

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

KEEPING UP

by Hank Wyman



Professional organizations such as the Soil and Water Conservation Society offer vital means of keeping up in the ever-changing fields faced by natural resource technicians, professionals and scholars. Through SWCS publications, training sessions and conferences, each of us can supplement the know-how we gain in our day-to-day

work.

Keeping up with programs—These days, customers expect us to know about our own organization's programs as well as those of other agencies and non-profits that could benefit them.

Keeping up with technology—It's not just new information technology that dramatically affects how we do business, but innovations in engineering, soils, agronomy and all the other related resource technologies that help us improve our work.

Keeping up with colleagues—There's not much we do that can't be done better with a little help from our friends as we progress in our jobs. Whether looking for advice on a project or the next career move, relationships built in professional societies can make a difference.

Keeping up takes effort, but SWCS membership makes it easier. And SWCS's California Chapter adds important "local" considerations to these efforts.

So, make a New Year's resolution to get two dates

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In 1998, a collaboration began between three high schools in two different districts and the El Dorado National Forest. Every October since then, students from Golden Sierra, El Dorado, Oak Ridge, and Union Mine high schools have traveled to Union Valley Reservoir in the El Dorado National Forest for the Watershed Education Summit (WES) conference. Professional Foresters, Wildlife Biologists, State Water Quality Resource Specialists, Resource Conservation District personnel, and teachers work together with students for three days collecting physical and biological data about the creeks. This collaborative adventure, a service learning project, has been very successful. Many students that have participated are now going to college and majoring in science or environmental fields. Our local Forest Service office and RCD agencies along with the State Water Resources Control Board receive valuable data that help them manage our watershed resources.

CALIFORNIA AIR QUALITY STAFF ATTEND THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION

by *Johnnie Siliznoff and Wendy Rash*

The White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation was held the last week of August in St Louis, Missouri. Its purpose was to encourage cooperation from the various partners in the nation's conservation effort, bringing together participants from throughout the country. It was only the fifth such conference in the past 100 years, the first this century, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service was a lead agency in bringing the conference together. Many federal level officials attended or presented talks through closed circuit television, including President Bush, Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Stephen L. Johnson, and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

The theme of the conference was strengthening partnerships and promoting cooperative conservation as an alternative to regulatory conservation. Presenters from throughout the nation talked about conservation efforts they have implemented and the results that have been achieved. These programs range from waterway restoration projects, re-forestation programs, Endangered Species Act success stories, Conservation Innovation Grant projects and a host of other topics.

NRCS State Air Quality Coordinator John Beyer and Air Quality Specialist Johnnie Siliznoff of the Fresno Area Office attended through the invitation of a partner group called "Agriculture Improving Resources", or AIR. AIR is a consortium of agricultural producer groups throughout the San Joaquin Valley who work with stakeholders, regulators, government agencies, private industry, and environmental groups to improve air quality in the region. Some twenty agriculture groups make up AIR, including county farm bureaus, the Nisei Farmers League, Sun

Maid Growers, the Raisin Bargaining Association, Citrus Mutual and others. NRCS air quality staff has been an active participant in AIR, helping the group obtain start-up grant money and working to develop Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) as a way for growers to voluntarily comply with regulations of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

The AIR booth was one of the most popular booths in the Exhibitor's Hall, drawing more than 500 visitors, including Secretary Johanns and NRCS Chief Bruce

Knight. Johnnie and John staffed the booth and distributed more than 500 information packets on the California air quality program, along with samples of dried fruits and nuts from the agricultural bounty of the San Joaquin Valley. This event provided an opportunity to interact with people from diverse backgrounds who share a common interest in conservation. Many seemed surprised at the willingness of agricultural producers in the San Joaquin Valley to comply voluntarily with air quality

regulations through the CMPs. NRCS Chief Bruce Knight has shown an interest in the Conservation Management Plan program and its development and implementation in the valley.

NRCS was praised as a model for other agencies in cooperative conservation. As a non-regulatory agency, NRCS has always used a cooperative approach to achieve conservation goals on private land. The results can include not only an improved natural environment, but strengthened relationships between people as well.

