



All Ohio Chapter News

Soil and Water Conservation Society

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From The President

By Brent Sohngen

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It's a Great Time to Be a Member of the All Ohio Chapter!

Brent Sohngen

It has been a great honor and pleasure to serve this past year as the President of the All Ohio Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. Of course, it is always easy to stand on the shoulders of so many great volunteers who make this organization work so well. These volunteers include the executive council members who dedicate their time to monthly meetings, developing programs for the winter and summer meeting, keeping track of finances, keeping minutes, and debating strategy, among other things. I cannot thank this group enough for their dedication and efforts: Past-President Lloyd Owens, Future President Dave Libben, Secretary Sandra Chenal, Treasurer Bob Parkinson, Members-at-Large Alan Sundermeier and Mary Ann Core, and Counselor John Clark.

The volunteers also include those who chair and serve on committees, where the real work of our organization takes place. Art Brate chairs the outstanding member committee and works with Randall Reeder and Tim Gerber. Larry Antosch chairs the outstanding publications committee and works with Jon Rausch and Kevin King. Angel Arehart chairs the Scholarship committee and works with Kara Tucker. Kara also chairs the membership committee. Chris Coulon does incredible work putting the newsletter together and taking care of the web page. Last year, Tim Gerber and Barry Allred conducted an audit of our financial books. Tom Stockdale tabulated the election results this past fall. If I have missed anyone who has contributed this past year, and I surely have, I apologize.

At this February's winter meeting a new group of officers will take charge (President Dave Libben, President Elect Michelle Lohstroh, Treasurer Rick Wilson, Secretary Sandra Chenal, new Member-at-Large

Member Spotlight – Lloyd Owens

By Christina Coulon

USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Soil Scientist Lloyd Owens has a long and distinguished tenure as a member of the All Ohio Chapter of SWCS. He became a member in 1978, two years after earning his PhD in Agronomy (soil chemistry) from Purdue University in his home state of Indiana. Prior to obtaining a PhD, Owens earned a bachelor's degree in Chemistry Education from Purdue in 1969. He continued his education at Purdue earning a master's degree in Agronomy (Soil Biochemistry) in 1972. He then traveled to Africa where he studied Agriculture (Pedology) at the University of Rhodesia.

Owens began his career with ARS in 1976 as a Supervisory Soil Scientist in Coshocton, Ohio. In 1987, he became a Research Leader/Location Coordinator at ARS. In 2002, Owens became a Research Soil Scientist at ARS, a position that he still holds in Coshocton.

Owens credits his supervisor from his early days in ARS with turning him on to SWCS. Owens states, "it (joining SWCS) did not take a lot of 'arm twisting'. Being a young scientist and at a small, remote location, it was important that I have professional development and networking

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*Lloyd Owens, Former SWCS
President*

Conservation Programs in Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008

By Carl Zulauf, Professor, Ohio State University

The author thanks Dennis Nuxoll for his comments and insights.

Beginning with the 1985 Farm Bill, a major policy trend has been the increasing importance of farm conservation and environmental programs. The 2008 Farm Bill continues this trend. It authorizes a \$4 billion increase in spending on conservation programs over the 2008-2012 fiscal years relative to baseline spending. Baseline spending is determined by assuming the continuation of existing programs.

More significantly, over the 2008-2017 fiscal years, the authorized budget on Title II, or conservation programs, was scored at \$55 billion, which was 64 percent of the \$85.5 billion budget score for Title I (farm commodity support programs). While history teaches us that actual spending can differ substantively from authorized

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Carl Zulauf is a professor of agricultural economics at The Ohio State University. His areas of interest are agricultural policy and agricultural futures and options markets.

Professor Zulauf was raised on a general farm 60 miles north of Columbus, Ohio.

Professor Zulauf received his B.S. and M.S. from Ohio State University in agricultural economics and his Ph.D. from the Food Research Institute, Stanford University. He has won several teaching awards, and has published numerous research articles.

