

Ohio's Professional Soil Scientists

2022 Fall Newsletter Volume 49, Issue 4 Part 1

Message from our president – Matt Sullivan

As we are amidst of the holiday seasons, I am thankful for a lot of reasons. There have been mentors and friends that have walked along side of me within soil science. It has been fun to reflect on those times and people and see how they have shaped my career and how we as an association can impact the future of Ohio and beyond with helping people understand the continued importance of soils and related professions.

One of those learning opportunities came this fall with the annual AOP field day. These two days in Logan County, Ohio were filled with educational sessions, evaluating soil pits, wading in the Big Darby and touring Ohio Caverns. I currently live in the Big Darby Watershed in southern Franklin County and it was exciting to be in the headwaters of the Darby in Logan County. The Darby has been predominantly an agrarian watershed, but as Columbus expands into adjacent counties, there is extensive pressure on the Darby from a water quality perspective.

The AOP fall meeting had a focus on soils, water quality and biota in the region. On the first day, the focus was on the geology of the highest point in Ohio and how it impacts the soils in that area. The group was able to evaluate three different soil pits where the national soil judging contest was held this spring. As always there was a lot of great discussion on the soil pit characteristics. This seems to be one of my highlights to hear from years of experience of those in and around the pits.

The second day provided some really interesting presentations and demonstrations on how the ecosystems and geologic features in the Big Darby Watershed impacts water quality. Walking into the Darby and sampling the biota can provide a lot of information about stream health and the activities that can impact this in many different ways. As Pedologists, we understand the soil/water interface. It is good to see this in a field-day setting. It continues to emphasize the importance of soil and water. Thanks to all of the people that helped with the success of the field days.

February 24th will be another opportunity for AOP to gather at the annual winter meeting. I encourage you to come and be a part of a dynamic day of presentations and learning opportunities. There may even be an opportunity to test your soil texturing skills again. Look forward to seeing all of you at the meeting and sharing some of those great memories over the years.

Highlights of the Fall Field days with pictures

Each year I say that the Fall Field Days are the best, but for me, this year's really were the best. Besides the chance to gather with all our wonderful friends and be out in glorious fall sunshine, the topics covered fit perfectly with my interests. We started out on Thursday morning with Andy Nash's stellar presentation on Ohio's Geology. While I have heard probably dozens of these presentations and given a

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few myself; Andy does the best job I have ever heard. Susan said it best, “You don’t have to be a geologist or a soil scientist to understand his story”. It really is geared for everyone but even the best experts pick up new details. Later that morning we got to listen to Guy Denny tell us the story of how the tall grass prairies came to central Ohio and the Darby Plains. Again, no one knows that story better than Guy Denny who has dedicated his life to preserving and protecting Ohio’s natural areas and preserves.

I also got to enjoy the dance that Rachel Warren and Susan do as they capture our presentations. We are so fortunate to have Andy’s and Guy’s PowerPoints and videos, along with everyone else’s. At lunch, Guy and I shared our stories of our beloved mentor, Jane Forsyth, who was pivotal in our academic and professional lives.

The Thursday afternoon soils pits were very interesting. The geologists, Andy, Tom, Mike and I huddled on the hill trying to decide what to call the glacial till the soils were developed in. Jane Forsyth had mapped it as the Mt. Liberty Till but the GeoSurvey are trying to sort out the old local names and standardize the Ohio system. We decided that since we were in the Scioto River Lobe and south of the Powell End Moraine, we must actually be on the last Harrah of the Darby Ice Sheet as it retreated back up towards where Lake Erie would finally be. Age of the ice sheet retreat at that point? It’s still up for discussion.