For more on the White House Conference, visit

<http://www.conservation.ceq.gov/index.html>



Air Quality Specialist Johnnie Siliznoff, left, and State Air Quality Coordinator John Beyer, right, visit with NRCS Chief Bruce Knight at the AIR booth in St. Louis.



John Beyer, right, talks with visitors to the AIR booth.

**EXCERPT FROM REMARKS PREPARED BY
THE HON. MIKE JOHANNIS, SECRETARY, U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOR THE
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON COOPERATIVE
CONSERVATION**

St. Louis, MO - August 29, 2005

Conservation today is no longer about conflict. Instead, it's about cooperation, about partnerships, about collaborative solutions from the bottom up.

I've had the opportunity to view conservation efforts from a number of perspectives... certainly as Secretary of Agriculture but long before that as Governor of a largely rural and agricultural state and as a young man growing-up on a farm in Osage, Iowa.

Osage is a perfect place to learn about conservation. Any farming or ranching community is. For one thing, you learn exactly where your food comes from. There are those who seem to think that food and lumber originate in the cargo areas of supermarkets and home improvement stores.

Growing up in Osage, I saw firsthand the connection between people and the land, and I learned the importance of that connection. Farming and ranching operations are about sustainability, about long-term productivity.

Those involved with agriculture have a direct stake in sustaining the soil and water resources that, in turn, sustain all of us. There is a powerful connection between sound, profitable farming and effective conservation practices. On farms and ranches, conservation is quite simply common sense.

I learned that what we did on the Johanns farm affected our neighbors in multiple ways - the connection was crystal clear. I might add that the neighbors weren't afraid to let us know if we lost sight of that connection. There's no living in anonymity in a community like Osage. So, I learned that conservation is about cooperation with neighbors and town folk, with anyone who shares the landscape upon which we depend to make a living. It's about respect for each other and finding common goals.

In a perfect world, such understanding and cooperation would exist everywhere. As you know, that has not always been the case. Not long ago, those living on the land seemed locked in a struggle with those worried that our natural resources were not being preserved. Some believed that the best way to protect the land is through edicts, injunctions or orders. In

fact, some still look for regulatory solutions and try to resolve differences in a courtroom. I do not share the belief that management by mandates is the best option, nor does our President.

President Bush has a vision for cooperative conservation and he has set hard-driving goals to make that vision a reality. His ideas are supported by decades-old wisdom.

In fact, the great conservationist Aldo Leopold, even before he coined the term "land ethic," wrote in the 1930s of the need for cooperative conservation on America's farms. He used that very term. He argued that the future of conservation depended

on private landowners and that looking too much to government for solutions could be a distraction.

USDA has embraced an alternative vision of conservation a vision articulated by our President that is consistent with Aldo Leopold's views. It's based on the belief that those who depend on the land to make a living have a vested interest in stewardship.

As President Bush has said, "Stewardship is the daily work of America's farmers and those who own the land." It's a vision of cooperative conservation-of working with our farmers and ranchers and our timber producers and forest landowners instead of against them.

In our vision of cooperative conservation, government has a strong role to play, but not as a top-down regulator as some might imagine. Government has a responsibility to be a facilitator of community-based

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US Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns at the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN ACTION: RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE SWCS ANNUAL CONFERENCE, ROCHESTER, NY

by Mark Steffek, President-Elect, California Chapter SWCS

One of the more important responsibilities for the CA SWCS President-Elect to accomplish is to cast a ballot at the Chapter Delegates meeting at the International Conference each year. I was fortunate to be able to attend the Conference this summer in Rochester, NY, and carry out that responsibility.

Perhaps you are asking: What were the issues at this year's conference? What are the election results? Let me tell you. (SWCS Directors will receive these resolutions from the House of Delegates to take final action.)

Resolution #1: The Missouri Show-Me Chapter requested a new membership category to be established at a reduced price that did not include receiving the JSWC. FAILED 29-1. What good SWCS member doesn't read JSWC?

