



# RUNNOFF

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2007

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LET'S GET TOGETHER!

*by Mark Steffek*

I hope all of you have your calendars marked for May 2nd through the 4th for the upcoming Annual Conference in Sacramento. Our President Elect, David Rose, has formed a committee that is developing the agenda. One thing I know is that



David will construct a n annual conference that will provide outstanding speakers, training opportunities for all, and thought provoking discussion topics for members and policy makers. Also, the annual conference will be a place to have fun, meet friends and colleagues, and discuss plans to move the Society forward as a leader in California and Nevada soil and water conservation issues.

Our annual conference is also the time to recognize the outstanding contributions of members and partners for their efforts in promoting SWCS goals through their work. If you know of an individual, group, or organization deserving of recognition, contact the Chapter's Awards Committee Chair, Phil Hogan ([phil.hogan@ca.usda.gov](mailto:phil.hogan@ca.usda.gov)). I know there are plenty of worthwhile nominees in California and Nevada deserving of recognition.

The International Soil and Water Conservation

Society Annual Conference is scheduled for July 21st through the 25th in Tampa, FL. I'm not sure how many of you will be able to be there, but the Chapter does offer financial assistance for "emerging leaders" to attend. Contact me our any one of the other Chapter officers for more information about that.

I will be attending the International Conference since the abstract I presented was chosen to be included in the oral reports in the watershed management component of the agenda. My topic is about the successful partnerships in the Pit River Watershed Alliance in northeastern California that has resulted in a watershed assessment and a water quality monitoring program for a river on the CWA 303d list. The Alliance also recently received a CalFed grant to develop a watershed management strategy to be completed by June, 2008.

I also attended the International Conference last year and was pleased to see and hear presentations from five different people from California. I hope we will be as well, or better, represented this year.

Those of you interested in being a leader in the new SWCS California-Nevada Chapter should submit your name to our Nominating Committee Chair, Hank Wyman ([hank.wyman@oacd.org](mailto:hank.wyman@oacd.org)). There are vacancies for Council Director and President Elect.

There are always opportunities for members serve on committees or even to chair a committee. Help is always welcomed. Serving on a committee is another opportunity for you to move the Chapter forward as a leader in soil and water conservation. Contact me if you want to serve on a committee.

You are all aware, I'm sure, that the California and Nevada Chapters are planning to merge into a single Chapter. The merger will be voted on during the business portion of the annual conference. Please do all you can to be present at the conference to discuss this issue and help in the next phase of conservation leadership in the West.

See you in Sacramento.

## FOOD SAFETY IN THE WORLD'S SALAD BOWL

by Jeff Raifsnider

As California acts to address food safety, will conservation efforts suffer? In September 2006, an outbreak of the deadly E. coli 0157:H7 strain killed three people and sickened approximately 200 others in 26 states. This outbreak was traced back to spinach from San Benito County. Salinas Valley and adjacent valleys have been involved with eight of the 19 E. coli 0157:H7 outbreaks associated with lettuce and spinach since 1995.

After the latest outbreak in spinach, the September 14, 2006 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory against eating fresh spinach heralded an estimated \$1 million dollar a day loss for the spinach industry. The resultant media frenzy was followed by major industry layoffs, and a threat to consumer confidence in the food safety standards practiced in the area known as the "World's Salad Bowl." The Salinas Valley produces about three-quarters of the nation's lettuce and spinach.

California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) officials announced the start of a new California State Marketing Agreement on January 24, 2007. The agreement is designed to improve food safety standards for handling of spinach, lettuce and other leafy green vegetables in California and potentially to guide improved food safety standards that the entire nation will follow. Industry groups hope that the agreement's improved safety standards will increase consumer confidence and head off proposed new legislation that could increase production costs. Under the Marketing Agreement, California handlers can agree to accept product only from farmers who follow specific food safety procedures in the growing of leafy greens. "Leafy Green Products" are: iceberg lettuce, romaine lettuce, green leaf lettuce, red leaf lettuce, butter lettuce, baby leaf lettuce (i.e., immature lettuce or leafy greens), escarole, endive, spring mix, spinach, cabbage, kale, arugula and chard. CDFA's announced start of the agreement means that handlers can now sign up to participate and enables CDFA to appoint a 13 member Marketing Agreement Board.