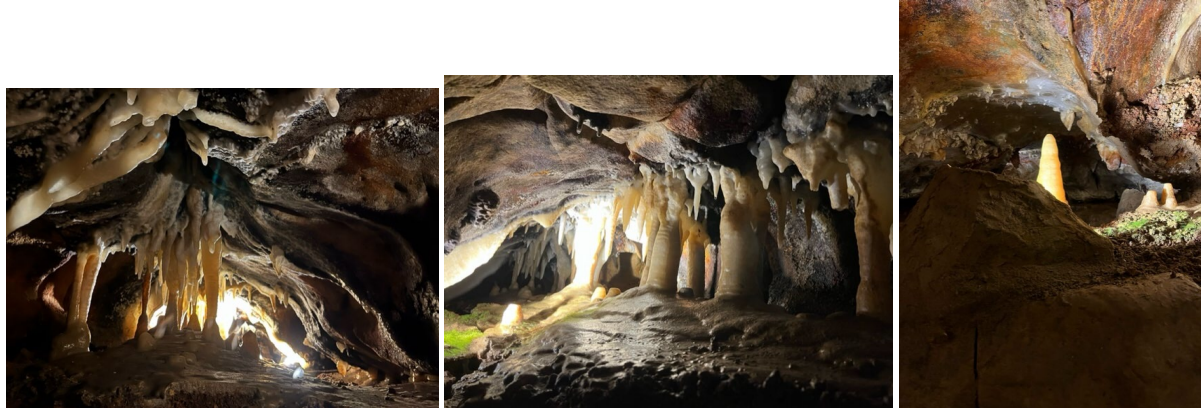


The special soils pit of the day was the one down in the low area by the stream. Most of us had never seen a marl horizon. How did it get there? Maybe it was originally a kettle, a stranded block of ice that was left behind as the Darby Ice Sheet retreated. When it melted, it left a lake, we found lacustrine sediments deeper under the pit when we augured down. Over time it became a freshwater pond, all the snail shells and other freshwater fossils in the marl. Then later, a wetlands was formed and finally a low spot on a tall grass prairie. The deep plant roots could be found preserved through the whole exposed profile.



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We ended the day at Ohio Caverns, a delightful trip that is certainly worth a return. While it may not be Mammoth Cave in Kentucky or Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, it is a good show for Ohio.



Friday morning we continued the excellent lectures, all nicely saved. We enjoyed another excellent meal and then headed out to explore the headwaters of Big Darby Creek. We enjoyed a great hike through autumn woods, saw a restored tall grass prairie and got a good view of the headwaters wetlands from the viewing platform. The drifts of the fall asters, covered with pollinators were a joy to behold. We stopped at a covered bridge and got to go wading in a creek, looking for the critters that live there.



Frog in Center



Butterfly in center

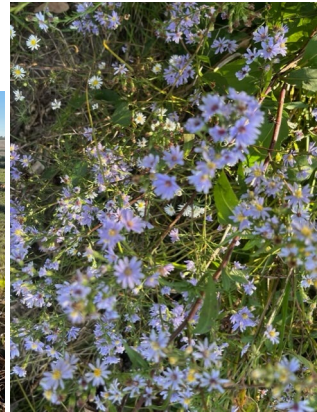
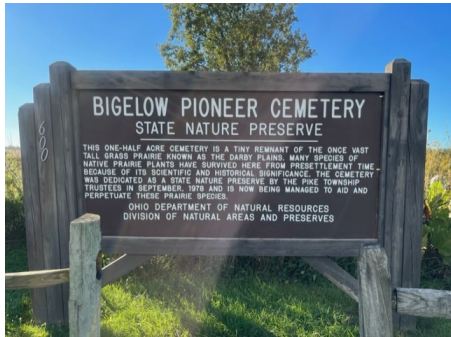


Jewelweed

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On the way home, Susan and I stopped at Bigalow and Smith Cemeteries where tall grass prairies, fall wildflower and post oaks protected the headstones of the people who pioneered the area. They are both small, both lovely and both quite different. We have ODNR Natural Areas and Preserves and Guy Denny's leadership to thank for saving places like this for us to visit. They were haying on the farm surrounding the Bigalow Cemetery and the contrast between tall grass wild prairie and cultivated farmland could not have been more stark.



We stopped at Der Dutchman in Plain City on the way home for a late dinner, got there before they closed.

Susan took more than 700 pictures on the two afternoons. We are going to try to arrange them in a photo album for the web page. We are going to have to work very hard to top those two days next year. We need to give a great round of thanks to all who worked on the organization, piggybacking on the

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April National Soils Judging Contest. Special thanks go out to Kathy Sasowsky and her husband Ira for finding all the special stops for the afternoon explorations.

News from our Treasurer, Rick Griffin Annual Dues for 2022, Have you paid yours yet?

Dues payments - 2022

Name: _____

Do we have your correct contact information? Please provide contact information (only if there are changes to your previous contact information or if you are not getting the AOP newsletter by e-mail):

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Email Address _____

Phone number _____

Association of Ohio Pedologists Membership Dues starting 2022 (and dues for 2021, if you haven't paid)

For members approved as Professional.....\$40

For members approved as Affiliate Members and Student Members.... \$20

Category of Membership (circle one): Professional, Affiliate Member, Student Member,

Honorary (No annual dues)

AOP Dues Amount: _____

Contributions to Scholarship Fund: _____

Continuing Education Fund: _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____

Make checks payable to AOP and send to:

Rick Griffin, AOP Treasurer

937 Laurel Ave.

Zanesville, OH 43701

You can also pay on line.

In addition, we would like to hear from you regarding membership and meeting topic ideas.

The Current Executive Council

Dan Michael, Past President

Matt Sullivan, President

Kathy Sasowsky Incoming President

Scott Demyan, Secretary

Rick Griffin, Treasurer

Julie Weatherington-Rice, Newsletter Editor

Jessica Burns, Member at large

Reed Johnston, Member at Large

Anna DeForest, Member at Large

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We will be voting on a new incoming president at the Annual Winter meeting. If you know of someone who would make a good addition to the Executive Council, please let Dan Michael know. He heads up the nominating committee.

