

The background of the entire image is a close-up photograph of a plant. It features a thick, dark purple stem with several small, pale yellow flowers. Numerous thin, orange, thread-like vines are wrapped around the main stem and other parts of the plant, creating a complex, tangled pattern. The lighting is natural, highlighting the textures of the plant parts.

Northeastern Weed Science  
Society

# **NEWSletter**

Summer 2023

# NEWSS Executive Committee 2023 Officers



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Jacob Barney

## Past President's Report Jacob Barney

Many of us are returning from the 4th National Weed Contest hosted by Bayer in Union City, TN. NEWSS had a strong showing and it is always great to see colleagues and celebrate our students – congrats to all who competed!

The Board is hard at work planning for the next annual meeting in Boston, which means it is time to begin thinking about nominating our colleagues for society awards. Please see the MOPs (<https://www.newss.org/charter/>) for details on the specific information and nominating materials for each award, which include: Fellow, Award of Merit, Outstanding Educator, Outstanding Researcher, Robert D. Sweet Outstanding Graduate student (MS and PhD), M. Garry Schnappinger Service Recognition Award. I strongly encourage you to

nominate your deserving colleagues to be recognized by the society at the next annual meeting. Nominations are due October 13, 2023. Please email complete nomination packages to me at [jnbarney@vt.edu](mailto:jnbarney@vt.edu). I would also like to encourage you to nominate your deserving colleagues for WSSA awards. It would be really great to see some of our outstanding NEWSS colleagues recognized in San Antonio next year. See award details (<https://wssa.net/society/awards-2/>) and contact myself or WSSA Representative Steve Pyle with questions.

I have been working hard on the MOP changes to reflect the updated Board structure that we approved at the Business Meeting in February. The goal is to have these approved by the Board before our meeting and begin implementation at the next Business Meeting. Stay tuned for more details and I look forward to seeing all of you in Boston.

**Respectfully,**  
**Jacob Barney**



Erin Hitchner

## President Elect's Report

### Erin Hitchner

I hope you have been having a productive and enjoyable summer. I am looking forward to our Annual NEWSS Meeting set to take place on January 7-11, 2024 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Boston. It will have been 14 years since we had a meeting north of Philadelphia, so I'm excited that our membership will get the opportunity to explore this city. The Program Committee (Thierry Besancon, Larissa Smith, Katherine Diehl and Eli Russell) are working to pull together the overall meeting format and schedule of events. One goal for this meeting is to follow a condensed meeting program where there will be no concurrent sessions. We plan to utilize one large meeting space for the entire event which will allow our membership to attend and participate in all student presentations and breakout sessions. We have received positive feedback when we used this format in the past and we hope this will continue to be the case. The theme for this meeting is

Science Communication and we welcome Patty Raun from the Director of the Center for Communicating Science at Virginia Tech. More information to come regarding title uploads and other key deadlines, but I look forward to seeing our NEWSS family in Boston!



Larissa Smith

## Treasurer's Report **Larissa Smith**

If you would like to be a NEWSS Member, annual membership dues can be processed at: <https://www.newss.org/membership/sign-up-or-renew-membership/>

**Mailing Address:**  
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Questions? Please contact [larissa.smith@syngenta.com](mailto:larissa.smith@syngenta.com)

### **NEWSS Account Balances as of August 1, 2023**

Checking	\$79,339.92
Savings	\$31,877.34
12 Month CD	\$50,834.73
Endowment Fund	\$59,225.13
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$211,286.12</b>



## CAST Update - February 2023

### Anthony Witcher, CAST Representative

#### New CAST Leadership

CAST announced that Dr. Chris Boomsma will be the next Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer (EVP/CEO). Kent Schescke, the current EVP/CEO, will retire at the end of August after eight successful years with CAST. More details at <https://www.cast-science.org/cast-announces-dr-chris-boomsma-as-next-evp-ceo/>

#### Borlaug CAST Communication Award.

In May, Dr. Alison Bentley was announced as the 2023 recipient of the Borlaug CAST Communication Award. Dr. Bentley is the Director of the Global Wheat Programme at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT). <https://www.cast-science.org/alison-bentley-announced-as-2023-borlaug-cast-communication-award-recipient/>

#### New CAST President-Elect.

In July, Brandon Neuschafer was elected CAST President-Elect for 2022-2023. Neuschafer is co-leader for Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner, LLP International Food and Agriculture Team and brings a unique perspective to CAST focused on legal and policy challenges and opportunities. Two of his many goals in this important leadership role are to support and increase CAST's various communication formats and expand membership to include a broader group of prospects. Neuschafer will officially assume his responsibilities as President-Elect at the conclusion of CAST's annual meeting in November. <https://www.cast-science.org/brandon-neuschafer-selected-as-2023-2024-cast-president-elect/>

#### Plant Agriculture and Environmental Issues Work Group (PWG) Update.

The PWG meets monthly to discuss the status of current writing projects and to consider new proposals. There are approximately 15 active proposals (in varying stages of completion) under consideration by the PWG. Four of the proposals rank as high priority and include: Precision Irrigation Management, Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB), RNAi Technology, and Intensification of Agriculture.

#### Recent CAST Publications include:

- [Stewardship of the Food Supply: Ensuring Food Safety, Traceability and Transparency through Technology](#)

- [Zoonotic Diseases in Animal Agriculture and Beyond: A One Health Perspective](#)
- [Goals, Strengths and Limitations Governing the Use of Life Cycle Assessment \(LCA\) in Food and Agriculture](#)
- [Gains Foregone by Going GMO Free: Potential Impacts on Consumers, the Environment, and Agricultural Producers](#)
- [Celebrating 50 Years as the Trusted Source for Agricultural Science and Technology](#)
- [The Role of Agricultural Science and Technology in Climate 21 Project Implementation](#)

## **What is CAST?**

Some of you may not be familiar with CAST, the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology. CAST was established in 1972 and is a nonprofit group composed of scientific societies and many scientific/professional societies, universities, nonprofit organizations, companies, and individuals. Its primary purpose is to assemble, interpret, and communicate credible, balanced, science-based information to policymakers, the media, the private sector, and the public. There are three different work groups and we participate in the Plant Agriculture and Environmental Issues Work Group (PWG). NEWSS pays an annual membership to CAST, which enables us to have a representative on the Board of Directors.

## **Become a Member.**

Students can join for FREE. For others, \$100 gets you an individual membership and helps to support the great work that CAST does on behalf of agriculture.

## **What's in it for me?**

1) You'll receive Friday Notes—CAST's weekly signature newsletters. 2) With every publication release, you may request one free printed copy of new Issue Papers, Special Publications, and Task Force Reports. You will also have online access to all CAST publications and archived issues of Friday Notes. 3) Recognition of your support is listed in the CAST Annual Report. 4) Since CAST is 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, your membership contribution may qualify as a charitable contribution under IRS guidelines. Don't forget, students can join for FREE!

## **Submit an Idea.**

If you have a topic/issue of national interest that CAST should address, please forward to me ([awitcher@tnstate.edu](mailto:awitcher@tnstate.edu)). I will propose the topic to the PWG and if selected it may become a future CAST paper.

