



**The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Association of Professional Soil Scientists**

**PO Box 871, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055**

**August 2018**

**PAPSS and SSSA Proposal for CPSS Soil Scientist  
Memorandum of Understanding –  
Proposal to Establish a PA-Based Certifying Review Board  
by Tim Ratvasky**

Following numerous discussions of the licensure attempts and associated issues between PAPSS and Luther Smith, the Soil Science Society of America's Director of Certification and Licensing, the SSSA has offered an approach/opportunity for PAPSS professional members and soil scientists in Pennsylvania. This approach may satisfy the concerns of the regulatory and legislative community described below, potentially provide recognition of Soil Science at the State level, and address the diminishing numbers of members in PAPSS, the SSSA and certification program, and soil scientists in general.

As recently as two years ago, PAPSS had been pursuing, unsuccessfully, PA state-level registration or licensure of soil scientists to obtain recognition of the profession by the regulatory and legislative community in their guidance and regulations. Issues brought forth by the legislature and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) include:

- The limited number of "qualified" Soil Scientists to perform work, if restrictions for soils work to be performed by only "qualified" Soil Scientists are placed in the regulations.
- Costs to establish and maintain a State-level certification program for Soil Scientists.
- A State-level mechanism for reviewing and determining responses for ethics violations.
- Potential for a State-level certification/qualification program to be too "exclusive" of other professions.

During the past several months, the PAPSS Board has worked with SSSA to define the components of this program, and to further identify the advantages and potential complications associated with the approach. The approach proposed by SSSA and reviewed by the PAPSS Board has been used successfully in Ohio and Florida to get Soil Science recognized in guidance and legislation. The approach incorporates a Memorandum of Understanding between PAPSS and SSSA defining the terms of this program, a grandfathering component for Soil Scientists to become Certified Professional Soil Scientists under SSSA, and the development of a Pennsylvania Certification and Review Board (PCRB) for reviewing future Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS) applications and addressing ethics complaints. The components of this approach are described below.

- SSSA will be the final rule making, review, testing, and issuing authority for the CPSS program. SSSA will provide legal protection to those performing associated activities (PCRB members). The CPSS credential will remain national (there will be no Pennsylvania CPSS).
- The PAPSS requirements for professional membership are based upon and closely follow the requirements for certification established by SSSA. Soils professionals who are members of PAPSS and meet the requirements for PAPSS professional membership may be grandfathered by SSSA into the CPSS process without being required to take the Soils Fundamentals exam or meet certain academic course work requirements. **The intent of the grandfathering process is to afford a means for existing knowledgeable, experienced Pennsylvania soils professionals in the public sector, academia and private practice who to-date have not had reason to pursue professional Certification to obtain CPSS status.** Those who seek the CPSS credential after the grandfathering period will be required to meet existing SSSA requirements for obtaining the CPSS credential: these include academic and professional requirements and passing of the fundamentals exam. ▼

- Concerns regarding State-level representation (someone “local” to turn to) for the CPSS certification process and for addressing professional ethics violations will be addressed by establishing a Pennsylvania Certification and Review Board (PCRB). The PCRB would include members of the regulatory, academic, public, and private practice who are nominated by the PAPSS Board and approved by the SSSA. The PCRB serves as a State-level extension of SSSA and will receive liability protection from SSSA.
- Continuing education courses focused on Pennsylvania-related soils and Pennsylvania regulations may be developed and offered on a two to three-year period. This coursework would provide a means of identifying those CPSS with Pennsylvania focus and experience.



*PAPSS members meet with Luther Smith, SSSA in Hershey in June to discuss PAPSS-SSSA MOU. Luther Smith, Mike Callahan, Charlie Klinger, Laurel Mueller, Bruce Willman, Mike Brown*

The PCRB’s function will be to 1) Review CPSS applications from Pennsylvania applicants received from SSSA for completeness and attainment of academic and professional requirements established by SSSA, and 2) Review and determine appropriate response to ethics issues/violations brought to the attention of the PCRB by the membership, regulatory community, or SSSA. For both functions the SSSA will establish the requirements and criteria for membership and disciplinary action, issue CPSS credentials and serve as an appeal body for ethics complaints.

