



LA VOZ

Newsletter of the National Organization of Professional Hispanic
Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

April 2007 Newsletter

In this Issue: President's Message | Training Conference Program | Make Your Plans to Attend the Training Conference | Conference Registration Form | More on Minnesota | NEDC Courses Available Through AgLearn | Technical Oral Presentations | Technical Poster Presentations | Donate Items for Auction | Conference Exhibit Opportunity | Shipping Exhibits to Conference | Nominations Now Being Accepted | Want to Translate? | Member News

President's Message

By Carlos Suarez

NOPHNCSE President



Dear NOPHNCSE Family!

We are less than four months away from our training conference, and I am already seeing the results of the hard work the committees have accomplished to make this upcoming training conference the best ever!

NEDC courses are already posted on Aglearn. For those of you who will be participating in any of the three NEDC courses that will be offered, you need to log into Aglearn and register. Feel free to contact Astrid Martinez or Luis Hernandez for more information about the process.

Your national council just finalized the development of a business plan. This business plan focuses on four goals: partnership, marketing, recruitment, and career development. The business plan will be posted in the next few days in our website. I invite you to take a look at this business plan and actively participate in the accomplishment of these four goals.

You remember that in my last message, I spoke about creating a grants program to assist our members with the cost of career development courses...well, I am pleased to announce that under the excellent leadership of Kris Graham-Chavez and her ad-hoc committee, they just presented the first draft to the national council of how this grant program would work. We expect to have it up and running by June! More information will follow after the national council meeting in May.

We already began the nomination process for national council officers. This year, we inaugurated a new system to nominate and vote online. We had a few bugs at the beginning, but thanks to Carmen Ortiz and the folks at Fort Collins, those issues have been resolved and now is up and running. The nomination process is currently being held through our website. Kudos to Carmen Ortiz and Carlos Hernandez for the great job!

Going back to the training conference -- I strongly encourage that you start making your hotel reservations. The Marriott-Bloomington Airport is already accepting reservations under for the training conference. Please go to the NOPHNCSE website for more information.

Last but not least, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of you who are working in the different NOPHNCSE committees. You are bringing and implementing many great ideas which are making this organization stronger and stronger each day.

Take a Look at the Latest Training Conference Program

Luis Hernandez, Program Committee Chairperson

A draft agenda for the NOPHNCSE training conference is now available on our website:
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/hispanic/2007_conference.html

Make Your Plans to Attend the Training Conference in Minnesota

Julie MacSwain, Conference Planning Chairperson

The National Organization of Professional Hispanic Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees (NOPHNCSE) will host its 14th Annual Training Conference in Bloomington, Minnesota, at the Minneapolis Airport Marriott, 2020 American Blvd.East, Bloomington, MN 55425, August 6-10, 2007.

The Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager's (HEPM's) will be having their annual training meeting in conjunction with the NOPHNCSE Conference. This function will "provide a great opportunity for HEPM's to fulfill their training and network needs." The NRCS encourages its employees to take advantage of career development and professional enhancement opportunities.

Reservations for the NOPHNCSE conference can now be made. You may make your reservations by calling the Minneapolis Airport Marriott at (952) 851-4766. Please be sure to identify yourself with the NOPHNCSE conference group. The hotel will take reservations until July 16, 2007.

More conference information can be found on the following website:
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/hispanic/2007_conference.html

If you have additional questions about the upcoming conference, please contact Julie MacSwain, 2007 NOPHNRCSE conference planning committee chairperson, at (651)-602-7859 or via e-mail at: julie.macswain@mn.usda.gov.

Conference Registration Form

The conference registration form is available on our website at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/hispanic/2007_conference.html.

The deadline for early registration is June 30, 2007.

More on Minnesota

Julie MacSwain, Conference Planning Chairperson

Minneapolis Airport Marriott in Bloomington, Minnesota, is the location for the 14th Annual NOPHNRCSE Conference August 6-10, 2007. During your travels to Minnesota, there will be numerous ways in which you can keep connected via the internet at the motel.

Throughout the motel foyer, free wireless internet service is available. Additionally the motel has a business office that contains 3 computers and a printer. Motel guests are free to use these computers 24 hours a day.

Internet service is also available in the motel rooms at a rate of approximately \$9.95.

Two airports are located near the Minneapolis Airport Marriott: The Lindberg and the Hubert H. Humphrey Terminals. Every 30 minutes a shuttle from the Marriott will be present at the Lindberg Terminal. However, if your travel plans have you fly into the HH Humphrey Terminal, you will need to call the Marriott for the shuttle to come and get you!

If you have any other questions pertaining to your upcoming trip to Minnesota, please contact Julie MacSwain, 2007 conference planning chairperson. Julie can be reached via e-mail at: julie.macswain@mn.usda.gov or at (651)-602-7859.