Resolution #2: The Kentucky Blue Grass Chapter requested increased accountability to SWCS Directors in Regional programs to assure members are being served as intended. PASSED 30-0. Apparently some folks don't feel their Regional Representatives are providing service to them as detailed in their position description. Let's get our Regional Representative to California!

Resolution #3: The Missouri Show-Me Chapter requested that the SWCS not sell or give membership rosters to other organizations other than sister organizations without the express permission of the member(s) involved. PASSED 24-8. Perhaps a good policy considering the amount of spam and junk mail we all receive, not to mention security issues.

Resolution from the Floor: Ontario Chapter asked if a Contributing Member category could be established and be made available to retiring members and recently graduated members. The dues would be less than the Conservationist level and allow lower income people to remain members at the start and end of their careers. A portion of the dues would go the Chapter. PASSED 22-10. Now that's an idea I can agree with!

These are important issues to the entire membership of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. I challenge California and Nevada Chapter members to critically review Society and Chapter operations

and programs. Submit ideas for improvement to our President, Hank Wyman. I feel confident Hank will share all comments received for consideration by the Executive Committee and forward to the parent organization as appropriate. Thanks, in advance, for actively participating in your Society.

Submit articles, photos, or news items for the next issue of RunOff to wendy.rash@ca.usda.gov by January 9, 2006!

CALL FOR PAPERS IS IN THE MAIL

by Walt Bunter, based on SWCS Conservagram

You are invited to submit proposals for oral and poster presentations or to organize special concurrent sessions or workshops at the Soil and Water Conservation Society's (SWCS) annual meeting to be held July 22 - 26, 2006 at the Keystone Resort in Keystone, Colorado.

SWCS welcomes papers, posters, and symposia reporting the results of research, testing, monitoring, and evaluation projects, and/or lessons learned from professional experience working with conservation and environmental management systems, technologies, programs, and policies.

Proposals for presentations need to address one or more of the ongoing areas of emphasis outlined on the Society's website and the Call for Papers brochure. These ongoing areas of emphasis comprise the core of SWCS's work to foster the science and art of conservation. In addition, each year SWCS identifies specific topics—within our ongoing areas of emphasis—for special attention at the annual conference.

The three areas of special emphasis for the 2006 SWCS international conference are:

- 1) Water Use and Management—Learning to Live with Limits;
- 2) The Science of Targeting; and
- 3) Conservation and the 2007 Farm Bill.

The deadline for submitting all abstracts is December 5, 2005. Submissions will be taken via the SWCS website at:

http://www.swcs.org/en/swcs_international_conference/2006_international_conference/

REMARKS BY SECRETARY JOHANNNS

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collaborative approaches from the bottom up. When carried out this approach both improves the environment and strengthens the economy by helping people help the land.

Our progress under the President's leadership has been significant, but we recognize that there is more to be done. I mentioned the extra benefits we get from farms, forests, and ranches, like clean air and water, healthy soil, fish and wildlife habitat, and more; well, good conservation practices on working lands have historically generated these benefits.

We have relied on farmers, ranchers, and timber producers to provide these vital benefits at no cost to us. I would submit to you that we should not take these benefits for granted. We should not wait until more working lands are lost before we recognize the value of the benefits they provide. A new policy will ensure we don't wait.

Today, I am announcing that USDA will seek to broaden the use of markets for ecosystem services through voluntary market mechanisms. I see a future where credits for clean water, greenhouse gases, or wetlands can be traded as easily as corn or soybeans. We will collaborate with partners to establish a role for agriculture and forestry in providing voluntary environmental credits.

In closing, let me say this: Like many others who grew up depending on the land for a living, I believe we have a duty to be good stewards. As the President has said, we didn't create the earth, but we have an obligation to take care of it. We cannot fulfill that obligation by sowing discord and mistrust. Instead, we must sit down together in a spirit of mutual respect to find common ground and then work together to formulate and achieve common goals.

