



# Southern Weed Science Society

## Note From the President:



How exciting as we embark on 2025 not only as individuals but as the Southern Weed Science Society. Each of you hopefully had an opportunity to recharge your batteries and prepare to attack the new year with renewed vigor and determination. With the end of 2024 closing we have the opportunity to reflect on the traditions of our past and how we can build on those successes moving forward. I believe the 2025 meeting theme “Celebrating our history, while preparing for the future” symbolizes those thoughts. We start by recognizing the accomplishments of our colleagues and the hard work and dedication they have provided to the Weed Science discipline. Past-President Eric Castner and the awards committee have done their due diligence in selecting a group of most noteworthy individuals for these awards. I hope we all will revel in the accomplishments of each of these very deserving members. President-Elect Eric Palmer has done a yeoman’s job in developing the 2025 program. We embarked on a new software program to submit titles, abstracts, and put the program together this year. I appreciate everyone’s patience with this process. We anticipate that this process will improve moving forward. Besides the excellent presentations by our society members, I would encourage everyone to attend the General Session to hear the keynote speaker Dr. David S. Shields “Carolina Distinguished Professor” from the University of South Carolina Department of English Language and Literature. Dr. Shields has worked to identify historical crops once grown in the south and revitalize their growth and culinary use. I for one, am excited to hear his presentation and hope you will be too. I would also like to thank Matthew Cutulle for his leadership as the local arrangement chair and for welcoming the SWSS to Charleston, SC. Of course, one of our highlights for each and every meeting is our SWSS student paper and poster competition. I believe we are lucky to have some of the brightest students of any of the regions or agriculture disciplines. I would like to wish each of the students good luck as they put the finishing touches on their presentations. Additionally, I would like to give a “shout out” to all the professors that work to prepare these graduate students to lead our industry in the future. For our society members I would encourage you to get involved and volunteer for one of our committees, the need for energetic committee members is always in need. I am also looking forward to welcoming the next set of new officers to the SWSS board, your willingness and dedication to the society is vitally important to our future success. With that I would also like everyone to make a



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commitment to the SWSS Endowment. We will be developing a plan for its growth and each of you will be extremely important to determining the success of that growth. Finally, safe travels and I look forward to catching up with each of you in Charleston at this year's meeting. "Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness" – Thomas Jefferson

Todd Baughman

2024 SWSS President

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## *2025 SWSS Annual Meeting Reminders*

### **Reminders:**

Join us **January, 19-23, 2025 at the Charleston Marriott in Charleston, South Carolina**. Registration for the SWSS Annual Meeting is open. You can register from the SWSS website: <https://www.swss.ws/annual-meeting/#!event-register/2025/1/20/2025-annual-meeting>

**All abstracts are due January 6th, 2025**, and can be submitted here: <https://vmx.m-anage.com/home/us/swss2025/en-US>

**Final presentations must be uploaded by January 13th, 2025.**

**Top Golf Mixer Event is Sunday January 19th, 2025. (\$25 for students, \$100 for regular members)**

For more information regarding the 2025 SWSS Annual Meeting, please visit the SWSS website (<https://www.swss.ws>).

Additionally, please make time to attend and listen to this year's keynote speaker, **Dr. David Shields**, at the General Session starting at 1:00 PM on Monday, January 20th, 2025.



Dr. Shields is a Carolina Distinguished Professor at the University of South Carolina. He is an accomplished historian and author of many books including "Southern Provisions: The Creation and Revival of a Cuisine" and "The Culinaricians" where he researched the impact of local Low Country agricultural crops on the development of Southern cuisine. From Carolina golden rice, African peanut, sugarcane, to the Bradford watermelon, Dr. Shields has researched the history and impact these crops had on South Carolina and the Southeast

# Call for Judges - 2024 Joint WSSA/SWSS Student Contest

Student contest judges are needed for the upcoming 2025 Annual SWSS meeting. If you are interested in serving as a judge, please contact Hannah Wright-Smith (hewright@uada.edu)

In responding as a volunteer contest judge, indicate your preference for oral or poster contest judging assignment. "No preference" is also an acceptable indication. You're welcome to judge in multiple contests if your schedule permits. Multiple assignments will be made only as need dictates. Also, please let Hannah know when responding if you may have any conflicts of interest.