Product certified as grown under "Good Agricultural Practices" will be designated by an official "mark" or seal.

Some of the guidelines of the Marketing Agreement, such as monitoring of crop handling and testing of irrigation water and compost amendments will undoubtedly improve the safety of the food supply. However, significant uncertainty remains about the effectiveness of other guidelines, such as removal of all non-crop vegetation and elimination of wildlife cover in



*Lettuce production in the Salinas Valley. Photo by Jeff Raifsnider.*

buffer areas. These requirements contradict practices that provide environmental protection, and growers will be caught in the middle and forced to choose between these two objectives.

NRCS has been working cooperatively for years with local farmers and regulatory agencies to develop conservation practices to meet water quality and wildlife protection standards. The Farm Water Quality Planning program of UC-Cooperative Extension and NRCS, and the Agricultural Water Quality Alliance for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary have assisted farmers and ranchers to protect water quality on thousands of acres along the Central Coast. Growers who have installed vegetative conservation practices and have documented improvement in water quality may now be pressured to remove these practices to meet industry

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*Field day participants view a grassed waterway on a Salinas Valley lettuce farm. Photo by Jeff Raifsnider.*

guidelines calling for clean fields.

Vegetative conservation practices such as filter strips, grassed waterways, hedgerows, and vegetative barriers act to reduce soil and wind erosion, and to remove sediments, nutrients, chemicals, and animal waste from agricultural runoff. Conservation practices protect and improve water quality while protecting many threatened and endangered species.

The potential food safety benefits of the guidelines must be weighed against the known degradation of water quality and wildlife habitat that will occur if vegetative conservation practices are removed or if new vegetative conservation practices are discouraged and never installed. These issues highlight the need for better research and information on the pathogen transport mechanisms before adopting measures that have uncertain food safety effectiveness but known adverse environmental impacts.

In the long run, it is imperative that industry leaders work with the environmental regulatory agencies, researchers, and conservation technical assistance agencies such as the Conservation Districts, UC Cooperative Extension, and NRCS, to create compatible solutions that address both food safety and natural resource protection goals. Some scientific literature indicates that the biodiversity created from certain conservation practices acts to reduce disease vectors and organisms, not to increase them. Food safety and environmental protection measures may actually be complementary rather than in conflict as they currently seem to be.

## CALIFORNIA CHAPTER ANNUAL CONFERENCE DATES SET

*by David Rose*

Save the dates! The annual conference for the California Chapter of SWCS will be held Wednesday May 2 through Friday May 4 at the Holiday Inn Sacramento Hotel Northeast.

The conference will begin on the morning of May 2 with a tour of conservation sites in the greater Sacramento area.

On Thursday morning, the conference will continue with a local welcome, a keynote speaker, and the Annual Business Meeting.

Concurrent sessions will be held Thursday afternoon and Friday morning. The sessions will focus on two tracks: Bioenergy and associated topics, and Technical Training. The technical training sessions will be designed for our attendees to learn something valuable that they can take back to their job and put to work. Topics such as wetland restoration, erosion control on rice land, erosion control on riparian corridors, native plant planting and establishment, and NEPA processing in the field are tentatively planned. Our Executive Council Annual Meeting Committee is working hard to put the conference details in order. Watch your mailboxes for more information as the conference approaches!

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# Membership Update

## CALIFORNIA AND NEVADA SWCS CHAPTERS PLAN TO MERGE

by *Walt Bunter*

Ten members of the Nevada Chapter SWCS responded favorably to the recent letter signed by Acting Nevada Chapter President Cub Wolfe and CA Chapter President Mark Steffek asking their views on pursuing a merger. There were no unfavorable responses.

California Chapter members were notified of the potential merger in the last newsletter and invited to express positive or negative views by December 28. There were no unfavorable responses.

Since there is a favorable consensus by members of both Chapters, SWCS headquarters will be notified by letter and work initiated to amend the by-laws. The California Chapter Executive Council expressed hope that the merger can be completed at the next Business Meeting on May 3, 2007 in Sacramento.

