



CONSERVOGRAM

 > The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

In This Issue

Congratulations to the 2024 Award and Scholarship Winners	1
Welcome SWCS Interns Nithin Guddera and Quinn Lowry	2
Join a SWCS Committee	2
79th SWCS International Annual Conference Updates	2
Sponsor Spotlight: Syngenta	3
2025 Emerging Leaders Program Applications Open July 1-August 15	4
ELP Success Stories	4
Upcoming ELP Events	5
New Members	6
Corporate Partners	6

Congratulations to the 2024 Award and Scholarship Winners



The 2024 SWCS award and scholarship winners have been announced! We would like to congratulate all of the winners and say a huge thank you to everyone who applied or nominated someone this year. The award winners are leaders in the conservation space and have made significant contributions to the profession. Check out the full list, and if you know someone, help us celebrate them by reaching out and congratulating them on this major accomplishment!

[View Award Winners](#)

All winners will be showcased during the awards luncheon at the 2024 SWCS International Annual Conference on July 23, 2024, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. **Register by July 3 to join us for the event!**

Welcome SWCS Interns Nithin Guddera and Quinn Lowry

In May, Nithin Guddera and Quinn Lowry joined the SWCS staff as the Student Leader Project Interns. During the internship, they will assist with the operations and logistics of the 79th SWCS International Annual Conference, plan a student and early career professional networking session during the conference, create a social media calendar and design posts, assist with a retiree project, and more.

Nithin is a student at North Carolina State University majoring in Agricultural Business Management and minoring in Economics, Ag-Entrepreneurship, and Environmental Science. Quinn is majoring in Law and Public Policy with a minor in Labor Studies from Indiana University.

We are excited to have Nithin and Quinn on our team at SWCS this summer and hope you get the opportunity to meet them at the conference in July!



"I hope to grow my professional network and gain professional experience independently and collaboratively while learning about the Soil and Water Conservation Society's operations."

Nithin Guddera



"I want to see what it is like working for a nonprofit and learn about running a large event like the conference."

Quinn Lowry

Join a SWCS Committee

There is still time to get involved with SWCS at a national level through the Annual Conference Program Planning Committee and the Awards and Scholarships Committee! Applications are due **June 30, 2024**.

- [Annual Conference Program Planning Committee](#)
- [Awards and Scholarships Committee](#)

79th SWCS International Annual Conference Updates

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
July 21-24, 2024

www.swcs.org/24AC

The Countdown Is On!

The online registration deadline for the 79th SWCS International Annual Conference, July 21-24, 2024, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, is quickly approaching, and we don't want you to miss out on this opportunity to hang out on the beach with your conservation family and hear from some amazing experts and speakers!



Speaking of amazing speakers, at the end of May, we announced that Clarendia "Farmer Cee" Stanley will deliver this year's SWCS Keynote Pritchard Lecture. She is the CEO of Green Heffa Farms in North Carolina, the first Black-owned farm to earn Certified B Corp status. You can learn more about Farmer Cee and the general session in the [press release](#).

Also, if you are looking for some in-depth, hands-on learning opportunities, make sure to add on a tour or workshop at registration. Space is limited, so don't wait!

For complete conference details, visit www.swcs.org/24AC. The online registration cutoff is **July 3, 2024**. Once you have registered, be sure to make your hotel reservation before the discounted room block ends on **June 20**.

Donate to the SWCS International Annual Conference Silent Auction

The Hugh Hammond Bennett Chapter still needs donations for this year's silent auction at the SWCS International Annual Conference. Do you have unique items or experiences you can donate? Or maybe you have connections to local artists or producers who are willing to donate some items. Get ideas about what you can donate and submit your donation form today!

- [Silent Auction Donation Request](#)
- [List of Donation Ideas](#)
- [Donation Form](#)

Wear your SWCS Conference Gear in Myrtle Beach – Order by June 24!

On Wednesdays, we wear... our SWCS Conference tees!

On Wednesday, July 24, everyone will be wearing the SWCS Annual Conference shirt at the conference, so don't be the odd one out! Go to the [SWCS Store now](#) and get your shirt today.



