



SHOW-ME CHAPTER

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PARKWAY NORTH HIGH SCHOOL SWEEPS ENVIROTHON FOR SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR

BY JUDY STINSON



Rebecca Goldstein, Eva Pearlstone, Amal Al-lozi, Sam Fok, and Rebecca Frankenburger.

Parkway North High School did it again! Last year, they dominated the Envirothon competition with their three teams taking all top spots. This year was no different. The three competing teams from Parkway North swept the 2007 competition as well. The school is part of the Parkway School District in St. Louis County. The winning team scored Missouri's highest ever with 512 points out of a possible 600.

Twenty teams competed in the areas of soils, aquatic ecology, wildlife, soils and land use, forestry, and the 2007 current conservation issue, alternative/renewable energy. The state event features the top three teams from each of Missouri's seven regional competitions. At the state level, the teams rotate through five out-door challenge stations, as well as an oral presentation station.

After the scores were all totaled, the winners were announced. The placement results of all the teams are listed below. The top 10 teams came from six of the seven regional events held throughout the state.

The team will go on to compete at the 2007 Canon Envirothon in Geneva, New York, July 29-Aug. 3. The Envirothon is North America's largest high school natural resources competition, with more than 40 states and seven Canadian provinces participating at the national level.

Sponsors for the Missouri Envirothon include the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, local soil and water conservation districts, the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Districts Employee Association, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, the University of Missouri Extension, Bass Pro and the Show-Me Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

SWCS PRODUCTS AND APPAREL AVAILABLE

Bags, blankets, caps, jackets, t-shirts, polo shirts, long and short sleeve shirts for men and women, pull-overs, sweatshirts, vests, and youthwear with embroidered SWCS logo are now available at www.americanbus.com/swcs/.

Additional products such as SWCS books, cartoon pamphlets, Journals, window clings, water bottles, memo pads, and more are available at

<http://store.swcs.org/>.



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Special points of interest:

- * Page 2 has information about SWCS Annual Conference held in Tampa, Florida this summer.
- * Page 3 has information about the WNC Regional Conference in October.

President's Corner BY KIM WORTH



If you are a hypochondriac, you should stop reading now. Instead go check out the information about the Chapter canoe trip scheduled for July 14th and the other good articles included in the newsletter.

For those who continued, some of this might sound familiar from a soil biology class that you took many moons ago, but I had forgotten about it. And I will warn you that if I don't have all of the details of the following diseases correct that I am not intentionally trying to mislead you. Much of my information came from public Internet sites such as Wikipedia and Answers.com.

I recently heard a story of a missionary, who had spent time in Missouri, becoming infected with blastomycosis. Blastomycosis can lead to flu and pneumonia-like symptoms, skin lesions, and a variety of other physical symptoms, in his case it was sores in his mouth. Blastomycosis is a fungal infection caused by the organism *Blastomyces dermatitidis*. Apparently the infection occurs by inhalation of the fungus from its natural soil habitat. Once inhaled in the lungs, they multiply and may disseminate through the blood and lymphatics to other organs, including the skin, bone, genitourinary tract, and brain. According to Wikipedia, in the United States, blastomycosis is endemic in the Mississippi River and Ohio River basins and around the Great Lakes. The annual incidence is less than 1 case per 100,000 people in Mississippi, Louisiana, Kentucky, and Arkansas. The cases are greater in northern states such as Wisconsin, where cases occur roughly 1 in 100 people. Whether it is true or not, I heard that blastomycosis more commonly affects people who visit these parts, such as a temporary missionary, rather than those who are permanent residents.

In the process of trying to find out about blastomycosis I also learned a little about histoplasmosis. Also caused by the inhalation of fungus spores, this time *Histoplasma capsulatum*, the symptoms are similar. The spores that cause this disease are found in soil that has been contaminated with bird or bat droppings. According to Answers.com, in the United States, the disease is most common in eastern and midwestern states and is widespread in the upper Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, and St. Lawrence River valleys. Since the spores of *H. capsulatum* are so widespread, it is almost impossible to prevent exposure in endemic areas. Dust suppression measures when working with contaminated soil may help limit exposure. About 95% of people who are infected either experience no symptoms or have symptoms that clear up spontaneously.

