



La Voz

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

February 2008

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President's Message

Carlos Suarez, President

Dear NOPHNCSE Family!

First of all, on behalf of the National Council, we want to wish you and your family a 2008 full of health and success. This year, NOPHNCSE is celebrating its 15 year anniversary. This has being captured in our 2008 conference theme:

“NOPHNRCSE: 15 Years of Making a Difference in Conservation”. The hard work of the planning committee is already paying off. Our conference was approved back on Dec, 17, 2007, hotel accommodations are set, tours are already selected, the program agenda will have outstanding workshops, and more is to come as we get close to the conference. This year and for the first time in our conference history, the Federal Women Program Managers will join the HEPM training and being part of our training conference. Thanks to Sharyn Alvarez and her FWPM's for joining us. Keep visiting our website for conference updates and material.

I encourage you to participate in one of our NOPHNRCSE committees. We are always looking for volunteers to help us. It is not too late to join a committee. If you are interested in participate in one of our committee or helping out during the conference please contact Mario Morales at Mario.morales@tx.usda.gov or Astrid Martinez Planning Committee Chair at astrid.martinez@ne.usda.gov

A goal that we set every year is to increase our membership. I am asking you to help out on this goal. Contact past members and bring them back to the NOPHNRCSE family and talk to your co-workers and encourage them to join the organization. There are many benefits by becoming a member; networking, mentorship and opportunities for career development among others. Our membership chair is Rocemi Morales and she can be reach at Rocemi.morales@oh.usda.gov

Every year during our State Conservationist breakfast students are recruited to work for us. These students and new NRCS employees need mentorship. Each one of us in one way or another has a mentor, a person that you call and ask for career advice. Become a mentor of a new employee or student! They need our help and advice. If you want to become a mentor of a student during the conference please contact Gilbert.Guerrero@wdc.usda.gov.

Last but not least, I encourage you to include our training conference as part of your Individual Developing Plan (IDP) and training needs. Every year, we fulfill the training needs of our members and you should take advantage of this. Feel free to discuss with your supervisor all the training and workshops available during our conference.

I am always looking for ways to improve our employee organization. Feel free to contact any member of the National Council should you have any idea on how we can improve our organization.

Carlos

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Conference Update

By Astrid Martinez, Planning Committee Chair

I am pleased to announce that our conference was approved on Dec 17, 2007 and the approval letter was sent out to the states. If you haven't seeing the letter, I am including it in the newsletter and it would be available on the NOPHRCSE website.

The theme for this year conference is **NOPHRCSE: 15 Years of Making a Difference in Conservation** and our logo beautifully designed by Barb Jansen from Wisconsin is:



NOPHRCSE
 15 YEARS OF MAKING A
 DIFFERENCE IN CONSERVATION
 15 AÑOS HACIENDO LA
 DIFERENCIA EN LA CONSERVACIÓN
 JULY 7-11, 2008

We are very excited to have for the first time the Federal Women Program Managers and the Hispanic Emphasis Program Managers conducting their SEPM Training together at our conference on Monday July 7, 2008. Please welcome them at our conference.

Our conference registration form should be available on the website by February 15, 2008. We are still working on a few details and for that reason the registration form is not complete. Nevertheless, for those that are wondering about registration fees they are as follow:

REGISTRATION FEES	EARLY (BEFORE JUNE 16, 2008)		LATE (AFTER JUNE 16, 2008)		RETIRED LIFE MEMBER
	MEMBER	NON-MEMBER	MEMBER	NON-MEMBER	
SEPM (Monday only)	\$25	\$25			
3 DAYS CONFERENCE	\$400	\$425	\$430	\$455	EXEMPT
2 DAYS CONFERENCE	\$300	\$325	\$330	\$355	EXEMPT
1 DAY CONFERENCE	\$175	\$200	\$205	\$230	EXEMPT
3 & 4 DAYS NEDC	\$350	\$350	\$375	\$375	-
STUDENT 3 DAYS CONF	\$150	\$175	\$175	\$200	-

