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SWCS Annual Conference

July 11-15, 2009 Dearborn, MI
"Delivering Conservation Today and Tomorrow"

<http://www.swcs.org>

ASA-CSSA-SSSA International Annual Meetings, "Footprints in the Landscape - Sustainability through Plant and Soil Sciences," Nov 1-5, 2009, Pittsburgh, PA

<https://www.soils.org>

Please submit more summer and fall events for the next newsletter!

President's Message

Tom Pick, Montana SWCS Past (Past) President

Chapter Officers Elected

The recent Chapter Officers' election cycle resulted in the selection of Tommy Bass as President-Elect. Tommy will serve in this capacity for the next two years until he takes office as President in January 2011. In a stunning sweep of the two Conrad-based incumbents, Stacy Denny Eneboe will again hold the Secretary position for the next two years and Jane Holzer will continue to handle money matters as Treasurer. Congratulations to these officers, who were installed during the Chapter's membership meeting in Billings which was held during the Soil Quality/Health Conference at the end of January.

The Chapter expresses great pride in members Suzanna Carrithers, Amy Kaiser, and Erik Suffridge for their service as candidates for elected office. They all ran a good, clean election they can be proud of. We hope to see them again as well as others in the future step up to volunteer their services for the continued success of the Montana Chapter.

Kit Sutherland, the new Montana SWCS President, will join the summer '09 newsletter with his inaugural "President's Message." Many thanks to Ann for her dedicated, and continued service.



Editor's Message

Thomas Bass, MT Chapter Newsletter Editor & President Elect

Happy Spring Montana SWCS! I awoke to snow and an icy driveway this morning, but am finishing the day under brilliant sunshine. Congratulations to the new officers and many thanks the great participation from all our members. I will continue to manage the newsletter through the year, but will need to step aside for 2010 as I gear up to learn my responsibilities for 2011 and 2012. Having said that, editing the newsletter has been a pleasure; it is truly a publication of the membership and I thank everyone for their continued contributions. This edition is a little short, but keep those articles coming for summer.

If you are interested in working on the newsletter, please contact me. The template is made and it just requires some time in dropping in articles and soliciting announcement and calendar items. I must give a plug for this year's annual meeting in Michigan, I hope that the MT Chapter can be well represented. I am on the planning and review committee and the program looks great!

-TMB



Nick Pairitz has been employed with the NRCS as a Soil Conservation Technician in Sheridan, MT since June of 2008. He currently lives on a llama & alpaca ranch that his wife, Ashley manages. Prior to beginning his career with the NRCS, he has worked on a ranch in Judith Gap as well as serving a summer internship in Sidney at the ARS.

An Indiana native, he obtained his Bachelors in Soil & Crop Management from Purdue University in 2004. Following that, Nick worked 2 years as the Assistant Maintenance Director for Tippecanoe County Parks in Indiana before moving to Montana with his wife.

He has been involved with the SWCS since his sophomore year at Purdue. He is a Rocky Mountain Certified Crop Advisor and enjoys putting his knowledge and skills to use in his present position. His hobbies include but are not limited to backpacking, mountain biking, fabrication/welding and working with his wife.

Networking for Conservation

Located at <http://swcsnetwork.ning.com/>, the SWCS Network is your connection to conservation. If you're familiar with Facebook, the free networking website that allows users to network and share with other users, you'll find that the SWCS Network functions similarly in the conservation world.

Reasons to join the SWCS Network:

- Network with professionals
- Find answers to your conservation questions
- Learn about the latest conservation news
- Keep track of upcoming events

Check it out without joining the network. If you want to join, all you need to provide is a name and email address.

MT SWCS 2009 Awards

AWARDS ARE PRESENTED!

Dick Scheetz, Award Committee Chair: Finally, I get to write an article that isn't pleading for nominations for the MT SWCS awards. This year's awards were presented to some very worthy recipients at the annual conference, January 30, 2009. Unfortunately, the camera couldn't process pictures of me presenting the awards, so we have no pictures. Following are excerpts from the nomination forms for the winning individuals. Thank you to all who provided nominations.

