



PROFESSIONAL SOIL SCIENTISTS ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS

Texas Soil Profiles

President's Letter



Cristine Morgan, 2010 President

Happy New Year fellow soil scientists! I hope the majority of you are planning to attend our annual PSSAT meeting this year. In addition to having the opportunity to socialize with friends and associates, we will have a speaker, Tracy Rutherford give us tips for improving our photography. I also hope to get input on creating new t-shirts for the group. It is my vision to create a t-shirt that is interesting to us and for our children and grandchildren to wear. Jamie Pichford and I will present some ideas and we encourage you to bring your creativity, ideas, and opinions. President elect, John Sackett will be looking to fill many committee positions. If

you are currently on a committee and your term is expiring, please let John know if you wish to continue to serve. Also, if you are interesting in contributing to PSSAT by serving on a committee, let John know as well. If you want to add a topic to the business meeting, please send me an email (cmorgan@ag.tamu.edu) and I will put your topic on the agenda. Special thanks to Dusten Russell, Amanda Bragg, Denis Brezina, Jamie Pitchford, and Toni Edwardson for their help and guidance this year.

SPECIAL NOTE!!! -- The 2010 Photo contest deadline has been extended to **Jan. 21st**. Photos still need to be from 2010. Submit your entries to pssat_photo_submit@yahoo.com. See the PSSAT website for more information and contest rules.

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Information about the 2011 PSSAT meeting

Date: Wednesday, February 2nd

Location: College Station Conference Center, 1300 George Bush Drive, College Station.

Cost: \$15 per plate

A fajita dinner will be served. The dinner fee does include the security guard so alcohol can be consumed on site. ****Reminder: BYOB!**** We hope to see everyone in attendance.

* We will be sending out an RSVP-e-invite. While response is not mandatory, if you are able to, please respond quickly. The more accurate estimate of attendance we have prior to the meeting, the more efficient we can be with food orders – thus potentially lowering the cost per plate.

2011 PSSAT Meeting Agenda

5:30 - Social Starts, purchase of meal ticket, renewal of membership

6:00 - Fajita Dinner Served

6:30 – Guest Speaker: Dr. Tracy Rutherford, Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications. Topic: Improving our amateur photography skills

7:00 - Business Meeting

I. Reading and approval of 2010 minutes

II. Officers Reports

a. Treasurer Report

b. Editor Report

c. Webmaster Report

III. Committee Reports

a. Scholarship

b. Membership

c. Constitution & Bylaws Committee

d. Public Relations Committee

IV. Photo Contest

V. Nominations

VI. T-Shirts

VII. Sponsorships

a. Regional Soil Judging Contest at TAMU in Fall \$300

VIII. Pass the Gavel To John Sackett

IX. Adjourn

2010 Committee Assignments

Constitution and By-laws (3)

Riley Dayberry –(chair)- 2009-2010

Rusty Dowell -- 2009-2010

Stacey Kloesel -- 2009-2010

Finance (3)

James Gordon –(chair)- 2009-2010

Joe Neal -- 2009-2010

Jo Parsley -- 2009-2010

Membership (5)

Cristine Morgan (President)

Maurice Jurena -- 2008-2010

Richard Reid -- 2008-2010

Public Relations and Education (3)

Jamie Pitchford –(chair)- 2010-2011

Kelly Attebury -- 2009-2010

Sara Russell -- 2009-2010

Nominations (3)

Dusten Russell (Imm. Past Pres)

Gary Harris – 2009

Laurie Kiniry – 2010

Scholarship (3)

Jessica Jobe -(chair)- 2009-2010

Bryon Lorenz – 2009-2010

Deanna Faubion – 2009-2010

Ehtics (3)

Alan Stahnke –(chair)- 2009-2010

Wayne Gabriel – 2009-2010

Clyde Stahnke – 2009-2010

Minutes for the PSSAT 2010 meeting

By: Sara Russell

Members began arriving at the meeting at 6:00 PM. At approximately 6:35, plates were filled. The catered meal of catfish and chicken strips was provided by Buppy's Catering.

Shortly after the beginning of the meal, President **Dusten Russell** called **Jamie Pitchford** of Luminant Mining to give a presentation over the mine soils tour Luminant hosted last spring. Several people from many professional organizations were in attendance. Jamie said a large part of the tour focused on examining post-mine soils pits and the reclamation process, with which Luminant has had much success. The event lasted two days and also included a tour of the Monticello Power Plant.

At 7:04 PM, Dusten Russell called the meeting to order. He stated that a copy of the minutes from the previous meeting had been posted on the PSSAT website and asked for any additions or corrections. Since there were none, Dusten entertained a motion and a second to accept the minutes as they stand. The motion carried and was passed.