**Thank you for the opportunity to represent NEWSS at CAST.**

## Washington Report

### Lee Van Wychen

#### Weed Science Society Presidents Visit Washington DC

During the week of April 17, the presidents from the four regional weed science societies and WSSA traveled to Washington DC to advocate on behalf of weed science policy initiatives and help WSSA achieve its mission of promoting research, education, and awareness of weeds in managed and natural ecosystems. Our primary mission during the week was meeting with the president's elected members of Congress and their staff from their home



Pictured (L to R): Wes Everman, NC State, NEWSS President; Curtis Rainbolt, BASF, WSSS President; Carroll Moseley, Syngenta, WSSA President; Eric Castner, FMC, SWSS President; and Reid Smeda, University of Missouri, NCWSS President

states. We discussed an array of weed science related topics, including:

- Support \$8 billion in mandatory agricultural research funding in the next Farm Bill. U.S funding peaked in 2002 and has declined by 1/3 since then, hitting the lowest levels since 1970. While U.S. investments decline, China's funding for ag research has grown to more than \$10 billion – **double of what the U.S. currently spends**. Current U.S. ag research funding is just under \$5 billion and most of that is discretionary funding that relies on year-to-year appropriations from Congress.
- Support USDA-NIFA IR-4 Project funding at \$25 million in FY 2024. The IR-4 Project was funded at \$15 million in FY 2023.
- There is a phenomenal need for specialty crop protection products to help feed the world. The IR-4 Project was established in 1963 by USDA to conduct research and develop the data needed to facilitate the registration of crop protection products, including reduced risk and bio-based pesticides, for minor use crops such as fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices, ornamental plants and other horticultural crops. The IR-4 Project provides an incredible return on investment as it contributes \$8.97 billion to the annual U.S. GDP.
- Support the USDA-NIFA Crop Protection and Pest Management (CPPM) program at \$25 million in FY 2024. The CPPM program was funded at \$21 million in FY 2023.
- The CPPM program is a highly effective competitive grant program that tackles real world weed, insect, and disease problems with applied solutions through the concepts of integrated pest management (IPM). The CPPM also funds the Regional IPM Centers and Extension IPM programs.
- Amend the definition of a “plant pest” in the Plant Protection



Act so that it includes noxious weeds and invasive plants. Currently, only “parasitic plants” are listed in the definition of “plant pest” ([7 USC 104, S.7702 – Definitions, \(14\) Plant Pest, \(C\)](#)).

- USDA-APHIS receives almost \$400 million per year in their Plant Health account to prevent the introduction and spread of “plant pests” in the U.S., but only a fraction goes toward weed prevention and surveillance. One example is their “Plant Pest” and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention (PPDMDP) program,, which directs \$75 million a year to state governments, universities, non-profit institutions, industry, and tribal nations – to support projects that protect specialty crops, nursery systems, forestry, and other agricultural production systems and natural resources from harmful and exotic “plant pests.” Very few of the 300+ “plant pest” projects supported by the PPDMDP involve noxious weeds or invasive plants.

The weed science society presidents also attended a number of other events and receptions while on Capitol Hill. This included a House Ag Committee hearing with EPA Administrator Michael Regan. This was the first time an EPA Administrator testified to the House Ag committee since 2016. They also attended a Senate Ag Committee hearing to examine Farm Bill policy, focusing on making conservation programs work for farmers and ranchers.

Off the Hill, they met with the American Soybean Association and attended the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR) board of directors meeting, which featured a lively discussion of agriculture research priorities in the next Farm

Bill. They also attended part of the CropLife America (CLA) – Responsible Industry for Sound Environment (RISE) Spring Regulatory Conference where the keynote speaker was Rod Snyder, Senior Advisor for Agriculture to EPA Administrator Regan.

Another highlight of the CLA RISE Spring Conference was the retirement reception for Ray McCallister. He is a lifetime weed scientist and a member of WSSA’s Science Policy Committee. Ray

is highly regarded here in DC for his expertise on pesticide regulatory policy. He semi-retired from CLA on April 1 after 33 plus years of service. Ray’s contact info is (202-577-6657) and [rsm6consulting@gmail.com](mailto:rsm6consulting@gmail.com). Congratulations Ray!

Many thanks to presidents’ Carroll Moseley, Reid Smeda, Wes Everman, Eric Castner, and Curtis Rainbolt for their professionalism and leadership during the week. I can assure you that the national and regional weed sciences are in good hands! I’d also like to thank them for taking the time out their busy schedules to travel to DC.



### **USDA Announces New USDA NIFA Director**

On April 24, USDA announced the appointment of Dr. Manjit K. Misra as the new Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Dr. Misra started new role on Monday, May 8, 2023.

Prior to joining USDA, Dr. Misra served as a Professor of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering at Iowa State University. For more than 30 years, he was Director of the university’s Seed Science Center. The center has administered the National Seed

Health System, authorized by USDA APHIS since 2001. Dr. Misra also was founding Director of Iowa State's Biosafety Institute for Genetically Modified Agricultural Products.

In 2012, Dr. Misra was appointed Chair of the USDA National Genetic Resources Advisory Council (NGRAC), a position he held until 2017. Misra has served on more than 60 local, national, and international boards and committees. These include the Steering Committee for the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) International Conference on Biotechnology, the Scientific Advisory Council of the American Seed Research Foundation, the Board of Directors of the Iowa Seed Association, the Iowa Crop Improvement Association, and the First the Seed Foundation.

Dr. Misra earned a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Engineering in India, a Master of Science and a Doctor of Philosophy in Agricultural Engineering at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He is a researcher with 137 publications and an innovator with ten patents. During his tenure as the Director of the Seed Science Center, the faculty and staff conducted seed programs in 79 countries, including 34 countries in Africa.

### **Support for FY 2024 Appropriations and Farm Bill**

Since January, the national and regional weed science societies have signed onto five ag research coalition letters that have been submitted to Congress regarding the Farm Bill and the FY 2024 budget. Current requests for the FY 2024 budget include:

- Provide \$2.080 billion for the USDA NIFA research, providing increased support for the ag research capacity programs such as the Hatch Act and Smith Lever Act that are fundamental to the extramural research, education, and Cooperative Extension system. This includes:

- \$300 million in FY 2024 for the Hatch Act account, which

supports 1862 land-grant university federal - state partnerships

- \$108 million in FY2024 for the Evans-Allen account to provide capacity funding for food and agricultural research at the 1890 land-grant universities and Tuskegee University

- \$46 million to support McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry research, which investigates carbon sequestration, the development of bio-based products, and the prevention of forest fires

- \$420 million in Smith-Lever 3(b) and 3(c) funds to support the Cooperative Extension System

- \$88 million for the Extension Services of 1890 land-grant universities

- \$17.5 million in FY2024 for Tribal Colleges Extension

- Provide \$500 million in funding for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), USDA's premier competitive research program.

- Provide \$500 million in funding for the Research Facilities Act

- A 2021 Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) report found that 70% of research facilities at US public agricultural colleges are at the end of their useful lives, with **\$11.5 billion in deferred maintenance**. The Research Facilities Act allows for the construction of modern facilities at colleges that support agricultural research, which will increase pest and disease preparedness and the use of advanced technologies nationwide.

- Provide \$1.95 billion for the Agricultural Research Service

(ARS)

- As the USDA's principal in-house research agency, ARS is one of the only funding sources available for long-term agricultural research. The ARS labs and research sites foster synergistic research collaborations across scientific disciplines and geographic locations. This funding would also help address ARS infrastructure improvements critical to carrying out its research responsibilities.
- Provide at least \$50 million in funding for the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority ([AGARDA](#)).
  - Advanced research agencies have been effectively deployed in defense ([DARPA](#)), energy ([ARPA-E](#)), and health ([ARPA-H](#)) to tackle the biggest challenges facing those areas in novel and groundbreaking ways. AGARDA was established in the 2018 Farm Bill and modeled after DARPA, ARPA-E, and ARPA-H. When funded, AGARDA will foster research, development, and technology transfer, resulting in significant benefits across the US food and agriculture value chain.