Our program committee is working hard to give you the best workshops available. Look for a draft of the program agenda by February 15. **Here is a quick look at what the committee is working on to showcase at the training conference.**

- Your Safety and Health in NRCS - what you should know and do
- What to do and how to conduct the business of OWCP Employee/Supervisor
- Basic Rules for Professional Writing – e-mails etiquette correspondence procedures and more
- Culturally Targeted Career Strategies for Latino Employees
- Web Base Soils Information for Conservation Planning
- American Customer Service index – what were the results and how does it affect me?
- Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)
- “A day in the life of a NRCS employee....”
- Health, Happiness and Humor in the workplace
- A Look at Conservation History the last 15 years – how it relates to Hispanics
- Competencies and Skills – what do they mean and how do I use them
- Hispanic kitchen
- Leading Culture Change with the Brain in Mind
- Managing Self and Influencing Others – multiple and emotional intelligence

We are also looking into the possibility of having NEDC training sessions available. Stay tuned as activities are approved. This year’s training conference is going to be very exciting and informative.

If you know of any one interested in having an exhibit during our conference please contact Ted Lucero at ted.lucero@co.usda.gov

We have our conservation tours. As previous years you will have to register for the tour of your choice. The tours will be first come first serve. Here are the tours with their description and website if you want to know more about the places we will be visiting.

1	<p>Aldo Leopold Foundation Tour of Aldo Leopold’s farm and the shack on the Wisconsin River. The tour includes a discussion of the history and philosophy of Aldo Leopold, a visit to the shack and a walk through restored prairie, woods and the banks of the Wisconsin River. Aldo Leopold is the author of A Sand County Almanac. http://www.aldoleopold.org/</p> <p>The Wollersheim Winery A tour of the winery, one of Wisconsin’s premiere wineries. The tour points out historical aspects of the property, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Tour highlights include the old cave which was the site of the original wine cellar, the fermentation facility and the underground limestone aging cellars. The Winery agreed to allow us on the grounds so we can see the actual growing conditions and discuss particular environmental/conservation issues unique to growing grapes. http://www.wollersheim.com</p>
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- 2 **Geology of Wisconsin Dells:** The Upper Dells features some of the areas most striking signature sandstone cliffs. Along the scenic route, you will see some of the tallest rock formations of the region such as Steamboat Rock and Black Hawk's Profile. During the tour the boat stops at two historic shorelandings– Witches Gulch and Stand Rock. Witches Gulch is the first stop where passengers can explore mysterious passageways as they walk through this cool canyon that offers beauty beyond words. Stand Rock is the area's world-famous trademark – sculpted by the forces of nature. Watch in amazement as our specially trained jumping dogs leap the five-foot chasm from the main cliff to the rock ledge. The demonstration commemorates the world's first stop-action photo taken by famous Dells photographer H.H. Bennett in 1888. Website: <http://www.dellsboats.com>

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

We will visit the 16 acres the Outdoor Display Gardens which offers ten specialty gardens connected by network of pathways. Olbrich Botanical Gardens is dedicated to the creation, conservation and interpretation of gardens and plant collections hardy to the American Midwest or native to the world's tropical forests for study, enjoyment and public benefit. www.olbrich.org

3 **International Crane Foundation**

The tour starts with a video introducing how the ICF got started. Then it takes you to an outside tour. The International Crane Foundation (ICF) is the only place in the world where you can see all 15 crane species. You will learn about the techniques used to preserve some of the rarest birds in the world. It will discuss conservation projects, explore nature trails through oak savanna, wetlands and tall grass prairie and learn about ecosystem restoration and preservation.