Effective implementation of the steps outlined above would demonstrate to PADEP and to the Pennsylvania legislature that soils professionals in Pennsylvania have a self-perpetuating mechanism for vetting and managing professionals which meets or exceeds the typical licensure/qualification program components (education, experience, proficiency testing, and self-policing) expected by regulators and legislators. The CPSS credential, which remains a national credential (there will be no Pennsylvania CPSS), will be promoted to the PADEP and Pennsylvania Legislature as the credential of professional experience and knowledge in Soil Science sufficient to perform soils-related work.

The anticipated progression of this approach is provided below:

1. Contact representatives in PADEP involved with Sewage Facilities to determine the potential level of interest for certifying soils professionals using the proposed approach.
2. Discuss the proposed approach with PAPSS membership to address questions and concerns, and to determine level of interest.
3. Finalize the terms of the MOU and other components of the proposed program.
4. Notify non-professional PAPSS members, and soils professionals in academia, PADEP, and private practice of the program, and opportunity to be grandfathered into SSSA’s CPSS program.
5. Send out official notice of the six-month-long grandfathering period, to begin on the date that the MOU is signed by PAPSS and SSSA.
6. Obtain nominations for the volunteer PCRB and submit the nominees to SSSA for approval.
7. PAPSS and SSSA sign the MOU.
8. The PCRB becomes active.
9. Potential development of Pennsylvania-specific training/education for CPSS continuing education.

The proposed program described above is scheduled for discussion and input from the membership during the upcoming Annual Meeting. Additional information may be obtained by contacting Charlie Klinger, President of PAPSS and current board members. ■



PAPSS Online

[www.papss.org](http://www.papss.org)

Web Soil Survey

[websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx](http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx)

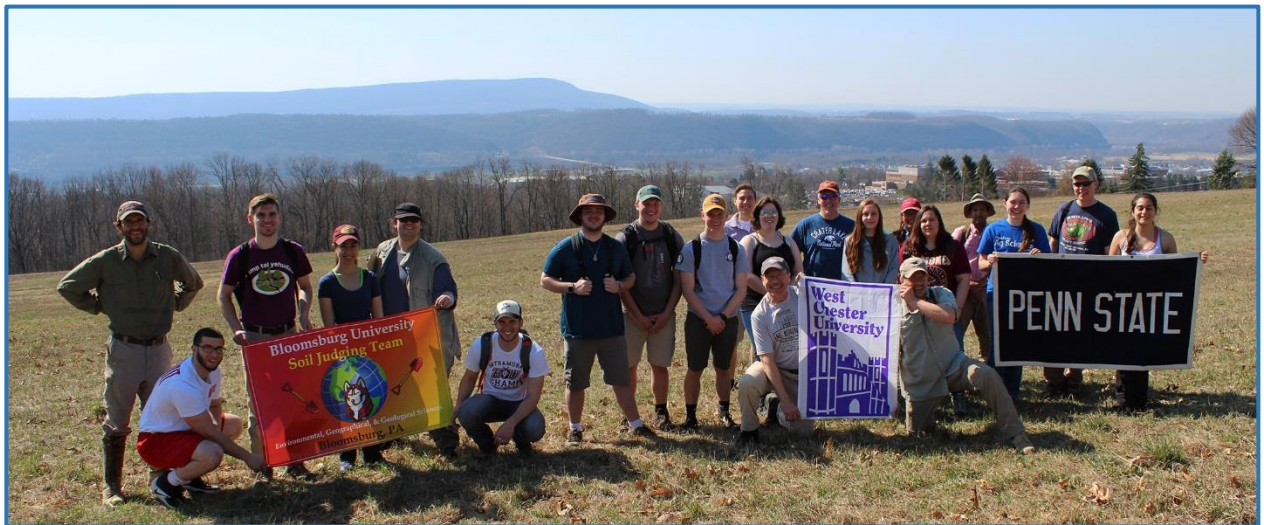
Comments or contributions?

