

Minnesota

Soil and Water Conservation Society



September 17, 2007

Chapter Newsletter

In this issue:

Bio-Fuel conference	p. 1
Calendar of events	p. 1
2007 SWCS Annual Conference	p. 2
Summer tour	p. 4
Invasive species conference	p. 5
Elections	p. 5
Award nominations	p. 6

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Our mission is to foster the science and art of natural resource conservation.

2006-2007 Officers

President:
Shannon Bengtson
President Elect:
vacant
Past President:
Linda Meschke
Treasurer:
Sid Cornelius
Secretary:
Mike Appel
Northern Surface Waters:
Greg Larson
Karst and Driftless Area:
Dave Copeland
Minnesota/Missouri Watershed:
Cheryl Isder
Red River of the North:
vacant

Don't Miss this Regional Conference:

Impacts of Bio-Fuel Production

The West North Central Region of the SWCS is presenting "Impacts of Increased Bio-Fuel Production on the Midwest Landscape" October 16-17, 2007 at the Holiday Inn in Dubuque, Iowa.

With regional and national attention focused on the use of renewable bio-fuels to promote energy conservation and energy independence, the impact on the environment – specifically soil and water quality and quantity – is a critical dimension of the dialog that has often been in the background. The goal of this conference is to elevate the debate surrounding bio-based fuels beyond technology creation and economic development to address soil conservation, water quality, and human decisions about land management.

Sessions will address modeling of water quality effects, alternatives to corn for bio-fuels, effects on wildlife, and policy issues. Featured speakers include Diana Friedman (USDA Sustainable Agriculture and Renewable Energy), Brian Wrenn (National Corn-to-Ethanol Research Center), and Stan Gruszynski (Global Environmental Management Education Center at the UW-Stevens Point). The conference includes a tour of New Melleray Abbey, featuring 2000 acres of cropland and 1,200 acres of managed forestland.

Registration fee for members is \$100 by September 30th or \$160 after September 30th. For more information and to register, go to http://www.swcs.org/en/conferences/regional_conferences/.

Calendar of Events

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|-------------------------|---|
| Sep 30, 2007 | Early bird registration due for Bio-Fuel conference. |
| Oct 16-17, 2007 | Impacts of Increased Bio-Fuel Production on the Midwest Landscape, Regional Conference in Dubuque, IA. (Article above.) |
| Mar 7, 2008 | MN Chapter SWCS annual meeting: "State of the Soil". |
| July 26-30, 2008 | National SWCS Annual Conf., Starr Pass, Tucson, AZ |
| Oct 20-23, 2008 | Farming with Grass: Sustainable Mixed Agricultural Landscapes in Grassland Environments. SWCS Special Conference. Oklahoma City, OK. |
| Oct 26-28, 2008 | 2008 Aquatic and Terrestrial Invasive Species Conference, Duluth at the DECC. (Article p. 5.) |

2007 SWCS Annual Conference, Tampa Florida

Minnesota Members Take Advantage of Learning and Networking Opportunities

Shannon Bengtson

This year SWCS conference in Tampa Florida was a great success. Seven MN Chapter members were among the 589 conservation professionals attending this conference. Jeff Strock not only represented the MN SWCS chapter as the chapter delegate but also played an important role in planning this year's program. Jeff will be the chair of the conference program development committee for the 2008 conference in Tuscan, AZ.

Three members gave presentations at the conference. Jerry Spetzman spoke on "Fecal Coliform Total Maximum Daily Load- North Branch of the Sunrise River". Jeff Strock gave an oral presentation on "Diagnostic Nitrogen Testing for Predicting Corn Response to Nitrogen" and was part of the Symposium "Assessment and Management of Vegetated Ditch Systems for Drainage and Water Quality Goals". Donald Reicosky was part of the plenary session on "The Role of Conservation in a Bio-Fuels Economy." They all did a great job!

Many of the presentations for the workshops and plenary sessions are posted on the national website at www.swcs.org.



Jeff Strock gives his oral presentation.

Shannon Bengtson, Chapter President, participated in the Leadership Development Training on Saturday. This training was well worth the time! Topics covered included "Aligning new professional development needs of members with those of your organization and meeting those needs," "The how-tos of inclusivity and diversity in organizational membership," and "What does it take to be seen as a credible source of information?" The final presenter was Norm Berg.