### **USDA Unveils New Tool to Track Federally Funded Investments**

USDA has released [two new data dashboards](#) that allow users the unprecedented ability to access high-level data about NIFA's agricultural research funding investments and track the status of their grant applications.

The public can now access, download, and save data on all NIFA competitive and capacity funds granted since FY 2018. This tool offers users the ability to pull information on funding investments by research program and grant type, congressional district, recipient (including land-grant, minority-serving institutions, tribal, Hispanic-serving institutions, and Extension), and other focused

searches.

[The NIFA Grant Funding Dashboard](#) allows users to search for information related to requirements, waivers, and the amount of match funding provided by recipient type and award. Users can also explore a funding map to find NIFA funding obligations by states and congressional districts. The [NIFA Application Status Dashboard](#) enables users to quickly check the status of their application using their assigned Grants.gov tracking number.

[Learn more about these new tools.](#)

### **A Survey of Weed Research Priorities: Key Findings and Future Directions**

The WSSA Research Priorities Committee published the results of their weed research priorities survey in Weed Science on June 13, 2023. The survey was conducted in 2021/2022. The last time there was a published report of weed science research priorities was in 2007. The paper authors are: Daniel C. Brainard, Erin R. Haramoto, Ramon G. Leon, James J. Kells, Lee R. Van Wychen, Pratap Devkota, Mithila Jugulam, Jacob N. Barney. [DOI: 10.1017/wsc.2023.24](#) Abstract:

*We conducted an online survey of weed scientists in the US and Canada to 1) identify research topics perceived to be important for advancing weed science in the next 5-10 years, and 2) gain insight into potential gaps in current expertise and funding sources needed to address those priorities. Respondents were asked to prioritize nine broad research areas, as well as five to ten subcategories within each of the broad areas. We received 475 responses, with the majority affiliated with academic institutions (55%) and working in cash crop (agronomic or horticultural) study systems (69%). Results from this survey provide valuable discussion points*

for policymakers, funding agencies, and academic institutions for allocating resources for weed science research. **Notably, our survey reveals a strong prioritization of Cultural and Preventative Weed Management (CPWM) as well as the emerging area of Precision Weed Management and Robotics (PWMR).** Although Herbicides remain a high-priority research area, continuing challenges necessitating integrated, non-chemical tactics (e.g., herbicide resistance) and emerging opportunities (e.g., robotics) are reflected in our survey results. Despite previous calls for greater understanding and application of weed biology and ecology in weed research, as well as recent calls for greater integration of social science perspectives to address weed management challenges, these areas were ranked considerably lower than those focused more directly on weed management. **Our survey also identified a potential mismatch between research priorities and expertise in several areas including CPWM, PWMR, and Weed Genomics, suggesting that these topics should be prime targets for expanded training and collaboration.** Finally, our survey suggests an increasing reliance on private-sector funding for research, raising concerns about our discipline's capacity to address important research priority areas that lack clear private-sector incentives for investment.

### Supreme Court Rules on Waters of the United States

The US Supreme Court released its opinion on May 25 in *Sackett v. EPA* and ruled in favor of the Sacketts. **All nine members of the court rejected** the federal government's "significant nexus" test, which was crafted by former Justice Anthony Kennedy in the 2006 *Rapanos* decision. In other words, the "significant nexus test" is no longer an appropriate measure to determine a Water of the United States (WOTUS). Although there was a 5-4 split over what the test should be, not one justice attempted to defend "significant nexus" as an appropriate test.

The Court held that for a wetland to qualify as a WOTUS and be

subject to federal regulation, there must be a **continuous surface connection** to a waterbody. Justice Alito's majority opinion said "adjacent" wetlands have to be close enough to other waters covered by the Clean Water Act (CWA) as to be indistinguishable. It also said the "significant nexus test" results in an unchecked definition of WOTUS which means that a staggering array of landowners are at risk of criminal prosecution or onerous civil penalties.

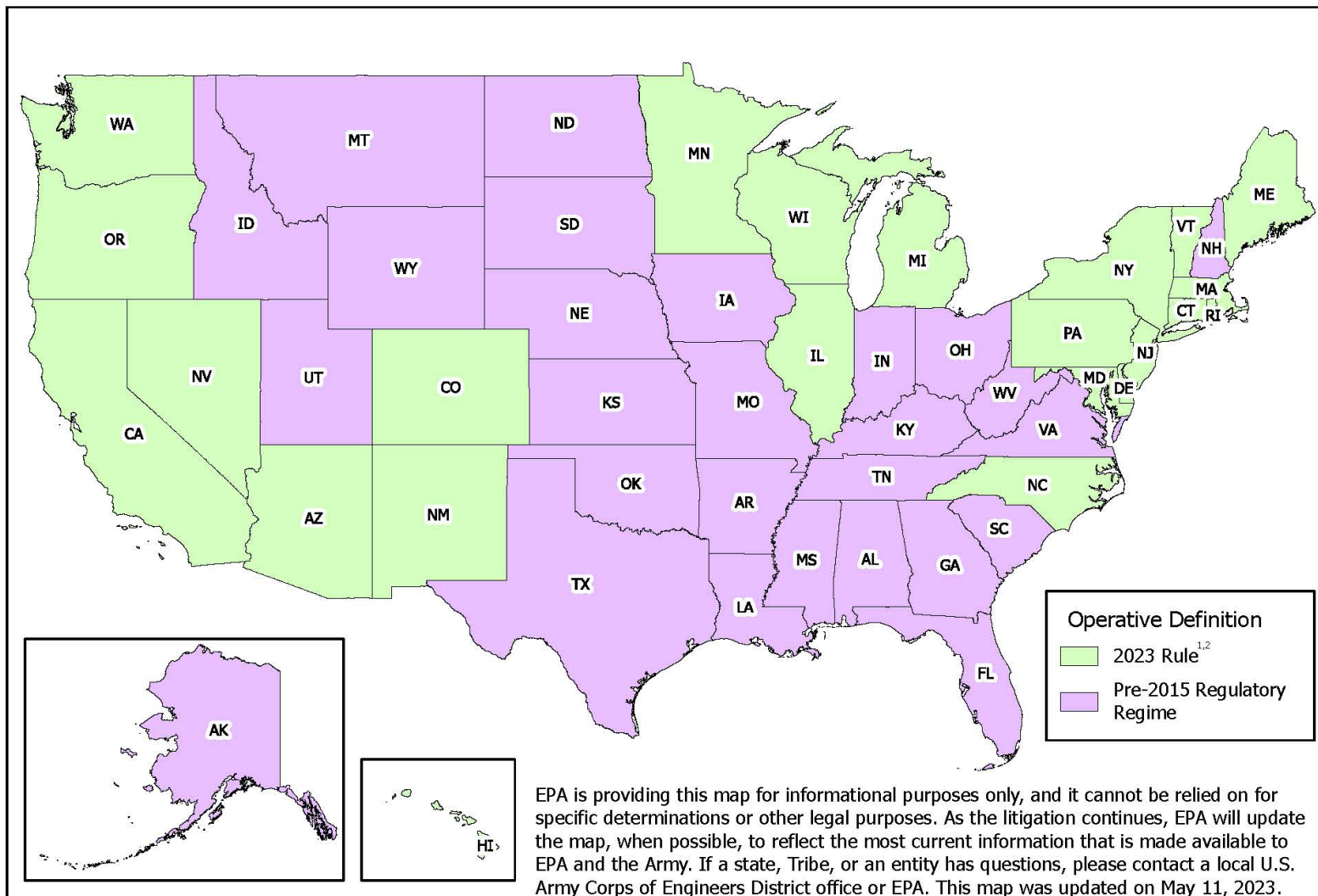
Justice Brett Kavanaugh, in the minority opinion joined by Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson, said the majority engaged in a rewriting of the law by interpreting "**adjacent wetlands**" to mean "adjoining." Kavanaugh, however, noted that in 1977, Congress added "adjacent" wetlands to the definition of WOTUS in the law. "Adjacent wetlands" means not only wetlands adjoining covered waters but also those wetlands that are separated from covered waters by a manmade dike or barrier, natural river berm, beach dune, or the like. Thus, "adjacent wetlands" includes more WOTUS than "adjoining wetlands."

