



SHOW-ME CHAPTER

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY MIKE MORRIS



Welcome Spring!

In my heart I am a winter person, but even I am glad to see the onset of another growing season. I'm doing my part with spring activities. The garden, while not planted, is ready. I have managed to plant over 50 trees and shrubs on my property. I'm hoping to cash in on some carbon credits or something! The main thing is, like most all people, we are busy with work, family and hobbies. Fortunately for me, someone convinced me to run for President 18 months ago. This has insured that I would devote at least some of my precious time to serving our Society. This is a good thing. While I do believe my time is "precious", I also believe the workings of the Show-Me Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society to be a worthy cause. I am very grateful to my fellow members who have devoted their "precious" time as well.

During the last Executive Council Meeting there were a couple of issues discussed that I would like to report on. The National Chapter reported on the passing away of Norm Berg who was a long time member and presented the Washington Update for chapter members. Closer to home was the passing of one of our long time members, Raleigh Redman. Both of these men were like all professional people in that they were busy with their lives. But as conservation professionals they believed that the Soil and Water Conservation Society was worthy of their "precious" time. To honor these men the Executive Council voted to send \$100 memorials to a recipient designated by each family. The Norm Berg memorial went to the Norman and Ruth Berg Fellowship Program administered by SWCS. For Raleigh, the memorial went to the Springfield American Legion Post with a letter sent to his wife and family.

Reflecting on the passing of these members, I cannot help but wonder who will fill the void they have left. Nature has a way of filling voids when they occur, but the laws of nature do not apply to professional societies — hence the question, "Will the void be filled?"

SWCS National Convention, July 26-31, Tucson, Arizona! The Chapter has \$500 budgeted to any member who would like to attend. As of yet this money has not been spoken for. I will be attending as chapter President as well as Bob Ball who will be receiving an Award. Granted, Tucson in July is a bit scary, but they say it's a dry heat.

In the next newsletter I will give a report of the Convention. Wishing each of you safety.

I'm proud to be your President!

Mike Morris

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MAY 2008

Special points of interest:

- * Page 2 has information about float trip in August that you may attend
- * Page 4 has information about a fun Geology and Soils Tour in July

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS!

BY KIM WORTH

Pleasant Hope High School, the Missouri State FFA Soil Judging champion team, charged into Oklahoma and did something no Missouri team has ever done...they walked away with the first-ever National Championship for Missouri. The complete story may be accessed from the Oklahoma Conservation Commission at http://www.ok.gov/okcc/News/Land_Judging_Contest_2008_Post-Event.html, or the Bolivar Herald-Free Press also headlined the story when it came out in May at http://www.zwire.com/site/tab1.cfm?newsid=19671751&BRD=2841&PAG=461&dept_id=603510&rft=6. The team was competing at the National Land, Homesite, and Range Contest since there is not a national FFA soils contest as the contest is practiced in Missouri. Most, if not all, of the team members are high school sophomores, so they have good years ahead of them. As a SWCS member, please consider offering your professional expertise to a FFA, 4-H, Envirothon, etc. team in your area. And congratulations to the Pleasant Hope Soils team for drawing national attention to Missouri soils and natural resources!



The Pleasant Hope team from left: Brady Gifford, Matt Brown, Blake Press, Jeff Voris (Advisor), and Ben Farrell

WANNA PLAY?

BY KIM WORTH

August 3 – 4 (Sunday and Monday). Niangua River, near Bennett Springs State Park. Convene Sunday evening for a campfire and conversation. Float on Monday. And then head home Monday late-afternoon/evening to get back to the rat-race.

For more information, or if you are interested in attending, please contact Kim Worth, 209 Ash Street, Gallatin, MO 64640, 660-663-3703x7, kim.worth@mo.usda.gov.



SWCS 2008

Annual Conference

Tucson, AZ

July 26-30

The area of special interest for the 2008 conference is “Getting the Water Right: Hydrology, Climate Change, and the Bio-economy” and we will be hosting a special workshop on the topic on the last day of the conference.

The 2008 conference will take place at the JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort in Tucson, Arizona. Starr Pass is about 20 minutes west of the Tucson International Airport and two hours southeast of Phoenix.

There is scholarship money available from the Show Me Chapter if you are planning to attend.

We Are Looking

The Show Me Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society is only as good as it's members, and we have some awesome members. Please consider serving as an officer for the society and doing your part to improve our activities and projects. If you are interested please contact the nomination committee chair and express interest. We'd love to hear from YOU!