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## Incoming SWSS Board Members

### Vice President



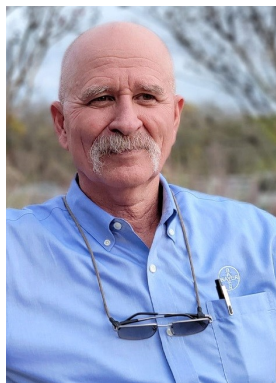
Drew Ellis

### Member at Large (Academia)



Nick Basinger

### Endowment Foundation Board



Gary Schwarzlose

### Member at Large (Industry)



John Richburg

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## Updates Corner



### SWSS Membership Reminder!

If you are unable to attend the annual meeting this year, remember you can still renew your SWSS membership!

Make sure to go through the meeting registration process, and select SWSS membership only. It should be a one-time fee of \$75 for your annual membership for 2025.



Thank you for your continued support of our organization!



@SouthWeedSciSoc

For other society information, visit our website:

<http://www.swss.ws/>

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## Washington Report

### WASHINGTON REPORT

December 31, 2024

Lee Van Wychen

#### USFWS Proposes Listing Monarch Butterfly as Threatened Under ESA

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published a 12-month finding on the endangered species listing status of the monarch butterfly as “threatened” on December 12, 2024. The USFWS is seeking public input on a proposal under section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Public comments will be accepted on the proposal until March 12, 2025. The Service will then evaluate the comments and any additional information on the species and determine whether to list the monarch butterfly.

With monarchs being listed as “threatened” (as compared to “endangered”), the USFWS can issue a 4(d) rule, which offers more flexible regulations, including special rules to tailor protections to the specific needs of the threatened species. A 4(d) rule can modify or exempt certain species protections to balance conservation efforts with economic impacts. It allows flexibility to incentivize positive conservation actions and public comment is critical to shape the 4(d) rule.

With the monarch butterfly being listed as a threatened species by USFWS, the EPA must include it within its standard process for pesticide label registrations under its Herbicide Strategy, treating it with the same consideration as other protected species. Potential impacts to pesticide labels will likely be seen starting in 2026 as new and previously registered active ingredients undergo registration review.

To assist with monarch conservation efforts, the USFWS is also proposing critical habitat for the western migratory monarch at a portion of its overwintering sites in coastal California. In total, the USFWS is proposing 4,395 acres of critical habitat for the western migratory monarch population across Alameda, Marin, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz and Ventura counties in California. A critical habitat designation imposes no requirements on state or private land unless the action involves federal funding, permits or approvals.

## TWO PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

The USFWS will hold two public informational meetings followed by public hearings. The first meeting and hearing will be from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. EST on January 14, 2025. To accommodate those in western time zones, the second meeting and hearing will be from 8:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. EST on January 15, 2025.

Register for the virtual meeting on January 14 Register for the virtual meeting on January 15

## INFORMATION THE USFWS IS LOOKING FOR ON MONARCHS

The USFWS intends that any final action resulting from their proposed rule will be based on the best scientific and commercial data available and be as accurate and as effective as possible.

Therefore, they request comments or information from other governmental agencies, Native American Tribes, the scientific community, industry, or any other interested parties concerning this proposed rule. In particular, they are seeking comments concerning:

(1) The species’ biology, range, and population trends, including:

a) Biological or ecological requirements of the monarch species, including habitat requirements for feeding, breeding, and sheltering;

b) Genetics and taxonomy;

c) Historical and current range, including distribution patterns, alternative migratory pathways, and the locations of any additional populations of this species;

d) Population dynamics and contributions from the nonmigratory populations, specifically resident monarchs in southern Florida, the Gulf Coast, the southern Atlantic Coast, and the southern Pacific Coast;

e) Historical and current population levels, and current and projected trends; and

f) Past and ongoing conservation measures for the species, its habitat, or both.

(2) Threats and conservation actions affecting the species, including:

a) Factors that may be affecting the continued existence of the species, which may include habitat modification or destruction, overutilization, disease, predation, the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms, or other natural or manmade factors;

b) Biological, commercial trade, or other relevant data concerning any threats (or lack thereof) to this species;

c) Existing regulations or conservation actions that may be addressing threats to this species; and

d) Other potential threats that were not identified as key threats to the species.

(3) Additional information concerning the historical and current status of this species.