About 60 people participated in social night at Busch Gardens. We had a wonderful meal and then a wrist band to go on any and all the rides we could in two hours. This was only one of many opportunities throughout the conference to network and communicate with other conservation professionals!

Next year's conference will be in Tuscan AZ! Remember The MN Chapter has stipends available to members who wish to attend the conference. Contact a board member about this opportunity!



Shannon Bengtson enjoys an opportunity to meet Norm Berg.

House of Delegates Meeting Highlights Society Accomplishments

Jeff Strock

State representatives to the SWCS House of Delegates session met at the SWCS Annual Conference at 9:00 AM Sunday morning. Dr. Jeff Strock served as the Minnesota delegate accompanied by State SWCS President Shannon Bengtson. The session was opened by Peggy James, Vice President and Chairperson of the House of Delegates.

Delegates were briefed on the State of the Society by President Theo Dillaha. Theo noted that the Society had a very successful year. Highlights include publication of three reports and two books based on SWCS special projects, workshops, and conferences. The Journal of Soil and Water Conservation was ranked 15th of 57 water resources journals and 15th of 29 soil science journals and printed 592 pages of news, viewpoints, and research articles. In the next year there are plans to make the journal available on-line. Theo pointed out that one of the challenges the Society continues to face is declining membership. Theo also noted that the Society received 1342 (29%) member responses to its

member survey. Responses to the survey will guide the Society during the Strategic Planning process to identify and prioritize critical issues, and to set and develop plans for achieving goals.

Following Theo's comments, Craig Cox updated delegates on the four resolutions raised during the 2006 House of Delegates meeting. The first resolution regarding improved estimates of conservation tillage had been submitted to the Science and Policy committee for consideration as they developed priorities for the Society. The second resolution was in regard to improving the Soil Conditioning Index (SCI) for peanut rotations. A review of SCI and several other conservation tools was recently completed and a report was forthcoming. The third resolution regarded improving recognitions of the benefits of conservation practices in water conservation and drought mitigation. The Society recently released two reports on the benefits and implications of conservation practices. The fourth resolution was in regard to formation of a combined California-Nevada chapter. The Society Board of Directors approved the formation of the combined chapter.

The Missouri Show-Me Chapter presented a new resolution to create a new membership option for the Society that was less costly than the current Conservation level option while still maintaining standard membership benefits. After a lively debate the resolution was unanimously defeated.

Peggy introduced SWCS headquarters staff members who each gave a short presentation on their roles and responsibilities to the Society. The meeting was adjourned at noon.



Jeff Strock discusses his poster. Jeff will chair the 2008 conference program development committee.

Renewable Energy was Focus of Summer Tour

Cheryl Isder

The Minnesota Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society held their annual Summer Tour at the ARS Northern Great Plains Research Laboratory in Morris, MN on June 27, 2007. The first presentation was by Michael Reese, Director at the West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC) at the University of Minnesota, Morris. His presentation of the WCROC Renewable Energy and Research and Demonstration Center focused on the Wind to Hydrogen Ammonia Pilot Project along with a visual tour of the wind turbine, which was installed in March of 2005.

At the Chippewa Valley Ethanol Company (CVEC), General Manager Bill Lee led a tour and discussion on the plant and their new gasifier. He also spoke on the economics of the industry and their fuel sources.

At the Doug Wulf Farm, Don Reicosky presented an on-farm carbon and water quality research. Reicosky is a Soil Scientist with the USDA-ARS. They test the carbon emissions off various fields with corn and pasture and compare it with tillage operations and also made use of a ground water monitoring well.

On a hay wagon tour at the Swan Lake Research Farm, Jane Johnson, another Soil Scientist with the USDA-ARS presented on Balancing Biomass for Bioenergy

and Soil Conservation. Reicosky followed up his first presentation with another carbon crops study, which went into more detail on the carbon emissions of the study plots.

To conclude the day, Russ Gesch from the USDA-ARS had a presentation on Cuphea: Potential Biofuel Crop. Cuphea is an oilseed crop that contains high levels of lauric acid and other naturally fatty acids. Cuphea oil properties are being researched as an additive for biodiesel with cold flow properties.

