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Western grebe nesting on a farm reconstructed wetland in South Dakota.
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If real leadership means not only advocating or expressing a clear position in favor of a healthy environment, but also helping deliver solutions, especially when the Congress plays a key role, this book is both timely and credible. We who have worked with both branches of the federal government know from experience that hardly anything a President wants goes through Congress the way it was presented. Lawmaking is often viewed as a messy, incompetent process to be designed by most scientists. However, remaining aloof, as this guide says, is to forego the chance to influence policies and budgets.

Most members of SWCS would be pleased to be identified as scientists. Most readers of this journal serve in occupations impacted in some way by the actions of the U.S. Congress. Two organizations—the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology, and Government—recognized that the agenda of the U.S. Congress is increasingly dominated by issues involving science and technology. However, few members of Congress have had any training in science or engineering. Although scientists have long worked with the executive branch of government, few have a comparable relationship with Congress. Thus, this guide, authored by Dr. William G. Wells Jr., an engineer with a wide range of experience in science and government, serves as a practical manual to help scientists and engineers when they have an opportunity to work with the Congress.

Dr. Wells is concerned that his peers need to understand that it is essential today, and will be even more vital in the future that they become more involved and effective in relating to Capitol Hill. He states his many reasons under three general headings. First, serving the public and national interest; second, serving the interests of science and engineering and their component disciplines; and third, serving one’s own personal and institutional self-interest. He suggests the alternative, if scientists do not become more involved, would only leave congressional policymaking in areas of importance to scientists to others.

The text only has six chapters. The first, Why Work With Congress? in my opinion, validates why SWCS established a Washington, D.C. representative position to become involved a decade ago.

Chapter 4, Working With Congress has seventeen cardinal rules plus nineteen items when meeting members of Congress, five points for informal visits, thirteen things to do when using the telephone, eleven ideas when preparing and submitting correspondence, and seven ways of working with state and district offices of members of Congress. Also, Dr. Wells raises the issue whether scientists should get involved in politics.

The fifth chapter suggests that the fourth chapter was only preliminary to performing in the center ring of the circus. One of the more important actions of Congress is hearings performed by their committees and subcommittees each year. Scientists are appraised of the need to become witnesses at hearings related to their expertise. This demands time and talent. To assist you the author’s seven guidelines for preparing testimony, and fifteen suggestions for presenting the statement are worthwhile. After the hearing a witness will benefit from five follow-up recommendations in the book.

Members of Congress are professionals in their field of politics and legislation. Working with Congress can provide the scientist or engineer, and most other lay persons with the experience needed to develop a productive relationship between professionals from two very different fields to the mutual benefit of both. The author makes the point that support for science is not an entitlement, nor something most legislators will do because it is the “right thing to do.” Scientists increasingly must make members of Congress aware of the benefits at both the local and the national level. This book will provide the most benefit if used in planning a strategy for telling your story to the U.S. Congress.

Finally, Chapter 6, A Cautionary Note, tells us, “...neither this book nor any other will make you an instant expert on the Congress. Recognize the limitations of your knowledge—that is, know what you don’t know and when to get help.”

Additional copies of this book are available from AAAS.—NORMAN A. BERG, Washington, D.C. Representative, Soil and Water Conservation Society

General


Agriculture


Ecology

The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination. By


Beyond Compliance: A New Industry View of the Environment. Edited by Bruce Burmeister and Dr. Frank Keith. 350 pp., 1993. National Conference of State Legislatures, Denver, CO 80202. $55.00 plus $3.00 shipping and handling.

Energy

Fish and Wildlife


Forests


Land Use

Law, Legislation, Politics

Natural Areas


Pesticides
Assessment of Pesticide Residues in Soil Water and Wells Associated with an Apple Orchard and Strawberry Fields. By Joseph E. Weaver, Henry W. Hohmire, and John C. Sencindiver. 23 pp., 1993. West Virginia University Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Morgantown.


Soils


Waste Management

Water Resources


Wetlands