(4) Information to assist us with applying or issuing protective regulations under section 4(d) of the Act that may be necessary and advisable to provide for the conservation of the monarch butterfly. In particular, we seek information concerning:

a) The extent to which we should include any of the Act's section 9 prohibitions in the 4(d) rule;

b) Whether we should consider any modifications or additional exceptions from the prohibitions in the 4(d) rule;

c) Whether the provisions related to the maintenance, enhancement, removal, or establishment of milkweed should be revised to include spatial or temporal restrictions or deferments;

d) Whether we should include an exception for the use of pesticides and, if so, what measures are reasonable, feasible, and adequate to reduce or offset pesticide exposure to monarchs from agricultural and non-agricultural uses (e.g., rangeland, rights-of-way, forestry, commercial areas, and mosquito control), including measures for specific classes of pesticides (e.g., herbicides, insecticides), pesticide uses, and application methods;

e) Whether we should include an exception for direct impacts from transportation and energy infrastructure, including mortality from collisions with wind turbines; and

f) Whether we could improve or modify our approach to the 4(d) rule in any way to provide for greater public participation and understanding, or to better accommodate public concerns and comments.

(5) Specific information related to critical habitat, such as the following:

a) The amount and distribution of monarch butterfly habitat;

b) Any additional areas occurring within the range of the species in the United States, especially in breeding, migratory, or overwintering areas, that should be included in the critical habitat designation because they (i) are occupied at the time of listing and contain the physical or biological features that are essential to the conservation of the species and that may require special management considerations, or (ii) are unoccupied at the time of listing and are essential for the conservation of the species; and

c) Special management considerations or protection that may be needed in critical habitat areas we are proposing, including managing for the potential effects of climate change.

(6) Land use designations and current or planned activities in the subject areas and their possible impacts on proposed critical habitat.

(7) Any probable economic, national security, or other relevant impacts of designating any area that may be included in the final designation, and the related benefits of including or excluding specific areas.

(8) Information on the extent to which the description of probable economic impacts in the economic analysis is a reasonable estimate of the likely economic impacts and any additional information regarding probable economic impacts that we should consider.

(9) Whether any specific areas we are proposing for critical habitat designation should be considered for exclusion under section 4(b)(2) of the Act, and whether the benefits of potentially excluding any specific area outweigh the benefits of including that area. If you think we should exclude any additional areas, please provide information supporting a benefit of exclusion.

(10) Whether we could improve or modify our approach to designating critical habitat in any way to provide for greater public participation and understanding, or to better accommodate public concerns and comments.

To review the proposed rule and submit comments by March 12, 2025, please go to:  
<https://www.regulations.gov/search?filter=FWS-R3-ES-2024-0137&withinCommentPeriod=true>

Because of the species' general habitat use and wide distribution, all sectors of society have an opportunity to participate in a broad range of conservation efforts throughout the butterfly's range. For more information about the monarch listing proposal, and how to help conserve

monarch butterflies, please visit: <https://www.fws.gov/monarch>

## Congress Punts Farm Bill and Government Funding Decisions into 2025.

- House Ag Committee passed their Farm Bill draft on May 24, 2024. Senate Ag did not release their draft of the Farm Bill until November 19, 2024, almost two weeks after the elections.
- The 2023 Farm Bill extension expired on Sep. 30, 2024.
- On December 21, 2024, the U.S. Senate passed a continuing resolution by a vote of 85 to 11, extending current government funding levels for three months, authorizing a one-year farm bill extension, and securing vital farm and disaster aid. The legislation, which extends FY 2024 appropriations levels through March 14, 2025 passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 366 to 34.
- The next session of Congress, the 119th, will begin on Jan. 3, 2025 with a Republican House, Senate and Administration.

## Some notable provisions included in the House Farm Bill:

- Provides \$2.5 billion in mandatory funding for a competitively awarded agriculture research facilities grant program. (i.e. Infrastructure funding for land-grants)
- Mandates \$100 million in funding for student scholarships at land-grant colleges and universities.
- Directs USDA to establish at least 15 Centers of Excellence, which were previously authorized to receive priority for funding. Changed the eligible areas of focus to include aquaculture, biosecurity, biotechnology, invasive species, water quality, and other topics.

