had changed from sunny and 70 to cloudy and 45, making it unnecessary to return this evening.

As I drove to the farm this morning, I saw, among many shorebirds that assemble this time of year in the flooded fields, several juvenile bald eagles on the fences. On the one hand the extra water at this time is (Continued on page 4.)

Calendar of Events

- **June, 2016: WyRED.** June 6—10. This year's camp will be held in Meteetse, WY.
- **July 24 to 27, 2016:** SWCS 71st International Conference, **Louisville, KY**. Theme: *Managing Great River Landscapes*
- **September 28, 2016:** WY Chapter Technical Workshop and Annual Meeting, Central Wyoming College. Hosted by Area 3 in Riverton, WY. Topic: *Soil Salinity and Irrigation Issues*. Details to come, save the date.

Your SWCS Board News

We welcome Bree Lind of the Sublette County Conservation District as Awards Committee Chair. The Awards Committee is responsible for presenting nominees for both member Chapter awards and awards to leaders in the Wyoming conservation community.

Please see page 5 for information on this spring's Special Election Ballot. Melanie Purcell has expressed a desire to move into the President-Elect spot for the Chapter, to keep the chain of leadership strong. Michelle Sutherburg has volunteered to step into Melanie's role as Secretary, should the membership vote as such. Your participation is requested by May 31 to complete the ballot online. Thank you.

Scholarship Chair Dicksie Michael reported in that we had only one applicant for the Chapter Scholarship this year, and that student was not qualified. We raised the scholarship amount from \$500 to \$750 last year in an attempt to draw more interest from college students around the state. At the last Board teleconference, Dicksie and your Board discussed new ways to draw attention to the scholarship, including reaching out directly to more faculty in natural resources departments. All ideas and information that may help this cause would be appreciated. Please contact your Area Director.

Dan Mattke, Area 3 Director, has been working hard to put together this year's Technical Workshop, (Continued on page 6.)

Remembering Mike Collins

By Jim Gulliford, SWCS Executive Director

One of the true blessings of working in the soil and water conservation field is knowing that every time you help a landowner with a conservation decision you can see the results of your work on the landscape. That was the case for Mike Collins as he worked with farmers and ranchers across the Great Plains as an advocate for healthy soils and soil conservation. Mike died in a snowmobile accident February 27, 2016.

Mike Collins was an area conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Colorado, and a longtime member of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. At the time of his passing, he was completing his third year of service on the Board of Directors of the Society. His enthusiasm for his work and the So-

ciety were evident in his service to SWCS, and he will be missed by all of us who worked with him.

Memorials may be made to the Soil and Water Conservation Society in honor of Mike Collins.



Photo: Lisa Cox, SWCS Conference 2015

News from the Society

Update from Washington D.C. Representative, John Peterson

NACD submitted comments on May 10 to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in support of the Service's proposal to delist the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem population of grizzly bears. Since being listed as threatened in 1975, the population has increased and has more than tripled its occupied range. Is this anything that SWCS ever comments on?

The [U.S. Standard Grants Program](#) is a competitive, matching grants program that supports public-private partnerships carrying out projects in the U.S. that further the goals of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). These projects must involve long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats for the benefit of all wetlands-associated migratory birds. For guidance on how to apply, qualified applicants, and other tips, please [Click Here](#) – the deadline for applications is July 14. All proposals must be submitted through the [Grants.gov](#) registration process, but it is also recommended that applicants contact their [Joint Venture Coordinator](#) in their project area for assistance. Regeneration International is seeking applicants for the “[100 Projects for the Climate](#)” program. Continuing the momentum of COP21, this program aims to speed up the emergence of citizen-led initiatives to help protect the planet and feed the world. This new effort will enable the 100 most innovative solutions from around the world to become a reality. Individuals or groups who have what they believe are “effective and replicable solutions for combating climate change,” including soil health efforts, are invited [to submit their applications](#) for possible funding. The deadline for applications is June 6. Citizens will then vote to select 100 projects worldwide for funding.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced on May 5 the enrollment of more than 800,000 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Through CRP, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) helps farmers offset the costs of

restoring, enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and strengthen wildlife habitat. Farmers' and ranchers' participation in CRP continues to provide numerous benefits to our nation, including helping reduce emissions of harmful greenhouse gases and providing resiliency to future weather changes. "The Conservation Reserve Program provides nearly \$2 billion annually to land owners – dollars that make their way into local economies, supporting small businesses and creating jobs. When these direct benefits are taken together with the resulting economic activity, the benefits related to CRP are estimated at \$3.1 billion annually," said Vilsack. "Over the past 30 years, CRP has created major environmental improvements throughout the countryside. The program has removed carbon dioxide from the atmosphere equal to removing nine million cars from the road annually, and prevented 600 million dump trucks of soil from erosion. With today's announcement, USDA is continuing these achievements by maximizing conservation benefits within the limitations provided by law." Read the full press release [here](#).