Jerry and Kathy Sikorski from Baker were presented the Land Steward of the Year Award. The Sikorskis were recognized for implementing a conservation system including no-till for over 10 years. They have adopted a diverse crop rotation to reduce weed and disease issues, and reduce fertilizer and fuel costs. Jerry and Kathy have participated in various trials to promote alternative crops, windbreak plantings, and recently planting cover crops after harvesting a cash crop. Any and all information that they have learned has been readily shared with other producers as well as Government Agencies. They have left food plots for wildlife and developed areas specifically for wildlife habitat.

On their rangeland Sikorski's have installed water developments, cross fences and shelterbelts, and have developed a grazing and monitoring system to improve the condition of the vegetation. Jerry and Kathy have done an excellent job in maintaining a sustainable farm/ranch system, and continue to make improvements based on the latest technologies.

(continued next page).

Rick Bandy was presented the Professional of the Year Award. Rick is the Great Falls Area Soil Scientist for the NRCS. Rick is an inspiration to all of the employees in the Great Falls Area by his willingness to provide assistance with soil determinations, as well as irrigation and wetland issues. Rick is the Toolkit Specialist for the Area and is a willing teacher by relating the computer uses to everyday uses by the Field Office Employees. Rick readily assists with education activities throughout the State. He is very knowledgeable in soil properties and can present his knowledge in a very understandable manner, even for elementary students. One thing every student will learn is that you study soil, and get dirt under your nails.

OK, I lied. I will end with a plea to get nominations in for the 2010 winners in these categories. It is never too early to nominate someone deserving, and then you won't be kicking yourself that you forgot to complete a nomination. Call me!

See additional award story on back page (pg. 6).

SWCS 2009 Annual Meeting - Dearborn, MI

Are you coming to Michigan?

The preliminary program is complete and online registration is now active for the 2009 Soil and Water Conservation Society's 2009 International Annual Conference on July 11-15 in Dearborn, Michigan.

This year the overarching theme of the conference is Delivering Conservation, Today and Tomorrow. We will explore the challenges facing the delivery of conservation planning, policy, and practices today and the issues that must be resolved in order to deliver sustainable soil and water conservation tomorrow and into the future.

Conference highlights include a screening of *Dirt! The Movie* (and a Q&A session with one of the directors), 24 symposia, more than 150 oral and poster sessions, eight tours, and a variety of additional networking opportunities.

Download the preliminary program, register, make your hotel reservations and more at www.swcs.org/09ac

Thanks as always for your continued membership and support of the Society. We hope to see you this summer.

Sincerely,

Jeff Strock, Program Committee Chair
Dewayne Johnson, Professional Development Director
Kelly Goward, Michigan Chapter President



The 2009 conference will take place at the Dearborn Hyatt – just west of Detroit and 13 miles from the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW). Relevant to Montana travel, DTW is serviced by Delta, Northwest, United, Frontier and other air carriers. Ground transportation is \$62 round trip, plus gratuity. Government room rates are \$107/night and cut off for the SWCS block is June 14th. I hope Montana can be well represented. Pertinent travel links include: <http://www.metroairport.com>, <http://dearborn.hyatt.com>, and <http://www.metroairporthtaxi.org>.

Holly Sessoms, Bozeman - The MT SWCS is happy to announce the winners of this year's scholarships. **Kim Forgiione** of the University of Montana is the winner of the junior/senior scholarship, and **Colby Auckland** of Flathead Valley Community College is the winner of the freshman/sophomore scholarship. Kim and Colby were selected from a very qualified and competitive pool of applicants.

Kim is currently a senior at UM majoring in Wildlife Biology. She balances work, school, and volunteering, all while maintaining an excellent GPA. Kim has actively pursued experience in the Wildlife Biology field by volunteering at the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust as a Pine Barrens Monitor and at the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge as a volunteer biological aid, and through work experiences with the Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S.G.S. Kim will graduate in Fall of 2009, and hopes to obtain a position with the Department of Interior. She is especially interested in conducting research that examines interactions among wildlife, flora, and other abiotic factors.