That, I believe, is the essence of cooperative conservation. It's not a new idea. But after a generation of conflict in the name of conservation, I believe it represents an innovation in land and resource stewardship. It's a journey well worth making if we're ever going to restore our forests to health, recover our lost wetlands, and protect our green spaces for generations to come.

For Secretary Johannns' full remarks, visit <http://www.conservation.ceq.gov/agenda.html>



Web Soil Survey

*Soil Survey information now available online at:
<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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on your calendar: the California Chapter's annual conference March 22-24 in San Diego and the SWCS International Conference July 22-26 at Keystone, Colorado. Be sure you're keeping up.

New Leadership Selected

I'm pleased to announce two additions to our Executive Council. Ken Trott, environmental scientist with the California Dept. of Food and Agriculture, is replacing Tom Hedt (who has been selected as assistant state conservationist for NRCS in Alaska). Ken previously served as Dept. of Conservation liaison to the state's resource conservation districts and administered the Williamson Act and the California Farmland Conservancy Program. Also joining the council (as student representative) is Richelle Leggett, an earth science major from Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo.

Strategic Plan Updated

Executive Council members updated the chapter's strategic plan and developed our 2006 Plan of Work at last month's annual planning meeting. We'll provide you more information in the coming weeks and at the annual conference.

ANNUAL CHAPTER CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR SPRING IN SAN DIEGO

by *Mark Steffek*

The California Chapter SWCS Annual Conference is scheduled for March 22-24, 2006 in San Diego. The theme is "Putting Conservation Programs to Work". The Conference will be held at the Hanalei Hotel. "We're happy to have our dates and location set this early for our spring conference" said Mark Steffek, President Elect and Conference Planning Committee Chair. "The committee members are very enthusiastic about having the conference organized early in order to develop a program that will be of interest to as many SWCS members, and potential new mem-

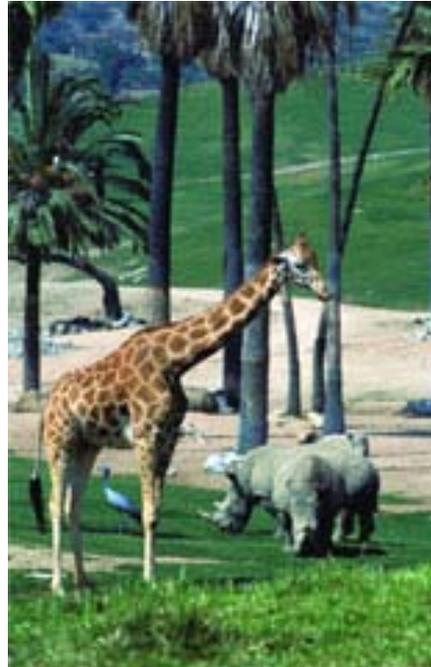


Red Lion Hanalei Hotel, San Diego

bers, as possible. The committee has some great ideas and keen insight on current and future resource issues that will be addressed during the conference." continues Steffek.

The Conference will begin on Wednesday, March 22nd, with a conservation tour that will highlight some of the activities that will be discussed during the concurrent sessions. The tour bus will depart the Hanalei Hotel at 1:00 PM and head out to rural San Diego County to look at a dairy digester, an organic farm, a nursery with a pesticide runoff plan, and a stop to review the cooperative dead tree removal program. The tour will conclude with a private group tram ride and wonderful meal at the San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park outside of Escondido.

The main conference agenda on Thursday and Friday morning will include a series of concurrent sessions related to the Farm Bill and technical topics that will be of interest to landowners, planners, consultants and agency people.



San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park

The agenda also includes speakers of statewide distinction that will keynote the conference and comprise two panel discussions that will open on Thursday morning and end on Friday at noon. That will leave the weekend for people interested in staying over to explore all the excellent events that San Diego has to offer.

