



SEPTEMBER 2014

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Association of Professional Soil Scientists
PO Box 871, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Inside:

- 2 Soil Survey Field Manual
Legislative update
- 3 Governor's ImPact
Award
- 4 Envirothon results
- 5 2014 National Collegiate
Soil Judging

**ANNUAL
MEETING
OCT. 24-25, 2014**

PAPSS Offers Wetland Delineation Training Gettysburg, PA

PAPSS assisted staff from the USDA NRCS and the Army Corps of Engineers during an educational session covering the Regional Supplement to the Corps Wetland Delineation Manual: Eastern Mountains and Piedmont Region. The two, one-day sessions were held at the Adams County Farm Service Agency building in Gettysburg. Mr. Frank Plewa of the Army Corps once again provided top-notch classroom instruction and practical information for the wetland delineators in attendance.

Mr. Plewa provided an overview of many common sources of background information that are available for review prior to conducting site work, including National Wetland Inventory mapping, historical USGS Topographic maps, historical aerial photographs, and historical soil mapping. PAPSS members Yuri Plowden and John Chibirka covered hydric soil identification for the most common hydric soil indicators in the region.



Wetland transects were completed on the adjacent campus of the Harrisburg Area Community College. The transects crossed a complex mosaic of wetland and nonwetland areas adjacent to Rock Creek and contained many invasive and problematic plant species. Mr. Plewa stressed the importance of plot location and plot size selection to accurately represent the wetland or nonwetland being documented and discussed the most common mistakes that reviewers find in wetland delineation reports. ■

Soil Survey Field and Laboratory Methods Manual

The new USDA “Soil Survey Field and Laboratory Methods Manual” is now available online (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/research/lab/guide/>). The manual, also known as Soil Survey Investigations Report No. 51 (SSIR-51), serves as a standard reference for soil sampling strategies and assessment techniques. The manual provides detailed descriptions of the standard methods used for the collection of soil, water, plants, and other biological materials. The manual also provides detailed descriptions of analyses for the field or field-office setting.



SSIR-51 is a companion manual to the “Kellogg Soil Survey Laboratory Methods Manual” (SSIR-42). SSIR-51 serves as a reference for the field scientist, and SSIR-42 serves as a reference for the laboratory analyst. Both manuals are “how to” manuals. Their respective methods follow the same format and cover many of the same kinds of analyses. The use of the standard operating procedures in these manuals ensures continuity in the analytical process.■

Soil Science Licensing Legislative Update

by Michael Lane

House Bill 997 and Senate Bill 1173 are in committee in the Pennsylvania Legislature. A public hearing was held on May 7, 2014 before the House Professional Licensure Committee. Testifying on behalf of PAPSS and in support of the legislation were Michael Lane, Cathy Sorace, Bill Davis, Mike Callahan, and Ed White. Dawn Gibas of the Soil Science Society of America also offered testimony in support of the bill along with a description of the examination process.

Mr. James LaRegina of the PA Council of Professional Geologists testified that the PCPG is in support of licensure of soil scientists, but that they oppose the language in HB997 because of potential conflicts with activities currently performed by licensed geologists. PAPSS worked with the PCPG in developing the Senate version of the legislation, SB1173, and Mr. LaRegina offered support for that language.

Offering written testimony, the PA Society of Professional Engineers opposed the legislation for similar reasons as the PCPG. PAPSS prepared a response following the hearing for distribution to the committee. An amendment has been drafted to make HB997 match the language found in SB1173. The House Committee Chair, Representative Julie Harhart, stated that the committee will review the information and decide if they will take action on the bill.

On May 23, 2014, PAPSS met with Ms. Fran Cleaver, Director of the Senate Professional Licensure Committee, in Harrisburg. Ms. Cleaver noted that she has received no correspondence related to SB1173 and questioned the need for a new license when there appears to be no public pressure.

In June, the PAPSS Board requested letters of support from the membership that will be delivered to the chairmen of the Senate and House committees when the legislature returns to the Capitol this fall.

List of sponsoring Senators of SB1173, and their email addresses follow.
If writing, send to: Honorable (name), Main Capitol, Harrisburg, PA 17120

Judy Schwank (Berks) senatorschwank@pasenate.com
Michael Brubaker (Lancaster) mbrubaker@pasen.gov
Jay Costa (Allegheny) costa@pasenate.com
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Gene Yaw (Lycoming) gyaw@pasen.gov
Matt Smith (Allegheny) SenatorSmith@pasenate.com
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James Brewster (Allegheny) brewster@pasenate.com
Elder Vogel (Beaver) evogel@pasen.gov ■

Soil Services Company Wins Governor's ImPact Award

On May 30, Laurel and George Mueller, long-time PAPSS members and advocates for soil science, were invited to an award luncheon in Hershey, where Soil Services Company of Forksville was a nominee for the Entrepreneur category at the Governor's ImPact Awards program. Laurel started Soil Services Co Inc 30 years ago, and has sustained solid (and growing) employment, and continues to diversify for the future of the business.



Winners from 5 categories were picked from the nominees in each PA region. Soil Services Company won for the Northern Tier. Laurel and George were seated at a front table next to Governor Tom Corbett.

Laurel reports, "Lots of fanfare and press. Wow, still in shock. Glad I took my Mom - she was very proud." Congratulations on the award! ■

Visit PAPSS online

www.papss.org

Web Soil Survey

websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx

NRCS Digital Soil Survey App

<http://casoilresource.lawr.ucdavis.edu/drupal/node/886>

Comments or contributions?

mlane@brickhouse-environmental.com

PA State Envirothon Results

Press Release

The 31st Pennsylvania State Envirothon was held at Susquehanna University and PPL Montour Preserve on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 20 and 21, 2014. High school students from 64 Pennsylvania counties participated in this year's event.