While you're there, you can also check out some old favorites, including the Climate Anxiety and the Definition of A Conservation Professional shirts. There are also youth shirts for the little aspiring conservationists in your family!

Orders are due on **June 24**, so they are at your doorstep and in your suitcase in time for the conference.



Order Now!

Sponsor Spotlight: Syngenta



Biodiversity is essential for plant breeding, pollination, and food diversity. It sustains the ecosystems that underpin fertile soils and plant pollination. Beyond its role in increasing food production, conserving biodiversity, and enriching wildlife, biodiversity also helps preserve genetic

diversity, improve carbon sequestration in soil, mitigate floods, and gives people the chance to enjoy nature. Increasingly, though, biodiversity is under threat as wild habitats are lost to climate change and urbanization.

Agriculture protects and restores biodiversity on farms in several ways. Today, many farmers establish plant habitats on less productive land, such as in field margins and around waterways, as well as improve biodiversity

within planted fields. This helps reintroduce local species, provide buffers for soil and water conservation, and reconnect habitats for wildlife.

[Operation Pollinator](#) is one example of biodiversity in action. It's an international initiative to boost the number of pollinating insects—such as bees—on farms, golf courses, and other landscapes. Started by Syngenta 20 years ago, Operation Pollinator creates habitats for pollinating insects and wildlife by planting field margins with local wildflowers across 30 countries in Europe, North America, Latin America, and Asia. These pollinators play a key role in the ag economy. Scientists believe that for every three acres of marginal land planted to benefit pollinators, 100 acres will experience a significant positive impact. Bees alone contribute nearly \$19 billion to the value of crop production in the United States annually. Pollinators are integral in many natural habitats and crucial for the production success of many food crops. Without pollination by bees, farmers, food processors, retailers, and even crop protection and seed companies would find it hard to develop and meet their goals. Consumers would not be able to enjoy locally



produced foods, especially fruit, which we all now take for granted. Syngenta is working with beekeepers and researchers around the globe to identify solutions that

will improve bee health. We are investing in [research](#) and working to better understand what these problems are and develop solutions to address them.

Protecting pollinators begins with product stewardship. Understanding product labels, using products effectively, and communicating with beekeepers helps ensure continued access to crop protection technologies. That's why—before using any crop protection product—farmers and applicators are strongly encouraged to follow three steps to help ensure these technologies are used responsibly. Ensuring a sustainable food supply requires each of us to play our part in preserving our land and protecting pollinators.

No matter your place in providing food for the planet, it is everyone's job to use crop protection products responsibly to ensure these important tools remain available to help farmers protect their crops. This will help us all to conserve biodiversity and sustainably feed a growing global population.



2025 Emerging Leaders Program Applications Open July 1-August 15

SWCS is excited to continue our Emerging Leaders Program into its second year! This initiative is designed to cultivate the next generation of conservation professionals by providing early career individuals with unique opportunities for professional development, leadership training, and networking within the conservation community. Applications for the 2025 cohort will be open from July 1 to August 15, 2024. We encourage all eligible members to apply and ask you to help us spread the word. If you know someone within the first five years of their conservation career, please encourage them to apply and take advantage of this incredible opportunity to grow and lead in the field of conservation. For more information, visit www.swcs.org/growconservation.

ELP Success Stories

Martin CD28 Nutrient Treatment Wetland + Two-Stage Ditch Educational Field Day

Hosted by ELP Participant: Rachael Millage



As part of the Emerging Leaders Program, I had the opportunity to plan and help host the ISG Martin County CD28 Educational Field Day. This project features a nutrient treatment wetland and a two-stage ditch that work together to reduce nitrate, phosphorus, and sediment levels flowing into the Fairmont Chain of Lakes, the drinking water source for Fairmont, Minnesota. The event attracted nearly 80 attendees, including Fairmont residents, local producers, employees from neighboring counties, and the state of Minnesota.

The field day provided participants with valuable insights into integrating conservation practices into the landscape, demonstrating how existing systems can adopt these practices and highlighting the significant impact of such implementations.

Through the ELP, I gained essential skills and tools for event planning, such as agenda creation, participant outreach, and maximizing event impact. This experience also allowed me to advocate for increased responsibilities and showcase my professional growth.



