



SOIL  
AND WATER  
CONSERVATION  
SOCIETY



**SWCS  
STUDENT CHAPTER AND  
AFFILIATE ORGANIZATION  
GUIDE**

**2023**  

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**2024**

# WELCOME

Welcome to the **Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS)** for the 2023-2024 academic year! Whether you're a seasoned environmental advocate or just dipping your toes into the world of conservation, we're excited to welcome you into our vibrant community.

## WHO WE ARE

We're more than just an organization—we're a movement fueled by passionate individuals committed to driving real change in the world. As a professional society, we advocate for and support students and professionals on their conservation career paths. Our platform empowers you to align your local efforts with a global movement, amplifying your influence and multiplying your impact.

As pioneers in soil and water conservation, SWCS stands on the forefront of meaningful transformation. We are on a mission to safeguard our planet's essential resources; when you join our student groups, you're not just enrolling in a club—you're becoming part of a legacy.

By affiliating your student group, chapter, or club with SWCS, you're stepping into a realm of opportunities that extend far beyond your campus borders.

## Why should you start or join a student group through SWCS this academic year?

- **Networking and Career Growth.** Our SWCS community is a dynamic hub of professionals, experts, and visionaries. By connecting with them, you're unlocking doors to internships, jobs, and mentorship that will shape your future.
- **Resume Building and Leadership Development.** Embrace leadership! As a student group member, you're not just a participant, you're a driving force. Organize events, initiatives, and projects that highlight your leadership skills and set you apart on your journey.
- **Educational Resources and Support.** Dive into a wealth of educational materials and research publications. Immerse yourself in knowledge that fuels your passion and equips you to make informed decisions for our planet.
- **Community Impact.** Together, we wield the power to create change. By initiating conversations, raising awareness, and actively participating in conservation events, you'll make an impact not just on your campus, but on the world at large.

So here's to a year of exploration, growth, and enduring environmental impact. Let's roll up our sleeves and dive into the work that truly matters—crafting a greener, healthier future for generations to come.

Thank you for embarking on this transformative journey with us.

Warm regards,

**Clare Lindahl**

CEO, Soil and Water Conservation Society



# PROGRAM TIMELINE

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We recommend students hold meetings monthly to engage members and keep up momentum! At all of your meetings and events, please have participants [sign in](#).



# GET YOUR OFFICIAL SWCS AFFILIATION

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Become an officially affiliated SWCS student chapter or affiliate partner organization by completing the following steps. Affiliation comes with a host of benefits, including

- Listing on the SWCS website
- Use of the SWCS student chapter logo/affiliate logo
- A swag package from SWCS headquarters
- A chapter feature on SWCS social media platforms
- Resume building tools and support
- \$150 reimbursement for meeting/event expenses (must complete the end-of-year survey)

## AFFILIATION CHECKLIST

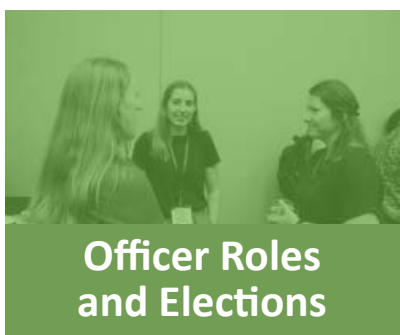
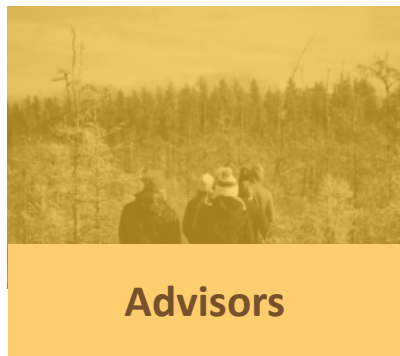
- By November 1:** One member or an advisor must fill out the [primary contact form](#) for your chapter or affiliate club. The person completing this form and co-leaders listed will receive leadership and planning resources from SWCS monthly. We recommend having an advisor fill out the form.
- At each meeting/event:** Ask attendees to fill out the [digital sign-in form](#). This form is not an SWCS membership form; it is only used to track event attendance. To be eligible for affiliation, at least ten students must fill out this sign-in form. Alternatively, you can have attendees sign in with their names and emails on paper and provide that information to headquarters staff via email at [renee.bouldin@swcs.org](mailto:renee.bouldin@swcs.org).
- (Optional)** Obtain official student organization standing at your school. Refer to the governance resources to learn more about this process.
- (Optional)** After your event: Send in photos and a brief description of your event to [renee.bouldin@swcs.org](mailto:renee.bouldin@swcs.org) for a chance to be featured on SWCS social media platforms.
- By May 15:** Take the [end-of-year survey](#) to provide feedback on your year with SWCS. Include basic details of any meetings or events held and your thoughts on the chapter program. Also, provide a primary contact for the next school year.