PARKWAY NORTH WINS TOP SPOT AT STATE ENVIROTHON

Parkway North High School is creating a winning streak at the Missouri state Envirothon. This is the third year in a row that they have won the top spot. They took first place this year with a score of 465 out of a possible 600 points. The school is part of the Parkway School District in St. Louis County.

Nineteen teams competed in the areas of soils and land use, aquatic ecology, wildlife, forestry and the 2008 current conservation issue, recreational impacts on natural resources. 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 outdoor 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.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Parkway North A-St. Louis County | 11. Parkway North B- St. Louis County |
| 2. Pembroke Hill High School-Jackson County | 12. Gallatin High School-Daviess County |
| 3. Hickman High School-Boone County | 13. Stockton High School-Cedar County |
| 4. Ava High School-Douglas County | 14. Valle Catholic High School-St. Genevieve County |
| 5. Blue Springs South Team B-Jackson County | 15. Blue Springs South Team A-Jackson County |
| 6. Camdenton Science Club-Camden County | 16. North Shelby Team B-Shelby County |
| 7. North Shelby Team A-Shelby County | 17. South Holt High School-Holt County |
| 8. Licking High School-Texas County | 18. Pilot Grove High School-Cooper County |
| 9. Norborne High School-Carroll County | 19. Mark Twain High School-Ralls County |
| 10. Eureka High School-St. Louis County | |

The team will go on to compete at the 2008 Canon Envirothon in Flagstaff, Arizona, July 28-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 and the Show-Me Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

For more information about the regional competition dates, contact your local soil and water conservation district. For more information about the Missouri Envirothon, contact Peggy Lemons at 573-893-5188, ext. 3, or Judy Stinson at 573-751-1783.

Article written by Jessica Royston, DNR and submitted by Bill White.



First place winners of the Missouri state Envirothon, Parkway North from St. Louis County, pose with their award. From left to right, Jenny Bower, Kathleen Beilsmith, Rebecca Frankenger, Amal Al Lozi and Jon Lee.

SPRING LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

BY KIM WORTH

Kim Worth attended the annual West North Central regional SWCS leadership workshop in Des Moines, Iowa on April 23rd as a representative of the Show-Me Chapter. There were chapter leaders in attendance from Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Iowa State University, and Minnesota. A few key points and interesting ideas from the morning meeting, along with tidbits from the afternoon presenter, are included below.

- Lindey Krug, Ankeny Membership Service Specialist, is leaving SWCS in August 2008 to student teach and pursue family activities
 - It takes an average of 5 contacts to get a person to sign up/buy something. Ankeny contacts expiring members approximately 8 times.
 - Corporate memberships earn the local chapter from \$100-\$300 per corporate member per year. Contact SueAnne Lyons with potential corporate members.
 - Non-profit partner memberships are available for \$100 annually.
 - Gift memberships (\$40) are available year-round for new members, but are mostly advertised around the holidays.
 - Consider a Chapter Retiree Liaison to contact retirees, hosts breakfasts, and offer reduced-price retiree memberships. Many of our members are approaching retirement age and we need to actively pursue keeping them involved.
 - The Upper Mississippi River Basin is being considered as the topic for the next WNC regional conference. Contact SWCS President Peggie James if you would like to volunteer for this regional conference planning committee.
 - “Starting in 2011, baby-boomers will be retiring every seven seconds for the next 11 years.”
- “Advisory Groups” or “Task Forces” vs. Standing Committees – people want a focused and fast way to volunteer. Give groups/people specific goals that can be accomplished in a relatively short period of time.

Selected activities in other states...

- Illinois – Farm Progress Show, booths at several conferences
 - Minnesota – “State of Minnesota Soil” meeting, tour of flood damage
 - Wisconsin – baseball games, 1 ½ day-long annual meeting, meetings in the same location as the student chapters so that more students can participate
- Iowa – telethon phone volunteers, trash pick-up via canoe, Bike Ride Across Iowa participants can mail home postcards featuring natural resources

YOU ARE INVITED!

BY KIM WORTH



Pickle Creek running through Hawn State Park.

Looking for a cheap getaway with family, friends, and/or coworkers this summer?

A Geology and Soils Tour of Hawn State Park in Ste. Genevieve County, Missouri (south of St. Louis) will be hosted by the Missouri Association of Professional Soil Scientists this summer. As numerous SWCS members are also members of MAPSS, and as even more of us share similar interests, Show-Me Chapter SWCS members are encouraged to attend the MAPSS Geology and Soils Tour.

