



Healthy Land  
Clean Water  
For Life

# State of the Society

*Michigan Chapter SWCS Annual Meeting*

*December 19, 2025*

*Renee Bouldin, SWCS Program Manager*



# Today's Update

SWCS initiatives are designed to support members, chapters, and conservation work → We're investing in infrastructure, people, and programs

- 2025 in Review
- New member benefits and tools
- Upcoming Events and Opportunities

# The Year in Review

## 80TH SWCS INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2025 conference brought together more than

**300** conservationists representing  
**5** countries and  
**41** states.

The conference program included

**152** presentations,  
**2** tours, and **1** workshop.



## EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM

The 2025 class of the Emerging Leaders Program graduated in August!

**128** leaders hosted  
**109** events with  
**6,922** attendees and  
**283** partner organizations.

SWCS welcomed **195** participants into the 2026 class in September.



## JOURNAL OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

The JSWC published

**40+** papers from studies across

**4** continents,  
led by our team of editors who represent

**14** countries around the world.



## CHAPTER ACTION

SWCS chapters continue advancing conservation locally.

**4** new student chapters were added to our network of

**40+** chapters in the US and Canada. We recruited

**380+** new members, and chapters continue increasing the number of local events held each year.



*The Platform for Agriculture and Climate Transformation, a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors & U.S. Department of Agriculture, under agreement number NR243A750018C 028, are supporters of the Emerging Leaders Program.*

## Webinars

- 31 webinars, 34 speakers, 1,400 live attendees

## People

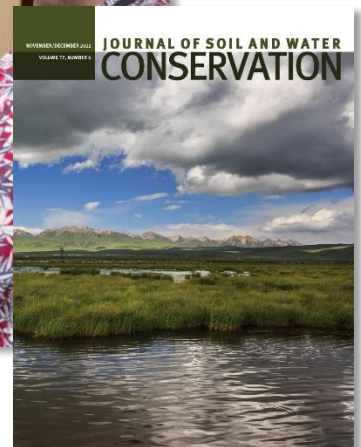
- 4 new Board members
- 2 summer interns
- New research co-editor of the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation
- Celebrated Conservation Professionals Week



## CONSERVATION VOICES:

*Strategies for Professionals Shaping the Future*

— Presented by the Soil and Water Conservation Society —



# The Year in Review



A new program in Illinois – farmers donate to support local grants and scholarships.

The voices of our members brought to Washington, DC – CEO Clare Lindahl spent 2 weeks meeting with leaders to advocate for conservation professionals and programs





# The Year in Review

## Enhancing Conservation Capacity

**82% of respondents** identified a medium or high need for greater capacity to provide farmers and landowners with technical assistance.

**49% of respondents** indicated a high need for improved onboarding and training for new employees, reflecting staffing and resource challenges.



## Streamlining Processes



**90% of respondents** rated streamlining contracting processes as “helpful” or “very helpful,” aligning with frustrations over cumbersome paperwork and inefficiencies.

## Climate-Smart Agriculture

**62% of respondents** were comfortable providing technical assistance on climate-smart agriculture, a significant increase from 37% in 2021.

## Job Satisfaction & Challenges

**~56% of respondents** reported being satisfied with their jobs most or all of the time, citing direct work with farmers, marking observable impacts on the environment and their community, and working in teams and collaborations as highlights.

Practitioners highlighted 3 major challenges in their work: excessive paperwork and process complexity, limited human and financial resources, and the ineffectiveness of programs coupled with insufficient progress.

*Key findings  
from the 2024  
Conservation  
Practitioner  
Poll Summary  
Report.*

# A New Member Platform

## Community Content Hub

The Soil and Water Conservation Society's Community Content Hub is your one-stop destination for tools, templates, and inspiration to grow your impact in conservation.

Whether you're a chapter leader, student, or member looking to bring people together, the new hub makes it easier than ever to find what you need to plan events, strengthen outreach, and build community.

Explore our member-exclusive resources below.



### CHAPTER OPERATIONS

Resources for conducting basic operations including chapter basics, template budgets, sample meeting agendas, officer roles and responsibilities, efficient meeting strategies, and more!



### OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS

Template social media calendar, SWCS brand guide, website building tools, template graphics, and more to share your message.



### EVENTS

Event flyer templates, offering CEUs, tour toolkit, template speaker and attendee emails, event planning checklist, networking event toolkit, and more to plan and execute successful events.



### GROWING YOUR COMMUNITY

Recruitment tools, template member survey, template welcome email, and more to recruit and retain passionate chapter members and collaborators.



