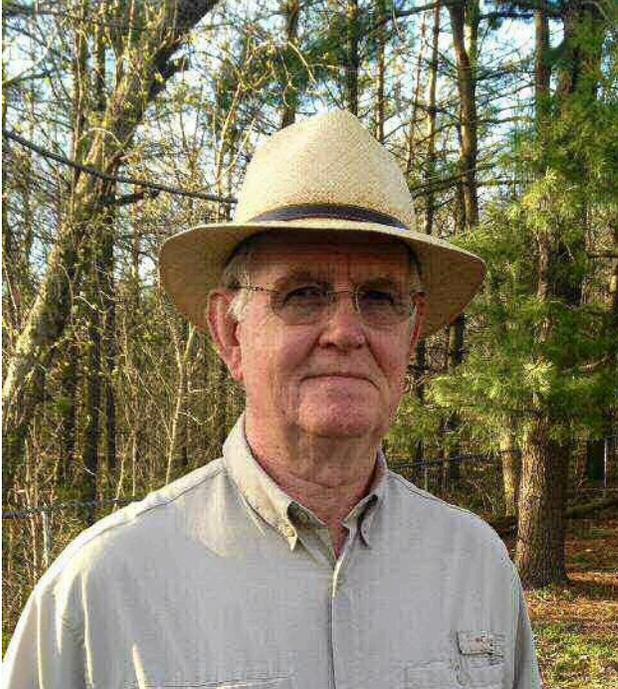


Association of Ohio Pedologists

Ohio's Professional Soil Scientists

VOLUME 45 ISSUE 3

President:	Jerry Bigham (jerrybigham.1@gmail.com)
President Elect:	Duane Wood(dwood8830@gmail.com)
Past President:	Larry Tornes (larrytornes@aol.com)
Treasurer:	Jon Gerken (jgerken47@gmail.com)
Secretary:	Joe Ringler (jenvironmental@gmail.com)
Editor	Mke Plunkett (mplunket@columbus.rr.com)
WebMaster:	Matt Lane (mr.mattlane@gmail.com)
Members at Large:	Terry Priest(priestterry12@gmail.com) Bill Schumacher (bcschumacher@msn.com)



President's Message

"Soil Scientists and Peer Review"

I'd like to begin by thanking our President-elect, Duane Wood, for his efforts in organizing a very successful summer workshop, and I invite you to read his report in this issue of our newsletter. One person on the workshop program joked about his previous experiences working with soil scientists and suggested that they/we sometimes "march to a different drum." He's not the first person I've heard make that comment. In fact, I believe most of us who call ourselves soil scientists take a good deal of pride in the title and feel it implies a higher standard of excellence. Probably the simplest etymological definition of a scientist is "one who knows", so a soil scientist is "one who knows about soils." Soil scientists also know that science, in general, is based on observational facts that can be recorded, tested, checked and **verified by review**. So, being soil scientists includes a willingness – in fact, a desire – to have our work evaluated and affirmed by peer review.

I've learned over the years to appreciate different types of reviews and review processes. As a student trying to master subject matter, I certainly became accustomed to the written and oral examinations designed to test (or review) my progress toward that goal. As I passed through the academic gauntlet of graduate school, I began to realize that a project was never complete without critical review and that being a professional involved a willingness to offer, as well as receive, constructive criticism on topics within the realm of my expertise. When I joined the faculty at Ohio State, this reality really hit home.

I found that every aspect of the job - teaching, advising, service, research and publication - involved multiple levels of review. Students and stakeholders were asked to express their level of satisfaction with my knowledge and delivery of subject matter. Campus professionals were engaged to evaluate the mechanics of my teaching and advising. Administrators assessed my service commitments and overall productivity. Most importantly, internal and external colleagues who knew and appreciated the subject matter of soil science (my peers), were routinely asked to review classes, grant proposals, technical reports, and publications. I will admit that some of those colleagues always had a rubber stamp handy, and others only carried a red pen for crossing "t's" and dotting "i's". But most were willing to review for content, offer suggestions for improvement, share ideas and, when necessary, recommend rejection. Early on, the more thoughtful reviewers sometimes left me

with a bruised ego, but I soon learned to appreciate their constructive feedback and did my best to return the favor. The process consumed a lot of precious time, but those individuals that were dedicated to quality peer review made the commitment because they knew it was important to the profession and, ultimately, to the people we serve as soil **scientists**.

I arrived at Ohio State in the mid-1970's when the cooperative soil survey program was in full swing, and I became one of several university representatives to the numerous county field reviews, special projects, and mapping inspections that were being conducted throughout the state. The entire process fit well with my overall experience and belief in the peer review model. I understood that the correlators and project personnel, just like my Ohio State colleagues, were individuals with different talents, motivations and work ethics. But I felt that almost everyone accepted the field reviews as an important and necessary part of quality assurance and quality control. Certainly, the process of turning out a product that would hold up to the scrutiny of peers afforded an opportunity for all of us to learn and improve as professionals. I know my career at Ohio State was greatly enhanced by the knowledge I gained from our Ohio Soil Survey personnel.