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spending, the 2008 Farm Bill is a watershed event in that baseline spending on conservation programs exceeds 50% of the baseline spending on farm supports.

The preceding discussion implies that conservation programs are no longer a minor budget item. With greater budget costs will come increased scrutiny regarding spending on conservation programs. One indicator of increasing scrutiny is the increasing pressure during the last several years and during the Farm Bill debate to ensure that conservation program dollars are being well spent. Another indicator is the tighter restriction on payments from conservation programs included in the 2008 Bill. Specifically, conservation payments are denied to a person (legal entity) whose average adjusted gross nonfarm income during the previous 3 tax years exceeds \$1 million unless average adjusted gross farm income is two-thirds or more of average adjusted total gross income. In the 2002 legislation, conservation payments were denied to a person (legal entity) with adjusted gross income of over \$2.5 million, averaged over the previous 3 years; unless 75% or more of adjusted gross income was from farming, forestry, or agriculture. Congress enacts payment limits to control the cost of a program and/or to address concerns about the size of government payments an individual should receive. In short, it will behoove supporters of conservation programs to begin now to document the efficacy of conservation programs in preparation for the next round of policy deliberations.

More broadly, this observer no longer believes that it is appropriate to use the descriptor, "the farm bill." While categories are always subject to debate, one commonly-accepted metric is that no more than 25% of total spending authorized by the bill was for farm support programs. Another commonly-accepted metric is that authorized spending on nutrition programs was at least 65% of total spending authorized by the bill. This observer believes that it is more accurate to think of the "Farm Bill" as the "Bioresources Bill." BioResources more

accurately connotes that the Bill addresses policy issues centered on biological resources, ranging from food for human consumption, production of energy from bio-feedstocks, provision of environmental services, and the production of farm commodities.

I would like to note three specific Title II (Conservation) provisions. Please be aware that interpreting bill language is difficult so errors may exist. In addition, just as important as bill language is the interpretation of bill language via the regulations. Regulations are critical to the operation of programs and thus can change one's perspective of legislative language.

One provision is the redesigned CSP (now stands for Conservation Stewardship Program; previously known as the Conservation Security Program). The objective of CSP remains to encourage farmers to adopt practices that benefit the environment on land that they farm. CSP is referred to as a working lands program. The new CSP requires a producer to meet the "stewardship threshold" for at least "one priority concern." The meaning of these two terms will be much debated during the writing of the regulations for CSP. More importantly, CSP's target is to enroll 12.8 million new acres per year or 64 million new acres over five years. If this expansion is realized, the new CSP will underscore the transition of conservation programs from a focus on land retirement to a focus on farm practices.

The second provision is the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI). CCPI is essentially a test program for a different model of addressing environmental issues. Specifically, it encourages private-public partnerships involving different levels of government and diverse community partners to collaboratively resource and solve environmental issues. Community partners can include farmers, environmental organizations, concerned citizens, other

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voluntary organizations, and so on.

CCPI funds will come from 6% of the funds appropriated for conservation programs, excluding the Farmland Protection Program and land retirement programs (Wetland Reserve, Grassland Reserve, and Conservation Reserve, but Conservation Reserve Enhancement is included in the CCPI funding base). For example, 6% of the \$1 billion in EQIP funds for Fiscal Year 2007 translates into \$60 million. Thus, funding for CCPI will be significant.

The third provision directs the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish technical guidelines that outline science-based methods to measure the benefits of environmental services from conservation and land management activities. A stated priority is the issuance of guidelines for markets in carbon. It is significant that the Department of Agriculture was given this authority. Another option would have been the Environmental Protection Agency.

These guidelines will provide a framework to facilitate participation of farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners in markets for environment services. Ecosystem markets have the potential to create private sources of capital to encourage stewardship behavior. The development of such markets potentially could change the mix of activities in which U.S. farmers chose to engage as well as the provision of environmental services from farm and forest land. They could become especially important given the previously-discussed, increasing scrutiny of public funds for farm environmental programs.

