



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

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TO: SWCS Chapter Presidents

DATE: May 5, 2010

FROM: Bill Boyer, SWCS Vice President
Chairperson, House of Delegates

SUBJECT: House of Delegates Agenda and Resolutions

I am enclosing the agenda and resolution received prior to April 28th deadline for presentation at the 2010 House of Delegates session. The session will take place on Sunday, July 18 at 12:00 p.m. in St. Louis, Missouri. All conference attendees are encouraged to participate at the House of Delegates meeting, however, only official chapter delegates may vote. One resolution was submitted for the delegates' consideration.

Resolution: On Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change – The Empire (New York State) Chapter- SWCS

Resolution: The Empire Chapter of the SWCS recommends that the Soil and Water Conservation Society develop a position statement on the evaluation, development, and promotion of agricultural conservation practices to reduce and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. We recognize the need to maintain the efficacy of conservation practices to maintain and improve our soil and water resources to provide for increasing needs for food, fiber and bio-energy production. We also recommend that a committee be formed to work with the other professional organizations such as ASA/SSSA/CSSA/AAAS to develop a joint position statement on this issue. The individual SWCS and/or the collective position statement(s) could be formalized with a press release at the SWCS international annual meeting in Washington, D.C. in 2011. The Empire Chapter is relying on the Leadership of this professional society to develop the position statement and necessary collaborations.

This information is being forwarded to you so that you may engage the members of your chapter in discussion regarding this resolution. We believe that pre-discussion at the chapter level encourages effective discussion at the House of Delegates.

As in past years, discussion will be limited to the formal written resolution received prior to the April 28th deadline. All conference attendees are encouraged to participate at the House of Delegates meeting, however, only official chapter delegates may vote.

The following procedures will be used to direct the House of Delegates Meeting:

- The delegate from the Chapter presenting the resolution will introduce the issue and resolution. Their name appears on the agenda.
- I will moderate all discussion and preside over any voting on resolutions.

If time allows, immediately following the House of Delegates meeting all who are present will be asked to engage on a topic of discussion identified on the Agenda. A written response to that topic of discussion has been provided by the Georgia Chapter. Their statement on the topic is included with this material as the last page of this document.

AGENDA

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION SOCIETY HOUSE OF DELEGATES MEETING

2010 Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri
Meeting Room: TBD
Sunday, July 18
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Welcome – *Bill Boyer, House of Delegate's Chairperson/Vice President*

Introduction of SWCS President

Introduction of SWCS Board of Directors and Executive Director

Review Role of the House of Delegates

Review of 2009 House of Delegates Resolutions and Board Action

Introduction of 2010 Resolution for Delegate Consideration

Resolution: On Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change – Paul Salon, Empire State Chapter (New York State)

State of the Society

President's Report

Treasurer Report

Executive Director's Report

Town Hall Meeting

Topic of Discussion led by Gary Steinhardt (**Note:** time permitting)

Energy, water, and global climate change will drive research and environmental programs over the next century. This will largely determine what we hand off to our sons and daughters. We are heading into a time period that is comparable in significance to the Great Dust Bowl. What do you believe the appropriate role for the Society is with respect to these issues?

Closing Comments

RESOLUTION FOR PRESENTATION TO THE 2010 HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: On Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change

Presented by: Paul Salon - The Empire (New York State) Chapter of the SWCS

Resolution: The Empire Chapter of the SWCS recommends that the Soil and Water Conservation Society develop a position statement on the evaluation, development, and promotion of agricultural conservation practices to reduce and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. We recognize the need to maintain the efficacy of conservation practices to maintain and improve our soil and water resources to provide for increasing needs for food, fiber and bio-energy production. We also recommend that a committee be formed to work with the other professional organizations such as ASA/SSSA/CSSA/AAAS to develop a joint position statement on this issue. The individual SWCS and/or the collective position statement(s) could be formalized with a press release at the SWCS international annual meeting in Washington, D.C. in 2011. The Empire Chapter is relying on the Leadership of this professional society to develop the position statement and necessary collaborations.