EPA is expected to release post-Sackett guidance soon. However, as a result of on-going litigation, 27 states (in purple) should use the **pre-2015 regulatory rule** where WOTUS are:

1. Traditional interstate navigable waters
2. Relatively permanent bodies of water connected to traditional interstate navigable waters
3. Wetlands that have a continuous surface connection with either (1) or (2)

The May 25th WOTUS decision in *Sackett v. EPA* is also another sign that the Supreme Court may reverse the *Chevron* doctrine. The **Chevron doctrine** is an administrative law principle that compels federal courts to **defer to a federal agency's in-**





<sup>1</sup>Also operative in the U.S. territories and the District of Columbia

<sup>2</sup>The pre-2015 regulatory regime is operative for the Commonwealth of Kentucky and Plaintiff-Appellants in *Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, et al. v. EPA* (No. 23-5345) and their members (Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Associated General Contractors of Kentucky, Home Builders Association of Kentucky, Portland Cement Association, and Georgia Chamber of Commerce).

## Operative Definition of “Waters of the United States”





Touring Dr. Chris Mudge's mesocosm research trials on giant salvinia at LSU. Pictured (L to R): Kristy Crews, Product Manager, EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) Registration Division (RD), Fungicide Branch; Jessica Post, Economist, EPA OPP Biological and Economic Analysis Division, Francisco Llarena-Arias, Environmental Protection Specialist, EPA OPP RD, Fungicide and Herbicide Branch; Chris Mudge, Research Biologist: U.S. Army Engineer Research & Development Center and Adjunct Professor: LSU School of Plant, Environmental & Soil Sciences; Jeremy Crossland, US Army Corps of Engineers, Land Uses and Natural Resources Program Manager; and Lee Van Wychen, WSSA Executive Director of Science Policy.

**interpretation** of an ambiguous or unclear statute that Congress delegated to the agency to administer. The principle derives its name from the 1984 U.S. Supreme Court case *Chevron U.S.A., Inc. v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.* The Supreme Court has already signaled its concern for agency interpretations of existing law, ruling in a case last year that EPA exceeded its authority in regulations designed to curb greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.

### **LSU and Army Corps of Engineers Host Aquatic Weed Tour in Louisiana**

During the week of June 5, I had the chance to tour Dr. Chris Mudge's aquatic weed research trials at LSU along with staff from the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers. We also got to explore the

different aquatic weed problems they face in the Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Lake Henderson. The Atchafalaya NWR is approximately 44,000 acres and encompasses Lake Henderson, which was formed by man-made levees in the 1930's and serves as a relief outlet for the Mississippi River. The elevation of Lake Henderson is set at 9 feet above mean sea level (MSL), but can range from 6 feet MSL to 18 feet MSL. From August through October, the lake is lowered to 6 feet MSL. These draw-downs expose the lake bottom, which helps to control aquatic plant infestations like water hyacinth, hydrilla, giant salvinia and Cuban bulrush.

I would like to send a special thank you to Dr. Mudge and his staff for organizing the tour and sharing their knowledge and expertise on aquatic weed management. It takes a lot of work to set these

tours up, especially for aquatic weeds where you have to line up airboats to tour some of the swamps and bayous. We got some unique insights into the aquatic weed management challenges faced by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and Army Corps of Engineers.

### **EPA Floats Rule To Help States And Tribes Gain CWA Powers**

In the *Sackett* case, the Supreme Court also affirmed that states have the “primary” responsibility to prevent water pollution. Under the Clean Water Act (CWA) states can get EPA authorization to take



**Touring Belle River in the Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge about 30 miles west of Baton Rouge, LA. Dr. Chris Mudge attempts to drive his boat through an untreated area full of giant salvinia. Note: behind us is open water that has been treated by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.**

over wetlands permitting, which is generally handled by the Corps of Engineers. Three states currently have such authority – **New Jersey, Michigan and Florida.**

On July 19, the EPA announced a proposed rule to revise the CWA Section 404 Tribal and State Program Regulations. EPA says the proposed regulatory revision will streamline and clarify the requirements and steps necessary for states and Tribes to administer their own programs from protecting waterways from discharges of dredged or fill material without a permit.

The proposal also provides direction on how a state or Tribe can demonstrate their program is consistent with and no less stringent than federal requirements, and how they can ensure that their permits they issue are consistent with the substantive environmental permit review criteria as laid out by EPA for section 404 permits.

Proposed Rule: [Clean Water Act Section 404 Tribal and State Program Regulation EPA-HQ-OW-2020-0276; FRL-6682-02-OW \(pdf\)](#)

### **Weed Science Societies Support Agricultural Labeling Uniformity Act (HR 4288)**

Below is a support letter for H.R. 4288, the Agricultural Labeling Uniformity Act that was sent to Congressional leaders. This is a bipartisan bill sponsored by Reps. Dusty Johnson (R-SD) and Jim Costa (D-CA) regarding FIFRA pesticide labeling uniformity. The six national and regional weed science societies endorsed the letter (below) along with 355 other signers.

*We write to express our great concern with recent misinterpretations of long-standing policy regarding the regulation*



*and labeling of pesticide products, as some states have begun to regulate pesticides in a manner contradicting decades of scientific guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Lack of certainty on EPA-approved, science-based nationwide labels will erode access to current and future pesticides, threatening crops and grower incomes, conservation practices, public health, vital infrastructure, and ultimately raise food prices for families amidst record-high inflation.*

*Growers and users need reaffirmation from Congress that while states have authority to regulate the sale and use of pesticides within their jurisdiction, they cannot impose labeling or packaging requirements in addition or different from the scientific conclusions of the EPA.*

*To that end, we support and urge Congress to enact **H.R. 4288, the Agricultural Labeling Uniformity Act**, bipartisan legislation which would reaffirm federal pesticide labeling uniformity and prevent state and local governments from adopting inconsistent labeling or packaging which would disrupt commerce and access to these vital tools.*

### **EPA Releases New Interactive Maps of Data Used in Endangered Species Act Assessments**

The EPA is making the geographic data used to conduct Endangered Species Act (ESA) assessments for pesticides publicly available for the first time via interactive maps. These data are not new. Rather, EPA is making existing data broadly accessible and providing a new tool to help users access the data. The maps also show which crops are grown near these species and habitats, which can help users determine which pesticides might be used in these areas. EPA relies on the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (the Services) for information on the biology and location of listed species. As the Services continue to learn more about where some listed species are likely located, information will be updated

and refined in the maps.