Update on Newsletter mailings

The Executive Committee has decided that only dues paying AOP members (and some exceptions like honorary members, courtesy sister Agencies, out of state connections and old coughers) will receive the newsletters. Therefore, if you have not paid your dues for 2022, this is your last newsletter. If you have a question as to your dues status, Rick Griffin has the official listing. Feel free to check with him. He and I will be updating my mailing list at the end of the year.

Plans for the Annual Winter Meeting – Hold the Date February 24, 2023

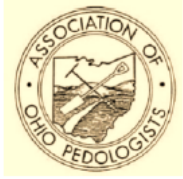
This year we will be back at the Nature Center at Highbanks MetroPark. The ODNR Core Repository that we have been using for the last several years is undergoing remodeling and expansion. Kathy Sasowsky is in charge of planning the meeting. So far we have confirmed a 1 hour session on Ethics (more about that later). The new sections of the AOP web pages are up and running so Rachel Warren will give a presentation on how to navigate those new sections. Linda Aller, my work partner, who the old timers know from her Ohio Department of Health days will give a presentation on PFAS, in our rain water, in our drinking water, in our soils, in our plants, in us. She has been working with this subject since the Little Hocking Rural Water District had the honor of being the most polluted public drinking water supply in the US. Jane Boehm, the Food Waste Programs Administrator for the Solid Water Authority of Central Ohio will give a presentation on the food composting to agricultural fields programs here in central Ohio. Recent PBS news stories tell us that 30% or more of all food grown is wasted. If it goes to landfills, it degrades anaerobically, generating methane gas which drives climate change. We can and must do better.

Ongoing discussions are underway with several other potential speakers. If you know someone who would make an interesting and informative speaker for an AOP gathering, please contact either Kathy or I so we can see if they are interested in participating. We are looking forward to seeing you all there. More information and registration forms will be in the winter 2023 Newsletter which I am hoping to get out by late January.

Developing an AOP Disclaimer

The AOP Executive Council realized that we did not have a legal disclaimer. That oversight could be an expensive legal error on our part. So, we have developed this draft disclaimer that we will discuss and vote on at the Annual Business Meeting in February. We recognize that this could open up a lengthy can of worms therefore, we will limit discussion at the meeting to 5 minutes and then call for a vote. If you feel that there should be significant revisions, if you hate it or if you love it, please contact the Executive Council before the meeting so that we can work to get membership on the same page. We are trying to protect AOP and bring us into the 21st Century.

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Disclaimer: The Association of Ohio Pedologists (AOP) provides information and promotional materials for the good of our membership and society at large. These materials are for the purpose of teaching about soils and the interaction of soils with water and other natural resources for sustainable use and the health of our lives on Earth.

AOP does not guarantee or certify this information or warranty the materials presented in any form presented at meetings or online. AOP does not verify information presented by authors, despite aims to provide scientifically valid productions. Presenters and preparers of the information are solely responsible for content and retain the rights to this intellectual property. AOP does not intend to offend or damage any party in any opinion provided by the association.

Field meetings convened by AOP may include inherent risks of injury or damage to the young, elderly, or people with compromised health conditions. The field meetings may involve challenging natural conditions and / or hiking on uneven surfaces, hiking with significant elevation gain, and / or high mileage which are not suitable for all people. It is the responsibility of individuals registering for AOP events to assess their personal ability and the risk of participating. Accommodations for all people may not be possible in each situation that our meetings may present, because of the natural settings and other constraints.

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Updating the AOP Constitution and Bylaws

AOP and its Executive Council responsibilities have undergone significant changes since the AOP Bylaws were last updated. So, to keep us legal, Kathy Sasowsky, Bob Parkinson and Jon Gerken have formed a working group to update the bylaws. The proposed bylaw revisions will be completed in time to print in the winter 2023 newsletter so we can discuss them and vote on them at the Annual Winter Business Meeting.

Reactivating the AOP Awards Committee

Matt Sullivan and Kathy Sasowsky are reactivating the Awards Committee in time to make awards to AOP members at the upcoming Annual Meeting. We need your help. If you know of an AOP member deserving an award for outstanding contributions to the organizations please let Matt or Kathy know. If you want to be part of the committee, please feel free to volunteer. We would love to have you. We are juggling a whole lot of balls right now and would really appreciate help.