## WSSA and NAICC Host EPA and FWS on Endangered Species Issues Tour in Wisconsin

During the first week of September, WSSA and the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC) hosted staff from the U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the USDA NRCS to examine the challenges and opportunities for implementing and improving EPA's "Herbicide Strategy" for protecting endangered and threatened species and their critical habitat as specified in the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The first herbicides that are going through the new "Herbicide Strategy" process this fall includes Liberty Ultra (a new herbicide registration) as well as herbicide re-registration decisions for oxyfluorfen, metribuzin, and possibly atrazine.

The tour covered multiple cropping systems and production scenarios across Wisconsin, including corn, soybean, alfalfa, potato and cranberry cropping systems. We discussed habitat requirements for two ESA species: the eastern massasauga rattlesnake and the rusty patched



bumble bee and focused on how to improve ESA mitigation measures. We also saw the abundance of non-crop habitat available next to crop production fields and discussed how

“habitat offsets” could be a very viable option for protecting ESA species, as compared to Pesticide Use Limitation Areas (PULAs) and spray drift and runoff/erosion reduction measures.



*Wisconsin ESA Tour Participants (L to R, first row): Dawn Wyse-Pester, Director of Innovation, Research & Development at WinField United with Land O’ Lakes; Hilary Sandler, WSSA President-Elect; Lori Nordstrom, Assistant Regional Director for Wisconsin and Minnesota, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS); Jan Matusko, Director EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) Environmental Fate & Effects Division (EFED); (second row): Lee Van Wychen, WSSA Executive Director of Science Policy; Matt Eich, NAICC Independent Crop Consultant, South Dakota; Kris Garber, Senior Science Advisor, EPA OPP EFED; Sarah Chu, WSSA Science Policy Fellow; Josh Miranda, WSSA Science Policy Fellow; Kaitlin Picone, Senior Advisor for Stakeholder Engagement, EPA OPP; Ian Olson, NAICC Independent Crop Consultant, South Dakota; Steven Hoffman, NAICC Independent Crop Consultant, Wisconsin; (back row): Kevin Pontel, NAICC Independent Crop Consultant, Wisconsin; Neil Anderson, Acting Director, EPA OPP Biological and Economic Division (BEAD); Mark VanGessel, WSSA-EPA Liaison; Charles “Billy” Smith, Director, EPA OPP Registration Division (RD); Bill Chism, WSSA ESA Committee Chair; Greg Dahl, WSSA President; Ed Messina, Director, EPA OPP; James Todd, NAICC Independent Crop Consultant, Texas; Tim Kiely, Deputy Director, EPA OPP Pesticide Re-Evaluation Division (PRD). The photo was taken at the last stop of tour at the WinField United Innovation Center in River Falls, WI.*

Congress Passes Stopgap Spending Bill On Wednesday, September 25, just five days before FY’2024 funding for the government was set to expire, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the government until December 20, 2024. Members of the House of Representatives passed the CR on a bipartisan vote of 341-82. The Senate subsequently voted and passed the CR on a vote of 78-18 and it was signed by the President before the September 30 deadline.

Bonanno Honored with the IR-4 Project SOAR Award The SOAR Award honors external partners of the IR-4 Project who exemplify the areas of Service, Outreach, Altruism and Research,

while supporting specialty crop growers and the mission of The IR-4 Project.

Rich Bonanno, is currently the Executive Director of the Association of Southern Region Extension Directors (ASRED). He has also served in the roles of former Associate Dean of NC State CALS, Director of NC State Cooperative Extension, and Vice Provost for Outreach and Engagement at NC State. Dr. Bonanno has been a long time member of the weed science societies and served as chair of WSSA's Science Policy Committee for many years.

Dr. Bonanno's legendary career and dedication to the land-grant mission has benefited countless growers and research units, including IR-4. As a specialty crop grower himself, Bonanno has a deep understanding of fellow growers' needs. Bonanno also has a long history of collaboration with IR-4; he was a charter member of IR-4's Commodity Liaison Committee (CLC) beginning in 1992, and chaired this committee from 2014-2016 (until he began his influential time at NC State). More recently, Bonanno played a pivotal role in advocating for and supporting IR-4's move from Rutgers University to NC State. As Dr. Bonanno transitions from NC State to an influential new role with ASRED, the IR Project celebrates his commitment to the growers and researchers of our region and thank him for being an exceptional ally to IR-4.