The proposed name for the combined Chapter would be "California-Nevada Chapter SWCS" and all the California Chapter officers would retain their positions until their next election. The By-Laws Committee will also consider a suggestion to increase the number of Executive Council Directors from five to six and designate that at least one be filled by a member living in Nevada.

## NEVADA CHAPTER MEMBERS = 13 (ON JANUARY 1, 2007)

Brian J. Andraski	-Carson City
Brian W. Boyd	- R e n o
Roy E. Cameron	-Las Vegas
Jason C Davison	- F a l l o n
Gail Durham	- M i n d e n
Angela Gayle Evenden	- R e n o
Ray R. Huxtable	-Henderson
John L. McLain	-Carson City
Steven R. Perkins	- F a l l o n
Floyd W. Rathbun	- F a l l o n
C. N. Saulisberry	- D a y t o n
Larry Schmidt	- M i n d e n
R. H. Wolfe	-Wellington

## NEW CA CHAPTER MEMBERS

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

CA Chapter membership on January 1 was 173.

Carol Arnold	- Concord
Ladi Asgill	- Modesto
Sarah Haggard	- Bakersfield
Todd Kraemer	- Arcata
Azizur Rahman	- Clovis
Richard Stamer	- Salinas
Gretchen Thomsen	- Redlands
Lorin Trubschenck	- Lompoc

## CALIFORNIA CHAPTER MEMBERS = 173 (ON JANUARY 1, 2007)

Carrie Alexander	-Arcata
Andrew J. Andresen	-Kelseyville
Eugene Andreuccetti	-Sacramento
Carol Arnold	-Concord
Ladi Asgill	-Modesto
Sarkis S. Aslan	-Indio
Matt Baldzikowski	-Los Altos
Erik H. Beardsley	-Red Bluff
Dylan E. Beaudette	-Davis
Eric Berntsen	-Sacramento
F. Thomas Biglione	-Stockton
Phillip R. Blake	-Napa
George Borst	-Fallbrook
Joan M. Breiner	-Riverside
Corinne Brooks	-Salinas
Linden A. Brooks	-Red Bluff
Anita Brown	-Davis
Billy R. Bruner	-Visalia
Walter A. Bunter, Jr.	-Davis
Ed Burton	-Acampo
Jim Bushey	-Napa
Joel Butterworth	-Sonoma
Cori Calvert	-Escondido
Richard J. Casale	-Aptos
Andrea Casey	-Corning
Barry D. Cavanna	-Pleasant Hill
George K. Chan	-San Marino
Bill Christner	-Cool
Carl Christofferson	-Santa Rosa
Denny Churchill	-Quincy
Richard L. Clark	-La Verne
Livy Coe	-Colusa
Duane Cornett	-Marysville
Dennis L. Corwin	-Riverside
C. E. Crews	-San Francisco
Nancy Dagle	-Sacramento
Charles K. Davis	-Davis
Shanon L. Dean	-Novato