*Please note that group affiliation is different from SWCS membership. To access full SWCS member benefits, including scholarships and Journal of Soil and Water Conservation access, [become an SWCS member](#). Start your journey with SWCS today!*

# RESOURCES

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SWCS is here to support you with resources and guidance! Find helpful information using the links below.







# MONTH-BY-MONTH PLAYBOOK

Utilize this guide throughout the year  
and get special offerings!



**KICKOFF**

**GOAL:** Hold your first meeting.

So you have decided you want in?  
Host a kick off meeting to  
determine your campus  
community's interest in SWCS!  
Search for an advisor and review  
the governance resources at  
[www.swcs.org/studentchapters](http://www.swcs.org/studentchapters).  
Provide information to SWCS so we  
can support you with resources.

**TO DO:**

- Use the [SWCS flyer template](#) to create a meeting flyer and share on your campus and on social media.
- Use the [SWCS meeting agenda](#) suggestions to help structure your first meeting.
- Ask attendees to fill out the digital [sign-in form](#) at any meetings or events you have, even initial planning meetings! SWCS staff can provide you with records from these sign-ins for your use. Alternatively, you can have attendees sign in with their names and email and provide that information to headquarters staff via email to [renee.bouldin@swcs.org](mailto:renee.bouldin@swcs.org).
- Fill out the [primary contact form](#). The person filling out this form and those they list as co-leaders will receive the leadership and planning resources from SWCS monthly. We recommend having an advisor fill out the form.



## BUILD MOMENTUM

### **GOAL:** Start gaining official SWCS affiliation.

You started—that's awesome! Let's keep up the momentum and make sure you're on a path to success for this year. Didn't have a chance to find an advisor last month? Didn't get to hold your kickoff meeting? That's okay, try again this month!

### **TO DO:**

- Fill out the [primary contact form](#) and make sure at least 10 students fill out the digital [sign-in form](#) at any of your meetings to be eligible for initial SWCS affiliation. Chapters and groups who complete these two steps by November 1 will be provided with official affiliation resources. These include SWCS affiliate logos and free swag!
- Determine your governance structure using the [governance resources](#).
- Participate in the Fall SWCS Student T-Shirt Competition! SWCS staff will send additional resources on how to enter the contest. Winners get free t-shirts for their group featuring their design.





# NOVEMBER

## FINISH THE SEMESTER STRONG

### **GOAL:** Win the t-shirt competition!

You're officially settled into this year—congratulations! Next step? Win the t-shirt competition! Send in your designs and vote on your favorites. The winning chapter or group will be announced in December. In the meantime, keep hosting meetings and build up a strong group of students and friends. Start discussing holding a conservation event in the spring and gauge what types of events and topics interest your organization.

### **TO DO:**

- Host a meeting to discuss a spring event. Determine your group's interests and options. This is the pre-planning phase, so just get some ideas flowing and have an open conversation on what you would like to accomplish with your event!
- Vote on your favorite t-shirt designs and hopefully win the t-shirt contest!
- For those chapters who applied for SWCS affiliation, you should receive your free SWCS swag this month to the address you gave on your [primary contact form](#)!

# DECEMBER

Ace those finals and remind folks to keep a lookout for your next meeting in the spring semester!

