



President's Corner: WV Chapter Recruitment, Our Greatest Challenge

Tom Basden, WV Chapter President

Whenever I am asked to reflect on my goals or on an organizations goals, I tend to look back first to see where we have come from before deciding where we need to go in the future. I have a box of

your individual talents. Committee involvement, recruitment of new members, attendance at meetings and financial contributions are necessary to be an active, contributing member.

"Let's commit, each of us, to recruit one new member this year."

West Virginia Chapter documents that I have sifted through looking back at past activities and membership lists. Our State Chapter has been a vibrant group over the years promoting conservation in the Mountain State. We have now seen a gradual decline in membership and it is time to make a commitment to reverse this trend. It is not enough to belong to an organization and deny the membership and the Chapter

I was talking to our Southeast Region Director Dale Threatt-Taylor at the 2017 Annual Conference and she was telling me some States in our region did not have State Chapters because of lack of membership. We do not want to go in this direction. Let's commit, each of us, to recruit one new member this year.

I would like to thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Chapter President during

2017. The Chapter would not function without the dedication of a group of Chapter officers including Past Presidents, Suzy Campbell, Melissa Merritt, our Treasurer, Jamey Darlington, our Secretary Becky (Bowers) Royal, Jeff Skousen our Scholarship committee Chair, Andrea Walker and Peg Reese. I would also like to welcome Josh Cook, President Elect to the leadership team.

We had a very good WV group attend the 2017 Annual Conference in Madison Wisconsin end of July. I attended with two Graduate students, Justin Brackenrich and Bethani Chambers. Also attending were Andrea Walker, Becky Royal, Suzy Campbell, Josh Cook and Jennifer Skaggs.

Two WV Chapter Members Recognized at International Conference

Suzy Lucas, WV Chapter Past President

The SWCS International Annual Conference was held in Madison, the capitol city of Wisconsin from July 30-August 2, 2017. The event was held at the Monona Terrace Convention Center, a venue beautifully situated on the shore of Lake Monona. This year's theme was "Conservation Connections: Creating Pathways to Sustainability", focusing on both the physical and social sciences behind soil and water conservation. Eight WV representatives attended the conference and two WV SWCS members received awards and were recognized for their accomplishments at the Awards Luncheon, held on the third day of the conference.

Award in recognition of her extraordinary accomplishments in the conservation of soil, water and related natural resources. The following announcement was made regarding Barb's admirable dedication to the field of soil and water conservation: "Barbara McWhorter is West Virginia state forester with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). A valuable member of SWCS for 24 years and a previous West Virginia Chapter president-elect and president, McWhorter has devoted her career to advocating for the conservation of natural resources, and specifically for forests as a renewable resource. With a focus on

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conservation education, technology development and training, and industry compatible conservation programs, she has trained

Two WV Chapter Members Recognized at International Conference!



Barbara McWhorter



Becky Royal

Two members of the West Virginia Chapter were recently awarded for their efforts at the International SWCS Conference this year. Barbara McWhorter won the Fellow Award and Becky Royal won the Outstanding Service award. Both of these awards required a petition of membership, as well as a decade of service to the chapter with only 0.1% of membership receiving such honors.

thousands of youth, teachers, landowners, private consulting foresters, state conservation and forestry agency employees, conservation district supervisors, and USDA NRCS employees. Her background and experience with commercial forestry and her knowledge of state and federal forest conservation programs make McWhorter uniquely qualified and skilled in crafting programs, policy, and practices that are compatible and implementable in private and commercial forest lands and by professional foresters. From local community groups to national agencies and organizations, no good cause is too small or too large for McWhorter to lend her time, talents, and expertise. In recognition of her achievements, she was recently named to the West Virginia Agriculture and Forestry Hall of Fame and presented with the West Virginia Women of Agriculture Award. It is with great pleasure that we award Barbara McWhorter with the honor of SWCS Fellow."