Colby hales from Snohomish, Washington and is the son of Miles and Jill Auckland. He is currently a sophomore at FVCC, where he has obtained an associate's degree in Natural Resource Management and is working towards a bachelor's degree in Forestry. Colby has spent three summers working for the Forest Service, two of which he has worked with the Timber Strike Teams cruising timber and establishing timber sales. He serves as team captain of the FVCC Logger Sports team and is a member of Phi Theta Kappa honor society. Colby's family has long been involved in the logging industry, and he hopes to carry on the tradition by obtaining a permanent position with the Forest Service, DNRC, or a private timber company as a timber sale administrator or in timber sale preparation. Congratulations to Kim and Colby and best of luck in your endeavors!

Northern Plains SWCS Technical Conference - SD

Ann Fischer - Baker: February 18th through the 20th brought more than snow and cold weather to the northern great plains. It brought over 100 conservation-minded people to Rapid City, SD for a *blizzard* of quality speakers on topics ranging from Conservation and Energy Production to Pollinators. Both speakers and participants were charged and eager to hear the latest on emerging topics and revisit old topics with a new twist.

Janet Oertly, South Dakota's NRCS State Conservationist, welcomed the group with a poignant presentation of South Dakota's wealth of natural resources. She was followed by Mary Miller, SWCS Vice President and Northern Plains Region Director and Peggie James, SWCS President, who touched on the State of SWCS and sustaining it's future.

The remainder of the day was devoted to other topics on energy and conservation. A lovely banquet with a special Smithsonian presentation by Dr. Gary Peterson on "Dig It" completed the opening day.

Thursday morning presentations were alive with soil quality and the creatures within. The ever-enthusiastic Jerry Lemunyon from the NRCS Tech Center in Texas gave us a different perspective through his rendition of "Maintaining Conservation in our Rush to Produce Food, Fiber, Forage and Fuel" as our luncheon speaker.

The afternoon was devoted to water quality including one of Montana's own, Dr. James Bauder, from Montana State University presenting "Water Quality and Salinity Impacts in the Northern Plains". The conference day closed after one conservationist from each of the six states represented at the conference was involved in a Conservation Planner Round Table discussion.

However, the Silent Auction hadn't yet ended. Quaint shopping plazas had nothing over the vast array of donated items from the six states in the region. Wine, fishing poles, handmade wood products, jewelry-everything imaginable! The bidding fervor rose in the last half hour, giving way to the winners who triumphantly picked up there prizes, wrote their checks, ultimately benefitting the chapters who donated the items.

The conference format changed on Friday morning to include 9 topics in three concurrent sessions. It was over quickly, leaving people to say their good-byes to new and old acquaintances and ponder their newly acquired thought processes on their trip home. It was a wonderful conference and many thanks go out to all the people involved in making it the great success that it was.

WASHINGTON, March 24, 2009--Agriculture Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack named Dave White as chief of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). With approximately 12,000 employees and an annual budget in excess of \$3 billion NRCS is the nation's leading agency in conserving natural resources on private lands.

"Dave White's extensive experience working with the NRCS and at the local, state and national levels is exactly what we need during this time of economic uncertainty and renewal," said Vilsack. "Dave's expertise and advice will be particularly valuable as we implement the 2008 Farm Bill and work to achieve President Obama's goals for renewing America and combating global climate change."

White is a career conservationist with NRCS. He has provided technical and management expertise in Missouri, South Carolina, Washington, D.C. and Montana, where he served as State Conservationist from 2002 to 2008. White also served in the Senate Agriculture Committee where he helped craft the Conservation Title for both the 2002 and 2008 Farm Bills. He also served on the White House Task Force for Livable Communities during the Clinton Administration. White was named Acting Chief of NRCS on January 21, 2009. (NRCS News Release No. 0067.09 .)

March Snowfall Boosts Mountain Snowpack

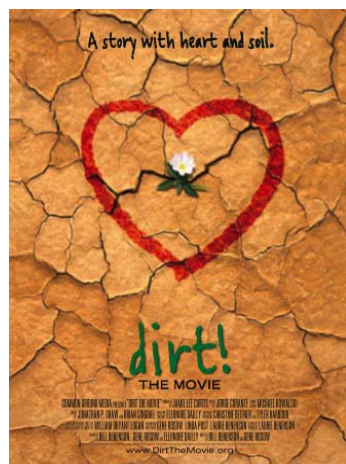
Bozeman--March mountain snow water content gains were well above average. In the Columbia River Basin, March snow water content was 170 percent of average, in the Missouri River Basin it was 163 percent of average, and in the Yellowstone River Basin it was 134 percent of average. After minimal gains in February, there have been significant snow water content increases during March.