Future meeting announcements and cancelations

If your CPSS CEU schedule is 2021-2022, you need to send in your credits to AAAS by the end of December. If you came to the annual meetings and fall field days for the last two years, you have your 30 hours. What you do not have, we discovered, is your one hour of Ethics training. We will correct that next February, 2023 but if you sunset December 31, 2022, that will be too late. Kathy found an on-line one hour class offered through SSSA that she took. Here is the link,

<https://web.sciencesocieties.org/Learning-Center/Courses/Course-Detail?productid=%7bEAC6E4E2-3A3B-EC11-8139-005056A7AFA5%7d>.

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Nathan Wright also found another free Ethics webinar to be given by SSSA on Dec. 8th. It came in on his SSSA Profile page. You should be able to search it through their web pages. I have signed up for it. Here is what my incoming email from SSSA looked like. It came in last Wednesday.

Click [here](#) to view this email in your browser.

A webinar sponsored by the Soil Science Society of America

Ethical Considerations in Soil Science December 8, 2022 | 11:00 am CT

Conventional thinking is that humans have no moral obligation for the care of soil resources. This webinar will provide the contrasting perspective that humans do indeed have an ethical responsibility for the care of the natural environment. Science, while providing objective information to decision makers, does not operate in a social vacuum. Soil scientists have a responsibility to advocate for sustainable soil management and for the development of policies that encourage care for soil resources.

Speaker:

Tom Sauer, Supervisory Research Soil Scientist, USDA Agricultural Research Service

Click the [Register Now](#) button below to see speaker and additional webinar information.



Free to all registrants!

Registration for the live webinar provides free access to the recording for 30 days.

Questions? [Contact Us](#)

Sponsored by the [Soil Science Society of America](#)

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Rep. Mary Lightbody's H.B. No. 579 to have 1st Sponsor Hearing.

The Back Story

When the Morrow County oil and gas drilling boom started in the early 1960s, there were very limited environmental protection requirements. The drilling pits that held the oil and gas drilling and production brines were unlined and quickly contaminated both surface and ground water in the region. Alum Creek was heavily contaminated with the brine salts and the water supply for the City of Westerville, which came from the creek, was contaminated. Drinking water tasted salty, lawns and gardens watered with city water turned brown from the salts.

Wayne Pettyjohn was teaching hydrogeology at Ohio State in those years and sent students into the region to document the contamination. His summary paper, Water Pollution by Oil-Field Brines and Related Industrial Wastes in Ohio, was published in the September 1971 issue of the Ohio Journal of Science, <https://kb.osu.edu/handle/1811/5637>. In 1977, while taking his class and working on my MS Thesis, he sent me to the Westerville Water Treatment Plant to find out if the filling of Alum Creek Reservoir had diluted the brine in the creek. It had and the drinking water was no longer contaminated to pollution levels. However, the ground water in Morrow County still was and still is to this day.

In 1983, ODNR Div. of Oil and Gas tried to convince the Ohio Statehouse that we should not be spreading oil and gas brine on Ohio's roads for ice and dust control. The scientists were concerned about the exposure to the public from BETX (Benzene, Ethylbenzene, Toluene and Xylene). The leadership at the Statehouse said that ODNR did not have credible evidence and refused to consider a bill to ban a free service that communities had been enjoying for decades. The 1986-87 Governor's Oil and Gas Regulatory Review Commission also recommended the banning of the spreading of the production brine in a minority report, for the same reasons. The Commission had also documented that there were heavy metals present in the production brines.

In the 1990's, Dr. Mel Palmer, who was the OSU Extension to the Ohio Dept. of Health private water and wastewater programs and Professor in Ag. Engineering, developed non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. His form of lymphoma was triggered by environmental exposures. Many of you knew him. He determined that the cause of the non-Hodgkin's lymphoma that he and his neighbor had contracted was from the production brine that was spread on his gravel road in Licking County. He found the heavy metals bound to the clay minerals in the dust and he and his neighbor, who mowed their big country lawns, would come in after mowing covered with dust that had been churned up by car traffic on the road while they were mowing. Several years later, they both died.

In the mid-2010's, the Buckeye Environmental Network (formerly the Buckeye Forestry Council) and the Sierra Club formed the Ohio Brine Task Force to once again try to ban the use of oil and gas production brines from conventional wells being applied to Ohio's roads. ODNR Oil and Gas started collecting and sending out samples of production fluids for complete chemical analyses in 2017. There were 151 samples in the original set of samples. They gave the sample results to the Ohio Brine Task Force. The analyses showed not only high levels of salts, BETX, heavy metals but also radioactive metals several

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orders of magnitude above any value considered safe for human exposure. With this information in hand, Teresa Mills, Director of the Buckeye Environmental Network, my daughter Susan and I met with Rep. Mary Lightbody, representing NE Franklin County (Westerville, New Albany and parts of Gahanna) in March 2020, to discuss the need to ban road applications. The next week, Ohio shut down from Covid.