In both of these cases anyone can get histoplasmosis or blastomycosis, but people who come in contact with bird/bat excrement and infected soil are more likely to be infected. This includes farmers, gardeners, bridge inspectors and painters, roofers, chimney cleaners, demolition and construction workers, people installing or servicing heating and air conditioning units, people restoring old or abandoned buildings, and people who explore caves. Most of us will mentally write ourselves into that list also, I'm guessing, based on our natural resource and agriculture-related occupations.

For those engaged in scientific pursuits a little danger and intrigue is nothing new, but it's just another reason to *be careful out there!* On a more positive note, for a health-beneficial reason to "play in the dirt", visit <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/healthnews.php?newsid=66840> and <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/18082129/>.



2007 Annual SWCS Conference

The Soil and Water Conservation Society's 2007 annual conference will be held July 21-25 in Tampa, Florida.

The conference theme is "Conservation Challenges in a Changing Landscape." The conference includes workshops, concurrent sessions, symposia, posters, plenary sessions, and technical tours designed to expose participants to recent developments in the science and art of natural resource conservation and environmental management on working land—the largely privately-owned land comprising working farms, ranches, forests, and rural and urban communities.

AUDIENCE: The SWCS annual conference brings together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers at all levels of government, business, and nongovernmental organizations to explore current issues in conservation and environmental management science, technology, practice, programs, and policy.

You can register for the conference, view the preliminary program, read about lodging and activities, and more at http://swcs.org/en/conferences/2007_annual_conference/.

Membership Activity Survey

Top educational activity – Well drilling; Plant Nursery was a close second

Top outdoor activity – Summer canoe trip followed by Exploring a State Park

Community awareness activities (I like the suggestions, so I'm including them all) – Urban storm-water and erosion control issues, Wetlands, Manure storage and application, Implications of CAFOs on soil properties, water and air quality, Soils and septic systems for realtors

Top community development activity – Habitat for Humanity Build

Area with the most respondents – Central (56%), followed by NE and NW

Distance people are willing to travel for an activity – 60 miles (45%), 120 miles (30%)

Willing to stay overnight? – 76% said Yes

Maximum cost that you are willing to incur - \$50 (52%), \$100 (22%)

Thank you for completing the Membership Activity Survey! Your Show-Me Chapter Executive Council will try to make good use of your input. If you would like to volunteer to host an event or assist with planning, please contact a member of the Executive Board, or volunteer for an Exec position for next year.

Help Wanted!

Chapter Nominations Chair

Anyone who would be interested in volunteering for the Show-Me Chapter Nominations and Elections Chair (arranges elections and nominees),

please contact kim.worth@mo.usda.gov or tammy.teeter@mo.usda.gov. Current Chair Tammy Teeter is the best source for information about the position.

MEMBER ACTIVITIES BY DAVID SPEIDEL

E-gad its newsletter time and I am behind the eight ball! The response by our members to the activity survey was solid for outdoor events. The top three were canoe trips, exploring state parks for wildflowers and an educational visit to a well site during installation.

On June 3rd the Yokum Well Drilling will be hosting a tour of a well being drilled in Cass County. This was originally set for July with a 418th Civil Affairs Army Reserve Battalion but had to be moved. If anyone is interested and reads this in time please give me a call (816/632-7174). I will see what can be arranged just for our chapter later this year.

The wildflower tour may be possible this fall, if not will get set up for next spring.

That leaves the canoe trip.

There will be a SWCS Float Trip on July 13-15. Two sites on either the Gasconade (105 miles from Columbia) or Meramec Rivers (114 miles from Columbia). Current plan is to camp on the Gasconade on the 13th and be on the water the 14th. A three-hour float can leave at 9 am and pull out at noon. Please email david.r.speidel@us.army.mil by June 18th if interested. Canoe rates \$39 per and have not determined camping fee or if anyone wants to share rides. Details TBD. A waiver for the float will be provided to all participants prior and ½ fee up front. Cancellation only if seven days prior. (See www.canonemissouri.com for details).

WNC REGIONAL SWCS

Impacts of Increased Bio-Fuel Production on the Midwest Landscape

October 16-18, 2007 - Holiday Inn - 450 Main Street - Dubuque, Iowa

With regional and national attention focused on the use of renewable bio-fuels, energy conservation and energy independence, the impact on the environment (specifically on soil and water quality and quantity) is a critical dimension of the dialog that has often been in the background. The desire for less reliance on fossil fuels and foreign sources of energy will have a dramatic impact on national soil and water resources.

