



SOIL
AND WATER
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY

Healthy Land
Clean Water
For Life

South Dakota Chapter Chatter Oct. 2021

Editor Tyler Tran

The Three Rs of Membership

By Arlene Brandt-Jenson

You've all heard of the three Rs of education: Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic. As I write my last article as President, I'm thinking of the three Rs of Membership: Recruit – Retain – Repeat.

Recruit. As with any healthy non-profit or volunteer organization, each one of us has an obligation to spread the word about the good work we do and actively recruit others to join us. How many people have you asked to join SWCS in the past 6 months? If you ask 5 people, maybe one will follow through and join. It's not up to just the President or Membership Committee to recruit; it's up to all of us. We recently received the names of 39 new NRCS employees hired since January. That's a huge potential for membership growth! Some have already joined and stepped up. Don't forget about other related agencies and organizations for recruiting potential.

Retain. The best way to retain members is to get them involved in meaningful activities. They see that their membership is needed and appreciated. This past year we revamped the committees and made and recruited new members to the committees. If you would like to be involved in one of the committees, please reach out to committee chairs listed elsewhere in this newsletter; they would love to hear from you. Members feel more inclined to renew if they see the chapter is active and having fun. You can see examples of that throughout this newsletter.

Repeat. Membership recruitment and retention is circular, not linear. You don't start somewhere and end at the finish line. Member numbers fluctuate, but our chapter is growing by adding new young members with

new ideas. Most people would rather be involved in a smaller group that is active than a huge group that does nothing. How will you contribute in the coming years? My thanks to the active members who have stepped up and become involved. It's been so rewarding to meet new people and collaborate on projects and events. My hope is that the SD chapter continues to grow through recruiting new members, retaining them through involvement, and continuing this growth to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Bees, Trees, & Cheese:

Summer Field Day

Sept. 13th

By Hannah Grimm

Our day started at Blue Dasher Farm in Estelline with the turkey welcome wagon ready to strut. Cats and chickens were nearby as well while we were outside. I hadn't been to Blue Dasher Farm before and being a sucker for farm cats and chatty birds, this was a great start! Throughout the morning we were able to hear presentations from Dr. Ryan Schmid, Research Agroecologist, detailing the research that Ecdysis Foundation works on. The foundation is based right at the farm. Many of the other researchers and workers on site were able to share snapshots of their projects as well. I would have never known just how tedious the process is to filter insects from residue and soil; this crew has dedication!

For the afternoon we traveled to McCrory Gardens in Brookings. If you haven't been here, I recommend it. Dr. John McMaine, Asst. Professor/Extension Specialist-Water Management Engineer (and SD SWCS Vice President) walked us through

the green infrastructure projects on site. I enjoyed the 'living' green roof designs. Without much knowledge about green roofs, I had imagined a house you may find in The Shire, but these can be designed to look modern while functionally providing stormwater management and decreasing energy consumption. By now it had started to steadily drizzle but that didn't stop Chris Schlenker, Horticulture and Grounds Manager of McCrory, from giving us a great tour through the actual gardens.



The Raven Precision Agriculture Center is a brand-new facility on the SDSU campus. Full-size farming equipment can be brought in for teaching and demonstrations. There's a ventilation system that can connect to a machine's exhaust, filtering the fumes out of the building. Other bells and whistles were spotted around every corner and the center itself is very tech savvy with multiple tv monitors and wired workstations for student use.

A short walk back outside in the drizzle would put us at our final stop of the day, SDSU's Dairy Bar. With several students inside enjoying ice cream and other treats, I knew it had to be good. Getting myself a scoop of a vanilla based honey and berry flavor, I wasn't disappointed. The Dairy Bar has produced almost 100 ice cream flavors since they began production on campus in 1910. Student-produced and 'cow-to-cone,' you should plan a stop at the Dairy Bar when you're in Brookings.

It was a full day after the drive to and from, but absolutely worth it.

RASDak June 9th

SD SWCS sponsored a rest stop on the Ride Across South Dakota (RASDak). While our members endured brutal heat and wind, it was a massive success and provided some much needed publicity for SD SWCS. Members handed out water and food to riders and also gave away post cards for riders to fill out and send home. Post cards were sent to 12 states and two countries! SWCS also received \$806 in donations! Thanks to everyone for planning and participating.



Standing: Stacy Turgeon, Bob Jenson, Jeff Zimprich, Mary Hendricks, Ron Hendricks, Rachael Frei, Hannah Grimm, and Jeanne Hamilton; Front: Arlene Brandt-Jenson and Tammy Sommer

RASDak Burma Shave Creativity!