We continued to talk with Rep. Lightbody. She is an old family friend. Her husband, Dr. Rick Noss worked for Bennett & Williams for many years and she taught Science Education at OSU's Newark Campus. She continued to be interested in banning oil and gas production brine from Ohio's roadways. This last summer she dropped H.B. 579, to "Prohibit road surface application – brine from oil and gas wells" into the House hopper. We are in lame duck session now and it would be almost impossible to have Sponsor, Proponent and Opponent testimony, vote out of Committee, to the floor and through the House, let alone through the Senate before the end of term so it most certainly will have to be reintroduced next session.

What is really important here is that the topic will have a hearing in the Ohio House and it only took 39 years to get there. This is a huge step forward! If we are thinking about awards, we might give one to Rep. Mary Lightbody for her courage to carry this important effort forward.

The Hearing

The bill sat all summer but just this last week it was assigned to 1st Hearing Sponsor in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee of the House. Rep. Lightbody is a member of that Committee and is known for asking the hard questions. The hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, December 6, 2022 in Room 122 at 2:00 pm. Susan and I plan to be there.

Barry Allred new Editor of the Ohio Journal of Science

This announcement comes from Lynn Elfner. Barry contributed papers to both the 2000 and 2006 issues of the Ohio Journal of Science that we wrote and undertook the geophysical survey of the Ozem Gardner Homestead that is featured on our Education section of the AOP web page. Lynn says there is funding for approximately 140 pages of page charges for geology and soils papers available from the Jane Forsyth fund of the Ohio Journal of Science if anyone is considering writing a paper.

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For immediate release

The Ohio Academy of Science Appoints New Journal Editor

Dr. Barry J. Allred, career professional with the USDA, begins position in January 2023.

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(COLUMBUS, OH 29 August 2022) The Ohio Academy of Science has appointed Dr. Barry J. Allred, a recently retired career professional with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), as Editor of *The Ohio Journal of Science* effective January 1, 2023. He succeeds the current volunteer editor, Dr. Lynn E. Elfner, who is retiring.

During the last 24 years, Dr. Allred held positions of Agricultural Engineer with the USDA-Agricultural Research Service and Adjunct Assistant Professor in the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. A member and volunteer of The Ohio Academy of Science, he has authored or co-authored more than 60 peer-reviewed scientific papers.

Dr. Allred holds a PhD from Oklahoma State University, a master's degree from Western Michigan University, a master's degree from Northern Illinois University, and a bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University.

He is a registered professional engineer, a licensed professional geologist, and holds a US Federal Aviation Administration remote pilot certificate. His specialties include hydrology, geotechnical and agricultural engineering, geology and geophysics, soil science, and computer modeling.

Founded in 1900, *The Ohio Journal of Science* is an Open Access, online, international, multidisciplinary journal published by The Ohio State University Libraries on behalf of The Ohio Academy of science. Readership is worldwide in more than 160 countries with daily accession of more than 900 hits. <http://ohiojournalofscience.org/> Issues from November 1900 to 2013 are available at <https://kb.osu.edu/handle/1811/686> . Issues from 2014 to date are available at <https://ohiojournalofscience.org/search> .

AOP Scholarships Announcements

It's not too early to be talking to AOP members about the 2023-2024 AOP scholarship for students not enrolled at Ohio State. The Ohio State AOP scholarship is administered by OSU. The AOP Scholarship Committee administers the scholarship for everyone else. Ohio students enrolled out of state or enrolled at Wilmington University and Central State University, the two other universities in state that teach soils are eligible. The application is easy, the student writes a 1-2 page essay identifying themselves, why they are studying soils and what they want to do with this training once they are through school. We hope they are going to stay in Ohio and train with some of our CPSS folks so we can grow our profession before we are extinct. Deadline for applications is June 1, 2023. Applications can be sent to me at AOPeditor2020@gmail.com.

Also, next spring, we will be supporting up to six Jr. High and High School students through the Ohio Academy of Science. Last year was our first attempt to reach this younger audience but it worked. We are hoping for more applicants this next year. Our only requirement is that their experiment actually uses real soil. We did not qualify projects in hydroponics or in non-soils media. The goal is to reach students early before they pick a college that does not offer soils courses. You cannot choose to be something if you don't know that it even exists. We are hoping to grab even more students than those that we attract through FFA and Envirothon compilations.

