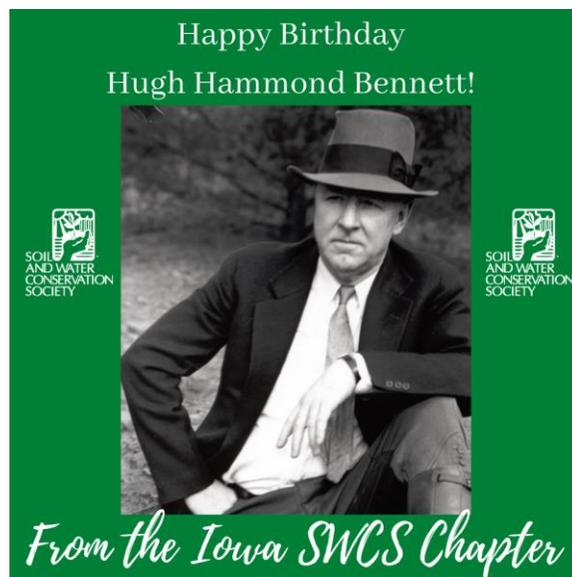




Iowa Chapter

Iowa Chapter SWCS Quarterly Newsletter- April 2021



Hugh Hammond Bennett, who was known as the father of Soil Conservation, was born on April 15, 1881. He worked as a soil surveyor for USDA where he observed a large amount of soil erosion. He wrote and spoke about soil erosion during the 1920s and 1930s during the Dust Bowl. In March of 1935, he testified in Congress for creation of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). As he was speaking, a dust cloud hit Washington, D.C. and he used it to dramatically demonstrate the need for soil conservation. As a result, the Soil Conservation Act was passed and was signed into law by President Franklin D Roosevelt on April 27, 1935 to establish the Soil Conservation Service. Hugh Hammond Bennett became the first Chief of SCS and served in that position until he retired in 1951.

President's Update: Steve Konrady, Soil and Water Conservation Society Iowa Chapter

Hello Iowa SWCS Members!

It turns out that I ended up with a pretty strange year to be Chapter President, all things considered! I thank you all for bearing with me in particular, but also with all of us on the Executive Committee as we navigated the challenges of the pandemic, attempted to remain valuable to our members, and dealt with the same chaos in our personal lives as well. Launching the webinar series last year was a fun outlet and we had some great speakers, then we all probably spent a bit too much time on Zoom for our liking so I let it take a back seat on the priority list for a while. Rest assured, I plan to revive and continue it after a few spring virtual conferences are done, and hey, in not too long a webinar will be a nice break from all the in-person meetings we'll be having once again.

Yes, by the time you read this, vaccines will be open to all adult Iowans, and many of us have already received one or more shots, myself included. While it won't mean an immediate return to in-person events and the abstract idea that is "normalcy", science and good government has once again provided us a light at the end of the tunnel. By all indications, all the vaccines available in the US are safe and effective and I strongly encourage you to seek out an appointment. There are helpful tools available online that can assist with scheduling made by enterprising Iowans with the right skills and big hearts. I can tell you from personal experience that even having just one of two shots (Moderna, by the way) is a warm feeling of confidence, control, and security that I didn't even know I was missing over the past year.

I've said it in several meetings this year, and I'm sticking to it - I'm optimistic that we get to do a lot of things in 2021 that we had to cancel or heavily modify for 2020. We are making plans for our summer meeting, which will remain virtual, and we are also gearing up for a virtual spring food pantry drive with the Food Bank of Iowa, so stay tuned on what we hope will be a fun team event. The 2021 SWCS National Conference will once again be virtual, and I'm hopeful that we can at least organize a hybrid event for the annual chapter meeting in the fall instead of being all virtual. So yes, there are a lot of things still impacted for the immediate future, but all signs are pointing to a more or less normal RAGBRAI so far! The ballparks are soon to be opening up for fans in the stands, Clare is demanding help at headquarters with the groundskeeping, normalcy!