[mlane@brickhouse-environmental.com](mailto:mlane@brickhouse-environmental.com)

## **Pennsylvania Soil Judging Field Tour Held in Bloomsburg, PA**

**By Matt Ricker**

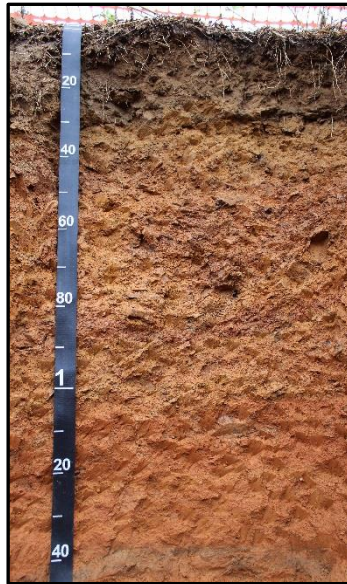
A total of 22 participants attended a soil judging field tour hosted by Dr. Matt Ricker at Bloomsburg University on Saturday April 14th, 2018. PAPSS members joined students and faculty from Penn State, West Chester University, and Bloomsburg University on the tour of three common soils found in the Susquehanna Lowland Section of the Ridge and Valley physiographic province of Pennsylvania. Students had many opportunities to practice their soil judging skills including texture by feel, Munsell color, and identification of redoximorphic features.



*Participants prepare to enter the soil pits at Bloomsburg University's Upper Campus Property*

The first soil evaluated is mapped as Hartleton series, an Ultisol located at the summit position of a secondary ridge. The soil contained excellent features for teaching novice students including a well-defined Ap horizon, a thick argillic horizon with prominent clay films, and manganese concentrations. The second soil was also an Ultisol located at the footslope position and included three parent materials (loess over colluvium over old loess). The second soil was much redder in color than the first and allowed students to practice identification of lithologic discontinuities. The old loess at the bottom of the soil pit may be one of the oldest preserved eolian deposits in this region of Pennsylvania and Dr. Patrick Drohan from Penn State will evaluate this soil further using optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) dating.

The final soil shown was a floodplain Inceptisol in the Fishing Creek valley. The soil formed in recent alluvium over glacial outwash and offered an obvious contrast with the well-developed Ultisols. Participants were able to identify iron redoximorphic features (depletions, soft masses, pore linings), alluvial stratification, and weakly developed Bw horizons. Overall, the trip provided students time to practice their skills for the upcoming regional soil judging competition in the fall and learn about the complexity of soil formation in the Ridge and Valley of Pennsylvania. ▼



Soils evaluated during the tour in order from left (first) to right (last), metric photo tape ■

## PAPSS Display at Area Conferences

by Bruce Willman

PAPSS was invited to have a poster display at this year's Pennsylvania Septage Management Association (PSMA) and Pennsylvania Sewage Enforcement Officers (PASEO) annual conferences both held at The Red Lion Hotel in Harrisburg, PA. The PSMA conference was held January 29-30 and the PASEO conference was held on March 11-13. Many soil science consultant's list and several membership applications were handed out to interested attendees. In addition, we were able to answer questions about soil science as related to the conference topics.



The photo shows Mike Brown and Bruce Willman manning the display at the PASEO conference.

If anyone could use the display at a function, please contact Bruce Willman to make arrangements to pick up the display. Also, recent photos are appreciated to update the main headings of Membership, Education, Standards and Expertise. ■



**Message from the President**  
**by Charlie Klinger, PAPSS President 2018**

Dear Members,

I just wanted to take this opportunity to say that it has been a privilege to be representing our organization this year and to give you a quick update on things from my prospective as your new president.