NECD Courses Available Through AgLearn - Enroll ASAP

Astrid Martinez, Program Committee

NECD courses and dates are as follows:

- Managing for Excellence (Tuesday, August 7, 1:00 pm to Friday, August 10, noon)
- Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery (Tuesday, August 7, 1:00 pm to Friday August 10, noon)

- "Trainer Skills Workshop" (formerly known as Effective Instruction - Level I) (Tuesday, August 7, 1:00 pm to Thursday August 9, noon)

Approval is required from your supervisor prior to enrolling in a course. You must enroll through Aglearn first and after receiving confirmation from NEDC that you are officially registered for the course, you must submit the registration form that is available through the NOPHNRCSE website <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/hispanic/> or through your regional representative and send the payment to Damarys Mortenson, conference registration chairperson, in Michigan. Once you register for the NEDC training, send an email to Astrid Martinez at astrid.martinez@ne.usda.gov with your name, training requested, and your contact information.

The registration fee the conference is \$400.00 for members and \$425 for non-members. If you are attending the NEDC course, then your registration fee will be \$350.00 and will cover the NEDC course and all of the amenities (Tuesday's luncheon, Thursday's banquet, president's reception, scholarship night, and the state conservationist's breakfast). The tours are not included. Please note if you want to register for the NEDC training it must be done through Aglearn. It is very important that you attend the entire training session to receive a certificate. If you do not, you will not receive the credit. The only portions of the NOPHNRCSE conference you will be participating in will be the morning session on Tuesday, the luncheon on Tuesday, and any of the evening activities.

If you have questions, please contact members of the program committee: Astrid Martinez, Luis Hernandez, Gilbert Guerrero or Juan C. Hernandez.

Technical Oral Presentations at the Training Conference

Arturo Carvajal, Natural Resources Committee Chairperson

The following NOPHNRCSE members will make oral presentations at the annual training conference:

Edgar Ascencio, CARE El Salvador– Project Coordinator. Edgar will present "Strategic Investments in the Goascorán Watershed Honduras – El Salvador".

Edgar will present the above conservation project, which is a Bi-National program funded by the European Union in partnership with the governments of both countries. This project started in April 2003. It's presently under implementation and may serve as a management model for watersheds shared between countries or states here in the USA with similar problems. Today, the integrated management plan for the Goascorán Watershed is contributing to the environmental, social and economic development of Honduras and El Salvador.

Eduardo Bautista, PhD & others. USDA/ARS Arid-Land Agricultural Research Center is located in Maricopa, AZ. Eduardo will present "Simulation, design, and evaluation of surface irrigation systems with WinSRFR".

This presentation will provide an overview of the WinSRFR software, discuss some key features, and illustrate its application with practical examples. Interested attendants will receive a CD with the WinSRFR software.

Albert Cerna, USDA/NHQ; "Wildlife Habitat Incentives (WHIP) Program policy".

Emphasis will be on discussion of revised policy, which allows flexibility to states to be creative with outreach activities to potential NRCS customers.

Maria Davila, Civil Engineer, Design Section/Ronnie Skala, Hydraulic Engineer, Water Resources from Texas; "Taking advantage of an opportunity for self-development".

They will describe the Texas NRCS Mentor program and explain the role model of "mentors", who assist the "mentees" to define and develop their own careers. Maria and Ronnie will emphasize the program objectives, such as improve moral, motivation, job performance and satisfaction, increase employee retention and other mutual benefits. They will explain how participants were trained and how the evaluation of the mentoring experience was conducted.

Martin Guereña, Program Specialist, National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT)-ATTRA Project in California. "Experiences and lessons learned while providing outreach to Latino farm-workers and farmers on organic agriculture and related topics".

Martin will provide outline of the workshops provided through the project. Workshops include: organic farming, risk management (not crop insurance) and environmental education. A summary of lessons learned will be provided.

David E. Manzanares, former Range Conservationist, RC&D Coordinator, located in New Mexico; "Sociedad de los Vaqueros de Canjilon – 319 Grant Proposal".

David will explain de history behind this grant application and how thirteen Hispanic grazing "permittees", who are members of the small village of Canjilon, NM and partnered with state and federal agencies. The grant money will pay for gap fencing, trick tanks, livestock pipelines, brush control, reseeding and planned grazing system, as well as a range monitoring program.

Astrid Martinez, MLRA Project Leader, Scottsbluff, NE; "GIS uses for MLRA Soil Survey management and update".

Astrid will outline all the steps that took place to create a state wide seamless spatial soil layer from Geodatabase creation to reports and NASIS data entry. Another part of her presentation will outline uses of GIS to determine plan of work for the whole MLRA area, extending from NE to WY and CO. She will also show new tools developed by SRITB that can benefit NRCS staff in the field.