<http://www.savingcranes.org/index.cfm>

Aldo Leopold Foundation

Tour of Aldo Leopold's farm and the shack on the Wisconsin River. The tour includes a discussion of the history and philosophy of Aldo Leopold, a visit to the shack and a walk through restored prairie, woods and the banks of the Wisconsin River. Aldo Leopold is the author of A Sand County Almanac. <http://www.aldoleopold.org/>

Dates to keep in mind:

- **February 15, 2008-** check website for Registration form and conference draft program agenda.
- **April 2, 2008-** NOPHNRCSE Scholarship application due date.
- **April 30, 2008-** Award nomination due date.
- **April 30, 2008-** Student Scholarship for conference attendance due date.
- **June 4, 2008-** Form SCS-FNM-72 Meeting Attendance Approval due date.
- **June 16, 2008-** Early registration due date and due date to make reservation at the Madison Concourse Hotel.

I encourage you to check our website regularly to get the most current information and conference updates.

Hope to see you all in Madison!

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Dear NOPHNRCSE Member:

The Awards Team is soliciting your nominations for Awards recipients. We feel that there are employees in our agency and organization who contribute far beyond the call of duty. This is an excellent opportunity to voice your appreciation and nominate them for an Award. Enclosed are the guidelines, categories and a nomination form. Please be prompt and send them to Marina Barajas by April 30, 2008.

Thank You,

The Awards Committee

NOPHNRCSE: Guidelines for Nominations

- **Nominee must be an ACTIVE member in their Hispanic Community.**
- **Nominee must have at least one year's membership in NOPHNRCSE.**
- **Nominee may nominate him/herself.**
- **No person should be named an Award recipient for more than one Award in the same year.**
- **Awards Team will be responsible for promoting availability of awards, soliciting and screening Nominations and presenting awards at Annual Conference. They will also be the Judging Panel and have established a process for selecting the best-qualified nominations. Judging of all nominations will be completed by May 12, 2008.**
- **Awards Team may reject any nomination of candidates that do not meet expected standards of documented performance.**
- **Runner-up nominees are not considered automatic candidates in subsequent years. New nominations need to be submitted each year.**
- **Nomination shall be made by submitting a complete nomination form to the Awards Team no later than April 30, 2008.**
- **Selection, acquisition and engraving of appropriate Awards or certificate is a function of Awards Team in collaboration with the Conference Planning Work Group.**

NOPHNRCSE AWARD CATEGORIES

Leadership

The NOPHNRCSE Leadership Award recognizes the accomplishments of proactive and motivated men and women who are active members in the Hispanic Community. The award especially recognizes their participation in and support of NOPHNRCSE in addition to their contributions in their profession and Hispanic Communities. This Award is given in tribute to the forerunners and pacesetters of the organization whose dedication and leadership resulted in the founding of the organization. Only one Award will be presented each year.

Visionary

The NOPHNRCSE Visionary Award recognizes the accomplishments of forward looking and innovative men and women who are active members in the Hispanic Community. The Award especially recognizes their participation in and support of NOPHNRCSE in addition to their contributions to their profession and Hispanic Community. This Award is given in tribute to pioneers of the organization whose hard work and vision resulted in the founding of the organization. Only one Award will be presented each year.

Award of Excellence in Natural Resources Conservation

The NOPHNRCSE Award of Excellence is designed to recognize individuals who, over a period of time, have contributed substantially and creatively to our Natural Resources Conservation profession. The recipient should exemplify excellence in a particular discipline and, possibly, in multi-discipline efforts that promotes excellence and creativity. The recipient also should demonstrate leadership and involvement in NOPHNRCSE. Awards of Excellence should not be given to members currently serving on the National Council or be a current chair of a standing committee. The Awards Team will decide the number of Award (s) presented each year.

Award of Excellence in Hispanic Community Outreach

The NOPHNRCSE Award of Excellence is designed to recognize individuals who, over a period of time have contributed substantially and creatively to Hispanic Communities. The recipient should exemplify excellence in a particular discipline and, possibly, in multi-discipline efforts that promotes excellence and creativity. The recipient also should demonstrate leadership and involvement in NOPHNRCSE. Awards of Excellence should not be given to members currently serving on the National Council or be a current chair of a standing or ad hoc committee. The Awards Team will decide the number of Award(s) presented each year.

