



PROFESSIONAL SOIL SCIENTISTS ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS

Texas Soil Profiles

2022 PSSAT Officers

President - Jamey Douglass, USDA-NRCS, retired, Temple **President-Elect** - Cole Patton, USDA-NRCS, Bryan
Vice-President - Dr. Richard Griffin, Prairie View A&M Univ., Prairie View
Treasurer - Travis Waiser, USDA-NRCS, Kerrville **Editor** - Jon Brandt, CPSS-retired, Corpus Christi
Past-President - Shanna Dunn, USDA-NRCS, Corpus Christi

In this issue:

- Annual PSSAT Meeting -- page 2
- Soil Scientist Spotlight - Cole Patton -- page 2
- PSSAT Webmaster Volunteer Needed -- page 4
- Absentee Ballot -- page 6

President's Message - from Jamey Douglass

Well, 2023 is now upon us. May God bless you and your families in 2023.

Based on a survey PSSAT conducted, looks like the 41st PSSAT Annual Business meeting will be in-person this year. Date is February 7, 2023, at the new location of C&J BBQ in Bryan, TX.

Since retirement and complete separation from my previous employer, I had doubts as to serving in the role of President. I no longer had contact with former colleagues. In fact, I had questioned my willingness to serve as President. I am happy to say that the Executive Council had three meetings, and discussed lots of topics. Members of the 2022 Executive Council are Jamey Douglass - President; Cole Patton - President-Elect; Dr. Richard Griffin - Vice President; Travis Waiser - Treasurer; Jon Brandt - Editor, and Shanna Dunn - Immediate Past President. I was disappointed the Fall Field Trip did not pan out, but those consecutive 100-degree days made the decision to cancel an easy one.

The most recent issue of Texas Soil Profiles, thru all the photos, really tells our story as soil scientists from all around the state. Not too long ago, our membership was twice as large.

I vaguely remember our Charter Meeting in Austin some forty (40) years ago. I was a brand-new GS-5 soil scientist with the USDA Soil Conservation Service based in Mt. Pleasant, TX. Where have all those years gone? I wondered then if I would make it to retirement, and would I be a member of the Old Fogey Club. Here I

sit, retired two years, and definitely qualify as a member of the Old Fogey Club. My interest in soils keeps me going, now telling the story to Master Naturalists and the public.

Cole Patton will be the incoming President. If you are interested in serving on any of the six committees, please let him know.

Thanks to all for allowing me to serve as President.

Jamey Douglass

Annual PSSAT Meeting - February 7th, 2023

The annual meeting will be held in-person.

Details will be posted soon on the website: <http://www.pssat.org/pssat-member-page/announcements/>

Dr. Richard Griffin will give a presentation during dinner. The annual meeting will be held after dinner.

Agenda Item to be discussed: the amended PSSAT Constitution and Bylaws (December 2022). The proposed amended version can be found on the PSSAT website (it's the first link on this page: <http://www.pssat.org/pssat-member-page/organizational-items/>). Please review and be prepared to vote on the amended version - thank you.

Soil Scientist Spotlight - Cole Patton



From an early age, agriculture has been a passion of mine. I didn't realize my passion for soil until much later in life. My immediate family-owned cattle and hay land. My sense of accomplishment comes from working with cattle. Capturing calves, flanking them, and providing them with the appropriate care and inspection makes me feel like I've done a good deed for these animals. It makes me think back to the "old days". Despite being 95 years old, my grandfather has a book full of stories he can tell. Despite all his accomplishments in the Marines and in his personal life, the story that always sticks out to me is when he was a boy. He was raised on a ranch in Winters, TX, where he drove cattle on horseback to Buffalo Gap and then to Abilene, a journey that took them a full week. Summers were spent sleeping with their beds pulled out under the porch because it was so hot.

Being a 7th generation Texan makes me proud. There's something special about a Texan. There are books that describe people wanting the drive, pride, and resilience Texans possess. The line "Remember the Alamo" is the start of this. A humbling defeat, but a reminder to Texas to push forward and not give up.

While growing up, I was heavily involved in agriculture, as well as sports, showing animals in 4-H and FFA. In high school, I played baseball at some nice stadiums for playoff games and always liked how picturesque the fields were. I appreciated this because one of our duties on the team was to ensure that the infield dirt was weed-free. Many hours were spent weeding and watering. I continued playing baseball at Temple College, and our playoff tournament was in Abilene, Texas. Back then, I thought to myself, "When I grow up, I'll never want to live out here!". Ha! Later, I enrolled at Tarleton State University, where I received an agronomy degree instead of a turf management degree as I originally planned. I plugged in a few range courses, and while waiting for available classes, I filled in my electives with soil courses. As a result, I earned a degree in Agronomy and Range Management emphasizing in Soil Science. I'm qualified for all three NRCS positions with the amount of credit I've earned. Following graduation, the Soil Survey announced there was one opening. Can you guess where? That's right, Abilene, Texas! Never say never, right?

Over the course of five years, I worked with the NRCS Soil Survey department in Abilene. The flatness, wind, and magnificent Texas sunsets grew on me. This soil would be even more productive if it received about 10 more inches of rain a year! I remember thinking I didn't want to live back in central Texas being that was where I was from. I put my name in the hat and was assigned to Clinton, Missouri as the MLRA project leader. There is something to be said about someone spending their whole career in one location. Nevertheless, moving elsewhere can have its benefits. I met some wonderful people there, and that was a memorable experience. The outdoors there are amazing, you get four seasons, not like the two you get in Texas. Our office was five minutes from Truman Lake, where I fished and hunted like you wouldn't believe. I caught so many crappies that I had to get creative about making meals with them. I enjoyed all the caves and the Weaubleau structure (Google if you have time). I remember digging a soil pit in the middle of Missouri, just north of I-70. The soil was dark down several feet deep. The tilth and the smell of mycorrhizae were like a raised garden bed. Then I found out, an airplane flew over, dropped seed, and had a successful stand. I was like, "is this real"? That's when I had the soil health ah ha moment.