At the Envirothon, five-member teams participate in a series of field station tests that focus on five topic areas – soils and land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and environmental issues. The 2014 current environmental issue focused on Sustainable Agriculture/Buying Local. The teams also prepare and deliver oral presentations to panels of judges who evaluate each team on its problem-solving capabilities, oral presentation skills and recommendations to help solve the specific environmental challenge, which relates to the current environmental issue.

Teams participating represent the best and the brightest of the thousands of high school teens who have competed in county Envirothon competitions sponsored by conservation districts from across the state. At the state level, the Envirothon is sponsored by Pennsylvania's sixty-six conservation districts, the State Conservation Commission, and the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts. The program is managed by a board of directors representing those sponsors. Technical expertise is provided by the following partners: PA Department of Environmental Protection, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, PA Game Commission, PA Fish and Boat Commission, U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Pennsylvania Farmers Union. Sponsors and partners of the 2014 Envirothon are PPL Corporation, Marcellus Shale Coalition, Shell Oil Co., Air Products Foundation, Philadelphia Insurance Companies, Access Midstream, Canon USA, Envirothon, PA Department of Agriculture, PA Department of Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania Department of Education, PA Trappers Association, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, and State Conservation Commission. The Hershey Company, Dwight Lewis Lumber, Lewis Lumber Products, PPL, and Cargill are corporate station sponsors.

The winners of the 2014 Pennsylvania Envirothon state competition will be recognized as the State champions and will receive additional scholarship funding or an educational excursion on the Chesapeake Bay.

The 2014 Pennsylvania Envirothon state champions are from Penncrest High School located in Delaware County with a score of 522.33 out of 600.

Top 10 winners are:

- Second Place – YHSA Homeschoolers, York County;
- Third Place – Carmichaels Area High School, Greene County;
- Fourth Place – Palmyra Area High School, Lebanon County;
- Fifth Place – Downingtown East High School, Chester County;
- Sixth Place – Redbank Valley High School, Clarion County;
- Seventh Place – Neshaminy High School, Bucks County;
- Eighth Place – Central Valley High School, Beaver County;
- Ninth Place – Blue Mountain High School, Schuylkill County;
- Tenth Place – Lewisburg Area High School, Union County.

For more information on the Envirothon program, contact your county conservation district or contact the Pennsylvania Envirothon by phone (814) 623-8099, Email paenvirothon@pennswoods.net, or visit the website at www.envirothonpa.org. ■

**PAPSS Awards \$25
Prize to Niharika
Gupta as part of the
Montgomery
County Community
College Science
Research
Competition**

Niharika is from
Methacton High
School and studied
the effect of arsenic
from rice on human
monocytes.

2014 National Collegiate Soil Judging Contest by Steve Dadio

Over 100 students representing 19 universities descended to Delaware Valley College for the 2014 National Collegiate Soil Judging Contest. The contest, which was held April 3rd and 4th, 2014; the students braved the elements of rain and cold of an early Spring Contest being held during a year when the Winter over-stayed its welcome. The Contest Organizer, Joe Valentine, showed the students a variety of different soils in Bucks, Lehigh, and Montgomery Counties: soils formed from residual parent materials (Cambrian-Age gneiss, Triassic-Age sandstone and shale, Jurassic-Age diabase and hornfels), as well as some loess and glacial outwash.

The students saw soils near Washington Crossing State Park (how often is there a soil judging contest at a location that is on the back of a state's quarter?) and Ringing Rocks Park in Pottstown (diabase boulders that ring like bells when struck with a hammer).



Virginia Tech won first place with a combined team score of 3,170 points, followed closely by the University of Rhode Island (3,156), and the University of Maryland (3,143).

The top individual was Bianca Peixoto of the University of Rhode Island (pictured below with Joe Valentine). The top 10 finishers are listed below.



Bianca Peixoto	University of Rhode Island
Julia Gillespie	Virginia Tech
Nancy Kammerer	Penn State
Arthur Franke	Purdue
Brian Maule	Northern Illinois
Caitlin Hodeges	University of Georgia
Tyler Hodges	University of Maryland
Kyle Weber	University of Wisconsin – Platteville
Emily Salkind	Virginia Tech
Zachary Sanders	University of Georgia

The University of Maryland won the Group Judging Contest, followed by Auburn University and Northern Illinois University.

Delaware Valley College was originally scheduled to host this contest in 2015, but the schedule got moved up 1 year, compressing the logistics of this contest into a very short time frame. Kudos to Joe Valentine for pulling it all off! Thanks also to the head judges, Rich Shaw – NJ NRCS State Soil Scientist and Joe Kraft – PA NRCS State Soil Scientist, to the NJ and PA Soil Survey Staffs for assisting in the test pit descriptions, Nancy Sansoni for heading up the scorecards and coding/tracking of the 80+ competing students, Mike Sowers for heading up test pit maintenance (not easy given the weather conditions – a lot of water pumping in the cold and dark), and Mike Callahan/Steve Dadio providing logistical support. Thanks are also given to all of the PAPSS, MAPSS, and NJAPSS members who helped in various aspects of the contest, particularly in the grading of the scorecards. ■

PAPSS Annual Meeting and Technical Session: Soils, Coal, and Beer in the Anthracite Region

Proposed Agenda:

Friday, October 24

Yuengling Brewery Tour (tour takes ~ 1 hr – 1.5 hrs)

PAPSS Annual Business Meeting



Saturday, October 25

Centralia Guided Tour/Pioneer Coal Mine Tour in Ashland

Local Test Pits

Look for further details in the coming days. ■