Outstanding NOPHNRCSE Member Award

The NOPHNRCSE Outstanding Member Award is the highest recognition given by the members, themselves, to one of its members. The purpose of this Award is to recognize excellence in professionalism and leadership as a NOPHNRCSE member. It is based on achievements in NOPHNRCSE over an extended period of years and on participation and support of its mission. Only one Award will be presented each year.

Amiga/Amigo Award

The NOPHNRCSE Amiga/Amigo Award recognizes the activities of an individual(s) or organization, which have substantially contributed towards the improvement of the Organization and/or Hispanic Community at large, in regards to visibility, information dissemination and program accessibility. The recipient(s) should demonstrate an involvement with the Hispanic Community and by actions show support of NOPHNRCSE's vision and mission. Only one award will be presented each year.

(more)

2008 NOPHNRCSE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

Please check the appropriate category: (one category per nomination)

Visionary Leadership Hispanic Community
 Natural Resources Conservation Amiga/Amigo Outstanding Member

Nominee Information

NAME:

TITLE:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

2008 Dues Paid: YES NO

Why this person should be considered for this Award:

Participation and Support to NOPHNRCSE:

Responsibilities and Contributions to NRCS:

Other Additional Information:

NOTE:

Limit one nomination per form only! Nomination application must be fully completed to be considered.

Nominated by:
Title:
Address:
Phone:

**Please return to: Marina Barajas, 4190 Armadale Way, Sacramento, CA 95823
or email to Marina.Barajas@ca.usda.gov by April 30, 2008.**

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Mentors for Students Needed

Gilbert F. Guerrero, Student Outreach Committee Chairman

The student outreach committee is soliciting mentors for the 2008 NOPHNCSE conference in July. Our goal is to provide each student with a mentor. As a mentor you will have the opportunity to talk with the students about your experiences as a NRCS employee and guide them through the process of applying for internships and scholarships. The main focus will be to prepare the students for career development and to increase our membership in the organization for the future. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please feel free to contact Edwin Martinez via email at edwin.martinez@ca.usda.gov or Gilbert Guerrero at gilbert.guerrero@wdc.usda.gov.

NOPHNCSE is seeking college students interested in a career in natural resources to attend this year's training conference, July 7-10, 2008 in Madison, Wisconsin. Attendance at this conference will provide the best-qualified students (college and upper level high school students) with an opportunity to meet, interact, and network with NRCS professionals. Students will also have the opportunity to visit with hiring officials from across the country about federal internship programs and job opportunities. The organization will provide travel expenses for the students selected. The application must be postmarked by April 30, 2008. For more information, visit the [NOPHNCSE website](#).

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NOPHNRCSE by the Numbers

By Carlos Suarez

Dear Membership:

Happy New Year 2008! I hope this New Year that just began brings you great things to you and your families.

The National Council is currently working on developing a report that will provide NOPHNRCSE member's data about our organization's diversity. The report is called "[NOPHNRCSE by the Numbers](#)". This data will provide information that will improve our recruitment of new members, promote lifetime memberships, maintain real time data of membership, and will provide statistical information that can be used to develop NOPHNRCES literature. This is the first time that NOPHNRCSE will put together a report showing the diversity of the membership.

In order to create this report, our Membership Committee has developed a survey questionnaire that captures the information needed to create "[NOPHNRCSE by the Numbers](#)". Our agency has become more transparent over the last couple years. Filling this survey is strictly voluntary. However, I encourage you to support this initiative by completing the attached survey. This survey is posted in our website on the second page of our membership form.

Forward your surveys to your Regional Representative in your respective areas. Let's make a difference and help our National Council develop this report.

Should you have any questions, please contact Edwin Almodovar, Midwest Regional Representative, at 269-823-3974 or email at edwin.almodovar@mi.usda.gov.

**Carlos Suarez
NOPHNRCSE President**

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Don't you just love your job? I do!