We decided after living in Missouri for a few years that Missouri is great, but it just isn't Texas! I was able to return. Where did I go? That's right, Bryan, Texas. Never say never! In addition, my wife and I wanted our son to have a Texas birth certificate! I worked in the Soil Survey for a couple of years there and then was able to become the Zone 4 Resource Soil Scientist where I'm currently at. For the type of person, I am, this is my favorite position in the soil thus far. I know everyone is different, but I believe this is the best position with a soil title. The most accurate way to describe the position is as a problem solver, salesman, and outreach coordinator. I always tell people I know a little about a lot, but I am not considered an expert in anything. I need to understand soils, hydrology, vegetation, biology, engineering, agronomy, GIS, ranching, farming, and others.

I've had many great supervisors and co-workers along the way and to date. I've been blessed with a great wife, Kim, that was happy to pack up with me and go wherever the Lord took us really enjoying life and raising a 4-year-old son with a baby girl on the way. I'm excited to be raising my family on our farm. I am 12 years into my career, and I am excited to see what is still to come.

PSSAT Webmaster Volunteer Needed

The Executive Committee is asking for a member volunteer to serve as the PSSAT Webmaster position. This is an unpaid, volunteer position that does not require much time: maybe 30-60 minutes/month and several hours after the PSSAT annual meeting. It's preferable that the volunteer be relatively comfortable with web applications. A description of the webmaster duties can be found below. The Executive Committee thanks you in advance for considering this service.

PSSAT Webmaster Duties

The responsibilities of the PSSAT Webmaster involve a 3-year commitment, ideally. The first year, webmaster will be assisted by prior member holding the position. During the third year, the webmaster assists the following member who has volunteered. Note: the volunteer position is not limited to three years - it can be indefinite, but it is crucial to have overlap for a year with next volunteer.

Regularly Check Webpage and Ensure Public Visibility and Website Integrity

- To be done monthly
- Verifies the webpage is still visible to the public and has not been hacked
- Check all 7 webpage sections (Ask a Soil Scientist; College Scholarships; Information on Soils; PSSAT Member Page; Field Tour Guides; Soil Scientist Spotlight; and Contact) and verify content is still accessible and up-to-date
- Test the inquiry form on the Ask a Soil Scientist page - make sure you receive an email from the website
- Test the inquiry form on the Contact page - make sure you receive an email from the website

Ask a Soil Scientist

- Reply to inquiry email within 2-5 business days (best if it can be done within 24 hours). Let them know their inquiry is being forwarded to PSSAT members
- Forward inquiry to PSSAT members. Ask them to copy you on their reply so you can keep track of inquiries and responses.
- Tally the inquiries and responses that are submitted each year. Include these statistics in the webpage report for the Annual Meeting

PSSAT Member Page

- Update PSSAT Officers and Committees page ASAP after annual meeting
- Post newsletter on website soon after receiving file from PSSAT Editor

Items Needing Routine Updates and Occasional Monitoring

- College Scholarships page - in the Fall
- Information on Soils page - once a quarter, verify that all the links listed on the page are still viable
- Upcoming Events page

Maintain/Update Officer Email Contacts

There are forwarding email addresses for all of the officers, including the webmaster. This is to prevent people's email addresses being available on the web and should minimize spam messages. These forwarding email addresses (aliases) need to be updated once a year, after the annual meeting

Prepare Webpage Report for Annual Meeting

Present a summary of webpage visitation and activity related to "Ask a Soil Scientist"

Webpage Details

- A WordPress template is used. Edits are made through a WordPress Dashboard
- Files are uploaded separately, using an interface provided by Datarealm (the webpage hosting service)
- Knowledge of HTML is useful, but not necessary
- Webmaster needs to update passwords to WordPress and access to Datarealm portal (and keep them securely) and is responsible for sharing password with PSSAT President and President-Elect, so there is redundancy and guaranteed access to the website for the PSSAT Executive Committee.

PSSAT Absentee Ballot

February 7, 2023

Nominees:

President-Elect (2-year term): Dr. Richard Griffin, Professor/ Research Scientist, (Prairie View A&M University), Prairie View

Vice President (1-year term): Charles Pehl, Soil Scientist - retired, Houston

Treasurer (2-year term): Travis Waiser, USDA-NRCS, Kerrville

Editor (2-year term): Jamey Douglass, USDA-NRCS - retired, Temple

Write-In Nominees:

This ballot is for PSSAT Members who will **not be attending the in-person meeting**, on February 7, 2023, in Bryan, Texas. Please circle the nominees' names if you concur with the Nomination Committee's selections. You can also nominate alternative members to the above positions. Return your ballot in a sealed envelope with "BALLOT" written on it. Placed sealed envelope in a 2nd envelope and mail to Travis Waiser. His address follows: **Travis Waiser, 146 Deer Park Ln., Kerrville, TX 78028**. Please mail ballots before January 27th, so they will arrive in time for the ballots to be counted at the Annual Meeting on February 7th (you may want to mail them even sooner, as first-class mail services have been running slower than in the past).