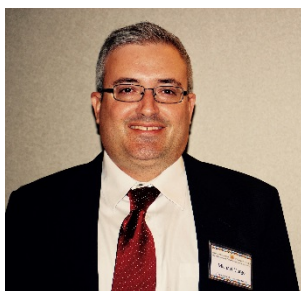




Ranching in the Past and Present...Covarrubias Family



Hello NOPHNCSE members,

I hope you are enjoying these long summer days both at work and at home! I would like to update you on some of the things the National Council has been working on:

Organizing Standing Committees.

NOPHNCSE currently has several active and inactive standing committees. The council is currently evaluating each committee, identifying vacancies, and may propose new ones if needed. Opportunities to serve on a committee will be forthcoming. Please inform your regional representative if you are interested.

Updating our Website. The council is currently looking at options to revamp our website with a possible new web design that is user-friendly and will meet our organization needs. I envision our site to be an information portal for our current and future members with personal and career development training information, events calendar, member highlights, community forum, job detail information, easy online membership payments and renewals, links to our social media sites, other professional organizations, event photos, etc., etc. Thanks to Janella Cruz for taking the lead on this project.



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Planning 2018 Training Meeting and 25th Anniversary. Planning is underway for a 2018 Training Meeting and 25th Anniversary! I am hoping to see many past Presidents and council members at this meeting! We will be continuing our successful partnership with NEDC. The meeting will be held in Texas with a date yet to be determined.

We will soon be asking for numerous volunteers to help with both our training planning committees and to fill vacancies in our standing committees. *Serving in a committee is one huge opportunity to reap benefits of your membership.* You will develop important leadership, and communication skills that are essential for career advancement. Stay tuned since we will be asking for volunteers to fill specific vacancies soon.

In conclusion, I would like to recognize lifetime NOPHNCSE member and West Regional Representative, Mary Sanchez who retired at the end of May 2017. Mary started her career with NRCS in 1983 as student range conservationist in northern New Mexico. She spent time with NRCS in Idaho, Arizona, and finished her career in Las Cruces, NM. Mary joined NOPHNCSE after the first conference in 1993. Thank you Mary for commitment to the vision and mission of our organization and I hope you enjoy your retirement! We look forward to seeing you at our training meeting next year!

We are now looking for a member from the west to fill the West Regional Representative position on our National Council. If you are interested or know someone who is,

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National Council

President

Michael Margo, CT

michael.margo@ct.usda.gov

Caribbean Area Representative

Yadira Feliciano, PR

yadira.feliciano@pr.usda.gov

Executive Vice President

Rocemi Morales, OH

rocemi.morales@oh.usda.gov

East Region Representative

Janella Cruz, NY

janella.cruz@ny.usda.gov

Vice President

Bianca Díaz, NJ

bianca.diaz.deliz@nj.usda.gov

Midwest Region Representative

Diana Avellanet, MI

diana.avellanet@mi.usda.gov

Treasurer

Edgar Cantu, RI

edgar.cantu@ri.usda.gov

Northern Plains Region Representative

Roberto Luciano, ND

roberto.luciano@nd.usda.gov

Secretary

Bianca Soto, MD

bianca.soto@md.usda.gov

South Central Region Representative

Flavio Garza, TX

flavio.garza@tx.usda.gov

Acting West Region Representative

Diana Avellanet, MI

diana.avellanet@mi.usda.gov

Southeast Region Representative

Joxelle Velázquez, MS

joxelle.velazquez@ms.usda.gov

please contact Diana Avellanet or myself. Diana will be covering the west region until we have a replacement. Thanks Diana!

Enjoy the rest of the summer and if you have any ideas or suggestions related to NOPHNRCSE please reach out to your regional representative or myself.

Talk to you soon!