To bring this message full circle, I heard a few lively conversations around soil pits at the summer workshop, and these reinforced my belief that such educational events are an important part of our organizational mission. They also caused me to think that those of us now working in relative isolation around the state are perhaps being "professionally starved" by lack of access to an organized, peer review process. After all, the power of peer review doesn't depend on academic background, income level, employer, subject matter, or size of business operation. It simply requires an understanding of the science, a desire to learn, and a commitment to "get things right". Failure to systematically engage in peer review could lead to negative

consequences for us all. At least, that's my opinion. What do you think? I'm sure our Editor would welcome supporting comments, rebuttals, and other viewpoints.

Respectfully,
Jerry Bigham



"WE JUST DON'T GET INVOLVED WITH THINGS LIKE DOUBLE-BLIND TESTS AND PEER REVIEW. WE'RE JUST A LITTLE MOM-AND-POP LABORATORY."

CartoonStock.com

Calendar of Events:

- SSSA Fall Certification Exam - Nov. 16 - various locations
- SSSA Annual Meeting - Jan. 6-9, 2019 - San Diego, CA
- AOP Winter Meeting – Feb. 21, 2019 – H.R. Collins Lab and Core Repository, Delaware, OH.

If you know of an upcoming local, regional, national or international event that might be of interest to our members, please submit the name, date, location, and any available links to our Editor.

Ethics Training

Some AOP members have inquired about local opportunities for ethics training to fulfill the obligation for certification renewal with SSSA. Bill Schumacher, Member-at-Large on the AOP Executive Council, has checked with Susan Willeke, Education and Communications Administrator for the Ohio Ethics Commission, to inquire about the ethics training offered to state employees. He was told that the ethics training offered by the Commission includes several on-line options that are mostly geared to public employees, but they are open to anyone. The available offerings include a one-hour Ohio Ethics Law E-Course, a series of Topic Specific E-Courses, a six-Part E-Course Series, and a Private Sector E-Course. The various options can be reviewed and accessed at:

<https://www.ethics.ohio.gov/education/elearning/index.html>

The main page for the Ohio Ethics Commission is available at:

<https://www.ethics.ohio.gov/index.html>

Nominate a Deserving Individual for an AOP Award

Is there someone you think has done an outstanding job in service to our organization or profession? AOP sponsors a variety of awards for both members and non-members. Why not go the extra mile and submit a nomination(s) to a member of the Executive Council? Details and nomination forms are available at:

<https://www.ohiopedologist.com/awards.html>

Summer Training Review

(Duane Wood, President Elect)

This year's summer workshop was held August 7th in Wooster and focused on quantitative measures of soil health. The morning sessions were held at the Agricultural Technical Institute and featured Dr. Steve Culman and many of his graduate students. Presentations were given on the present status of soil health measures, carbon and microbial activity, available nitrogen, physical properties, and infrared spectroscopy. (To view presentation slides visit <https://osu.app.box.com/s/t2qgkdxw53hsjdjtxiymka2lw9x3usfj>)

Participants were given a publication entitled "Comprehensive Assessment of Soil Health" from Cornell University. Lunch was provided by Des Dutch Essenhaus in the Carmen Café at ATI. Following lunch participants drove to a field site to visit pits dug at the edge of the construction easement for the Rover Pipeline on the Greg Sautter Farm south of campus about five miles. At the soil pits Greg gave an overview of the construction that occurred and had photographs on hand to view. Wendell Swartzentrubber provided information as an Agricultural Inspector during construction. The soil pit to the north was dug where the topsoil had been stored and exhibited signs of surface compaction. The soil pit at the south edge of the construction easement contrasted difference in native soil and the soil that was returned as fill after the two 42 inch gas lines had been installed. Dr. Culman and his students demonstrated in field infiltration measures and how to take measurements with a penetrometer. After leaving the soil pits, participants drove to Williams Hall and rotated through different labs to take part in hands on demonstrations of laboratory soil health measurements using soil that had been collected on site at the soil pit locations.

An above capacity crowd included a diverse group of participants, including soil scientists, sanitarians, geologists, SWCD employees and board members, OSU faculty, consultants, and current students. Thank you to Dr. Culman and his students for providing a great training opportunity. Thanks to landowner Greg Sautter, Wendell Swartzentrubber, Jon Redstrom, Steve Probonick, and Larry Tornes for their help with the soil pits. Thank you to the Wayne SWCD for supplying photocopies, pop up tents, having morning coffee ready and providing donuts. And a huge thank you to President Dr. Jerry Bigham for help with just about everything over many days and visits to Wooster. (Also thank you to anyone I may have left out.)