Prior to this, EPA was technologically unable to release all its ESA Geographic Information System (GIS) data because of the amount of data involved, but advances in technology have allowed EPA to overcome this problem. The maps allow anyone to access the GIS data online, and are particularly useful for federal, state, and local governments, tribal partners, environmental organizations, and pesticide registrants who want to conduct their own endangered species analysis.

Users will have access to information that may be incorporated into future ESA evaluations. EPA will update the spatial data it uses for its ESA analyses on a regular basis and will post updates as they occur. Visit [EPA's website](#) to learn more about these new maps and how to use them.

### **EPA FIFRA SAP on Atrazine is a Virtual Meeting from August 22 – 24.**

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) provides independent scientific advice to the EPA on health and safety issues related to pesticides. There was a call for nominations this summer for an SAP on the “**Examination of Microcosm/Mesocosm Studies for Evaluating the Effects of Atrazine on Aquatic Plant Communities**”.

I have verified that four of the “approximately 8-12 members” of the SAP are WSSA and APMS members: 1) Aaron Hagar, University of Illinois; 2) Jay Ferrell, University of Florida; 3) John Madsen, retired USDA-ARS, and 4) Kurt Getsinger, US Army Corps of Engineers. The SAP will take place August 22-24, 2023, from 10 a.m. to approximately 5:30 p.m. (ET). The public virtual meeting will be held via a webcast platform. You must register to receive the links. More info at: <https://>

## Culpepper and Chism Present Capitol Hill Seminar on Endangered Species Issues

On July 11, approximately 70 Congressional staffers and interested stakeholders attended a seminar in the House Agriculture Committee hearing room titled: “**Protecting Endangered Species While Feeding the World**”. The seminar was presented by Dr. Stanley Culpepper and Dr. Bill Chism and organized by me through WSSA’s membership in the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR).

The event sponsors were: WSSA, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), CropLife America (CLA), and Syngenta. Additional collaborators were the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) and the American Soybean Association (ASA).

### One-Page Leave Behind:

Fifty years ago, the **Endangered Species Act (ESA)** was signed into law to protect and conserve imperiled species from extinction. Few understand the complexities and challenges associated with this Act and how it potentially threatens agriculture, family farm sustainability, and having an ample supply of food, feed, and fiber needed by humankind.

*In an abundance of caution to protect species listed under the ESA and help minimize the risk of litigation, the **U.S. EPA has been inserting large spatial buffers** on certain pesticide labels that restrict applications in counties where listed species **may be present**. For example, an herbicide was eliminated from use on approximately one million acres in 11 counties in Georgia. However, after further research, only 0.37 percent of the total acres in those counties represented suitable habitat. Although the effort of protection is important and supported by agriculture, current label restrictions are excessive in some situations as restrictions are not based on high-resolution data where a species likely occurs nor where and how pesticides are applied.*



Dr. Bill Chism, chair of WSSA’s Endangered Species Committee, talks to Hill staffers about “Protecting Endangered Species While Feeding the World.” (Not pictured: Stanley Culpepper)



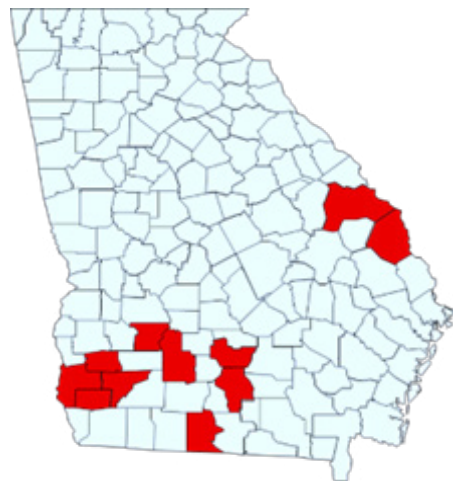
While entire counties have been removed from some product labels, EPA has also imposed in-field restrictions to mitigate **potential** off-target movement such as conservation practices to reduce runoff and no-spray buffers to reduce spray drift. For example, some required downwind buffers could eliminate as much as 49.6% of the field from a product application. These restrictions are preventing the use of tools needed to control threatening weedy pests in fields that are nowhere near the documented historical habitats of concerned species.

As the **number of farms decline** rapidly and the **loss of U.S. agricultural land** exceeds 200 acres every hour, there is an expectation that we will need to **produce 70% more food by 2050** to sustain a growing population. This monumental task will only be accomplished if economically effective tools are available helping farmers prevent pests from stealing food, feed, and fiber.

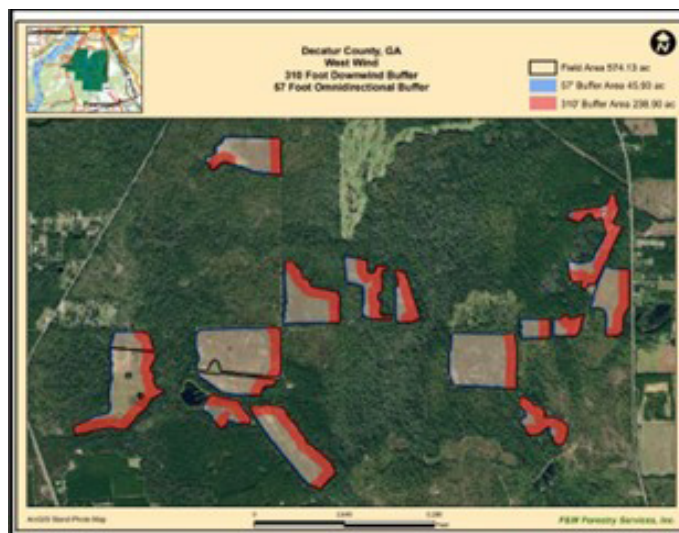
Methods developed from sound science can protect both concerned species and agriculture; in fact, protecting agriculture is the key to providing healthy habitats for wildlife. **Funding is needed to help educate farmers on ways to protect endangered species, create better maps of where species occur, and research additional ways to reduce the risks from pesticides.**

### **EPA Did Not Find PFAS in Pesticide Products Tested**

On May 30, EPA released a summary



County-Wide Restrictions



In-field downwind buffers (in red)

of the laboratory analysis of 10 pesticide products reported to contain per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) residues. **EPA did not find any PFAS in the tested pesticide products**, differing from the results of a published study in the Journal of Hazardous Materials. EPA also released its newly developed and validated analytical methodology used in the testing process alongside the summary of its findings. EPA is confident in the results of this newly released method, which is specifically targeted to detect the presence of PFAS in pesticide products formulated with surfactants.

Since learning about potential PFAS contamination in a small number of mosquito products in September 2020, EPA has taken a number of steps to address this issue. This includes [releasing data in March 2021](#) that pre-

liminarily determined that PFAS in those specific products was most likely formed from a chemical reaction during the container fluorination process which then leached into the pesticide product, [releasing another study in September 2022](#) testing the leaching potential of PFAS over a specific time into test solutions packaged in different brands of HDPE fluorinated containers, and [notifying manufacturers \(including importers\), processors, distributors, users, and those that dispose of fluorinated HDPE containers and similar plastics](#) that the presence of



PFAS formed as a byproduct in these containers may be a violation of the Toxic Substances Control Act.