# JANUARY/FEBRUARY

— WELCOME BACK — LET'S PLAN YOUR EVENT! —

## **GOAL:** Plan your conservation event!

Welcome back for the spring semester—let's get into the planning phase! In January and February, choose what type of event you want to host and set a time and place! SWCS staff will send planning resources to help you make your event a success! Some options for events include:

**Professional Development Activity**

**Speaker Panel**

**Networking Event**

**Office Tour**

**Site Visit**

**Cleanup or Service Event**

**Workshop**

*... and more!*

## **TO DO:**

- Determine the type of event you'd like to host. What will be most valuable to your group?
- Find a location to host your event. This will depend on the type of event you choose. Confirm your location and set a date and time for your event.
- Decide if you'll need to find speakers or guides to help you with your event. Send out requests and confirm their participation.
- Determine if you'll need participants to register for the event ahead of time. Will there be a limited number of spaces available? Will you need to coordinate carpooling? If so, set up a form to collect their information.
- Start spreading the word about your event! Share information on social media and tell your friends!



# MARCH/APRIL

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

### **GOAL:** Host your conservation event!

It's time to host your event! This is it, what you've been working toward! Use coming SWCS resources to help make your event a success. Don't forget to take lots of photos!

### **TO DO:**

- Send out event reminders to your co-planners, your speaker(s) or guides(s), and your participants! What should they know before attending your event? Will they need to be dressed to work outside or are you hosting a business casual event? What will they need to bring? Will there be any food?
- Prepare using the SWCS event planning resources sent to you at the beginning of the semester!
- At your event, make sure folks use the [digital sign-in form](#)! Take lots of photos you can share with headquarters for a chance to be featured on SWCS social media platforms.



# MAY

## WRAP UP YOUR YEAR

### **GOAL:** Submit the end-of-year survey.

You did it! Before you roll into summer, don't forget to reflect on the work you've accomplished this year. Use the end-of-year survey to let headquarters know what you've been up to and set yourself up for next year. If you've received SWCS official affiliation, by taking this survey you will also be eligible for a \$150 expense reimbursement. Additionally, this form will allow us to help you kick things off smoothly next year!

### **TO DO:**

- Determine who will be the primary contact for your group in the next school year.
- Fill out the [end-of-year survey](#) by May 15. You will receive instructions for how to receive your \$150 reimbursement if you are eligible.
- Communicate to your group that you will be continuing next year! SWCS will have renewal resources available in the fall.

# SUMMER

Enjoy your summer! Congratulations on all you've accomplished this year!



# LET'S RECAP

## NEXT STEPS

Congratulations on exploring the exciting possibilities of starting an SWCS student chapter or affiliate organization! By joining the Soil and Water Conservation Society's vibrant community, you're taking the first step towards making a positive impact on our environment and future generations.

Now, it's time to turn that enthusiasm into action! Let's recap your next steps:

- 1. Start Your SWCS Journey:** Gather your fellow students and reach out to potential advisors to kick off your SWCS student chapter or affiliate organization. Together, we can amplify our efforts and create a force for change on your campus and in your community.
- 2. Embrace Resources and Guidance:** Our dedicated SWCS team is here to support you every step of the way. Make the most of the governance resources, planning guides, and helpful tips available at [www.swcs.org/students](http://www.swcs.org/students). Leverage the knowledge and experiences of existing student chapters to pave the way for your success.
- 3. Get Official SWCS Affiliation:** Follow the steps outlined in the guide to get your official affiliation with SWCS. This will unlock access to valuable resources, affiliate logos, and free swag to showcase your commitment to soil and water conservation.
- 4. Spread the Word:** Utilize social media, campus networks, and community outreach to share your journey and engage with like-minded individuals who care about conserving our precious natural resources. Together, we can raise awareness and drive meaningful change.
- 5. Participate in the T-Shirt Competition:** Don't miss the chance to showcase your creativity and win free SWCS swag for your group! Participate in the Fall SWCS Student T-Shirt Competition and leave your mark.
- 6. Plan Your Conservation Event:** Set your sights on hosting a conservation event that aligns with your group's interests and passions. Utilize the planning resources provided to ensure your event is a resounding success.
- 7. Reflect and Renew:** As the year comes to a close, remember to complete the end-of-year survey to share your achievements, provide valuable feedback, and prepare for an even more impactful next year.

By taking these steps, you'll be part of a vibrant network of students and professionals dedicated to preserving our planet for future generations. Together, we can make a lasting difference in soil and water conservation.

For any questions or assistance, don't hesitate to reach out to our team at [memberservices@swcs.org](mailto:memberservices@swcs.org).

**Thank you for being champions of change! Let's build a sustainable and thriving future together.**

*-SWCS Team*