Becky Royal, WV NRCS Soil Conservationist, 14 year member, and current secretary for the WV Chapter of SWCS received the Outstanding Service Award in recognition of her distinguished service in helping the society to develop and carry out its program over her 14 years with The Chapter. The following was announced as Becky received

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her award: "Becky Royal has been a member of the West Virginia Chapter of SWCS for 14 years, with a high level of involvement and success in the chapter's executive committee and leadership roles for over a decade. She has served in office appointments such membership chair, secretary, president elect, and president, and has continued to serve the chapter as one of its longest serving secretaries and mentors of new chapter leaders. During her membership, Royal has helped to maintain a consistent presence of the

chapter in conservation programming and training, and has personally contributed to the success of its programs. She has gone above and beyond the call of duty through her continued service to SWCS members. Becky Royal is well deserving of the Outstanding Service Award.

Thank you Barb and Becky for your unwavering commitment to conserving West Virginia's precious natural resources! You make WV shine. The WV Chapter is proud of you and very grateful for contributions both to our state and to our chapter.

Upcoming Training: Post-mining Land Uses of Reclaimed Mine Land

Josh Cook, WV Chapter President Elect

Mark your calendar for this year's SWCS Workshop: Post-Mining land Uses of Reclaimed Mined Land. This workshop will be held Wednesday, August 23, 2017. Participants will visit two reclaimed mine projects, a hardwood reforestation project at Birch River and an apple tree and blueberry project at Muddlety. Attendees will hear discussions from those involved in the design and implementation of the projects. Discussions will center on soil physical and chemical properties of mine soils, plant growth on these mine soils, and income opportunities on these sites.

Registration Fees: SWCS

Members: \$10, Non-members \$15, payment accepted on the day of the workshop, please **RSVP** to tom.basden@mail.wvu if you are planning on attending.

Any further questions can be directed to the workshop lead, Dr. Jeff Skousen, jksousen@wvu.edu. Dr. Skousen is as professor of Soil Science at WVU and the Land Reclamation Specialist. One of his interests and research areas is on post-mining land use development and the potential agricultural and forestry products that can be grown on mine soils.



Agenda: Post-Mining Land Uses of Reclaimed Mine Land

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Wednesday, August 23, 2017 CEUs: To be determined.

9:00 am - Meet at Birch River Go-Mart off of Rt. 19.

9:30 am – Go about 12 miles on Rt. 82 toward Cowen.

Arrive at Birch River Mine.

- Meet with Bill Young, Chief Engineer.
- Visit Tree Reforestation Plots on the Mine.
- These may include hardwood tree plantings on different soil materials.
- Chestnut planting.
- Small Tree and Shrub Plantings.

12:00 noon – Lunch at Big Ditch Wildlife Management Area (Please bring bag lunch)

1:00 pm – Depart for Muddlety Apple Planting

2:00 pm – Arrive at Muddlety Site

- Meet with Darrell Sears, Sargent Major with WV National Guard
- Visit tree planting site, fencing, soil amendment plots.

4:00 pm – Depart from Muddlety Site to Rt. 19.

2017 SWCS Scholarship Winners

Jeff Skousen, WV Chapter Scholarship Chairman

Audrey Geise is from Allentown, PA, and upon graduation from high school, she entered West Virginia University majoring in Agroecology. During her undergraduate studies, she has been in active research. She conducted a horticultural study and presented her results at a national meeting in 2015 entitled “Effects of Alternate Media and Irrigation on Organic Vegetable Transplant

Production.” She also received an internship to work at the WVU Organic Farm and designed an experiment to study crops for managing stink bugs. Audrey then conducted research in evolutionary genetics finding causative genes for diversity in treehopper species. Audrey was awarded a prestigious Boren Scholarship which allowed her to study at Banaras Hindu University in India. Audrey has developed a passion for soil science and



after her undergraduate degree she plans to go to graduate school for a PhD in environmental chemistry to work in the soil chemistry research field.

The WV Soil and Water Conservation Society has provided scholarships to undergraduate students in West Virginia for over thirty years.

Alexandria Gourley grew up on a dairy farm in northwestern PA, south of Erie. She was active in environmental clubs in Union City high school and has been involved with the WVU Plant and Soil Science Club, Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Fraternity and the WVU

Community Choir. As a youth, she gained a deep appreciation for nature and natural resources. After graduation, she plans to obtain a career within the plant and soil sciences field to help farmers produce the optimum crops yields and protect soil and water quality.



A career working in soil fertility, nutrient management, and cropping systems would be most desirable.

Contact us:

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