The main message is, we'll get there and we'll get there together. My term as chapter president will end and I hope to introduce Mary Beth Stevenson as the chapter president for a more normal time. To that end, I wanted to dedicate the rest of the president's section of the newsletter for her to say a few things about herself. We had a few years as colleagues in the Iowa DNR and luckily she must still consider me a "work friend" as she graciously accepted my request to run for president (unopposed!). I'm excited to see what she has in mind for the chapter next year and I'm looking forward to helping her as past-president. So I'll turn it over to her and leave you with a repeat of my note of thanks to all of you for bearing with us, participating in our virtual events, and making this a great SWCS chapter.

Comments from Mary Beth Stevenson, President-Elect

Fellow Conservationists,

I would like to start off my introduction with a confession. After working as a conservation professional for nearly 20 years (holy smokes!), I am embarrassed to say 2020 was the first year I signed and delivered my first membership application to SWCS. Throughout the years I have followed SWCS newsletters and devoured many journal articles, and so I'm not sure why it has taken me so long to finally sign up as an official member. Now that I'm finally a member, I feel very excited to join the ranks of dedicated conservation professionals who are working hard every day to find sustainable solutions for some of our generations' greatest challenges.

One of the motivations for finally taking the step towards membership was the realization of just how important a network of trusted and respected colleagues can be, especially in a year like 2020. This has been a year like no other, full of important reckonings on so many levels. I have been very grateful to the friends and colleagues that have brightened many a Zoom call during some very dark times. In this vein, and as an admittedly brand-new member of SWCS, I'd like to share that an important priority of mine will be to communicate the value of becoming an SWCS member and to seek out new ideas to add value to a diversifying community of conservationists through the Iowa chapter.

In closing, I'd like to share my sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone for all that you do. I'm looking forward to getting to know many of you, and to a 2021 that will bring fresh energy and spirit into all of our efforts!

Iowa SWCS Executive Committee – Below is a list of the current board members and their term ending date. Officers are elected at the annual meeting in the fall and new officers take office immediately after that meeting. The President will automatically fill the Past President position. The President Elect will automatically become the President. All other positions are two-year terms in alternating years as indicated below.

Positions up for election this fall:

- President Elect
- Secretary
- Membership Chair
- Northwest Chair
- Southeast Chair

To learn more about serving on the board, contact any board member. *Serving as a board member is a great way to network with other conservationists across the state!*

To submit a nomination, send an email to Steve Konrady including a short bio and preferably a photo. A deadline for submitting nominations will be announced this summer.

Name	Office	Term End	Email address
Steve Konrady	President	2021	steven.konrady@dnr.iowa.gov
Mary Beth Stevenson	President Elect	2021	Mb.stevenson@cedar-rapids.org
Hanna Bates	Past President	2021	hbates@iastate.edu
Greg Townley	Secretary	2021	greg.townley@usda.gov
Anna Golightly	Treasurer	2022	anna.golightly@ia.nacdn.net
Clare Lindahl	Membership Chair	2021	Clare.lindahl@swcs.org
Heidi Ackerman	Central Area Chair	2022	heidimdittmer@gmail.com
Olivia LaGrange	Southeast Area Chair	2021	onlagrange@gmail.com
Josh Balk	Northeast Area Chair and Student Chapter Liaison	2022	Josh.balk@dnr.iowa.gov
Vacant	Northwest Area Chair	2021	<i>Immediate opening – contact Steve Konrady if interested.</i>
Jon Tesdell	Southwest Area Chair	2022	Jonathan.tesdell@usda.gov
Additional (non-elected) positions			
Sarah Ham	Social Media Chair		Sarah.ham@usda.gov
Alan Lauver	Assistant Treasurer		Alan.lauver@usda.gov



2020 SWCS International Annual Conference

by Courtney Allen, Event and Professional Development Director/Executive Assistant to the CEO, Soil and Water Conservation Society

“Expanding Horizons: Where Conservation Meets Innovation”

The Iowa Chapter of SWCS partnered with SWCS headquarters to organize the virtual 75th SWCS International Annual Conference on July 27-29, 2020.