***If any of your colleagues are not listed, please encourage them to become a member of SWCS!***

W. H. Denham	-Pasadena	Harold L. Loudermilk	-Victorville	Jerry P. Schneider	-Los Angeles
Gylan L. Dickey	-Bakersfield	Norman H. MacLeod	-Santa Barbara	Thomas E. Schott	-Palm Springs
Jim Earsom	-Loma Linda	Dan Martynn	-Greenville	Charles B. Schwabauer	-Moorpark
Norman Elam	-Palm Desert	Sandra Mathews	-Hayward	Cory Scott	-McKinleyville
Carol Fall	-Weaverville	V. P. McConnell	-Los Angeles	Lee A. Seidell	-Albany
Clarence U. Finch	-Fresno	Dan Meyer	-Bakersfield	Lisa W. Shanks	-Novato
Alan R. Forkey	-Yuba City	Roland D. Meyer	-Davis	Michael S. Simmons	-Goleta
Dennis G. Fox	-Bakersfield	Donald F. Miller	-Riverside	Michael J. Singer	-Davis
Donald J. Funk	-Templeton	Laura Mitsch	-Irvine	Steven W. Singer	-Santa Cruz
Jody Gallaway	-Chico	Daniel Mountjoy	-Salinas	Robert D. Slayback	-Lodi
Christopher	Giovanno-	Knud Mueller	-Guerneville	David Smiley	-Sacramento
ni-	Watsonville	Louis M. Nagy	-Ventura	Richard M. Smith	-Chula Vista
Orvil Godman	-San Diego	Sally Negroni	-Vacaville	James F. Spear	-Weaverville
E. L. Griner	-Bonsall	Robert Neilson	-Visalia	Richard W. Starner	-Salinas
Patricia G. Grover	-Sacramento	Pamela S. Nielsen	-Visalia	Mark E. Steffek	-Alturas
Sarah M. Haggard	-Bakersfield	Tim O'Halloran	-Woodland	Nancy E. Stein	-Martinez
Brent G. Hallock	-San Luis Obispo	Patricia Oliver	-Somis	David A. Steiner	-Napa
Keith A. Hamblin	-Redding	Louise D. Owens	-Potter Valley	Aaron Steinwand	-Bishop
Douglas Hanford	-Sonoma	Mark S. Parson	-Davis	Floyd G. Stephens	-Auberry
Howard W. Harris	-Ridgecrest	Gaylord P. Patten	-Pomona	David Stoms	-Santa Barbara
David R. Heilig	-Long Beach	Leslie Peacock	-Davis	Carlos Suarez	-Elk Grove
Steven A. Hill	-Blythe	Arthur R. Pearson	-Cambria	Karen Sweet	-Livermore
Rick Hill	-Morro Bay	Heath D. Pearson	-Fremont	Ron Taskey	-San Luis Obispo
Phil Hogan	-Sacramento	Jeff Peters	-Pt. Richmond	Michael Taylor	-Oroville
Michael P. Hogan	-Tahoma	G. Stuart Pettygrove	-Davis	Gretchen Thomsen	-Redlands
Lisa A. Hokholt	-Livermore	Roger J. Poff	-Nevada City	Ann Thrupp	-Hopland
Diane L. Holcomb	-Davis	Paul W. Prange	-San Jose	Kenneth E. Trott	-Woodland
Frederick L. Hotes	-Chico	Julie Price	-Ukiah	Lorin N. Trubschenck	-Lompoc
Richard C. Huff	-Livermore	Gil C. Pridmore	-Napa	Tina Vander Hoek	-Templeton
Kristin Hughes	-Richmond, VA	Azizur Rahman	-Clovis	Ralph Wagner	-Lake Arrowhead
Glenda Humiston	-Richmond	Jeff Raifsnider	-Salinas	Richard J. Wagner	-San Francisco
Ray Hunter	-Fresno	Wendy J. Rash	-Winters	Gordon L. Watts	-Carmel
Jason N. Jackson	-Grass Valley	Paul Robins	-Woodland	Kenneth E. Weaver	-Susanville
Ellen James	-Somis	John H. Rogers	-Davis	Thomas H. Wehri	-Roseville
Janice L. Jinings	-Elk Grove	David F. Rose	-Willows	David L. West	-Coarsegold
Richard Johnson	-Laguna Beach	Andrew J. Rosenau	-Sacramento	Robert Wheeler	-Murrieta
Kay L. Joy Barge	-Davis	Ann M. Rossi	-Riverside	Mark S. White	-Auburn
Stacy Kavanaugh	-Sonora	Jeffrey L. Rubin	-Oakland	William E. Wildman	-Davis
David B. Kelley	-Davis	Diana C. Ruiz	-Riverside	Ruth A. Wildman	-Davis
Salim B. Khalil	-Corona	Carol K. Rush	-Tehachapi	Bruce G. Williams	-Weaverville
James J. Kocsis	-Davis	Carol-Anne Rutenbergs	-Auburn	John P. Wilson	-Los Angeles
James D. Komar	-Red Bluff	Charles T. Saari	-Winchester	Jane G. Wohletz	-Berkeley
Todd Kraemer	-Arcata	Sarkis V. Sarabian	-Sanger	Hank Wyman	-Davis
Eric J. Larson	-Sebastopol	George K. Sato	-Rancho Cordova	Willard H. Youtz	-Escondido
Paul Laustsen	-Riverside	Colleen Schneider	-Davis	Steven J. Zembsch	-Aromas

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## **FIRST CLASS**

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2007

**RunOff** is the official California Chapter SWCS newsletter.

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***Submit articles for the next issue of  
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