Issue: The scientific community and governments throughout the world have now acknowledged the existence and threat of global climate change and that the anthropogenic contribution of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (CO₂, N₂O and CH₄) is the likely cause. Agriculture in the United States contributes about 6% of the total GHG equivalents and is the largest contributors of N₂O and CH₄ with a total of 68% and 32% of all US anthropogenic N₂O and CH₄ emissions respectively (EPA, 2010). Agriculture and forestry have the best opportunity compared to most other industries to act as a sink for carbon as well as to be able to produce sustainable biomass energy, further mitigating GHG emissions. Conservation practices developed and implemented by members of the SWCS and other conservation practitioners have the ability to reduce GHG effects of agriculture, maintain soil and water quality and other ecosystem services, and offset CO₂ emissions from other industrial sectors.

Background: The Empire Chapter of the SWCS acknowledges that the Soil and Water Conservation Society, through its Journal, Conservogram, and symposiums, has been taking a leadership role of informing its members and the scientific community on carbon sequestration, bio-energy and climate change related topics. In 2010 there will be a symposium on the "Conservation Practices to Mitigate the Effects of Climate Change" at the SWCS annual meeting and through the leadership of some SWCS members a topical session will be held at the 2010 SSSA annual meeting. The SWCS in 2010 is also sponsoring the Sustainable Feedstocks for Advanced Biofuels Conference in Atlanta, GA.

With only approximately 2-3 % of the population involved in agriculture and land management it is imperative that the American public have a true understanding of the significant contributions that agriculture and natural resources management, as well as SWCS society members and associated agencies and organizations, can make. Progressive agriculture and land management has the potential to contribute in the reduction, mitigation and adaptation to GHG emissions and climate change. SWCS members are leaders within the natural resource conservation and agriculture communities, and establishing a position statement on climate change and greenhouse gas emissions will add to their standing. A clear commitment on this topic by SWCS and other organizations will also engage younger professionals to participate in our societies and in the field of conservation. EPA 2010. Inventory of US greenhouse gas emissions and sinks 1990-2008. Chapter 6. Agriculture.

TOWN HALL MEETING

Input from the Georgia Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

1. Name and email of chapter delegate
Alan Franzluebbbers, Georgia Chapter President, 1420 Experiment Station Road, Watkinsville GA 30677, alan.franzluebbbers@ars.usda.gov
2. Resolutions to the SWCS Board
None
3. Regarding the topic put forward for discussion

Energy, water, and global climate change will drive research and environmental programs over the next century. This will largely determine what we hand off to our sons and daughters. We are heading into a time period that is comparable in significance to the Great Dust Bowl. What do you believe the appropriate role for the Society is with respect to these issues?

The SWCS should lobby for continued federal- and state-initiated research and extension funding to support development and promotion of resource-efficient, ecologically resilient agricultural systems focused on greenhouse gas mitigation, soil carbon sequestration, energy efficiency, water quality protection, and wise use of water resources.

The SWCS should be a key partner (and leader) with other organizations and federal and state agencies to (1) further promote known practices to conserve soil and water resources pertinent to these key issues of energy, water, and climate change and (2) develop ecosystem-level approaches to simultaneously improve soil and water quality, above- and below-ground biodiversity, ecosystem service functions, and rural development and sustainability.

Further, the SWCS should develop an educational program to promote and instill the principles of sustainability among its membership and the public. Conservation professionals may adhere to learned or mandated practices, but yet there is often a lack of ingenuity in modifying practices based on an innate understanding or belief in underlying conservation principles. Key outcomes of this effort can be derived from a grass-roots mindset, in which sustainability becomes an instinctive consideration like safety, ethics, or liability.

Cooperation between NRCS and SWCS has and should continue with regards to the issues of water, energy, and climate change. With specific regard to the southeastern region, we want to see the promotion of conservation tillage cropping, cover cropping, improved pasture management systems, and integrated crop-livestock systems that are in tune with the broad range of ecosystem services offered by conservation agricultural systems, not just an isolated service.