Renae Nicholson, Soil Conservationist, Harlan, IA; "From Extra Credit to Conscientious Conservationists: NRCS' Partnership with the Harlan Community High School Chemistry Class".

Renae will present an excellent conservation story, which has been told and heard in the USA and in many Canadian High Schools. With the support of Jim Sharp, DC, in partnership with the

Harlan Community High School and under the leadership of instructor Bernie Hermanson, a water quality project has been implemented. During the last six years the partnership between NRCS, the High School instructor and participating chemistry students has grown stronger. Renae will explain a new partner's participation, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship in this successful partnership and its outcome.

Technical & Outreach Posters at the Training Conference

Arturo Carvajal, Natural Resources Committee Chairperson

This year we have excellent posters and the presenters will be available to explain you their work and to answer any question or comment from you or other visitors. So, we encourage the Conference participants to take the time to visit the posters and talk to their authors.

Ricardo Baez, Civil and Environmental Engineer, Denham Springs FO, LA, will present poster "The NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program in Louisiana".

This poster will highlight the NRCS involvement in the recovery effort, to remove debris and obstructions caused by the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. Approximately 1,110 lives were lost, more than 200,000 homes were severely damaged and 28,000 were lost. The EWP work consists in stabilizing stream banks, repairing levees and protecting structures such as bridges and culverts, preventing flooding of the roadways.

Brad Harrison, District Conservationist, Adel, IA, will present the poster "Infiltration Based Practices for Urban and Rural Landscapes".

Infiltration based best management practices demonstrated in this poster includes bio-retention cells, rain gardens, bio-swales, soil quality restoration, native landscaping and pervious paving in urban areas. Grassed waterways, filter strips, and wetlands in agricultural areas. Both agricultural and urban areas can protect the 52,000 acres of Walnut Creek Watershed from pollutants.

Ismael Matos, District Conservationist, Loiza, FO, P.R., will present the poster "Services offered by a Soil Conservationist in Southern Puerto Rico.

Diverse topography and precipitation characterize this region. In hilly areas coffee processing facilities and hog enterprises impact upstream water sources. The SC knowledge includes construction of concrete structures, ponds, as well as vegetative erosion control measures. In flat areas, a SC designs irrigation and drainage systems, develops grazing systems, delineates wetlands, deal with manure issues in horses and dairy enterprises. This poster will present graphically and with photos the installation of practices recommended and designed by our SCs in the tropical Caribbean area.

Edwin Martinez, Soil Conservationist, & Hernandez, Venancio, Soil Conservationist Technician, will present the poster "NRCS accomplishments in the Klamath Basin Project, Northern California".

The Klamath Basin is located in Southern part of Oregon and Northern part of California. The NRCS office in Tulelake, CA is responsible for providing financial and technical assistance to the landowners in this sub-basin. The NRCS works in partnership with the "Lava Beds-Butte Valley Resource Conservation District. During 200-01 a severe drought left producers with no surface water supply in 70,000 acres. Since 2002, the NRCS Tulelake Project Office has treated over 61,000 acres implementing 400 individual KEQIP contracts worth 42 million dollars. The conservation priorities have been addressed in Klamath by: converting irrigation systems from flood to sprinklers, lining and piping water delivery, improving existing flood irrigation systems and improving wildlife habitat via wetland restoration and range treatments. Poster will show common conservation practices and important natural resources including wildlife photos.

Desideria Ramirez, Agricultural Engineer, will present the poster "Arroyo de la Laguna Stream Bank Restoration Project in Alameda County, California".

This poster will highlight the planning, design, implementation and monitoring of the project. The project is using bioengineering techniques, including Christmas tree revetments, vegetated veins, and eucalyptus pin dikes with willow plantings and rock barbs with root wads. These bioengineering techniques are implemented to protect eroding stream bank while improving the native wildlife habitat. The poster will include photos and written descriptions of the bioengineering techniques and current results of the project.

Nelson A. Rolong, PhD & others. The poster title is "Soil Development along an Arid to Semiarid Climosequence in the Trans-Pecos Area of West Texas".

Both Aridisols and Mollisols are mapped in part of Presidio County, Texas during the progressive soil survey. Mollisols are primarily mapped in areas of higher elevation (1400 to 2000m) with increased precipitation (350 to 400 mm), while Aridisols are mapped on alluvial fans in lower elevations (800 to 1300 m) and only 300 to 350 mm of rainfall. Vegetation has been key to separate soils developed under different soil moisture regimes.

Homer Sanchez & others from the NRCS-CNTSC, Ft. Worth & Washington DC. The poster title is "Establishment of Technology Information Exchange for Ecosystem Recovery Efforts along the U.S./Mexico Border".