Following that notification, the Department of Justice, on behalf of EPA, filed a complaint against Inhance, the company that manufactured the plastic mosquitocide containers in which PFAS was found, for its failure to comply with TSCA's notice, review, and determination requirements prior to manufacture.

As a continuation of these ongoing efforts, EPA has completed its verification analysis of a study published in September 2022 in the Journal of Hazardous Materials entitled "[Targeted analysis and Total Oxidizable Precursor assay of several insecticides for PFAS.](#)" This study reported the presence of PFOS in six of 10 pesticide products tested. EPA evaluated the 10 pesticide products included in this study using two different test methods to detect PFAS. The first method was developed by the Agency to specifically measure PFAS in pesticide samples containing surfactants and non-volatile oils, and the second method was used in the study published in the Journal of Hazardous Materials.

EPA obtained samples of the specific pesticide products from the study author and purchased additional products with the same EPA registration numbers on the open market to conduct analyses. EPA tested all samples using both methods and did not detect the presence of PFOS, nor any of 28 additional PFAS it screened for, above the lowest level that our lab instruments can detect (0.2 parts per billion) in any of the pesticide products using either method of detection. The equipment and methodology used by EPA would have shown PFAS detections if present in those pesticide products given that their level of detection (LOD) is 2,500 times more sensitive than the LOD reported by the equipment used by the study author.

EPA requested additional information, including raw data from the study author, but did not receive any beyond the published results. EPA's study [report](#) contains additional scientific details regarding

how the two methods differ and the significance of using the Agency's new method when testing these specific formulations.

One of the most important differences between the two methods is that EPA's [method](#) ensures accurate measuring of PFAS by eliminating interference from the oils and surfactants present in these formulations which can result in false positive detections.

EPA will continue to invest in scientific research to fill gaps in understanding of PFAS, to identify which PFAS may pose human health and ecological risks at which exposure levels and develop methods to better test and measure them.

### **A Future Without Glyphosate Report**

A [new study](#) from Aimpoint Research finds that if glyphosate were no longer available, U.S. farmers would bear the burden of increased input and operating costs, with small farmers disproportionately affected. Further analysis reveals a cascading chain of likely higher-order effects and unintended consequences, the most impactful being the rapid release of additional greenhouse gases and the reversal of decades of conservation and sustainability gains. Key points from the report:

- Farmers' profits fall as labor costs rise and they turn to more expensive glyphosate alternatives.
- Use of alternatives would represent a 2-2.5X increase in cost/acre while switching to tillage could increase production costs by \$1.9B+
- Small farmers are hit the hardest by decreased profits.

- Costs to consumers rise as food prices experience marginal, inflationary pressures.
- CO2 emissions and fuel use increases

A Future Without Glyphosate: <https://report.aimpointresearch.com/>

### **USDA-ARS NPL Steve Young Publishes Quarterly Weed Science Newsletter**

Dr. Steve Young, National Program Leader (NPL) for Weeds and Invasive Species at USDA-ARS is now publishing a quarterly newsletter about [ARS weed science research news and highlights](#). It's an excellent short read on current weed science research, events and announcements such as recent ARS weed science hires, as well as completed searches and current openings.

### **Recent Hires**

- Mark Bernards – ARS [Soil Management Research Unit](#), Morris, Minnesota
- James Kim – ARS [Sugarbeet and Potato Research Unit](#), Fargo, North Dakota
- Dale Halbritter – ARS [Invasive Plant Research Lab](#), Fort Lauderdale, Florida

### **Completed Searches**

- Chemist – ARS [Natural Products Utilization Research Unit](#), Oxford, Mississippi
- Weed Scientist – ARS [Crop Production Systems Research Unit](#), Stoneville, Mississippi

- Research Leader – ARS [Invasive Plant Research Lab](#), Fort Lauderdale, Florida

### **Current Openings**

- Aquatic Invasive Plant Ecologist – ARS [Invasive Species and Pollinator Health Research Unit](#), Albany, California (6-12-23 to 7-11-23): <https://arscareers.usajobs.gov/job/731291100>
- Weed Geneticist – ARS [Wheat Health, Genetics, and Quality Research Unit](#), Pullman, Washington (6-21-23 to 7-21-23): <https://www.usajobs.gov/job/732775300>
- Weed Ecologist – ARS [Columbia Plateau Conservation Research Center](#), Pendleton, Oregon (TBD)
- Weed Scientist – ARS [Northwest Sustainable Agroecosystems Research Unit](#), Pullman, Washington (TBD)

Download the [Summer 2023 ARS Weed Science Newsletter](#) or [Subscribe to Newsletter](#).

### **Status of FY 2024 House Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations**

This appropriations bill sets funding levels for EPA and the US Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS) programs. The House committee cut EPA's budget to its lowest level since 1991. However, many of the provisions that the national and regional weed science societies supported, along with many other stakeholder groups, were in the House bill. Here is a summary:

- **Pesticide Program Funding** – The Committee report recommended funding the pesticide licensing program at

\$120M for FY24, which is the same as the final funding level enacted for FY23. While it may seem disappointing not to have received an increase given that we requested \$145M, please note that the entire Environmental Programs and Management account, where the pesticide licensing program is housed, received a \$857M cut.

- **FWS Consultation Funding** – The Committee report recommended providing no less than \$2M for pesticide-specific ESA consultations at FWS. While we requested \$3M, this is still a significant accomplishment given that the report recommends cutting \$12M or 10.0% from FY23 enacted levels for the whole FWS planning and consultation account.

- **FIFRA Labeling Language** – We requested bill language specifying that no funds may be used by EPA to approve labels inconsistent with the agency’s human health findings under FIFRA. That language was included in the appropriations bill text.

- **EPA Pesticide Implementation Language** – We requested several language related provisions related to 1) what types of data EPA must consider in its ESA effects determinations (existing conservation data, pesticide usage data, real-world spray drift and water concentration studies, etc.) 2) directing the agency to consult with USDA/impacted stakeholders on mitigations and pilot projects pre-publication, and 3) direct the agency to ensure that epidemiological studies used by EPA meet data quality standards and can be independently verified. All this language was included in the appropriations committee report as well as directives for EPA to update its guidance on these matters as necessary.

- **Sub-County Species Level Maps Language** – We requested language directing FWS to, when possible, develop subcounty level species range maps. This language was included in the House Interior Appropriations committee report as well.

- NOTE: The House Interior Appropriations Committee bill is only

the first step in this process!

### **National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW)**

NISAW 2023 was held virtually from February 20-26 and organized by the North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA). Sponsors included the WSSA, Wyoming Weed and Pest Council, Washington Invasive Species Council, SePRO, UPL, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and Bayer.

**NISAW 2024 is scheduled for February 26 – March 3, 2024 in Washington DC.** This will be the 25th anniversary and planning is already under way. My hope is that all the invasive species stakeholder groups traveling to Washington DC will make **establishing an invasive species management fund** their #1 priority. (see below)

### **Establishing an Invasive Species Management Fund**

A common theme during the **Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC)** meeting held virtually on March 6 – 8, and the first ISAC meeting since 2019, is that we need a consolidated all-purpose **source of funding for invasive species prevention, research, and management.**

Global trade provides many benefits to us as consumers, but there is no question that one of the indirect costs is the importation of invasive species, whether intentional or unintentional. I have begun work on Capitol Hill discussing legislation similar to what Hawaii passed into law in 2008 ([HB2843](#)) where an inspection, quarantine, and eradication service fee was assessed on the net weight of freight, computed on the basis of **50 cents for every 1,000 pounds of freight** brought into the state.