See photos starting next page





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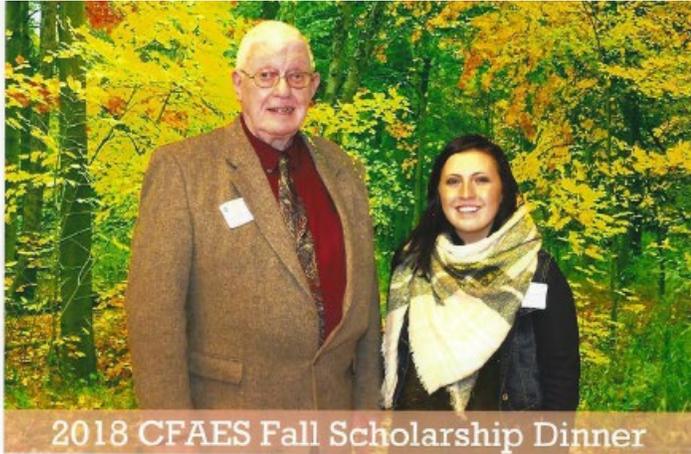






2018 -2019 AOP Scholarship awarded

Joe Steiger, soil scientist, is pictured with Whitney Welker, who received the Association of Ohio Pedologists Scholarship at the 2018 CFAES Fall Scholarship dinner held at The Ohio State University Student Union. Whitney is a junior majoring in agronomy whose family farm is located in Van Wert County, Ohio.



Nominations for Office – AOP Executive Council

Three positions on the AOP Executive Council will become available following the Annual Winter Meeting. These positions include: President-Elect, Secretary, and Member-at-Large. In accordance with the AOP By-Laws, three individuals have consented to be nominated for these positions. They are:

Jeff Glanville: President-Elect

Scott Demyan: Secretary

Kathy Sasowsky: Member-at-Large

Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting, but all such nominees will be asked if they consent to serve before being added to the ballot. If they decline, their names will be withdrawn, so please confirm before making a nomination.

New ASA-CSSA-SSSA Congressional Science Fellow



Matthew (Ph.D., Dec. 2017) in soil science on the Ohio State Soils Team, will spend the 2019 ASA-CSSA-SSSA Congressional Science Fellowship year. The ASA-CSSA-SSSA Congressional Science Fellows select one of their members to spend a year as a Congressional Science Fellow working with a member of Congress or congressional staff. The science Fellow works at the intersection of science and policy, using her or his scientific expertise to help inform the legislative process. The Fellow gains insight into the legislative process while striving to help the scientific community work more effectively with policy makers. Matthew's policy interests include Farm Bill Titles, Extension and Agricultural Outreach, Food Security and Nutrition,

Environmental Stewardship, Healthcare, Infrastructure, Taxes, and International Development and Trade. Matthew lived 1.5 years and conducted his Ph.D. research in Dakar, Senegal. His research focused on the use of native West African shrubs as tools to increase millet and peanut yields.

New AOP Member

Ron L. Winland recently joined AOP as a Soils Professional. Ron holds a B.S. in Soil and Water Conservation and a M.S. in Soil and Environmental Science from Ohio State. He served with the NRCS for 2 years and subsequently worked for over 29 years as an environmental scientist with the mining industry. His mining experience includes: a) environmental and clean water act permitting and compliance, b) pre- and post-mining soil sampling, c) fertilizer and liming recommendations for revegetation, e) wetlands evaluation and establishment, f) coal overburden drilling and analysis, and g) hydrology reporting. Ron is currently a Rural Development Specialist with the Ohio Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) and resides in Zanesville, OH. Welcome to Ron!

Flashback!

The 1974 Ohio State University Soils Team, coached by Neil Smeck, placed 4th in the Regional Contest hosted by Michigan State University. Team members included:



Dan Michael, Ruby Halper, Rich Gehring, Bob Hendershot, Ron Scherzinger (in van), Bob Gleim, Jerome Gundrum, Greg Blosser

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George Schafer (USDA-SCS), Jim Ernst (ODNR-DLS), Bob Ritchie (ODNR-DLS), Nicholas Holowaychuk (OSU/OARDC). Cooperative soil correlation. Lorain County. June 2, 1967.

From Jim Petro (ODNR-DLS) personnel slides, taken mainly from mid 1960's through mid-1970's.

1967 field review was conducted June 6th through June 9th. I assume the date on the slide is incorrect; alternately, maybe they were in the field the previous week preparing for the review.

Schafer, Ernst, and Ritchie were on the review the entire time. Holowaychuk participated June 6-8. Ernie Hayhurst participated June 7. Hayhurst was not identified as part of the survey, according to the field review report. At least by 1968, he was party leader in adjoining Medina County, which had fieldwork going on at the same time. Don Musgrave (ODNR-DLS) was the party member. He apparently did not participate in the field review. Field review report says about Musgrave: "Has done no fieldwork since 9/7/66 due to back injury."

Some of Petro's slides were somewhat staged, presumably just to show all of the individuals. Of course, taking pictures and getting film developed was more of an investment of time and resources in those days.

I was almost 2 years old at the time. I really appreciate these photographs, as it helps to understand how much work went into the soil survey, and what a cooperative effort it really was. It also helps me appreciate some of the stories that circulate, some of the correlation disagreements, and maybe some of the personalities I've heard about. I started with NRCS in 1987, when the initial mapping was almost complete. I remember Bob fairly well from field reviews, map inspections, etc. I met George once. I remember seeing Ernst once or twice. Never even saw Holowaychuk.