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AOP Web Page Consultants List and Education PowerPoints/Videos - Updates

Consultants List Updates

Rachel Warren has developed a statewide map and a new consultant listing form to update that old and badly out of date Consultants list that existed on the AOP web site. Rick Griffin, Matt Deaton and I have used the updating form and it works very well. I added all the corrections that people had sent to me that I could find. I may have missed some people. If I did, I'm sorry. If you did not tell me which counties you were planning to cover, not being a mind reader, I only listed your home county. I am certain that if you are working further afield, you will want that information included. To do that, just update the form at the bottom of the page. If you click on the map, you will see who works in a specific county. If there is an *, that means that consultant is not confirmed. Once you update where you are working, the other counties where you are listed with an * should disappear. I am providing referrals statewide in my role of the AOP Education Committee. If you go to the Consultant spread sheet and you see two ** listed next to your name, that means that we do not have an update for you. This system should now be self-policing and the web/education committee is going to expect you to periodically check you information and update it. Our consultant list is only as good as the accuracy of our information. This is also the only way we are going to find out if we have areas of the state with no coverage. Rachel Warren will be giving a further update at the Annual Meeting.

Additional On-Line Training Opportunities and Materials Development

Rachael Warren has also added materials to the Education page. There are videos and PowerPoints of general interest that anyone can view. There are also PowerPoints and videos from the last two Fall Field Days that are available behind a wall that can be opened by anyone who paid fees for those gatherings. Since this is so much work to compile and maintain, the Executive Council decided not to make everything free to all comers. We are working on ways to develop a pay per view system for folks who did not pay the meeting fees. This part is probably more complicated than the Consultants list. Rachel Warren will also be explaining this new system at the Annual Meeting.

Hats off to Rachel Warren and Susan Rice for being willing to tackle this, what has turned out to be a huge undertaking. If you are interested in participating in the educational outreach, interested in being interviewed or just have topics that you think we should be covering, please let Kathy Sasowsky, kathryn@sasowsky.com or I, AOPEditor2020@gmail.com know so we can get you scheduled.

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In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that I include the information on the passing of two important friends of AOP this last fall. The first to go was my beloved boss, Truman Bennett and the second was our dear friend and newsletter editor, Mike Plunkett. Both memorials were held at the Schoedinger Worthington Funeral Home. I felt like I had moved in there this fall.



TRUMAN BENNETT OBITUARY

Truman Wells Bennett, 90, of Westerville, Passed away on September 22, 2022. He was born on May 19, 1932, to the late Oscar and Emily (Wells) Bennett. In addition to his parents, Truman was preceded in death by his daughter, Elizabeth Courtney; and siblings Sharon Moulton, Glenn Moulton and Ostalee (Bennett) Tarbert.

Truman received his degrees in geology from the University of Dayton and The Ohio State University. He worked over 65 years as a geologist and hydrogeologist, always

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having a new idea or a new field that needed explored. He started his career in the oil fields in Texas, but returned to Ohio to work primarily in the water and environmental sector. He worked for the Layne Company where he designed and oversaw the building of Ranney collector wells for industrial and municipal water use on two continents. In 1980, he started a business, Bennett & Williams where he worked to provide, protect, and clean up water resources. He authored many professional papers and books, many which are still in use today.

He loved to travel and set foot on every continent except Antarctica. He was the person that was called to far away continents to solve problems when others had failed. He worked in South America, Jordan, Iran, and South Korea as well as all over the United States. He was an avid reader, who loved all books, but especially the classics and poetry. It was not uncommon for him to recite poems so that others could appreciate them. He enjoyed passing on his knowledge to his children and grandchildren. Most importantly, he loved life.

Truman will be greatly missed by his wife of 67 years, Jan, children, Karen (Gary) Ballou and Mark (Laura) Bennett; Son-In-Law, Steve Courtney; grandchildren, Gordon (Teresa) Ballou, Dana Ballou, and Amanda Courtney; three great-grandchildren, and numerous extended family and close friends.

A Celebration of Life for Truman will be held Friday, October 21, 2022 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm at Schoedinger Worthington, Ohio 43085. Sharing of memories will be at 5:30 pm. In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution to the Mid-Ohio Food Bank, Grove City, Oh.

Published by Schoedinger Worthington on Sep. 23, 2022.

My memories

While most people knew Truman as a geologist and one of the grandfathers of the field of hydrogeology, what few people knew was that he was also perusing a PhD in clay mineralogy at Ohio State. That effort came to an end when his oldest daughter Karen was born. As a new father, he needed a job to support his new family so he headed out to West Texas and put his college days behind him. He never forgot his appreciation of clay mineralogy and over the years sent in a steady stream of samples to Jerry Bigham to run for him on various projects. Jerry kept those funds and contributed them to the Soil Judging Team account which helped cover the costs for the OSU Soil Judging team. If you were on the team any time after about 1960, part of your fees may have been paid for by Truman.

He was also the other half of the "Cracks in Dirt" team, with George Hall who began the research into fracture formations in fine-grained unlithified glacially-related materials. He sent me back to school in 1990 because we were getting far more water, faster through the glacial deposits in Ohio than anyone could explain with the then current understanding of hydrogeology.