Friday, July 18th activities will start at noon with a meal (a small fee will be assessed), a brief meeting, and be followed by the soils and geology tour that will end approximately 4:30pm. Saturday, July 19th activities may include a local winery tour, Johnson Shut-ins, Elephant Rocks, or another local attraction. Plans are still being finalized. Camping is available at Hawn State Park. A two-night stay, splitting a camp site with another tent, is only \$13 total.

For more information, or if you are interested in attending, please contact Kim Worth, 209 Ash Street, Gallatin, MO 64640, 660-663-3703x7, kim.worth@mo.usda.gov.

“Many visitors believe that Hawn State Park is the loveliest of Missouri’s state parks, with forests of pine and oak, sandstone bluffs and canyons, and clear sand-bottom streams. The 4,953-acre park preserves some of the finest areas for viewing Missouri’s wide variety of natural wonders. It is also one of the few places in the state where visitors can see such a wide variety of rock types exposed at the surface. Hawn State Park is the perfect setting for visitors eager to explore the unspoiled natural beauty of the Show-Me-State.” (Source: <http://www.mostatetparks.com/hawn.htm>)

1ST PLACE WINNING ESSAY BY CLAY DEANE

Technology, Influencing the Future of Natural Resources Sustainability

The future of technology in agriculture is both exciting and challenging. In the past decade, the number of farmers has dropped from 40 percent of the population to under 2 percent. At the same time productivity has increased tenfold. Farmers have been forced by economic conditions to continually be more productive just to stay in business. The main reason farmers have been able to keep being more productive is technological advancements.

New technology is being developed all the time, and while it is very exciting, we as stewards of the land, must remain aware of their influence on the environment. In the scheme of life, as we solve certain problems we often create new ones. As farms grow in size out of necessity, it makes it easier to lose sight of the "attention to detail" that small farm family farmers are known for. While small farmers could mentally keep track of inputs in a few fields along with problem areas of erosion and runoff, larger farms will require a more sophisticated system. In order to remain efficient in managing larger acreages will have to utilize computers and tools such as geo-referenced field maps to keep field records. This will become a necessity as federal regulators become stricter. Many new technologies are available, that along with help from government agencies like the USDA and NRCS will make our job of being more productive while protecting the environment much easier.

I've been involved in our family farming operation since my first job of chopping cotton when I was ten years old. I have seen many changes in farming practices even in my short span of farming experience. We no longer chop or cultivate cotton, we rely on approved chemicals to do the job. We also plant bio-engineered crops to fight pests. Both of these practices is beneficial to the environment. With less tillage, water and wind erosion has been reduced, and Biotech control of insects has greatly reduced the amount of pesticides applied that could potentially end up in ground water supplies or streams. Our family farm has been enrolled in the Conservation Security Program since it began a few years ago. I helped establish the native grass strips and food plots for erosion control and wildlife habitat improvement. In the last couple of years we have seen the benefits of the program in increased number of quail and rabbits. With the records that we must keep for the CSP Program, we are able to monitor the amount of inputs, such as fertilizer and pesticides applied each year. I feel that this will help us to continue to be good stewards of the land.

As technology improves, farmers will be able to manage more acres with less labor. Innovations such as GPS will allow site-specific farming which will promote more efficient applications of inputs. The use of bio-engineered crops will create a cropping system that will be easier to manage and be friendlier to the environment. The use of computers to keep field input records will help us to remain productive yet accountable for our impact on the environment.

There are many challenging issues that farmers face each day. One problem that farmers through the ages have had to deal with is weather and its effects on crop production. Over the years, lack of rainfall, or drought, has been one of the most devastating weather related influences on crops.

Advancements in irrigation technologies and methods have helped farmers supplement the water needs of their crops. However, in many areas of the country, irrigation is either impossible or economically infeasible. The answer to the problem of lack of water in these areas, I feel, will come from the field of biotechnology. With new methods available in the field of plant breeding, I believe it is only a matter of time before drought resistant crops will be developed. Scientists are already studying these possibilities. With technology available to identify individual genes and introduce them to a different plant, who is to say that we can't take a drought-resistant gene from a cactus and put it in corn, cotton, or soybeans? With biotechnology, the possibilities are endless and very exciting!

Our job as future farmers in this nation is actually a balancing act. As we move forward with all the new technologies, we must also be aware of their effects on our precious natural resources and to environment.

Clay Deane is a senior at Sikeston High School in Sikeston, MO. He is an honor student and is active in many school and community activities including FFA, Future Teachers of America, Science Fairs, Boy's State, church, hunting clubs, and others. Clay is also an Eagle Scout, a member of Boy Scout Troop 41 and a member of Order of the Arrow brotherhood. Clay plans to attend college at Southeast Missouri State University and major in agriculture.

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



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