- As an example, there would be a \$3 fee assessed for a 6,000 pound SUV imported into the U.S. A rough estimate of U.S. import data suggests that this inspection, quarantine, and eradication service fee would **generate about \$1 billion per year** for a federal invasive species management fund. Please email me with suggestions.

- After speaking with the Congressional Invasive Species Caucus co-chairs, Reps. Elise Stefanik-R-NY and Mike Thompson-D-CA, as well as the Senate Interior & Environment Appropriations staff, the bigger question may be who gets the money and how to prioritize invasive species management projects.

**Lee Van Wychen, Ph.D.**  
**Executive Director of Science Policy**  
**Weed Science Society of America**  
**5720 Glenmullen Pl, Alexandria, VA 22303**  
**Cell: 202-746-4686**

### **National and Regional Weed Science Society Meetings**

Dec. 11 - 14, 2023 North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS), Minneapolis, MN [www.ncwss.org](http://www.ncwss.org)

Jan. 8 - 11, 2024 Northeastern Weed Science Society (NEWSS), Boston, MA [www.newss.org](http://www.newss.org)

Jan. 22 - 25, 2024 Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS), San Antonio, TX [www.swss.ws](http://www.swss.ws)

Jan. 22 - 25, 2024 Weed Science Society of America (WSSA), San Antonio, TX [www.wssa.net](http://www.wssa.net)

Feb. 26–Mar. 3, 2024, 25th National Invasive Species Awareness Week, Washington DC [www.nisaw.org](http://www.nisaw.org)

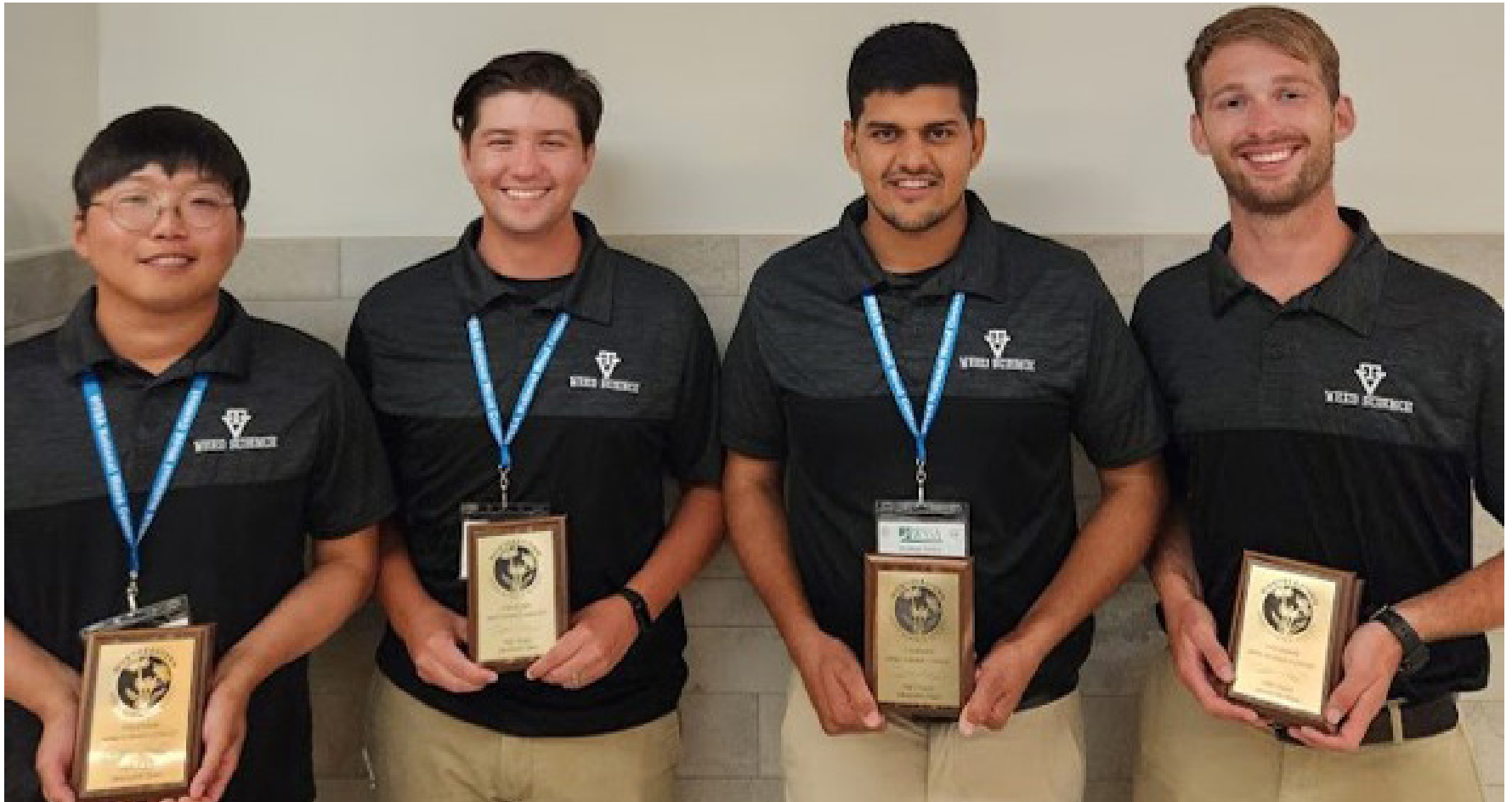
Mar 4 - 7, 2024 Western Society of Weed Science (WSWS), Denver,

CO [www.wsweedscience.org](http://www.wsweedscience.org)

Jul. 14 - 18, 2024 Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS), St. Petersburg, FL [www.apms.org](http://www.apms.org)