Shannon Bengtson, Chapter President, led the annual business meeting as well. The Terrestrial Invasive species conference was a success. They also awarded the 2007 Scholarship winners to Dan Pazdernik of the University of Minnesota, Crookston and Katherine Schake of the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. The Outstanding Service Award was presented to Sidney Cornelius of the NRCS, the Commendation Award was presented to John Beckwith of the NRCS, the Honor Award was presented to Julie MacSwain of the NRCS, the Merit Award was presented to Jay Rendall of the Department of Natural Resources Exotic Species Program, the News/Media Award was presented to Paula Mohr from The Farmer Magazine, and the Education Award was presented to Greg Munson from the Quarry Hill Nature Center.

Participants got inside views of a windturbine (below) and an ethanol plant (right).



Don Reicosky (above) and Russ Gesch (left) gave presentations.

Invasive Species Conference Needs Volunteers

Shannon Bengtson

The Minnesota SWCS chapter is helping plan the 2008 Minnesota Invasive Species Conference, October 26-28, 2008, at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center, Duluth, MN. Shannon Bengtson, Chapter President, is co-chairing the event along with Douglas Jensen of the University of Minnesota Sea Grant Program. The MN SWCS will act as the fiscal agent for the event. Volunteers are needed to assist with conference planning.

Everyone who owns property or loves to enjoy the outdoors, either by hiking or fishing or wildlife watching, can be impacted by invasive species. Invasive species have a great potential to harm Minnesota's soil and water resources, economy and recreation.

Sponsored in part by the Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Committee (MISAC, www.mda.state.mn.us/misac), this conference is the first to address terrestrial and aquatic invasive species issues in Minnesota. The purpose of the conference is to unite professionals and the public in discussions related to invasive species prevention, research, control, management, policy, and education. This is an opportunity to educate and to share experiences and success stories to more effectively respond to invasive species in Minnesota.

Please consider joining one of the committee below to help support the conference:

Exhibitors: Identify and contact potential exhibitors.

Tours and attractions: Plan and facilitate tours.

Media: Help to identify and contact media outlets.

Marketing: Assist with press releases and spreading the word through your media networks.

Sponsors: Identify and contact potential sponsors.

Technical Committee – Aquatic: Review abstracts, recommend presenters, and breakout session/symposia.

Technical Committee – Terrestrial: Review abstracts, recommend presenters, and breakout session/symposia.

Posters Session: Review poster abstracts, identify poster requirements, and assist with coordination.

Chapter Offices Up for Election

The following chapter offices are up for election this year. Please consider volunteering to run or nominating another member for these positions.

- President elect
- Region 2: Northern Surface Waters Region (Upper Mississippi on the map).
- Region 4: Southern Minnesota Agriculture Region (Minnesota/Missouri on the map)
- Treasurer

The executive board is also looking for a volunteer to be appointed to the vacant position for Region 1: Red River of the North Region (Red River of the North on the map). This position is up for election in 2008.

If anyone is interested in running for any of the positions or would like to nominate a member, please contact Mike Appel at mike.appel@mn.usda.gov.



Youth Component: Assist with a special session to promote youth education on invasive species in the Duluth area and/or statewide.

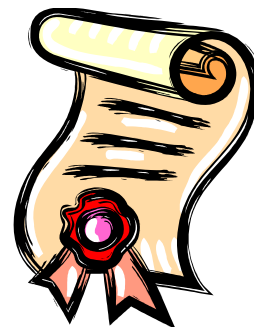
To volunteer, contact Shannon Bengtson: shannon.bengtson@mn.usda.gov, 320-266-5372. Mark your calendars - this is a conference that you will not want to miss!!

Who is Your Favorite Conservationist?

Take time to honor those who have contributed extra energy or special skills to conservation activities by nominating them for chapter or national awards. National SWCS award nominations are due December 12th. See further information at <http://www.swcs.org/en/members/index.cfm?nodeID=11400&audienceID=1>.

Minnesota SWCS award nomination requests will be coming out soon. Watch for further information on the chapter web site (www.minnesotaswcs.org), or contact Amy Stratton (amystratton@gmail.com), chair of the MN SWCS Awards Committee.

Last year's chapter award winners were Sidney Cornelius for the Outstanding Service Award, John Beckwith for the Commendation Award, Julie MacSwain for the Honor Award, Jay Rendall for the Merit Award, Paula Mohr for the News/Media Award, and the Quarry Hill Nature Center and their director Greg Munson for the Education Award.



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