It has been a busy year so far for the Board with many items to address, so we have held monthly teleconferences to keep the organization functioning. There are the usual dealings with membership and scholarship applications, accounting needs, event planning, etc., but this year there are some new obligations and opportunities that need attention. One new obligation is the need to form a Standards and Ethics Committee, which we will add to the sign-up sheet at the annual meeting. Another is the increasing cost of keeping our website operating and protected from hackers.

There is a new opportunity to enter into a Memorandum of Undemanding (MOU) with the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) in an effort to promote our profession within the state government. The MOU presents both benefits and challenges to PAPSS and will be an important topic of discussion at our annual meeting. *(ed. See Page 1 for further information)*

In this age of increased social media, and decreased interpersonal interaction, I challenge each of you to take an active role in your organization. We are successfully moving forward in the digital age and embracing the ease of information transfer (yes, even social media), but it is the people behind the keyboard and smart phone that make the difference. We are all very busy, but please join in and attend our annual meeting. It is the perfect time to foster understanding of what others are doing, enjoy comradery with your fellow members, and get involved with the important issues affecting the profession and the organization.

Lastly, never hesitate to contact the Board with ideas for technical sessions, fund raisers, or with comments and concerns.

Thank you all and stay well,

Charlie

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**Annual Meeting and Technical Session**

**OCTOBER 19-20, 2018**

**State College, PA**

**Technical Tour - October 19th**

**Annual Meeting - October 20th**

**TENTATIVE TOUR STOPS**

**Hawbaker Limestone Quarry**

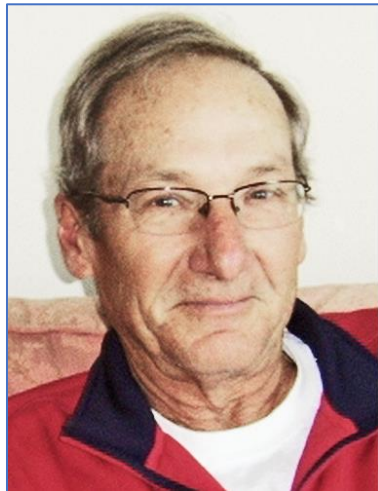
**NRCS Wetland Reserve Easement Site**

**Chestnut tree regeneration efforts**

**Riparian Forest buffer**



## Edgar A. White Jr. (1951 - 2018)



Edgar A. White Jr., 66, of Harrisburg, died on May 30, 2018 after a brief battle with cancer. He was born July 7, 1951 in Warrington, PA, the son of the late Edgar A. Sr. and Helen M. (Schad) White.

Surviving is his wife of 32 years, Sherrie J. (Diehl) White; a daughter, Amy Koch (Matt Boughter), of Mechanicsburg; 2 sons, Edgar A. White III (Jennifer Foutz), and James White, both of Harrisburg; 3 grandchildren, Kayla Koch, Owen and Kira White; a brother, Frank White of Ontario, and 4 sisters, Mary Roach of Virginia, Christine Chase, Kathy Scott, and Celeste White all of Florida.

Ed grew up in Bethesda, MD, and graduated from the University of MD. He was a soil scientist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. He retired after 35 years, ending his service as the State Soil Scientist. He continued working part time on soil map digitization, did farm inspections for the Department of Environmental Protection, and was a consultant for Land of Lakes. He was a long time member of the Pennsylvania Association of Professional Soil Scientists serving on the Board of Directors and as President.

He was an avid golfer and loved gardening and spending time with his family, especially with his grandson after his retirement.

A Memorial Service was held on Saturday, July 7, 2018 at 11:00 am at First Alliance Church, 403 S Progress Ave., Harrisburg, followed by a luncheon and visitation. Service attendees were asked to wear a polo shirt to recognize Ed's love of golf.

For an autobiographical sketch of Ed's career, please read Chapter 36 of Pennsylvania Soil Survey Biographies <https://ecosystems.psu.edu/research/pdf/as143.pdf>.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, PO Box 22478, Oklahoma City, PA 73123. ■