Dawn Afman, District Conservationist

Why are people not beating down NRCS' door for a job? Why are we not sharing how great we have it with others? In California, and I am sure nationwide, the NRCS is looking for good employees. We are hearing from everywhere that employee retention and recruitment are top of the list for all the State Conservationists. We need to recruit for certain specialties, such as, range cons and engineers. And we all know that we are losing 50% of our workforce due to retirement over the next five years.

Recently I moved to Mariposa where the District Conservationist had retired after 25 great years of service. So, I am new to the community, I don't know anyone, and I needed some help with my outreach campaign and summer Conservation Planning Initiative. So I hired a young, local fresh mind to assist in my endeavors for the summer. And I knew by the time people are at the university level, they probably picked their majors. So, I opted for a High School Student who I could mold into a future Forest, Soil or Range Conservationist.

I put an ad in the local paper and made the summer job a local competition. I required the kids to put together a resume, write an essay and do an interview. I got to meet lots of folks, I became the talk of the town for awhile and I met loads of parents while they tried to convince me that their son or daughter was the one for the job!

It's only January now, and I am already getting calls from kids who want to apply for this coming summer. We have the best jobs on the planet, most of the time, so let's start early, let's get these young bright minds into an Earth, Soil or Range Science degree. I ended up hiring an amazing HS student for the summer. The STEP, Michael, is now planning on getting his degree in Natural Resource Conservation. After the summer he wrote a letter to the editor about his experience with NRCS, this is a quote, "The experiences I have had this summer with the NRCS will last with me forever and will help me throughout college and my life. I know because I am a NRCS student intern and I am ahead of the competition for natural resources and wildlife related colleges and job opportunities."

Thus, I had a super experience hiring a STEP for the summer. You should try one too!

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If you Look, you shall find....

Dawn Adman, District Conservationist

As much as we try and as much as we do, there still may be underserved communities in our areas. There are people who slip through the cracks and never come into the office to apply for our programs or ask for technical assistance. Some people still don't know we are here to help them help the land. Curtis Tarver the Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations put together a task force to enhance outreach to Hispanics in Area 3, California.

The volunteer task force consists of Soil Cons, DC's, Public Affairs specialist, State Office Special Emphasis Program Manager (Hispanic SEPM) and others who want to help create the best outreach campaign. We met with other agencies to find out what we can do together to compound our efforts into a huge success.

There are about 4,000 Hispanic farmers just in Area 3 of California. So, we are currently putting together a plan and writing grants to get the funding to connect with these producers and address any special needs they may have.

I encourage other NRCS employees to look at their areas. When you are out in the field, look for those people and communities that don't stop by the local service center.

Who are they and how can you help them? Why do **you** care about this? Besides building up your resume by volunteering to be on a special task force, you will experience new cultures, different foods and get new friends. Together we can enhance NRCS Mission to serve the underserved. We can always do more for outreach, and Civil Rights.

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Beginning Farmers

By David Mas Masumoto

As I get older, I look behind me and don't see a long line of new farmers taking my place. The average age of the American farmer is 57-60 years old. Since I'm in my early 50s, does that make me a young farmer? If that's true, it's not a good sign.

In the future, who will grow my heirloom peaches? My children have expressed interest, but I envision their family farm very differently. Farmers may work in new partnerships, and they will need to be entrepreneurs, savvy in marketing and public relations, balancing the economics of survival with the rural way of life. Yet as large operations dominate the rural landscape, will there be room for the small farm operation?

Who will grow the specialty crops, especially the unique fruits and vegetables that thrive on smaller acreage? As ethnic foods are introduced, who will grow these new flavors?

When the Japanese first arrived in America, daikon and napa cabbage were introduced and are now readily available. It wasn't long ago when lemon grass and bitter melon seemed foreign. Now they're on American menus.

So who will grow the next exotic fruit? Should Colombian food explode on the food scene, who could grow the next sexy culinary dish using maracuya or passion fruit -- described as "agridulce/sweet and sour?"

Will farmers be around to supply a new epicurean hunger? To have ethnic foods, you first have to have farmers who grow them.