The Renewable Natural Resources Foundation (RNRF) has three annual awards to recognize outstanding achievements in the renewable natural resources fields. Two of the awards, established in 1992, were the first to honor interdisciplinary achievements with an emphasis on the application of sound scientific practices in managing and conserving renewable natural resources. The [Sustained Achievement Award](#) recognizes a long-term contribution and commitment to the protection and conservation of natural resources by an individual. The [Outstanding Achievement Award](#) recognizes a project, publication, piece of legislation, or similar concrete accomplishment. The [Excellence in Journalism Award](#) honors and encourages excellence in print journalism about natural resources. It recognizes work by an individual, group, or organization. Please visit our website for [nomination guidelines](#). Nominations are due at close-of-business on **June 3, 2016**. For more information, visit our awards page at www.rnrf.org/awards.html, call (301) 770-9101, or

email melissa.goodwin@rnrf.org.

Vacant and abandoned property is a problem that in recent decades has plagued many Northeast and Midwest cities still recovering from post-industrial population and job loss. In many cases, the foreclosure crisis has exacerbated the problem. The cost of fighting blight—whether through rehabilitation, demolition, or land reuse—is high. In many places, the need greatly exceeds available funding. At the same time, most targeted and stable federal support for addressing blight is decreasing, time-limited, or stagnant in the face of rising supply and labor costs. Briefing attendees will learn about: the widespread and persistent effects of abandoned property, including the most recent wave of abandonment resulting from the foreclosure crisis; NEMWI's work to identify and assess federal resources and legislation that can help communities address blight; and innovative approaches that communities are taking, with the assistance of federal programs, to rehabilitate or demolish property, or reuse land productively post-demolition. Speakers include:

- Dr. Colleen Cain, Senior Policy Analyst, Northeast-Midwest Institute
- Mr. Frank Ford, Senior Policy Advisor, Thriving Communities Institute, Western Reserve Land Conservancy
- Mr. Michael Braverman, Deputy Commissioner, Permits & Code Enforcement, City of Baltimore
- Mr. Stephen Janes, Assistant Commissioner, Research & Compliance, City of Baltimore

I am glad I will not be young in a future without wilderness.

— Aldo Leopold

Wyoming Chapter Leaders

Committee Chairs:

Annual Meeting Program –
Vacant

Awards –
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Fundraising –
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Membership –
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WY Resource Roundup

Wyoming will receive \$3.7 Million for Vital Watershed Projects March. 31 2016 – Wyoming will receive \$3.7 million to invest in post-disaster recovery and/or the rehabilitation of aging dams in fiscal year 2016, said Astrid Martinez, state conservationist. Wyoming is among 19 to receive funding.

"The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program is vital to communities repairing damage and making improvements to reduce future damage from natural disasters," Martinez said. "Wyoming has invested more than \$3.7 million to help local governments restore watersheds and protect communities from the aftermath of devastating natural disasters like the flooding in spring 2015, she said. The heavy rains and melting snow resulted in floods across Northern Wyoming. The EWP Program will be used for various restoration projects, including streambank stabilization, she said.

March 31, 2016 USDA NRCS news release

(Continued from page 1.) welcomed by these migrating birds. On the other... Too little water is always a question in the western US. One of the reasons the SWCS International Conference is so interesting every year is that the themes change based on location of the event. I will miss this year's conference, in Louisville, KY, where the issues related to riverways and the surrounding landscapes are certainly different from here in Wyoming. I'm thankful a new delegate, Michelle Sutherland, can go this year and represent our Chapter. But, I will miss what had become a welcome short break in the middle of summer to meet new people, see acquaintances I see once a year, and learn. I encourage all members to check out the conference at least once, for the professional development and networking opportunity it presents annually.

I also encourage you all to step up, like Melanie, Michelle and Bree have done this spring, to take on a new leadership role in our Chapter. Education and Outreach, Fundraising, Membership and Nominations and Elections are all open committees, and require just a little extra time annually. Please let your Area Director (see list on the next page) know if you are interested in participating on any of these committees.

Thank you all, as always, for your commitment to soil, water and natural resources conservation in our State.

What would be the feeling of this Nation should a foreign nation suddenly enter the United States and destroy 90,000 acres of land, as erosion has been allowed to do in a single county?