The Iowa Chapter hosted multiple social hour sessions, administered a virtual silent auction, took part in the photo contest and awards judging, and assisted with other various tasks to organize and ensure the success of the first ever virtual annual conference!

The conference kicked off Monday with workshops, partner and Society events, an Agriculture Innovation Agenda Panel, and evening social hour sessions. Tuesday was kicked off with the Pritchard Keynote Panel on “Diffusing Conservation Innovations,” followed by concurrent sessions, and evening social hour sessions. Wednesday began with morning social hour sessions followed by an Address from USDA NRCS Chief Matt Lohr and a Dialogue on Diversity with SWCS Incoming Chair Dale Threatt-Taylor and Ebony Webber with Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS).

Nearly a thousand registrants representing 6 countries and 48 states had the opportunity to listen to over 135 oral presentations and symposia; view nearly 60 poster presentations; and more!

Don't miss out on this year's virtual SWCS International Annual Conference, July 26-28, 2021. This year's theme is One World, Connected through Conservation. Registration will go live in late April, keep an eye out for details at www.swcs.org/21AC.

Recap of 2020 Fall Annual Meeting

By Greg Townley, Secretary, Iowa Chapter SWCS

The Fall Annual Meeting of Iowa SWCS was conducted on Friday, October 23, 2020 on Zoom. There were 43 attendees. Highlights of the meeting included the following: There was an Agency Chat with presentations by Susan Kozak (Director of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's (IDALS) Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality) and Jon Hubbert (State Conservationist for Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)). Then there was Conservation Chat with Clare Lindahl (CEO of the National SWCS) and Dale Threatt-Taylor (chair-woman of the National SWCS). There was a presentation on STRIPS (Science-Based Trials of Row Crops Integrated with Prairie Strips) led by Iowa State University students and professors Cole Dutter, Matt O'Neal, and Celine Beggs.

Scholarship winners (Casey Luke - Junior at ISU in Agronomy, and Malcom St. Cyr - Sophomore at ISU in Agronomy and Environmental Studies) were recognized. Officer election procedures were announced with on-line voting remaining available until October 30. There was a presentation from Jake Hill (Water Program Lead at DNR working with the Meskwaki Natural Resources) about water quality standards and

his work with the Meskwaki Natural Resources. There was a presentation by Joe Otto (Historian and Project Manager at SWCS Headquarters) about Iowa's natural resource history and the early leaders. Finally, there was a social networking session on Zoom for those interested in getting to know other members.

Scholarships- Iowa SWCS is offering two memorial scholarships, each for \$1,000. Those scholarships are in memory of **David L Schnur, Newman Lyle and Krsnak-Runyan-Ward**. These scholarships seek to provide financial aid to a student in **need of economic assistance** and pursuing a **career in soil and water conservation or natural resources**. Applications must be postmarked on or before June 30, 2021. For more information contact Olivia LaGrange at 319-981-3586 or Onlagrange@gmail.com or click on this link: <https://iaswcs.org/student-scholarships>

Upcoming Events

- April 25 to May 2, 2021 – **Soil and Water Conservation Week** – Theme: **“Healthy Soils, Healthy Communities”**
- Date TBD in June, 2021 – Virtual Summer Meeting hosted by Southeast Area
- July 25-31, 2021 – RAGBRAI XLVIII
- July 26-28, 2021 – 76th SWCS International Annual Conference (virtual event) – Theme: “One World, Connected through Conservation” (look for registration info coming in April)

Membership Benefits - By joining Iowa SWCS, you can network with other conservationists in Iowa and across the nation. You receive effective representation in policy circles on environmental, agricultural, and conservation issues. You have access to additional education materials in the ***Journal of Soil and Water Conservation***, the monthly ***Conservogram***, and the Conservation ***NewsBriefs*** e-newsletter. You also receive a discount on books and conference or workshop registration fees. Click on this link to join or renew your membership: <https://iaswcs.org/join>

Follow us on Social Media

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