Seasonal snowpack accumulation on April 1 for the Columbia is 96 percent; Missouri is 93 percent; and Yellowstone is 91 percent. State-wide mountain snow water content was 100 percent of average and 91 percent of last year. West of the Continental Divide snowpack was 98 percent of average and 86 percent of last year. East of the Continental Divide snowpack was 100 percent of average and 97 percent of last year.

State-wide, streamflow forecasts average 89 to 101 percent. West of the Continental Divide, streamflow forecasts average between 95 and 103 percent and east of the Continental Divide, they average between 85 and 100 percent. Water users and water managers need to pay particular attention to local basins affecting their water supplies, as there are localized areas where snowpack and streamflow forecasts are below average.

Tables for select basins available at: <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/news/releases/aprilsnow09.html>

Dirt! - The Movie



Inspired by William Bryant Logan's acclaimed book *Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth*, *Dirt! The Movie* takes a humorous and substantial look into the history and current state of the living organic matter that we come from and will later return to. An eclectic group of participants ranging from biologists to prisoners incarcerated on Rikers Island offer answers to problems and inspire us to clean up the mess that we've created.

Dirt! The Movie is directed by Bill Benenson and Gene Rosow and produced through Common Ground Media, Inc., a non-profit foundation. Kenny Turran, LA Times critic, spotlights *Dirt! The Movie* as one of Sundance's best documentaries in competition this year, "An invigorating look at an invaluable substance we take for granted that makes the case that dirt might be more alive than we are." Special Screening at the SWCS Annual Meeting in Michigan!

For more information on "Dirt!" visit: www.dirtthemovie.org.

Ann Fischer - Baker - **Brad Troser** joined MT Chapter SWCS in 1989. Brad served as Northwest Director for the Montana SWCS Board of Directors until 2008. Brad organized, and led the effort for the Jocko River Restoration Tour held in Polson last August. The Montana Chapter sponsored this tour that highlighted the watershed restoration and bull trout recovery work the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are doing on the Jocko River. Brad's initiative, talents, and interest in addressing the needs of Montana's natural resources and educating the members and public is much appreciated and is recognized through the President's award.



More information on the Jocko River Restoration Project available at: <http://jockoriver.net>

2009—2010 MT Chapter SWCS Officers

PRESIDENT: Kit Sutherland - Hamilton, 406/363-1444 ext 118

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Thomas Bass - MSU Bozeman, 406/994-5733

PAST PRESIDENT: Ann Fischer - Baker, 406/778-2238 ext 109

SECRETARY: Stacy Eneboe - Conrad, 406/278-3922 ext. 112

TREASURER: Jane Holzer - Conrad, 406/278-3071

DIRECTOR, EASTERN: Dick Scheetz - Terry, 406/635-5381 ext. 107

DIRECTOR, NORTHERN: Joyce Trevithick, Choteau, 406/466-5722 ext. 114

DIRECTOR, NORTHWESTERN: Angel Rosario, Kalispell, 406/752-4242 ext. 104

DIRECTOR, SOUTHERN: Roger Hybner, Bridger Plant Materials Cntr, 406/662-3579

DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN: Holly Sessoms, MSU Extension, 406/994-6589

REPRESENTATIVE: for Northern Plains on the Leadership Development Committee,

& WEBMASTER: Heidi Brewer - Bozeman, 406/587-6905



Please direct all submissions, comments and suggestions to: NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Thomas Bass, Montana State Extension, Animal and Range Sciences, 101 Linfield Hall—MSU, Bozeman, MT 59717 - 406/994-5733 - tmbass@montana.edu

The **mission** of the Soil and Water Conservation Society is to foster the science and art of soil, water, and related natural resource management through advocacy, professional development, and educational activities to achieve sustainability. The Montana members stand for a stewardship ethic that recognizes the interdependence of people and the environment.

Your **support** can make a difference! It's individuals like you that make healthy land and clean water for life possible. If you are not already a member, please consider joining. SWCS members benefit from professional development opportunities, in-service training and quality publications. Formal recognition for good work, awards programs and fellowship are also enjoyed. For more information please visit:

www.swcs.org/en/join_swcs