We need to support provisions that encourage beginning farmers. An opportunity lies in the current debate of the Farm Bill and support of a beginning farmer initiative.

But the public collectively rolls its eyes with talk of the Farm Bill, reauthorized every five years, 2007 being one of the more controversial debates. The average citizen quickly becomes lost in the \$300 billion congressional battle between commodities (corn, soybeans, wheat, rice and cotton to name a few), conservation and environmental policies, and nutrition programs (such as food stamps and part of the school lunch program).

But the old Farm Bill culture is changing. Western farmers are demanding that specialty crops -- fruits and vegetables -- get a piece of the pie, and support research and marketing programs that will directly benefit Valley agriculture.

Yet a specialty-crops strategy must also include encouraging new specialty-crop farmers. By modifying current USDA Farm Bill proposals, we have an opportunity to encourage, train and help establish diversity as part of the new American farmer profile.

Women are playing a larger role in agriculture, along with many from non-agrarian backgrounds. I welcome the "city slickers" and their idealism to reinvigorate our farmlands. I want to be inclusive, not exclusive. I don't think we can afford to exclude anyone who wants to farm.

Perhaps the greatest potential lies with the new ethnic farmer. Historically, immigrant families arrived in a new land, worked the soil and struggled to become part of America by planting roots.

In our Valley, Southeast Asians are filling an agricultural gap, growing crops large operations would rarely experiment with. They are proving highly adaptable, market-driven.

For generations, Latinos and Latinas have been part of our Valley's agriculture, most often as farmworkers. Understandably, I have often heard them speak of "getting their children out of the fields." Yet perhaps another goal is to transition from farmworker to farmer. (Could a powerful response to the devastating citrus freeze have been not only a handout of food but also a hand in planting seeds and training laborers to become small producers?)

Immigrants bring to the land a crucial asset: labor. A beginning farmer program could capitalize on this, redefining skills as knowledge capital, creating entrepreneurs and adding economic development to rural communities. A huge potential lies with specialty crops -- high risk, high value, high opportunity -- and with organic farming, which is more labor intensive.

Immigrants' skills and a willingness to work can then be parlayed into assets.

The current agricultural environment often prevents beginning farmers from succeeding. Large capital is required, governmental programs are difficult to access, training programs lacking.

Farm Bill loan programs are outdated, with rigid qualifying criteria. But in the West, small growers and their specialty crops need only "seed money" to start. Loan programs can be smaller, with quicker turnaround times due to higher value crops.

New ideas can also be explored, such as micro-financing models that pool funds, and a community management team that makes small loans, assists in monitoring to insure success and collects the funds to be re-loaned again in a sustainable program.

Disaster assistance and insurance programs need to be designed for the small grower. Marketing assistance can be tailored to not only sell product, but also bridge the gap between urban and rural at farmers markets and direct sales.

Appropriate technical assistance will work as an economic multiplier, training small farmers to spin off new enterprises, including their own marketing, transportation and distribution businesses.

Outreach to socially disadvantaged producers must accompany programs. The mission of a beginning farmer program is to work for a common good. A diverse farming population with a blend of backgrounds, skills, interests and attributes will only help strengthen our food production system.

A beginning farmer initiative can help transform the Farm Bill into a Food Bill, broadening its impact and influence. Farm Bill commodity and nutrition programs will continue to provide the basic breads for our diets.

My hope is that a portion of the programs can target the next generation of diverse farmers who can grow those special foods that complement our dinner tables.

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USA Soil Classification System Spanish Version

Luis A. Hernandez, CPSC, CPSSC, State Soil Scientist\MLRA Leader

As part of its role as a global leader in the field of soil science, NRCS recently released a Spanish version of the 10th Edition of the Keys to Soil Taxonomy. By translating the “Keys” into Spanish many soil scientists and other professionals from Latino America, the United States and other countries will benefit from this effort for years to come.