Michael Margo

NOPHNRCSE President

New member Spotlight



Luis C. taking GPS points with the Trimble

My name is Luis Cruz and I am a Soil Conservationist working out of the East Aurora field office in Erie County New York. My career with the NRCS began as a sophomore in college back in 2009, when I was assigned to work in Janesville, Wisconsin as a STEP intern. Janesville is where I first experienced the services our agency offers and the role that a soil conservationist plays in encouraging farmers to plan and implement environmentally sustainable practices. I was fortunate to have a great team and mentors during my time in Wisconsin. In 2010 was asked to come back to Wisconsin to continue my STEP internship in the Eau Claire field office in northern Wisconsin.

In 2011, I received a Bachelors in Agricultural Systems Technology from the University of Puerto Rico and immediately went to work as a pest control technician for a seed company in Santa Isabela, Puerto Rico. During my time there I supervised daily pest control operations for corn and soybean research plots and managed equipment maintenance and calibration. While working for the seed company I had the opportunity to learn about precision agriculture equipment such as GPS guided sprayers with spot spraying capabilities and variable rate technology. This experience sparked an interest in remote sensing and geospatial technology which lead me apply for graduate studies.

In 2013 I was admitted to the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico where I researched the feasibility of implementing unmanned aerial vehicle technology for photogrammetric studies of streambank erosion and in 2015 I obtained a Masters in Geospatial Science and Technology. While in school I was offered a pathways internship in my current office. A year later, here I am in East Aurora working as a permanent employee with a great group of people in a county where we “*help people help the land*” every day.

South Central Region

Ranching in the Past and Present

By Donnie Lunsford, Public Affairs Specialist NRCS

Almost 49 years ago, Jose Murillo was looking for work on a ranch in the Hill Country near Junction when he came upon a rancher working his cattle. Murillo was 17 years old at the time and needed room and board. Rancher Jim Henry saw potential in the young man and gave him an opportunity. Days turned into months and months into years. Owners Jim and Ann Wright gave the ranch to the Murillo family upon their passing in 2004. Murillo and his wife are grateful to own the ranch that gave them their start as a young couple.



Murillo followed in the Wrights footsteps ranching the rocky hills. Over the years, he began to see the decline of little bluestem, sideoats grama, and halls panicum. He was forced to burn prickly pear through drought years. He knew he needed some guidance and assistance and that's when he contacted the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The ranch was overgrazed with only a water well at the ranch headquarters. Murillo took the advice from the NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist, Alfredo Munoz, and removed and sold all livestock on his 850 acre ranch.

"It is hard to tell a rancher that he needs to rest his land to let the grasses recover," said Muñoz.

Immediately, Murillo and Muñoz began to work on a conservation plan to outline the resource concerns and conservation practices to achieve the desired outcome of the ranches resources. Using Farm Bill programs, Murillo was able to improve his water distribution and grazing management by utilizing cross fences to allow for cattle grazing rotation and pastures to rest.

Over three growing seasons, Murillo started to see the ranch begin to heal. He kept clearing invasive Ashe Juniper, as he always had, which would improve forage production and wildlife habitat.

Three watering systems have also been installed with solar pumps, thousands of feet of fencing, and hundreds of acres of brush cleared.

“He has brought back the proper amount of livestock and he uses a 6 inch grazing height on his bunch grasses to determine when he moves the animals to a new pasture,” Munoz said.

Today, the Murillos ranch is healthy diverse operation. Many lessons have been learned and conservation practices implemented over the years. The Wrights would be so proud of the Murillos and how they have transformed the ranch to what it is today.

“Don’t be afraid to start at the bottom and work hard. I worked for three dollars a day from sun up to sun down. My wife and I had to work off of the ranch to make ends meet at times,” Murillo said. “Continue to learn and don’t try to make the land produce more than it is capable of.”

Northeast Region

Paul Smiths Soil Survey Office Support with the North Adirondack Regional Envirothon (NARE)

By Janella Cruz and Rebecca Fox, 12-PAS Soil Scientist

The North Adirondack Regional Envirothon also known as (NARE) was held on May 11th at Paul Smiths College. Several county team schools from surrounding counties of Clinton, Essex, Franklin, and St. Lawrence competed for the state envirothon competition. There are four winners, one from each participating county, and an overall winner



of the whole competition. The members of the overall winning team each receive a scholarship to Paul Smith's College. This year's competition has participation from 17 different schools across the region!