### TRAINING WEBINARS

Recordings of past chapter leadership trainings that assist chapters in planning and implementing activities.



### STUDENT CHAPTERS

Governance resources, student event planning tools, Student and Affiliate Organization Guide, and more for students looking to organize locally.

## Events

Chapters host events throughout the year to provide education and training specific to local conservation topics. These meetings also provide the opportunity for conservation professionals to network with and learn from others working in their area.

The links below serve as a toolkit to help chapter officers and leaders plan and execute events. For more information on leadership training and resources to help chapters succeed, contact [memberservices@swcs.org](mailto:memberservices@swcs.org).



Topic	Resources
Finding and Sharing Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SWCS</li><li>• Share</li></ul>
Event Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Event</li><li>• Template</li><li>• Host</li><li>• Host</li><li>• Template</li></ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Event</li><li>• Email</li></ul>

## Growing Your Community

SWCS is a community of conservation professionals from a range of academic disciplines and many different public, private, and nonprofit institutions around the world.

SWCS depends on members at the local level to inform the community and inspire important conservation projects and partnerships. Strong chapters and networks of involved, dedicated members ensure a bright future for SWCS and our natural resources.

Use the resources below as a toolkit to recruit and retain passionate chapter members and collaborators. For more information on leadership training and resources to help chapters succeed, contact [memberservices@swcs.org](mailto:memberservices@swcs.org).



## Outreach and Communications

The key to successful community organizing is consistent and effective communication with our members and extended network.

To help you make the most of promoting SWCS and to ensure a consistent look, feel, and tone for all outreach and informative materials utilize the brand guidelines. The SWCS brand aims to reflect the professional innovation, and leadership spirit of the Society and our members.

Topic	Resources
SWCS Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brand Standards Summary (.pdf)</li><li>• Full Brand Standards (.pdf)</li><li>• SWCS Logos (.zip)</li></ul>
Chapter Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building Chapter Websites</li><li>• Template "About Us" Webpage Text (.docx)</li></ul>
Images and Graphics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conservation Media Library</li><li>• SWCS Flickr</li><li>• Using Canva Tutorial</li></ul>
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Template Social Media Calendar (.xlsx)</li><li>• Template Social Media Graphics (.ppt)</li></ul>
Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Template SWCS Branded PowerPoint (.ppt)</li><li>• SWCS Overview Presentation (.ppt)</li></ul>

Topic	Resources
Member Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Member Recruitment Training</li><li>• SWCS Overview Presentation (.ppt)</li><li>• Recruitment Tools</li><li>• Membership Made Easy (PDF)</li><li>• Member Benefits Flyer (PDF)</li><li>• Gift Membership Form (from chapter) (from individual)</li></ul>
New Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Template Welcome Email (.docx)</li><li>• Template New Member Survey (.docx)</li></ul>
Member Retention and Renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Member Retention Strategies</li><li>• Phone Script Template (.docx)</li><li>• Renewal Email Template (.docx)</li></ul>



# **New Database Walkthrough**





*Women Owning  
Woodlands Spring Tree  
Identification Hike, hosted  
by 2025 Emerging Leader  
Sarah Higgins in  
Hillsboro MO.*

# Looking Ahead to 2026

Building a stronger, more connected Society.  
Focusing on:

- Strengthening **chapters** and grassroots leadership
- Supporting our **members** – especially early-career and student engagement
- Expanding **professional development** and **networking** opportunities
- Modernizing **systems** and member experiences

Chapters are key partners in achieving these goals.

# 81<sup>st</sup> SWCS International Annual Conference – St. Louis, Missouri



Join SWCS in St. Louis as we bring together our conservation community of researchers, practitioners, industry leaders, farmers, and students from around the world to share inspiration, connections, and wisdom for success.

Submit a presentation for this conference by **February 4**.



# Awards and Scholarships



Submit a nomination or application by **February 10.**



# More Ways Get Involved!

- **Join a Committee** — Conference Coordinating Committee, Awards and Scholarships, etc.
- **Host an Event** — Utilize member resources to coordinate a local networking event
- **Support an Emerging Leader** — Attend ELP events, mentor, join us at conference
- **Join our Webinars** — Catch up on our 2025 offerings in the webinar library, get ready for more!
- **Share Opportunities** — scholarships, ELP applications, internship applications, etc.



*Bernadette Mills and Dale Threatt-Taylor at the 2025 SWCS International Annual Conference.*



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# Thank you!

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