- ◆ Hugh Hammond Bennett,
- ◆ W R Chapline

SPECIAL ELECTION BALLOT

MEMBER RESPONSE REQUESTED BY MAY 31, 2016

Melanie Purcell, Sublette County Conservation District, WY Chapter SWCS Secretary and Area 4 Director, has volunteered to fill the President Elect position for Wyoming SWCS. If elected, she will assume her duties July 31. Michelle Sutherburg, Trihydro, WY Chapter SWCS Area 2 Director, has volunteered to fill the Secretary role for the Chapter. If elected, she will assume her duties on July 31. Both will maintain their Area Director roles at this time.

Please read the brief bios and complete the ballot before May 31, at the link below. Thank you for your participating in the voting process.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6NFYQGG>

Melanie J. Purcell is the Wildlife and Habitat Program Manager at the Sublette County Conservation District in Pinedale, Wyoming. She has worked in a variety of natural resource positions over the course of her career and has been with the District for the past eight years. She received her B.S. from Colorado State University in Wildlife Biology and her M.S. in Zoology and Physiology from the University of Wyoming, where she studied *Pygmy Rabbit (Brachylagus idahoensis) Distribution and Habitat Selection in Wyoming*. Melanie has been a member of the Soil and Water Conservation Society since 2008, the Wyoming Chapter Secretary since 2011 and the Area 4 Director since 2013. Melanie has enjoyed serving time as the Secretary and is now excited to turn it over to someone else and take on a new adventure as President-Elect. She looks forward to expanding and continuing her work with the society and its members.

Michelle Sutherburg has been a member of SWCS since 2006 and was a Charter member of the UW Student Chapter of SWCS. She is a UW Alumni with a Bachelors in Rangeland Ecology Watershed Management and a Bachelors in Environment and Natural Resources with a Soil Science minor.

Currently Michelle is a Natural Resource Scientist (with Trihydro since 2012). She says, "I love to explore, backpack, and kayak, and am married with two kids."

Wyoming Chapter Leaders

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Lisa Cox, President
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Vacant– President-Elect
Vacant– Past President

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Melanie Purcell, Secretary
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Lisa Cox, Area 2
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Melanie Purcell, Area 4
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We're on the Web!

<http://wyswcs.weebly.com>

BE WARM AND SUPPORT YOUR CHAPTER!

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 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 2.)

which will be held on the Central Wyoming College campus in Riverton on September 28. Talks on soil salinity and irrigation issues will fill the day, and the Board is seeking sponsors for the morning and afternoon breaks and lunch, as last year. If your company or organization, or you personally, are interested in sponsoring this event, please let Dan at Dan.Mattke@usda.wy.gov or Lisa at bebetterwriter@gmail.com know.

There will be CEUs available for this workshop, and we will hold our annual meeting in conjunction. Details to come in your Summer newsletter,

but please put the date on your calendar now.

Your Board continues to discuss membership and leadership issues related to chapter growth and strength. We have been in touch with other professional organizations and agencies that have similar goals, and continue to encourage members to be involved at the chapter level in events and activities. Involvement can be as simple as sharing news from your part of the state, or a picture. Please contact your Area Director (see list on page 5) or Lisa Cox, Publications and Media Chair (bebetterwriter@gmail.com.)



The 71st Annual Soil and Water Conservation Society International Conference will be held this year at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville, KY, from Sunday, July 24 through Wednesday, July 27.

Take advantage of early registration rates through June 20, 2016!

From the Mississippi, Tennessee, Cumberland and Ohio rivers of Kentucky to the other great rivers of the world, human values and uses of these rivers and their landscapes impact the soil and water resources upon which civilization and natural environments depend. These rivers tell the story of agriculture, human civilization, and the complexity of natural-human systems. However, these landscapes are increasingly challenged by the risks and uncertainties associated with changing and variable climates; redistributed populations; increased demands for food, water, and energy security; and aging, fragmented transportation infrastructure.

The 71st SWCS International Annual Conference will provide a forum for exploring and promoting science-based knowledge about management practices that protect land and river ecologies and make them productive and more resilient. The conference will offer unique opportunities to showcase

conservation efforts in both the uplands and bottomlands of great rivers and their tributaries, including nutrient management, erosion and sediment control, non-point source pollution and watershed policy, flood and drought management, and other issues influencing the health and functionality of our soil and water. There is great need for continued strong partnerships among innovative scientists that propose and evaluate best practices, practitioners that adapt and monitor those practices to suit their own unique locales, and public and private organizations that invest in and advocate for the preservation of river ecology while using the water and soil resources to society's benefit.

This year's conference will not only be a time to reflect on decades of achievements and advancement efforts, but an opportunity to explore the work not yet completed and search for solutions to current and emerging challenges.

For more information, and to register, visit <https://www.swcs.org>.

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.

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