There will be an Award Luncheon on Thursday to recognize all the outstanding work done by California Chapter SWCS members and partners during the last year. This conference, though in its developmental stage, is going to be a great opportunity for natural resource specialists to learn about utilizing private, state and federal programs in order to achieve established goals of private landowners, watershed groups, conservancies, and rural communities, among others. Please mark these important dates down in your calendars! More information regarding registration and specific speakers and topics will be sent out as soon as they are confirmed.

Get RunOff in full color-delivered direct to your e-mail box!

Contact *Walt Bunter* at wbunter@pacbell.net to start receiving this newsletter electronically!

Society Shorts

UC DAVIS STUDENT WINS CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP

by *Wendy Rash*

Rob Thompson, a fifth-year senior at UC Davis, has been selected for the 2005 California Chapter SWCS scholarship! Rob began his college days at UC Davis as an exploratory major in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. His interest in soil and water conservation was sparked by the introductory hydrology course taught by Dr. Graham Fogg.



Rob spent the past summer as an intern at the UC Davis Castle Lake Limnology Lab located in the Shasta National Forest, and also attended a ten-day Coastal Oceanography course at the Bodega Bay Marine Laboratory. Rob is looking forward to traveling and gaining more experience in hydrology after completing his bachelor's degree this spring. Rob plans to pursue graduate work in hydrologic sciences in the fall. Congratulations and Good Luck, Rob!

HELP US UPDATE THE "RESOURCE CONSERVATION GLOSSARY"

by *Walt Bunter*

First published in 1952 as the "Soil and Water Conservation Glossary", and later revised and reprinted as the "Resource Conservation Glossary", this practitioner's guide is once again being updated for publication by the Society after a hiatus of nearly twenty-five years.

Work is progressing on the revised draft of the glossary, which once completed, will need to be reviewed by conservation professionals for accuracy. Our goal is to have the review completed by the end of the year and to do that, we are in need of individuals willing to serve on an ad hoc group. The reviewers will be asked to add words, delete words no longer in use, and write or review the definitions.

If you can help, please send your name, address, phone, email, and number of years experience in your current field to Deb Happe at: deb.happe@swcs.org.

NEW CHAPTER MEMBERS

by *Walt Bunter*

We extend a GREAT BIG WELCOME to the following members who recently joined or rejoined the SWCS and our California Chapter or transferred in from another state chapter.

Alameda County RCD - Livermore

Kristin Hughes - San Francisco

Lincoln E. Burton - Davis

Charles K. Davis - Davis

Carlos Suarez - Davis

Kenneth Trott - Woodland

Chapter membership is now at 185.

NEW MEMBERSHIP RATES IN EFFECT

by *Walt Bunter*

Beginning October 1, 2005, the new rates for membership levels in the Soil and Water Conservation Society changed as follows:

Student	- \$25 (no change)
Conservationist	- \$80
Leader	- \$130
President's Club	- \$200

International members (for outside the US, Canada and Mexico) pay an additional \$25 for shipping costs.

Those members who have taken advantage of the payroll deduction program as employees of the USDA-NRCS will need to have their dues changed by October 15, 2005 to the following rates:

Conservationist	- \$3.08
Leader	- \$5.00
President's Club	- \$7.69

Members who use the payroll deduction option need to go to their payroll office to request the change.

For those USDA-NRCS employees not currently using the payroll deduction method, you may wish to consider this convenient payment option. Membership dues are deducted during each pay period and automatically renewed each month. You'll never miss an issue of the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation!

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FIRST CLASS

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

FALL 2005

RunOff is the official California Chapter SWCS newsletter.

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Please submit articles via email to the Editor. RunOff reserves the right to edit all submissions.

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Pat Grover, Secretary

Kenneth Trott, Director

Phil Hogan, Director

Jason Jackson, Director

David Rose, Director

Tina Vander Hoek, Director

Richelle Leggett, Student Representative

RunOff Photo Contest

Submit photos of soil and water conservation in action! Winners will be featured in future issues of RunOff. Please include photographer credit and a descriptive caption.

Visit our Website!

www.caswcs.org

Deadline to submit articles, news items, and photos for the next issue of RunOff is January 9, 2006. Send items to the Editor via email.