I first met Truman in the summer of 1976, ten years before I went to work for him. I was out doing field work for my MS Thesis in geology in Blendon Township, Franklin County. Blendon and Plain Townships were the third fastest growing area in the US, they were unserved, we only had a preliminary soil survey, no suitability tables and septic systems and wells were failing all over the place. Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission and Franklin Soil & Water Conservation District were trying to figure out

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how to manage the situation so I took it on as a thesis topic. I was locating water well logs so that we could create subsurface mapping of the area. I was traveling the back country roads by bicycle because a car was too fast, the roads too narrow and walking was too slow. Truman was driving by on his way to the house they were building on Hoover Reservoir. He stopped and got out and asked me what I was doing. I had no idea who he was but I was trying to be polite so I explained. We were looking down into the Big Walnut Creek valley and he said to me, "You know, streams stack". "The stream you see there today is fitting into an earlier valley". And he left it at that. What he was telling me was a shorthand version of the 1st Law of Geology and Soil Science. The present is the key to the past. That stream that was about 15,000 years old had formed in an old valley which had had an Illinoian-aged stream and before that more streams from earlier glacial ages and before that, the valley held a stream when dinosaurs were roaming Ohio. I have never forgotten his lesson. I miss him with all my heart.

MICHAEL PLUNKETT OBITUARY



Michael Plunkett of Powell, Ohio, passed away on Saturday, October 29, 2022, at the age of 72. Michael was predeceased by his parents, John and Audrey (Davis) Plunkett; and sister, Kathleen Plunkett. He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Janet (Seibert) Plunkett; children Christopher Plunkett and Amanda (Walker) Hardy; granddaughters, Genevieve and Grace Hardy; and siblings, Timothy and Deborah Plunkett.

Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, Mike came to Columbus to attend The Ohio State University. While there studying Agriculture, he met his wife Janet. Although Mike spent some of his career in computer technology, he was a dedicated soil scientist who never tired of telling his kids what kind of rock formation they were driving past or pondering the composition of the soil of the fields they were passing on long car trips. Mike fought against a chronic illness for many years. In recent years, Mike signed up for numerous medical trials. The trials were exhausting, but he continued

because he wanted to find solutions for those who would come after him. He devoted himself to doing whatever he could to protect his family and others like him.

During better times, he travelled the world with his beloved wife, cruising to Norway, Spain, and New Zealand. When home, he returned to serving the causes of his youth as editor of the Ohio Pedologists newsletter and as a member of the Parsons Avenue Wellfield Protection Board, as well as being a doting grandpa. He fought an admirable fight, and he will be missed dearly.

A Visitation will be held on Sunday, November 13, 2022, from 4PM until 7PM, at the Schoedinger Worthington funeral home, 6699 North High St., Worthington OH, 43085.

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Funeral Services will be held at St. Michael Catholic Church, 5750 North High St., Worthington OH, 43085, on Monday, November 14, 2022, at 10AM.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Michael's name may be made to St. Michael St. Vincent de Paul Society or the Scholarship fund that the Association of Ohio Pedologists has established at <https://mediamagnet.osu.edu/items/13061>.

Published by Schoedinger Worthington on Nov. 2, 2022.

Bob Parkinson's Memories

Some Memories of Mike Plunkett – Bob Parkinson, Ohio NRCS (retired)

June 12, 1972 was the first day for Mike Plunkett and me working on the Crawford County Soil Survey with the Soil Conservation Service (SCS).

Mike was a summer trainee with one quarter left to graduate from Ohio State, and I was starting as a full-time soil scientist trainee. To our good fortune, we were under the tutelage of two excellent trainers: party leader Joe Steiger and the late Bill Brug, and we all became fast friends.



Joe immediately got Mike and me out in the field boring holes and looking at soils, like a good trainer should. And shortly thereafter, he assigned us maps in end morainic areas of considerable complexity where Mike and I perforated the soil scape trying to make sense of soil distribution in areas of ablation till. While we muddled along at a soil mapping rate established for trainees, Joe still got us involved in special soil investigations to help round us out.

As the summer progressed, the soils dried out and became hard as they typically do. Before the JMC Backsaver soil probe was used for soil survey, the standard probe of choice was an Oakfield fifty-two-inch auger. Boring holes in hard dry soil was tough for anyone using the Oakfield, but it was easier for Joe and Bill with their power, technique and mass. For Mike and me, with less power, little technique and much less mass, it was tough. Bill laughing as he watched us one day bouncing around on our augers, like pogo sticks on concrete, good-naturedly teased us as a couple of “candy-asses.” That got us all laughing. Bill then told us a trick to bore down a surface crack in the soil where there usually would be sufficient moisture to be able to penetrate the dry soil. It worked like a charm, all the way down to the auger handle - or to dense till, whichever came first.