The translation of the Keys into Spanish was the initiative of Luis Hernandez, Arkansas State Soil Scientist/Soil Survey Region 16 Team Leader. Hernandez coordinated this important effort with layout and printing support from staff members in the National Soil Survey Center, Lincoln, Nebraska and translation support from Dr. Carlos A. Ortiz, Professor of Soil Sciences at “Colegio de Postgraduados”, Montecillo, Mexico. Technical review of the translation was completed by Milton Cortes, Asst. State Soil Scientist, Raleigh, North Carolina, Edwin Muniz, MLRA Soil Survey Project Leader, Hammonton, New Jersey, Astrid Martinez, MLRA Soil Survey Project Leader, Scottsbluff, Nebraska, Milton Martinez, Soil Scientist, Quincy, Florida, Alvin Perez, Soil Scientist, North Platte, Nebraska, Manuel Matos, Soil Scientist, Fargo, North Dakota, and Diana Angelo, Cartographic Technician, Little Rock, AR

Currently, the Spanish translation of the “Keys” is posted on the soils page of the NRCS website and available for downloading in a PDF format. The publication is also available on a CD and can be requested by contacting the National Soil Survey Center in Lincoln, Nebr. A limited number of hard copies will be printed and available by late winter through LANDCARE—NRCS’ online ordering and distribution system for publications and education materials.

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2008 Career Enhancement Grant Announcement

By Kristin Graham Chavez



The National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees (NOPHNRCSE) would like to offer financial grants for further educational opportunities for members in good standing.

Guidelines for selection and priority will be based on:

- Applicants must be members in good standing.
- Willingness of the participant to become involved with NOPHNRCSE as a conference planning member, committee member, committee chair or officer.
- Awards will be distributed equally among the seven (7) regions.
- 14 grants will be offered the first year.
- Upward mobility and series qualification (such as 457 series) will take precedence over personal development.
- A passing grade or a certificate of completion is attained.
- There will be \$500 limit per person per year limit.
- The committee is requesting \$7,000 from the National Council to implement the program.

Following are the application form for 2008 and guidelines for completing and submitting the application. The due date is **April 2, 2008.**

For More Information:

Web Site: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/hispanic/>

Email: kristin.grahamchavez@az.usda.gov

Phone: [602-280-8842](tel:602-280-8842)

Grant Application

Please complete this application (print legibly) and submit it with all of the items requested to:

Kristin Graham Chavez 230 North 1 st Avenue, Suite 509 Phoenix, AZ 85323-1733
--

Complete application package must be postmarked by **April 2, 2008**. Incomplete or late applications will not be evaluated.

Check One: <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms.		
Name:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip Code:
Mailing Address (if different from above):		
Telephone:	Birth Date (Mo./Day/Yr.):	
Birth Place (State and Country):		
Name and address of High School or College you are currently attending :		

GPA (on a 4.0 scale): _____ U.S. Citizenship: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No.		

Note: [Your Grant Application will not be processed without proof of U.S. Citizenship.](#)

Name of the college, organization or person from which you received this application.

Name:

The following items must be submitted along with this signed application form. Failure to submit a complete 2008 NOPHNCSE Career Enhancement Grant Application package will result in you forfeiting any opportunity to be selected for a 2008 NOPHNCSE Grant.

The following items constitute a complete 2008 NOPHNCSE Career Enhancement Grant Application package:

- Submit this completed application with your signature;
- Submit a personal statement of 350 to 500 words in length (double-spaced). Please include information such as personal background, name of school(s) you plan to attend or are attending, personal and career goals, and extra curricular activities. You may also include other information that you feel is important (remember not to exceed 500 words) Please state how this grant will enable you to contribute to the organization.
- Submit two letters of recommendation from a College professor(s); or someone who can give a Character reference.
- Proof of U.S. citizenship (copy of Birth Certificate or Naturalization Certificate).
- Applicants submit a copy of a letter of acceptance from the college/program you plan to attend.
- **** Note:** Receipt of a NOPHNCSE Career Enhancement Grant does not constitute a guarantee of future employment with the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other federal agency.