# 2023 Northeastern Weed Contest

First Place Graduate Team - Virginia Tech



Daewon Koo, Eli Russell, Navdeep Godara, John Peppers



# 2023 Northeastern Weed Contest

Second Place Graduate Team - Virginia Tech



Cynthia Sias, Wyatt Stutzman, Elisabeth Kitchen, Caleb Henderson

# 2023 Northeastern Weed Contest

Third Place Graduate Team - NC State



Jacob Forehand, Jackson Alsdorf, Colton Blankenship

# 2023 Northeastern Weed Contest

First Place Individual - Graduate



Eli Russell

# 2023 Northeastern Weed Contest

Second Place Individual - Graduate



John Peppers

# 2023 Northeastern Weed Contest

Third Place Individual - Graduate



Daewon Koo



# 2023 Northeastern Weed Contest

First Place Undergraduate Team - Guelph



Stephanie Fletcher, Joe Rastapkevicius, Noelle Adams, Curtis Vanrooy

# 2023 Northeastern Weed Contest

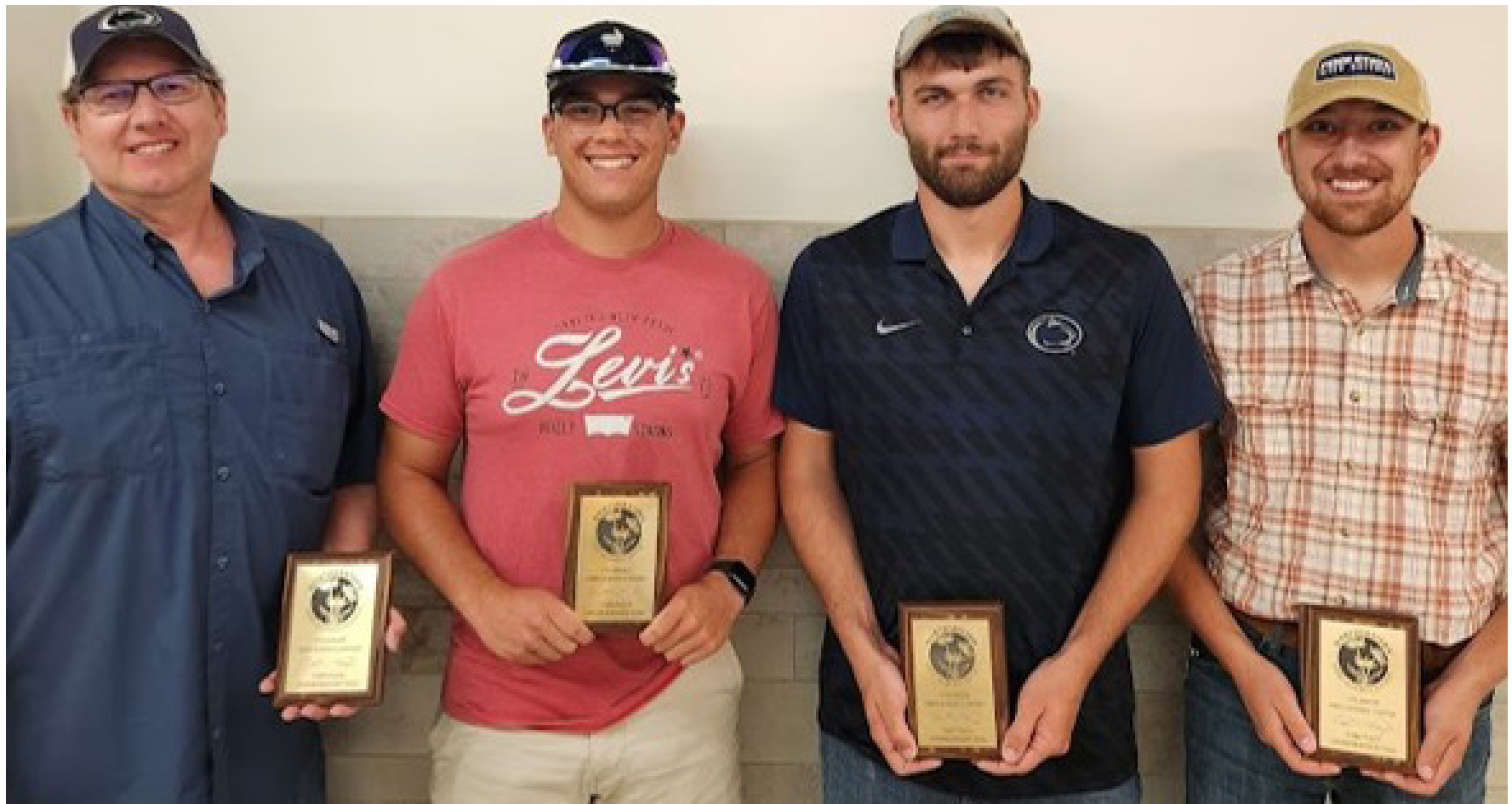
Second Place Undergraduate Team - Guelph



Marrisa Jeens, Quinn Driscoll, Maggie Durnin, (Absent: Kelly Ruigrok)

# 2023 Northeastern Weed Contest

Third Place Undergraduate Team – Penn State



Dwight Lingenfelter (coach), Ayden Jodon, Ethan Whitmoyer, Cody Lehman

# 2023 Northeastern Weed Contest

First Place Individual - Undergraduate



Cody Lehman

# 2023 Northeastern Weed Contest

Second Place Individual - Undergraduate



Hunter Lee



# 2023 Northeastern Weed Contest

Third Place Individual - Undergraduate



Ethan Whitmoyer

# 2023 National Weed Contest

First Place Undergraduate Team - Guelph



Stephanie Fletcher, Joe Rastapkevicius, François Tardif (coach), Noelle Adams, Curtis Vanrooy

# 2023 National Weed Contest

First Place Individual - Undergraduate



Cody Lehman

# Committee List

Name	Title	Email	Term Expires
<b>Officers (Executive Committee)</b>			
<b>Wes Everman</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>wesley_everman@ncsu.edu</b>	
<b>Erin Hitchner</b>	<b>President Elect</b>	<b>erin.hitchner@syngenta.com</b>	
<b>Thierry Besancon</b>	<b>Vice President</b>	<b>thierry.besancon@rutgers.edu</b>	
<b>Larissa Smith</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>larissa.smith@syngenta.com</b>	
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<b>Vijay Singh</b>	<b>Editor</b>		
<b>Katie Diehl</b>	<b>Graduate Student Rep.</b>		
<b>Carolyn Lowry</b>	<b>Research &amp; Education</b>		
<b>John Wallace</b>	<b>Sustaining Membership</b>	<b>jmw309@psu.edu</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>John Kaminski</b>	<b>Public Relations</b>	<b>kaminski@psu.edu</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Steve Pyle</b>	<b>WSSA Representative</b>		

# Committee List Continued

<b>Anthony Witcher</b>	<b>CAST Representative</b>		
<b>Lee VanWychen</b>	<b>Science Policy Director</b>	<b>Lee.VanWychen@wssa.net</b>	<b>NA</b>
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<b>Wes Everman</b>	<b>President Elect</b>	<b>wes_everman@ncsu.edu</b>	
<b>Erin Hitchner</b>	<b>Vice President</b>		
<b>Eric Jones</b>	<b>Graduate Student Representative</b>	<b>eaione22@ncsu.edu</b>	
<b>Katie Diehl</b>	<b>Graduate Student Representative Elect</b>		
<b>Agronomic Crops</b>			
<b>Vijay Singh</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>v.singh@vt.edu</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Ramon Leon</b>	<b>Chair-Elect</b>	<b>rleon@ncsu.edu</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Turf, Ornamental and Non-Crop</b>			
<b>Matt Elmore</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>matthew.elmore@rutgers.edu</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>David Hillger</b>	<b>Chair-Elect</b>	<b>david.hillger@corteva.com</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Fruit, Vegetable and Tree Crops</b>			
<b>Kurt Vollmer</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>kvollmer@umd.edu</b>	<b>2022</b>



# Committee List Continued

<b>Roger Batts</b>	<b>Chair-Elect</b>	<b>rbbatts@ncsu.edu</b>	<b>2023</b>
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<b>Art Gover</b>	<b>Chair, 2nd Past President</b>	<b>aeg2@psu.edu</b>	
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<b>Kate Venner</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>katelyn.venner@basf.com</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Anthony Witcher</b>	<b>Chair-Elect</b>		
<b>Site Selection Committee for 2024 (2023 Joint with WSSA - Arlington, VA)</b>			
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<b>Erin Hitchner</b>	<b>Vice-President</b>		
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# Committee List Continued

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<b>Erin Hitchner</b>	<b>Selected</b>	
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<b>Dan Kunkel</b>	<b>3rd Past President</b>	<b>DanielK@amvac.com</b>

# Committee List Continued

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<b>Hilary Sandler</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>	<b>hsandler@umass.edu</b>
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<b>Sudeep Matthew</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>	
<b>Toni DiTommaso</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>	
<b>Dan Kunkel</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>	
<b>Hilary Sandler</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>	