There were many other lessons Mike and I learned from Joe and Bill, but one lesson we'd have to teach ourselves was how to find an arrowhead. Commonly, either Joe or Bill, or sometimes both, would return to the office from a day of soil mapping flaunting a newly found artifact, much to the envy of Mike and me. We both longed to start finding arrowheads ourselves, possibly as a rite of passage to becoming full-fledged soil surveyors, but to no avail. I can't recall if Mike ever found one during his brief time in Crawford County, but it took me until October to break the ice.

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And as novice cooks, I remember the “delicious” food we fixed in our shared apartment – from the bratwurst from Light’s Meat Market to the sumptuous pizzas we’d fix right out of the Chef Boyardee pizza kit complete with all the toppings save for anchovies.

Mike, after graduation, would go on to the Belmont County soil survey where he, the late Danny Lemaster and I would do the conventional map finishing for the published Geauga County Soil Survey that winter at the late Ralph Meeker’s direction. That was a memory and adventure in itself! Mike’s wife, Janet, says he was very involved in the St. Clairsville chapter of the Jaycee’s (United States Junior Chamber of Commerce), serving as president one year, as well as an assistant advisor for a 4-H chapter where they did a lot of wood working and won some blue ribbons at the Ohio State Fair. Mike had all the boys convinced that Jim Plunkett (NFL QB for the Patriots and 49ers at the time) was his first cousin. They were all very disappointed when he finally confessed it was not true.

And after becoming soil survey project leaders ourselves around 1978, Mike took up the study of computers, leaving SCS in Pike County to work in the private sector for about ten years or so, in South Carolina, Dayton, and finally Georgia. But with his acquired experience in computer science, Mike returned in the early 1990’s to the Columbus area and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as the Ohio NRCS leader of Information Technology as well as my supervisor.

He was still the great guy he always had been but with new tales of ill-advised development in Fulton County, Georgia, and how horrible the traffic was in Atlanta as well as the continued sad state of Cleveland baseball. I appreciated his easy-going managerial style, in general, as well as the freedom he afforded me in doing my job as State GIS and Resource Inventory Coordinator. He handled his job as a member of the principal staff with all its complexity, uncertainty, and fluidity with perspective and humor. He would joke that the decisions he made were based on the fact his feet were firmly planted in mid-air.

Mike once again left NRCS to join the private sector in the late 1990’s where he retired some years later as his health declined. I would see Mike every now and then, at a decreasing frequency due to his declining health. He would attend the monthly Buckeye Breakfasts of some of the retired soils staff when he felt up to it. As his medical condition worsened, through it all and through the half century I knew him, Mike remained basically the same man he had always been: upbeat, conscientious, personable, and witty with a droll sense of humor.

Looking back over Mike’s decades-long productive life and career in both the public and private sectors, if he had both feet planted in mid-air, as he was fond of joking, he surely had one foot firmly planted in USDA and the other in private industry to the betterment of both.

I was lucky to have met and befriended Mike as others were who knew him.

Rest in peace, Mike.

My memories

My daughter Susan asked me when I first met Mike and what were my best memories. I had to admit, I could not remember when I first met him. Having started working for the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District in 1980, I just eventually got to know most all of the soil scientists who worked in Ohio. Bob Parkinson and I had been to school together in the mid-1970s but most everyone else came later. So I don’t have a fixed time line. But I certainly remember my best memories. Organizations like AOP are only as valuable as their gatherings, field days, web site and newsletters. I came to know Mike from the Newsletters. Having taken over that role from Mike with Jerry Bigham filling in for one year in

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between, I have come to greatly appreciate his dedication and contribution to both Ohio's soil scientists and to AOP. He was a sweet and kind man as well. He will be greatly missed.

We also received short memories from Keith Huffman and John Allen in Indiana. If folks want to share memories for Truman or Mike, I will be pleased to include them in future newsletters.

Letters to the Editor

This section of the Newsletter belongs to you, our members and future members, in the hopes that if we communicate with each other, we can find pathways to move forward to train the next generation. Please send your letters and/or responses to the Editor at AOPEditor2020@gmail.com and I will include them in upcoming issues of the Newsletter which is developed and disseminated quarterly.

Kathy Sasowsky passes on this NRCS job opening in Pennsylvania:

FYI: Opening/Closing Dates for Soil Conservationist HIR 33541 JOA 11735490

Job Title
Soil Conservationist

Open & Closing Dates
Wednesday, November 30, 2022 to Wednesday, December 7, 2022

Salary
\$40,883.00 to \$80,532.00 Per Year

Pay Scale & Grade
GS-5-9

Locations
1 vacancy in the following location:
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

If you have additional questions, Kathy can be reached at:

379 Bittersweet Rd.
Akron, OH 44333
(330)-670-0455

kathryn@sasowsky.com

Part one of the Fall 2022 Newsletter

This ends Part One of the Fall 2022 Newsletter. Part two is dedicated to wind and solar power arrays down on the farm.