Certification: I certify that all of the information provided is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Purposely providing false information may result in the recall of any scholarship granted or in the forfeiture of any scholarship awarded.

I am aware that any Grant awarded by NOPHNCSE will be disbursed on a reimbursement bases. You will be paid as soon as a passing grade or certificate of completion is attained.

If I am selected to receive a NOPHNCSE Grant, I will utilize the NOPHNCSE award toward expenses related to my college or career enhancement program attendance. Also, I understand that if I receive an award, there is no guarantee of renewal. I must reapply for a new scholarship each year.

I understand that proof of college enrollment will be required if selected and that I must notify my University Financial Aid Office and NOPHNCSE of any changes to my enrollment status. I further understand that changes to my enrollment status may result in the cancellation of any award provided. I hereby acknowledge that it is my responsibility to keep my institution's Financial Aid Office and NOPHNCSE informed of all address changes.

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to **submit a complete application package to NOPHNCSE in compliance with the posted deadline.**

Incomplete or late application materials will result in my Career Enhancement Grant application package not being considered for any award. All application materials become the property of NOPHNCSE. I hereby give NOPHNCSE permission to share this information for the purpose of recruitment, public relations, or possible employment.

I hereby certify that I have read the application information and guidelines, as well as this Certification, and that I understand and accept all of the conditions specified. Failure to sign this Certification will result in my ineligibility for this Career Enhancement Grant.

Signature:	Date:
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Become active in NOPHNCSE and make a difference.

By Mario A. Morales, Vice President

As we begin the New Year, I want to encourage the current membership to again join us for an exciting 2008 and to encourage non-members to also join us. I also want to strongly encourage you to participate and work on one of the many committees that contribute to the success of NOPHNCSE. Select a committee that interests you regardless whether you know someone on that committee or not. In fact, I challenge you to work on a committee that you have never worked on. I am certain that it will be a good experience for you and will help you develop into a better conservation professional.

I want to take a moment to express my appreciation to the persons serving as NOPHNCSE Committee Chairs. Your responsibility is great but I know that you will each leave your “mark” and make a difference. Ms. Marina Barajas is continuing as the Awards Committee Chair. I know that she will improve on her great performance of this past year. Ms. Stella Santos is the new Communications Chair. This is a new role for her and I have every confidence in the world that she will do an excellent job.

Ms. Astrid Martinez is the new Conference Planning Chair. This position requires great skill, drive, and dedication. She has already demonstrated these attributes with her performance so far and I know the best is yet to come. Additionally, she has assembled an impressive Conference Planning Team. I look forward to a great conference in Madison, Wisconsin. Mr. Patrick Conner has done an absolutely fantastic job with the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. I know he will continue to do a masterful job at this assignment. Ms. Rocemi Morales is the new Membership Committee Chair. I look

forward to seeing great achievements with regards to the Membership Committee. Membership is one of the committees with an incredible responsibility. After all, NOPHNRCSE is a member organization.

Mr. Arturo Carvajal is continuing as the Natural Resources Committee Chairs. He has done an outstanding job in this capacity, and he and his committee are proposing some interesting new ideas. I look forward to seeing the impressive results that I know are coming. Mr. Carlos Hernandez is continuing as the chair for the Nominations Committee. He has done a superb job in this role and I look forward to his continued efforts.

Mr. Ilde Chavez is the new Partnerships Committee Chair and I have every confidence that he will do a terrific job. The Partnerships Committee has Legislative and International Affairs responsibilities. The Recruitment & Career Development Committee is chaired by Ms. Tanya Robles. I know that she will do an outstanding job in this capacity. Ms. Amanda Hasemeier is the new Chair for the Scholarship & Endowment Fund Committee. She has held this position before and I know she will do a fantastic job, just as she has done before.

Again, I want to challenge the membership to volunteer for service on one of the above mentioned committees and to assist us with our recruitment efforts. And remember, we will also be looking for Technical and Poster presenters and for Conference Moderators for our Madison Training Conference. If you have any questions, about this or any other topic, please feel free to call me at 830-279-0164.

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