In conclusion, conservation programs have matured into a full partner in the writing of the BioResources Bill. The level of authorized spending provides great opportunities but will also bring closer scrutiny. The 2008 BioResources Bill makes clear that the focus of conservation programs is changing to

encouraging farm practices that benefit the environment. In my opinion, the successful completion of this transition is important. Conservation should be part of the culture of business and thus part of management. This means that supporters of the environment must empathize with the constraints faced by farmers and that farmers must empathize with constraints on the environment. If the farm environmental programs in the 2008 BioResources Bill can facilitate this cultural change, then farm conservation will have the opportunity to enter a golden age.

**Appendix: Title II (Conservation) Provisions
not mentioned above
*Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008***

- ▶ Reduces maximum acres in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): 39.2 to 32 million
 - ▲ Authorizes a pilot program to allow CRP to enroll 1 million acres of wetland and buffer acres
 - ▲ Permits managed harvesting (including for biomass) and wind turbines on CRP land provided the activity is consistent with environmental goals (including wildlife) --- CRP rent is reduced
 - ▲ Creates an incentive program to transition CRP land being returned to production by retired or retiring farmers to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers
- ▶ Increases acres in the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP): 2.275 to 3.0412 million
- ▶ Increases acres in the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) by 1.22 million by 2012
- ▶ Authorizes additional funds for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
 - ▲ Reduces the payment limit from \$450,000 to \$300,000
- ▶ Doubles funding for the Farmland Protection Program (FPP)

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opportunities. The All Ohio Chapter gave me the opportunity to become acquainted with other agencies and individuals in Ohio who were working with soil and water resources, especially on the applied side - not just in a "theoretical" research world."

Owens has served in multiple leadership positions in the 31 years he's been a SWCS member. In 1981-82, he was a member of the Soil Resources Committee, back when SWCS was called the AOC SCSA (Soil Conservation Society of America). In 1988, Owens served on the Technical Tours Committee for the International Meeting of SWCS. In 1999-2000, Owens held his first leadership role on the executive committee as AOC Secretary. That was followed by a term as AOC President-Elect in 2001, President in 2002, and Past-President in 2003. He repeated that series in 2006-2008.

If anyone has insight on how SWCS can benefit a person's professional development, Lloyd does. When he reflects on the benefits he's experienced as a member of SWCS he relates, "Being a SWCS member has helped me learn about soil and water conservation needs/concerns, especially in Ohio; approaches used to meet those needs; and how research and technology transfer can be part of the solution. It has also helped to see more of Ohio from a conservation professional viewpoint. The tours at AOC Summer Meetings have been particularly interesting. Being a member of SWCS has also helped me to have a national and even international awareness of conservation efforts."

Owens explains that being a member of SWCS has benefits extending beyond the professional. We do things because they have some meaning to us. Owens says, "Most of us have a need to be a part of something larger than ourselves. Being a SWCS member allows me to be a part of 'an effort' to wisely utilize and conserve our

natural resources beyond our local area and beyond our current generation. We should all be good stewards of our natural resources. The SWCS not only supplies research and technical information to its members as well as being a resource for local conservation districts, e.g. via the Journal, but it also uses its collective technical expertise to try to guide conservation policies at a national level. The best way to be a part of this is to be involved. The way to get the most out of an organization or experience is to put something in."

On a personal note, Owens resides near Coshocton with his wife and two teenage sons. They recently hosted an exchange student from China, who Owens says "was a pleasure to host."