Dusten then called **Lindsay Lang** to present the treasurer's report. Lindsay presented the members in attendance with a handout of his report and reviewed the status of PSSAT's accounts. Please refer to this document for financial details, a copy of which will be included with the newsletter. Total income for the year was \$3,986.12 and total expense for the year was \$3,774.30, leaving a difference of \$211.82. Afterward, Dusten called for a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. The motion was made and seconded, passing and accepting the report.

Dusten next called on **Cristine Morgan** to discuss the Membership Committee. She announced that 2009 brought in 2 new members to PSSAT.

Wayne Gabriel was asked by Dusten to give the Ethics Committee report. Wayne said there were no new developments and nothing to report.

Dusten called for **Sara Russell** to give the Constitution and Bylaws committee report as none of the committee members were able to attend the meeting. She said that the only changes to the constitution and bylaws this year were the addition of the two new membership categories: student and associate.

Dusten then asked Sara Russell to give the Public Relations committee report. She listed several of the ways in which PSSAT was promoted last year by the committee as well as individual members. Suggestions were made by several members, some of which include obtaining an email list from the Soil Science Society of America to recruit new members, handing out fliers and materials at FFA and 4-H conventions and adding educational presentations to the PSSAT website.

Ricky Lambert, Webmaster, was then asked by Dusten to give his report. Ricky provided the members in attendance with a handout summary of PSSAT website activity for the year. A copy of this handout will be included with the newsletter. PSSAT received 22,056 hits in 2009, which was a 3% increase from the previous year. The average number of visits per month is 1,992. The website received hits from over

50 countries, the most being from Russia, Ireland, Canada, India and Mexico and is still the first or second result when searching “PSSAT” on all major search engines. “Ask a Soil Scientist” received 2 inquiries in 2009. Charles Pehl and Jamie Pitchford provided answers. Richard Reid suggested starting a PSSAT Facebook page.

Nathan Haile was called by Dusten to present the Scholarship Committee report. Nathan said there were only 2 applicants this year. Paige Graves from Texas A&M was awarded the scholarship. She was not in attendance, so there was no presentation of the scholarship.

Dusten then asked Nathan Haile, Past-President, to handle Nominations and Elections. Nathan reported that John Sackett was the only nominee for President-Elect and Travis Waiser was the only nominee for Vice President. No one had any other candidates to add to the selections and a motion was made and seconded to cease nominations. The motion passed. Dusten asked if there was any other old business to discuss. Being none, he suggested the meeting move on to new business.

New Business

Dusten asked if anyone had any new business to discuss. The first item brought to the attention of the members was a possible amendment to the scholarship. Sara Russell took the floor to propose an idea for **John Sackett**, who was unable to attend the meeting. She stated that John’s idea was to split the scholarship in two, maybe one scholarship for college freshmen and sophomores and one scholarship for juniors and seniors. The reason behind this would be to attract more attention to soil science as a possible career choice for college students, as well as increase the number of scholarship applicants. Dusten Russell suggested maybe instead of an equal split of the scholarship money, offering \$500 for freshmen and sophomores and \$1,000 for juniors and seniors in college. Nathan Haile said he thought it would be good to split the scholarship, but possibly offer one college scholarship and one high school scholarship, the thought behind which would be to recruit younger kids to soils careers. Cristine Morgan said if PSSAT members wanted more scholarship applicants, we may look into relaxing the scholarship requirements. **David Weindorf** asked the members to consider opening the scholarship to out-of-state students. The conversation bounced around between these various points, with many for and against each idea. It was a general consensus that a major reason for the declining numbers of applications was the small number of students graduating with a soils degree. In the end, someone made a motion to cease discussion on the scholarship and to leave it the way it currently is. It was quickly seconded, followed by a majority vote of “aye” by the members. It was decided that the scholarship remain the same: one scholarship of \$1,500 per year awarded to a college student attending a school in Texas who is interested in soil science and meets the requirements specified.

Kelly Attebury then took the floor to reveal the results of the first PSSAT photo contest. Jamie Pitchford took home both awards for the Best in Show and Reserve Best in Show photographs. The results for the five categories are as follows:

Plants: 1st – Jamie Pitchford, 2nd – Nathan Haile

Landscape: 1st – Jamie Pitchford (Reserve Best in Show picture), 2nd – Dennis Brezina

Soil Profiles: 1st – Nathan Haile, 2nd – Wes Miller

Miscellaneous: 1st – Dusten Russell, 2nd – Clay Robinson

Animal: 1st – Jamie Pitchford (Best in Show picture), 2nd – Amanda Bragg

Kelly said the photos submitted this year were great and that he hoped even more would be sent next year. After the awards were given, Sara Russell stated that John Sackett wanted to let everyone know that the photo contest judges were contemplating adding two additional categories to next year's contest: cell phone pictures and out of state pictures.