The staff from the Paul Smiths Soil Survey Office (12-PAS) proctored the Soils portion of the NARE competition. Gerald Smith, 12-PAS MLRA Office Leader, lead the soil pit portion of the test. Rebecca Fox and Janella Cruz, 12-PAS staff Soil Scientists, lead a multiple choice test that also included an assessment in texturing and color of soil samples. Several groups of students participated in this year's event with many new intriguing discussions about soils. Overwhelmingly there was a sense of excitement among the students being more hands on in answering the questions while using some of the tools and techniques used in Soil Survey. Ultimately, it was another successful Envirothon with eager and motivated teams, beautiful weather and a badass Soil Survey Office.



Pathways & Hispanic Interns

Submitted by Misha Vargas, Soil Conservationist, Bangor, Maine

Our NRCS-Maine Pathways Interns **Juan Negron**, **Ada Vilches**, and **Axel Martinez** have already been engaged in "putting conservation on the ground" around the state and working closely with our field office staff.



In the photo, on the left, Pathways Intern **Axel Martinez** helps Scarborough District Conservationist **Wayne Munroe** and Agricultural Engineer **Candi Gilpatric** position a proposed irrigation pipeline in southern Maine.



In the photo, on the right, Pathways Intern **Ada Vilches** (right) joins Soil Conservationist **Misha Vargas** for a day of farm visits in Penobscot County on July 25.

Region	Representative	Phone	Email
Caribbean area	Yadira Feliciano	787-894-1480, ext. 111	Yadira.feliciano@pr.usda.gov
East	Janella Cruz	518-327-3774, ext. 3	Janella.cruz@ny.usda.gov
Midwest	Diana Avellanet	269-467-6336, ext. 3	Diana.avellanet@mi.usda.gov
Northern plains	Roberto Luciano	701-463-2851, ext. 244	Roberto.Luciano@nd.usda.gov
South Central	Flavio Garza	956-723-6643, ext. 3	Flavio.Garza@tx.usda.gov
South East	Joxelle Velazquez	601-483-4100, ext.113	Joxelle.Velazquez@ms.usda.gov
West	Diana Avellanet	269-467-6336, ext. 3	Diana.avellanet@mi.usda.gov





Lifetime Membership Drive

Lifetime Membership benefits:

- Your paid life membership dues are not subject to increase.
- Life memberships can decrease administrative expenditures.
- Life memberships increase revenues.
- A life membership provides peace-of-mind in that dues are current and saves money for the member.
- A life membership provides opportunity to promote the organization, increase stature, and for grassroots educational and outreach programs.
- A life membership provides a springboard for a separate entity within the organization to manage and administer these financial gains.
- A life membership offers a great degree of prestige and identifies you as an individual apart from the regular membership.
- A Life membership could generate income if it “raffle-off” occasionally as part of our regular membership drive or during “scholarship night”.

Currently the fee for a lifetime membership is \$500.00

Payment Options:

- 1 payment of \$500.00
- 2 payments of \$250.00
- 4 payments of \$125.00
- 5 payments of \$100.00
- 10 payments of \$50.00

Rules:

- The first payment has to be sent with the application form and choose what type of payment option.
- You have until March 1, 2017 to complete your payments.
- If for some reason you cannot finish by March 1 we will give you until April 30 to finish your commitment. A written statement requesting extension should be provided to the membership chair by March 1st.
- No money will be forfeit.
- If you change your mind or cannot finish the payment plan even with the extension, the money will be credited for future years. No money will be return.
- Payment options: by check address to NOPHNRCSE and PayPal. For PayPal payments please contact Edgar Cantu edgar.cantu@ri.usda.gov