Women and Soil

Hosted by ELP Participant: Alycia Willenbring

On Saturday, June 8, two Women, Land and Legacy chapters in northeast Iowa partnered with organizations and businesses (ISU Extension and Outreach, Practical Farmers of Iowa, Impact 7G, Dr. Elaine's Soil Food Web School, and the Field of Dreams) to host a half-day conference in Dyersville, Iowa, titled, "Women and Soil," attended by nearly 70 women landowners, farmers, and others interested in conservation from all across the state of Iowa.

The conference featured expert women speakers presenting on topics including soil health and soil biology, soil erosion concerns, conservation opportunities, and resources women can use to implement change. The day also included a demonstration of the USDA's "rainfall simulator," resource booths from local organizations and businesses that support women in agriculture, and networking opportunities for the attendees.

One of the event organizers, Sophia Campbell, a watershed coordinator from Winneshiek County and chapter lead for the Winneshiek-Howard Women Land and Legacy chapter, said, "My hope for this event was that attendees would leave having learned something – something about soil, about their farming operation, about themselves, or anything; or that they made a connection with someone. Our greatest resource is each other – without collaboration, our growth is limited to our own perspectives. The challenges we face today with soil erosion and water quality in Iowa and throughout the Midwest will take a major effort from every stakeholder in the agricultural industry to address. It is unavoidable, and our futures depend on it. I believe starting a conversation about soil health is a great first step."

Dr. Carla Portugal, one of the event sponsors from Dr. Elaine's Soil Food Web School (SFS), said, "The event represents a significant milestone toward a change in mindset about regenerative agriculture, farmer empowerment, and partnerships. Seeing so many powerful farmer leaders dedicating time, energy, and other valuable resources to a training event is rewarding. The SFS is grateful for this opportunity and aims for future collaborations, such as live open-source webinars, free for the attendees, promoted by the SFS, and having the speakers from this event speak about their great achievements to more farmers, including those outside Iowa. This is an opportunity to promote the Women, Land & Legacy efforts to the country and set an excellent example for other states to seek and implement this powerful program in their counties."



Alisha Sedlmayr, USDA soil health specialist for northeast Iowa, explains to a group of women landowners how rain infiltrates into the soil surface in different farm management scenarios, including soil with no-till and cover crop, continuously grazed pasture, rotationally grazed pasture, tilled soil, and native prairie.



Dr. Jodi Enos-Berlage, a microbiology professor at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, presents a "soil baby" during her presentation, "The Power of the Unseen," to represent how life above ground is only made possible by life below ground.

Upcoming ELP Events

[Women's Conservation Luncheon](#)

Hampton, Iowa
June 18 (10 a.m. CT)

[Exploring Regenerative Viticulture Field Day](#)

Windsor, California
June 21 (8 a.m. - 12 p.m. PST)
Bilingual Event – Dia de Campo

[Fields & Farms Showcase: Diverse Ag Ventures in Oklahoma](#)

Tulsa County, Oklahoma
June 22

[Cultivating Conversations: How and Why Illinois Farms Implement Edge-of-Field Practice](#)

Galesburg, Illinois
June 25 (9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. CT)

New Members

Welcome members who joined in May!

International

Juwonlo E Dahunsi

California/Nevada

Hoori Ajami

Georgia

Kendric Holder

Jodi Johnson-Maynard

Elizabeth Murrell

Idaho

Navdeep Singh

Indiana—Hoosier

Dawn Johnson Harvey

Massachusetts—University of Massachusetts Amherst

Student Chapter

Michael DiDomizio

Missouri—Show Me Chapter

Bernardo Candido

North Dakota

Elizabeth Smith

South Carolina

Khalfani Powell

Tennessee

Kaylin Hughes

Texas—Texas A&M University Student Chapter

Kennedi Harris

Wisconsin

Jason Cavadini

Corporate Partners

Please visit www.swcs.org/corporatepartner for more information on how to become a corporate partner.

Platinum



Gold



Silver

We are actively looking for a Silver Level sponsor. If you are interested in sponsoring, please contact memberservices@swcs.org.

Bronze