Old Man's Cave in winter – by Chris Coulon

2009 Winter Meeting

February 3, 2009

Ohio Department of Agriculture
Auditorium 8995 East Main Street
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068

(<http://www.agri.ohio.gov/contacts.aspx>)

Update on Animal Waste Management Science in Ohio

8:00 am	Registration and Coffee
8:30 am	Opening Comments - Dave Libben
8:35 am	Preliminary Results of Winter Manure Application in Wooster and Coshocton - Robert Mullen, State Specialist, OARDC; Lloyd Owens, USDA-ARS, Coshocton
9:30 am	Increased dissolved phosphorus losses from agricultural watersheds: Extent and possible causes - David Baker and Pete Richards, Heidelberg College
10:15 am	Break
10:30 am	How Manure and Nutrient Management Affects Water Quality AND an Update from the Ohio Lake Erie Phosphorus Task Force - Rick Wilson, Ohio EPA
11:15 am	Manure and Digesters: Reality vs. Wishful Thinking - Tom Menke, Menke Consulting
12:00 pm	State Regs - Kevin Elder, Ohio Department of Agriculture
12:30 pm	Lunch Luncheon Speaker: Douglas Southgate Professor, Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics "Must Food Grow Scarcer?"

Certified Crop Advisor CEUs available: 4.5 Total Hours; Nutrient Management (NM) = 2.5; Soil and Water (SW) = 1.0; Professional Development (PD) = 1.0. Alan Sundermeier will coordinate registration for these hours at the meeting.

This program is also eligible for 3.0 Engineering Professional Development Hours (PDH's). Mike Monnin will coordinate registration at the meeting.

AOC Winter Meeting - Business Meeting Agenda

President Brent Sohngen The All Ohio Chapter Winter Meeting of the membership will follow the luncheon presentation.

Secretary's minutes (from Summer Meeting)

Treasurer's report

Agency Updates

NRCS - Terry Cosby (invited)

Div Soil Water (ODNR) - David Hanselmann (invited)

Awards Outstanding Member Award - Art Brate

Introduction and Discussion- New policy committee.

Installation of Officers "Passing the Gavel"

2009 AOC-SWCS ANNUAL WINTER MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

February 3, 2009
Ohio Department of Agriculture
Auditorium
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Registration Costs: Member, Non-member, and Student (\$30) \$ _____

Registration Deadline is January 23, 2009.

Please fill out and return this sheet along with a check payable to:

AOC – SWCS
Mail to: *Bob Parkinson - NRCS*
200 N. High Street, Room 522
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Please consider making a personal contribution any or all of the Chapter's funds:

Envirothon Fund \$ _____

Operating Fund \$ _____

Scholarship Fund \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

SOIL SCIENTIST PASSES

Submitted By John Clark

According to the January 5, 2009 edition of the Columbus Dispatch, Samuel W Bone died at age 85. He was a long time OSU extension agronomist, retiring in 1980. Sam most recently lived in Columbus, Ohio and Ft. Myers, Florida.

He was one of the early leaders of the All Ohio Chapter, established in 1956. The 25 Year Chapter Anniversary Booklet said he held the offices of secretary-treasurer, vice-chair, and chairman during the 1959-61 period. (In 1962 these position titles changed.)

Sam traveled throughout the state sharing his research and knowledge of growing corn and soy beans using the no tillage method with many farmers. He was instrumental in helping to establish the 'Farm Science Review'.

The obituary referred to his family (married to Bettye for 53 years), his master's degree in agronomy, and his WWII navy experience.

PROPOSAL: Ad Hoc Committee on Public Policy

Position Description

Composition of the Committee

The Chairperson and up to 5 committee members will be selected by the Executive Council to serve for three year terms. Only members of the All Ohio Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society can be voting members of the committee, although the committee can invite non-members with particular expertise to participate as ex-officio members as needed.

Goals and Objectives

To promote and advance implementation of objective 3 of the chapter's strategic plan ("Advocate legislation and public policy that promotes the conservation of natural resources.").

To identify how important natural resource trends and policy issues before the state intersect with the interests and objectives of the chapter.