#### House Agriculture Committee Members for the 119th Congress

On December 17, the House Republican Steering Committee selected the Republican members who will serve on the House Committee on Agriculture for the 119th Congress. Returning Republican Members: Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson (PA-15), Chairman Rep. Frank Lucas (OK-03) Rep. Austin Scott (GA-08) Rep. Rick Crawford (AR-01) Rep. Michael Bost (IL-12) Rep. Scott DesJarlais (TN-04) Rep. Doug LaMalfa (CA-01) Rep. David Rouzer (NC-07) Rep. Trent Kelly (MS-01) Rep. Don Bacon (NE-02) Rep. Dusty Johnson (SD-AL) Rep. Jim Baird (IN-04) Rep. Tracey Mann (KS-01) Rep. Randy Feenstra (IA-04) Rep. Mary Miller (IL-15) Rep. Barry Moore (AL-02)

Rep. Kat Cammack (FL-03) Rep. Brad Finstad (MN-01) Rep. Monica De La Cruz (TX-15) Rep. Ronny Jackson (TX-13) Rep. John Rose (TN-06) Rep. Zach Nunn (IA-03) Rep. Derrick Van Orden (WI-03)

New Republican Members: Rep. Dan Newhouse (WA-04) Rep. Tony Wied (WI-08) Rep. Rob Bresnahan (PA-08) Rep. Mark Harris (NC-08) Rep. Mark Messmer (IN-08) Rep. David Taylor (OH-02)

#### Angie Craig Wins Vote to Lead House Agriculture Democrats

Representative Angie Craig (D-Minn.) will lead Democrats on the House Agriculture Committee in the next Congress after winning a caucus vote on Decemeber 17, 2024.

Craig, 52, beat out Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.), 72, for the role by a vote of 121 to 91. She will become the first woman ranking member of the House Agriculture panel and is part of a larger generational shift among House Democrats, who have forced out a number of aging committee leaders in the wake of their November election losses.

The current ranking Democrat on the Agriculture Committee, Rep. David Scott (D-Ga.), dropped out of the race on December 16 after winning just five votes in Democrats' Steering Committee. Scott, 79, faced growing calls over the last several years from rank-and-file Democrats to step down from his committee role, amid concerns about his health, lack of leadership and struggle to negotiate the \$1.5 trillion farm bill.

An interesting side note is that Rep. Craig's fellow Minnesotan, Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), is set to take over as the top Democrat on the Senate Agriculture Committee in 2025.

The Democratic members of the House Agriculture Committee have not been released yet.

### Federal Court Vacates APHIS Rule on Genetically Engineered Organisms

On December 2, the federal district court for the northern district of California issued an order in a case brought by the National Family Farm Coalition, Friends of the Earth, Pesticide Action Network, Center for Environmental Health, Center for Biological Diversity, and Center for Food Safety. The case challenged amendments to 7 CFR Part 340, finalized in 2020 by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The Part 340 regulations govern genetically engineered (GE) organisms, including biotech crops, and the American Seed Trade Association and the Biotechnology Innovation Organization intervened in the case to support APHIS. The

court agreed with plaintiffs that it was arbitrary and capricious for APHIS not to incorporate its noxious weed authority in its final rule, and to exempt from regulatory review GE plants with changes that could have been achieved through conventional breeding techniques without adequate substantiation for these positions in the final rule record. The court vacated the rule as of December 2 and ordered the parties to meet on outstanding issues in the case.

Lee Van Wychen, Ph.D.

Executive Director of Science Policy

Weed Science Society of America

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Cell: 202-746-4686

Meetings of the National and Regional Weed Science Societies Jan. 6 - 10, 2025 Northeastern Weed Science Society (NEWSS), Annapolis, MD [www.newss.org](http://www.newss.org) Jan. 20 - 23, 2025 Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS), Charleston, SC [www.swss.ws](http://www.swss.ws) Feb. 24 - 27, 2025 Weed Science Society of America (WSSA), Vancouver, BC [www.wssa.net](http://www.wssa.net) Mar 10-13, 2025 Western Society of Weed Science (WSWS), Seattle, WA [www.wsweedscience.org](http://www.wsweedscience.org) Jul. 14 - 17, 2025 Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS), Providence, RI [www.apms.org](http://www.apms.org) Dec 15-18, 2025 North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS), Grand Rapids, MI [www.ncwss.org](http://www.ncwss.org)