The goal of the conference is to elevate the debate beyond just technology creation and narrow economic development aspects to address soil conservation, water quality and human decisions about land management and how these intersect in the public debate surrounding bio-based fuels; and in particular, increases in grain based bio-fuel production. Organized by the West North Central Region of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

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SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY—SECOND PLACE

RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT VS. WILDLIFE HABITAT: CREATING A BALANCE BY SHELDON SHAVER

Years past when one thought of wildlife and conservation only rural lands came to mind. Farmland and woodlands provided an ecosystem for wildlife. As times change and the population increases, the development of farm land into subdivisions has changed the ecosystem. The transformation of the farmland as well as the natural landscape has created discussion and concerns about the habitat of wildlife, and the thinking that all development is destroying the habitat necessary for wildlife to survive. There are many developments that have been beneficial to wildlife which is a win-win situation for both developers and wildlife.

America often gets a bad wrap for being an overcrowded nation with suburban areas overtaking wildlife habitat. It is thought that wild animals will not thrive in a suburban setting when actually wild animals adapt to suburban life very well. Subdivisions have increased because people have the money and transportation to move to less populated environments. Studies prove that as income rises so does the interest people have in protecting the wildlife environment. Granted they build houses, streets, and bring more concrete with them; but at the same time, they help wildlife habitat. These same people create ponds, gardens, and plant trees that all help in the preservation of wildlife habitat.

Low density development can have a positive influence on wild life if it is built in the right way. Development actually opens up overgrown forested areas and creates new food sources for wildlife. Developers and conservationists must come together to form a plan that will help keep the wildlife numbers in the United States increasing. There are many things that can be done to protect wildlife habitat, but still allow development. Ordinances need to be in place to limit development in areas with wildlife habitat. Developers should design roads that do not block migration routes or isolate animals from food sources. Trees should be left to provide food and shelter for animals. Restrictions should be in place on street lighting in areas where wildlife is abundant. Reducing the amount of light and glare in sensitive habitat areas will minimize affects of people moving into animal habitat. These are all simple, but very affective practices that developers need to consider in their everyday work.

Some developers have already implemented practices that maintain a natural environment for wildlife when they build home sites. A couple of developers from Big Sky, Montana have been developing homes that have easy access to ski lifts and wildlife habitat. This trend is becoming more common across the country as people are attracted to wild animals and want to be close to them. A Keeping Track group in New Hampshire documents the presence of wild animals. The group documented the presence of bobcats on a particular sight that was to be used as an electric utility transfer station, but the group's findings led to a decision to relocate the station. It is programs and developers like these that provide positives not only for wildlife, but for development as well.

Second place, and \$1000 scholarship winner is Sheldon Shaver, senior at Norwood High School. He plans to attend Missouri State University and major in Agriculture. Sheldon is active in FFA, FBLA, National Honor Society, FCCLA, Student Council and basketball. He serves as Senior Class President, FFA President, and Vice President of National Honor Society and FBLA. He was selected to the All Conference Basketball 1st Team and has received many other basketball awards and recognitions.

Furthermore, urban sprawl is leading to an overpopulation of certain wildlife species. Suburbs provide such a wonderful habitat for deer that it becomes a problem. For example, in Kansas City the whitetail deer population is taking over part of the KCI Airport property. The city's ordinance does not allow the use of firearms or archery equipment has lead to an overpopulation of whitetail. The deer cause many traffic wrecks and damage to the community. The deer can destroy a homeowner's property by eating shrubs, costing the owner more money.

While urban development has increased Whitetail Deer population, other species such as Bobwhite Quail and Pheasants have suffered. Home owners often plant cool season turf such as fescue, which invades grasslands and chokes out native warm season grasses. Native warm season grasses are essential to the quail and pheasant population for the nesting of their young. Native grasses are difficult to reestablish and are often overlooked because of the high cost associated with them. Destruction of nesting habitat and the invasion of non-native species has had a detrimental effect on population of both species.