This poster will show the renewed effort of USDA/NRCS to establish alliances, programs, projects and activities related to management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems along the U.S./Mexico border. NRCS professionals are working with Mr. Rosendo Treviño, NRCS Technical Coordinator in developing this type of partnership with technical professionals from Mexico, along with several non-governmental organizations and interested supporters and landowners. The goal is to develop/implement a comprehensive resource management plan for ecosystem recovery effort along the Mexico border.

Lori Valadez, State Public Affairs Specialist, Temple, TX, will present the poster "Reaching out to Montana's Underserved".

In 2003, Montana NRCS developed an outreach plan to ensure the NRCS programs and services were accessible to all customers, with emphasis on the underserved. The poster will show the Montana plan focusing on the largest underserved group in Montana, American Indian agricultural producers. The plan included several media including the video production

"Listening to the living land". A reservation display featuring a conservation project was developed for each reservation office to be used at local events. In addition, each tribal office received an outreach toolkit, consisting of a rolling computer case full of educational material and information needed to conduct workshops.

Donate Items for the Auction

Stella Santos, Scholarship Committee

I would like to encourage the membership to start thinking about donating items for the scholarship auction. The proceeds from this event help support our scholarship program and build our scholarship endowment fund. Call Stella with questions at 830-278-2014 x 101. Please consider bringing something unique from your area.

Conference Exhibit Opportunity

Ted Lucero, Exhibits Committee

The 2007 NOPHNRCSE Annual Training Conference is scheduled for August 6 – 10th, 2007 in Bloomington, Minnesota at the Minneapolis Airport Marriott. Exhibit space is available to interested organizations that wish to display their information, services, and/or wares at our Training Conference. We are expecting about 250 conservation professionals from across the country as well as additional attendees from "sister organizations", also from across the country.

This is a great opportunity for your organization to visit with conservation professionals and to showcase your company. For more information or to reserve your space, please contact Ted Lucero at (719) 852-4489 ext. 318 or via email ted.lucero@co.usda.gov. Mail contact: Ted Lucero 1454 S Co. Rd. 1 E. Monte Vista, CO 81144. Exhibitors are asked to set up on Monday, August 6, between 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and breakdown their exhibits on Thursday, August 9, after 3:30 p.m.

The cost for this opportunity is \$575 per exhibit space. Each exhibit space will include a table, two chairs, listing in the conference program, and one conference registration fee (\$400 value). Please check below for inclusion of registration fee. The exhibit area is located near the conference activities where there will be ample exposure and opportunity to meet with hundreds of conservation professionals. The following are costs of the meeting: \$400 registration, \$430 late registration, \$575 for exhibit and registration, and \$300 for exhibit space only and no other conference activities.

Note: Full registration includes access to conference activities, including breakfast, luncheon, scholarship, night activities, and conservation tour/lunch.

Call now to reserve your space!!!

Shipping Exhibits to the Conference

Julie MacSwain, Conference Planning Chairperson

If you will be shipping an exhibit to the training conference, send them to the Minneapolis Airport Marriott after August 1, 2007. Send displays to the following address:

NOPHNRCSE August 6-10, 2007
Minneapolis Airport Marriott
2020 American Blvd. East
Bloomington, MN 55425

Call 952/851-4766 if you have questions.

Nominations Now Being Accepted

Carlos Hernandez, Nominations Chairperson

NOPHNRCSE is accepting nominations for national council positions until April 27, 2007. This year the procedure will be more automated. You can make a nomination online. Go to our website or directly to the following link:

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/hispanic/2007_election_nominations.html to submit your nomination. You can mail or fax the form if you prefer.

Please read the nomination procedure and rules before submitting your a nomination.

If you have questions, contact:

Carlos E. Hernandez, Nominations Committee Chair
Tel: 787-831-3402
Fax: 787-831-3315
Email: nophnrcse@hotmail.com

Want to Translate?

Kris Graham-Chavez, Vice President

Here's your chance to get involved with our awesome organization! NOPHNRCSE has been approached to translate NRCS technical documents from English to Spanish. This is an excellent opportunity for us to offer some assistance to NHQ and to states on a case-by-case basis. The opportunities for individuals may also be endless by helping some of us rusty Spanglish speakers to hone in on the Spanish language. Please contact Lori Valadez, communications chairperson, at lori.valadez@tx.usda.gov or Kris Graham Chavez, vice

president, at kristin.grahamchavez@az.usda.gov for more information of if you would like to be on a list of available translators.

Member News

Xavier Montoya, NRCS deputy state conservationist in Indiana, was selected as state conservationist for Wyoming effective April 22, 2007. Congratulations Xavier!