Before RASDak on June 9, we sent members a 'request for creativity' to submit 'Burma Shave' phrases to post on the road leading to our rest stop north of Chamberlain. We promised a mention in the next newsletter. Thank you to Hannah Grimm, Stacy Turgeon, Tammy Sommer, and Jeanne Hamilton!

Here's a sample of Hannah's creativity: Pierre to Chamberlain // 82.6 miles and a doozy hill // Cruising down HWY 50 // Stop at SWCS for your fill.

Find us! swcs.org sdswcs@gmail.com
Facebook: South Dakota SWCS
Instagram: sd_swcs



Member Spotlight: Cory Zirbel

Hello everyone! My name is Cory Zirbel, and I am a Soil Conservationist with USDA-NRCS in Webster, SD. I currently serve as a Publicity Committee Member for the SD SWCS Chapter, specializing in recruiting for the chapter and providing photography for various chapter uses. I currently reside near Waubay, SD on a farm with my wife Natalie, 1 year old son Otto, and soon to be second child in December!

I grew up between Summit and Waubay on a farm, helping raise dairy and beef cattle and various grain crops. Our family farm is situated on the headwaters of the Big Sioux River covering into the heart of the Glacial Lakes region of Northeast South Dakota.

My love for the natural resources began while growing up experiencing the various landscapes, ecosystems, and wildlife on our operation. I am an active outdoorsman, enjoying fishing, hunting, hiking, kayaking, and have taken on natural landscape photography in the past few years. Being located in a unique area of the state, I want to share the sights of the Prairie Coteau and the state of South Dakota with people. Since then, I have expanded and recently began a photography business, specializing in landscape and drone aerial photography.

Being a part of the SWCS has allowed me to be able to connect with other natural resource management professionals and

share our ideas of ways that we can expand on our goals.

Photos courtesy of Cory Zirbel



Save the Date

Thurs. Dec. 9 is the date of the 2021 SD Soil and Water Conservation Society's Annual Meeting: Building Resilience into Agriculture and the Environment.

This year's conference will be online via Zoom and will host a variety of guest speakers, feature an online silent auction, and conservation trivia!

Confirmed speakers include Dennis Todey, Midwest Climate Hub Director; and Dawn and Grant Breitreutz, managers of a multi-enterprise regenerative farm near Redwood Falls. More details coming soon!



Internship Program Provides a Variety of On-The-Job Experiences

By Michelle Burke

As part of a \$1000 Internship Agreement with the South Dakota Soil and Water Conservation Society (SD SWCS), Miguel Mena worked with a variety of conservation professionals during the week of August 9, 2021, to gain experience with different entities.

Miguel spent a day with Eric Barsness, Agronomist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Brookings, to evaluate fields of cover crops in preparation for the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition's Soil Health School. They traveled from Brookings to the Mitchell area to the field sites, having an opportunity to visit about the work of agronomists in NRCS.

University Extension is another area of interest to Miguel. He spent time with Anthony Bly, South Dakota State University Extension Soils Field Specialist. Miguel was able to job shadow and learn in the field as Anthony evaluated fields for the Every Acre Counts program.

Miguel also assisted in the field with a team from SDSU's Agricultural and Biological

Systems Engineering Department. The team is led by John McMaine, SDSU Assistant Professor in the and Extension Water Management Engineer. McMaine's team, including Kristen Almen, was collecting data for a soil health and water quantity demonstration project, and Miguel participated in their data collection effort.

Miguel also spent time at the NRCS Field Office in Brookings, where he was able to experience both the field work and the office work that it takes for NRCS staff to help producers plan and implement conservation on their land.

Prior to this 40-hour internship with SD SWCS, Miguel worked for the Edmunds County Conservation District in Ipswich during the summer of 2021. He returned to SDSU in August 2021 to complete his degree in Agronomy. Miguel is a senior and will be graduating from SDSU in May 2022.

Miguel is the son of Miguel and Maria Mena from Harlan, Iowa. Miguel said that the internship was a fun experience, and he enjoyed learning about the different aspects of the agencies, which will inform his decisions about future career opportunities.

If you know of a South Dakota college student who would qualify for this valuable Internship experience, eligibility information is available here:

<https://sdswcs.wixsite.com/website/internship>

How can YOU get involved?		
SD SWCS Committee Chairs		
Nominations	John McMaine	john.mcmaine@sdstate.edu
Internship	Michelle Burke	michelle.burke@usda.gov
Membership	Rachel Frei	rachel.frei@usda.gov
Publicity/Cons. Education	Hannah Grimm	hannah.grimm@usda.gov
Activities/Fundraising	Jeanne Hamilton	jeanne.hamilton@usda.gov