The challenge of creating a wildlife management plan that can be beneficial to all parties involved proves to be great. One need not look far for answers to the problem, however implementing these answers may prove to be a difficult task. The greatest challenge is not coming up with a plan that will benefit one species of wildlife, but a plan that meets the needs of all parties involved. Communicating the needs of everyone involved is the first step in solving this ever changing problem, and with that we come one step closer to finding the solution. Fifty years ago, if one was to pose the question, "What will urban development do to our native wildlife?" I seriously doubt many people would say wildlife population would be on the increase, yet in some cases that is exactly the issue we are facing today.

SUSTAINED PERFORMANCE AWARD BY KIM WORTH

I was contacted during the first part of May to let me know that the Show-Me Chapter was going to be awarded the SWCS Sustained Performance Award for 2006 which will be presented at the SWCS Annual Conference in Tampa, Florida in July. Following is the write-up that was submitted as justification for our award. Keep up the good work!!!

“The Show-Me Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society has a sustained record of high performance thanks to a proud past, active membership, and a promising future.

When the Soil Conservation Society of America (SCSA) was organized in 1945, six of the charter members resided in Missouri. By 1950 the membership had expanded to 64 members in Missouri. The first organized SCSA activity in Missouri was to form the Alfalfa-Brome Chapter. On January 18, 1955 the Alfalfa-Brome Chapter met, voted to disband, and organized a new statewide chapter, named "Show-Me". The Show-Me Chapter was changed to the Show-Me Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society by a membership vote in December 1987, the same year as the Soil Conservation Society of America name was changed to the Soil and Water Conservation Society. In the years from 1987 to 2006, the Chapter's membership has ranged from 176 to 231 members, with current membership of 215.

Additional examples of the longevity and sustained record of high performance of the Chapter's efforts follow. While several of the following activities were likely in place prior to 1986, Chapter history is only available as far back as 1986.

- Scholarships – presented 1986 through present
- Winter and Summer Meetings – 1986 – 1992, both were replaced similar meetings with different names
- Fall Forum – hosted 1993 through present
- Missouri Natural Resources Conference workshop sponsor – 1991 - 1992
- Missouri Natural Resources Conference co-sponsor – 1993 through present
- Co-hosted the SWCS Annual Conference with the Illinois Chapter – 2000
- Newsletter – 1986 through present
- Chapter website – 1998 through present
- Online officer elections – 2005 through present
- Chapter Awards to individuals (such as Professional Conservationist, Media, Volunteer, etc.) – 1986 through present
- Delegate to the Conservation Federation of Missouri – 1987 through present
- Chapter and Society Fundraising Projects – sold T-shirts, SWCS cartoon booklets
- Student Chapters – chartered in 1996, currently have 22 student members
- Sponsored/Co-sponsored numerous local and regional meetings

Next Executive Council Meeting - Thursday, June 14th

This meeting will be a teleconference. All SWCS members are invited to attend Executive Council meetings. If you cannot attend, please submit agenda items to your Area Director or kim.worth@mo.usda.gov.

Details are not yet determined, so check the website or contact your local director/councilperson if you would like to be involved in the call-in.

VOTING RESULTS ON CHANGING THE BY-LAWS

Following are the results of the recent election on changing wording of the by-laws:

Make our membership categories the same as the parent society – 48 yes, 2 no

Remove the past restriction of allowing the vice-president to serve only a one year term and no more than two consecutive terms - 45 yes, 5 no

Include online balloting, along with mail-in balloting, as a acceptable means of voting – 49 yes, 1 no

Remove the Betty Broemmelsiek Scholarship Endowment Committee section (the committee is no longer active) – 46 yes, 4 no

Change previous wording to match our membership categories – 49 yes, 1 no

Thank you to all who voted!

FALL FORUM NEWS - by Mike Morris

The Executive Council of the Show Me Chapter of the SWCS is currently organizing the annual Fall Forum. This years topic will be "Impacts of Ethanol Production on Soil and Water Resources". The plan is to have the Forum during the morning and have a tour of the Ethanol plant in Macon during the afternoon. A set date and panel of speakers has yet to be finalized and more information will be forthcoming. As in past years, the projected date will be the latter part of September. This Forum will provide insight into the resource challenges facing this country as well as an opportunity to see Ethanol production first hand. Watch for more information on the Forum forthcoming and plan on attending this fall.

*Fostering the science and
art of soil, water and
related natural resource
management to achieve
sustainability.*



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