Dusten called **Wayne Hudnall** to the front, where he presented Texas Tech a check for \$1,000. The money was granted to help with the expenses of the national collegiate soils judging contest, which will be hosted by Tech this upcoming March 21st-26th.

Next, **Charlie Clark** of Talon/LPE in Amarillo gave a presentation that offered insight into the private consulting world. Among topics covered were the wide range of environmental situations and problems addressed by Talon, corrective methods and suggestions used by the company and career opportunities. He stressed the importance of soil science in environmental studies and reclamation. Charlie directed anyone interested in finding out more about Talon to their website: www.talonLPE.com.

Nathan Haile announced that the Professional Soil Science Association of Oklahoma contacted him because they were interested in obtaining professional geosciences licenses and wanted to know how PSSAT achieved theirs. **Larry Wilding** answered the question by stating it involved PSSAT joining professional geologists several years ago and collecting money for a lobbyist. He said it took many sessions to pass and was not a quick and easy process.

Dusten then asked if there was any other new business. Being none, he called Cristine Morgan, President-Elect, to the front of the room. Dusten said he felt privileged to serve as PSSAT's president and thanked everyone for their help and support. He wished Cristine Morgan the best and passed over the gavel. Cristine asked for any additional comments. After none were brought forth, she accepted a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting. The 2009 PSSAT meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Celebrating a Historic Milestone on Texas Soils

Story by Dee Ann Littlefield – NRCS – Public Affairs Specialist

After 111 years, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently celebrated completing the last soil survey mapped in Texas. The historical event was commemorated with a “Last Acre Ceremony” held in Temple at the USDA-ARS, Grassland, Soil and Water Research Laboratory and Texas AgriLife Blackland Research and Extension Center. The ceremony signified the completion of 171,891,840 million acres of soils mapped—a milestone in Texas History.

“This is a historic day for Texas,” declared Salvador Salinas, USDA-NRCS acting state conservationist. “Soil really is the foundation of life – from the food we eat and clothes we wear to where we build our homes and highways. The completion of this survey will make this important information on every acre of Texas available to everyone now. “

The state’s soil mapping program began in 1899. The first soil survey was published for Montgomery County in 1901. Since that time, soil surveys have been completed in all of Texas’ 254 counties. Over the last century, the surveys have evolved from hand-drawn maps and handwritten notes to the digital technologies of today.

The event, moderated by Dr. Tom Hallmark, Texas A&M University, featured remarks from representatives of the key agencies and organizations involved in the cooperative soil survey. Additional speakers included: Dr. Tom Gerik, resident director, Blackland Research and Extension Center; Dr. Daren Harmel; lab director, Grassland Soil and Water Research Laboratory; Michael Golden, NRCS National Soil Survey Director; Dr. B.L. Allen, professor emeritus, Texas Tech University; Dr. Larry Wilding; professor emeritus, Texas A&M University; Jose Dodier, chairman, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board; Scott Buckles, president, Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts; Dr. Craig Nessler, director, Texas AgriLife Research; Dr. Edward Smith, director, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, and Dr. Dan Upchurch, southern plains area director, Agricultural Research Service.

Buckles announced that the ATSWCD is seeking to have the Houston Black Clay designated as the official State Soil by the 82nd Texas Legislature.

Some special guests were recognized during the event, which was attended by over 200 people. Wilson “Booger” Moon, retired USDA-NRCS state conservationist, received a standing ovation for his participation in the ceremony. At 99 years old, Moon is the oldest living USDA soil scientist in the United States. He began his career with the NRCS in Texas in 1934, one year before it became an official USDA agency.

As part of the Last Acre Ceremony official commemoration, NRCS State Soil Scientist Dennis Williamson led a team of soil survey partners who helped dig a soil pit that exposed the highly productive Houston Black Clay soil. A monolith of the soil site was also on display.

The ceremony site was dedicated with a granite monument engraved with the history and partnership efforts of the national cooperative soil survey.

Williamson remarked that the soil survey program is led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, with the Experiment Stations, Extensions Service, Universities, other federal partners and state agencies, as well as local soil and water conservation districts, which provide funding, personnel, soil analysis and research.

“The soil survey of Texas is a good example of what can be accomplished with a cooperative effort,” said Williamson. “Without the superb cooperation of local, state and federal entities in Texas, our initial soil survey would be a long way from completion.”

Williamson noted that work continues using modern technology to refine Texas’ soil surveys. NRCS also will continue to provide assistance to landowners and natural resources agencies in an effort to help them better manage land under their care. These cooperative efforts will add value to gathered soil information and its use.

For those who are unable to attend the meeting, don’t forget to pay your dues to:

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Note from editor:

If anyone has any ideas, articles, or information regarding future issues of Texas Profiles, please contact me at braggal@yahoo.com. This upcoming year I would like to send out quarterly newsletters. Your contributions are essential for making that goal happen.

Thank you,

Amanda Bragg