To educate the membership and the broader conservation community about how these policy issues may affect natural resources in Ohio.

To define positions that the organization may from time-to-time take regarding important legislative or executive initiatives from the government of the State of Ohio.

To educate the Ohio legislature and executive branches on important natural resource issues and emerging trends in natural resources and the environment.

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Policy and Procedure

1. This is a new committee of the Chapter with responsibility to identify important state and local policy issues that are affecting or will affect our membership.
2. The committee will work to educate the membership of the organization about these policy issues through the newsletter, list-serv, website, and annual meetings. The public policy committee will work with the publications committee and the program committee to design appropriate strategies to communicate information.
3. From time-to-time, the committee will work to define an appropriate position on an important emerging policy issue that represents a consensus view of the organization. The position statement should reflect the objectives and purpose of the organization, as outlined in Article III of our by-laws.
4. Committee reports will consist of written statement outlining the issue(s) being addressed and the proposed position for the chapter to take on the issue. The statement should include, as an appendix, additional background material reflecting the pros and cons of the issues discussed, any important minority views held, and a tally of the votes on the committee. The statement the committee writes must be approved unanimously by the executive council before it becomes policy of the All Ohio Chapter.
5. The committee may write letters on behalf of the organization to the executive or legislative branches in Ohio regarding the consensus view of the organization (previously developed by the committee) for new legislation or proposals for new rules. All letters must be approved by the executive council before mailing.
6. The committee may recommend policy to the international organization or may recommend national policy. Any such recommendations should be approved by the executive council.
7. The committee chair will keep the executive council informed of on-going discussions by reporting to executive council meetings at least semi-annually.

Committee Work Schedule

1. The committee will meet at least twice per year by telephone conference call or in person. The committee may meet more frequently when important issues are on the table.
2. The committee chair will report to the executive council once per year on the activities of the committee.

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Jon Rausch). I congratulate them and will work with them to continue moving our organization forward.

This is truly an exciting time for this organization. Environmental issues have perhaps never been on the minds of Americans as much as today. Climate change, water quality, fuel efficiency, energy, and healthy foods and farms, are just some of the issues discussed in the media, on blogs, and in coffee rooms all over the country. Members of our organization have a lot to say about these issues and will be driving state, federal and local policies that influence how society addresses them.

To help our organization respond to this growing set of policy issues, the executive council has worked over the past year to develop a new ad-hoc policy committee. This policy committee, we hope, will work to synthesize information, develop educational materials, and write policy statements on important federal, state, or even local policies that are affecting (or will affect) our membership. Over the next year, we plan to get this committee up and running. We hope that through thoughtful deliberation, consultation with the executive council and the membership, and some research, this policy committee will help our organization contribute more meaningfully to the environmental and natural resource policy dialogue in Ohio.

The scope for this new committee is printed elsewhere in the newsletter, and it is also available on the website. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the executive council members. In particular, if you wish to serve on this new committee, or another committee, please definitely send me an email.

To submit items for the newsletter contact newsletter editor Chris Coulon at chris.coulon@oh.usda.gov

Thanks to all of you for all you do to make Ohio a better place to live. It has been my pleasure to serve this organization in the past year and I look forward to continuing to work with you as the future unfolds.

Events of Interest

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- [OHIO FEDERATION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS ANNUAL MEETING](#) – January 20-22, Columbus, Ohio
 - [Grant Writing Workshop](#) – February 24, 2009, Russell Cooper House in Mt. Vernon, Ohio.
 - [CONSERVATION TILLAGE CONFERENCE](#), February 26-27, Ada, Ohio
-

AOC Officers - 2009

Dave Libben, President
Michelle Lohstroh, President-Elect
Brent Sohngen, Past-President
Sandy Chanel, Secretary
Rick Wilson, Treasurer
John Rausch, Member At Large
Mary Ann Core, 2nd Year Member At Large

Visit Us On the Web at:
www.ohiochapterswcs.org