

JOURNAL OF SOIL AND WATER
Conservation

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1995

VOLUME 50, NUMBER 6

FEATURES

SPECIAL WETLANDS ISSUE



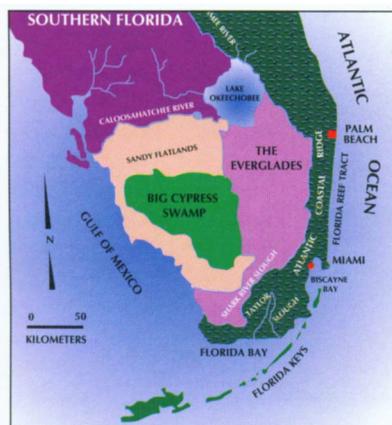
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As a multidisciplinary membership organization, we advocate the protection, enhancement, and wise use of soil, water, and related natural resources. Through education and example, we promote an ethic that recognizes the interdependence of people and the environment.

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Journal of Soil and Water Conservation (ISSN 0022-4561) is published six times a year in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Soil and Water Conservation Society, 7515 N.E. Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764. Second class postage paid at Ankeny, Iowa, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*, 7515 N.E. Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764. Copyright ©1995 by the Soil and Water Conservation Society. SWCS assumes no responsibility for statements and opinions expressed by contributors. Address all editorial and business correspondence to *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*, 7515 N.E. Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764; telephone (515) 289-2331; fax (515) 289-1227. Subscription is by membership in the Soil and Water Conservation Society or by subscription. Membership dues are \$49 a year (\$59 outside the United States and Canada); subscriptions are \$45 a year (\$57 outside the United States and Canada). Institutional subscription rates are \$48 and \$60 respectively.



printed on recycled paper

About this special issue...

Editor's note: This special issue of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* provides an overview of current research and policy positions on wetlands, an issue of critical interest to many of our readers. Wetlands are an important component of the American landscape. They provide habitat for wildlife, protect water quality, and provide drainage control in times of flood.

Wetlands also contribute to the economy through the resources they produce and the services they provide. If you would like more copies of this issue of the *Journal*, please call the Soil and Water Conservation Society at 1-800-THE-SOIL (843-7645). Portions of this issue, and more information about wetlands and about soil and water conservation, are also available on SWCS' World Wide Web Home Page, <http://www.netins.net/showcase/swcs/>

This special issue of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* was prepared with support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Cooperative Agreement CX824458-01-0, Project Officer Michael Boots. Articles presented herein do not necessarily reflect the views of EPA. Mention of commercial products or publications does not constitute endorsement or recommendation for use by EPA.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

1A. Title of Publication: *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*
1B. Publication Number: 0022 4561 **2. Date of Filing:** October 16, 1995 **3. Frequency of Issue:** Bimonthly **3A. No. of Issues Published Annually:** Six **3B. Annual Subscription Price:** \$42.00 **4. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication:** 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764 (Polk County) **5. Complete Mailing Address of the Headquarters of General Business Offices of the Publisher:** 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764 **6. Names and Complete Addresses of Publisher, Editor and Managing Editor:** *Publisher:* Soil and Water Conservation Society, 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764 *Editor:* Sue Ballantine 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764 *Senior Editor:* Doug Snyder, 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764 **7. Owner:** Soil and Water Conservation Society, 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764 **8. Known Bondholders, Mortgages, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities:** None **9.** The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes has not changed during the past 12 months **10. Extent and Nature of Circulation:**

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 months	Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total No. Copies Printed (net press run)	11,466	11,200
B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation		
1. Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, and Counter Sales (Not Mailed)	0	0
2. Paid or Requested Mail Subscriptions	10,393	10,174
C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation	10,393	10,174
D. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free	375	400
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 Director of Publications, Soil and Water Conservation Society**



P E N P O I N T S

To the editor:

The *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* is the voice for practical and wide-ranging articles about wise land use and conservation agriculture. It is a wonderful and powerful voice. The July/August issue contains advertising that should not be part of the "protection, enhancement, and wise use" message that the *Journal* embraces. Granted, herbicides and commercial fertilizers are used extensively in conservation farming and large-scale marketing of ag products is a part of American agriculture. Yet advertisements for these types of companies extend beyond the bounds of where a conservation *journal* should seek advertising dollars. After 50 years of good hard work, their partnership is one which we should not be so brazenly cultivating. If the edi-

tor and editorial board feel that advertisements for such companies are a "necessary evil" to maintain the *Journal* in its current format, I would prefer a simpler format without these advertisements. I strongly urge the *Journal* to discontinue advertisements from major conglomerates selling agrichemicals and "fence row to fence row" farming. Lord knows, they are selling it every where else. Thank you for consideration of my opinion.

*Robert McCallister
McFarland, Wisconsin*

Response: Business has been a part of SWCS since its founding. One of the first SWCS founders was a businessman and the first edition of the *Journal* had advertisements from large ag machinery companies. SWCS believes

that businesses play a profound role in getting conservation practices adopted.

*Karen Howe
Director of Marketing*

To the editor:

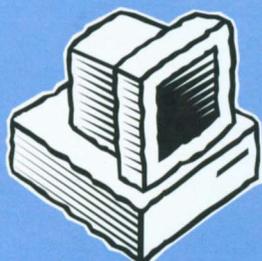
I support the designation of a state soil for Illinois and agree with most of the "State Soils of the United States" article in the July/August issue of the *Journal*. The selection of the Drummer series, however, by a few soil scientists goes against the broader goal of conservation education. As many of you know, Drummer soils are mainly drained wetlands that are not threatened by soil erosion.

Another series that does need protection from erosion would be much more useful for an example in a conservation education program.

Drummer has the added danger of severe limitations for development. A partially informed person could be in for some very unpleasant surprises when building on that great "official" state soil! For these reasons, and others I have not mentioned, the Drummer series should be eliminated from consideration for the state soil of Illinois.

*Dana Walker
Macomb, Illinois*

Editor's note: Reprints of "State Soils of the United States" are available in color for \$150 per 100 (nonmember) or \$140 per 100 (member price); and in black and white for \$85/100; \$12/subsequent 100s + \$10 set-up fee. To order, call us at 1-800-THE-SOIL (843-7645).



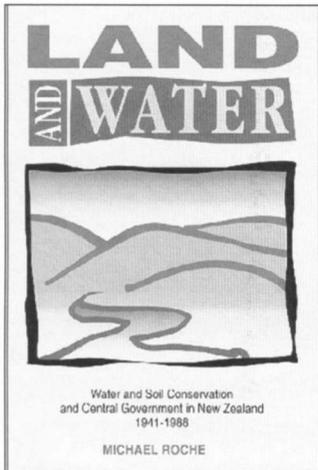
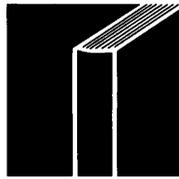
You can send your contributions to Pen Points via email: swcsjswc@netins.net.

Even more resources from SWCS are now available on the World Wide Web. With a connection to the Internet, you can get information about CPESC, membership, news, and the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*.

Important articles from the *Conservogram*, a calendar of events, and a list of jobs wanted and available are only the beginning. The fall 1995 book and publications catalog is now on-line, and you can order any book right from your computer.

You can reach us with questions and comments by e-mail at the address above and our World Wide Web information can be reached with Netscape or Mosaic at <http://www.netins.net/showcase/swcs/>.

Pen Points is a forum for readers to comment on material that has been published in the JSWC or on land and water management issues in general. Readers are invited to express their views in a letter to the editor. Letters are judged on their clarity and pertinence to natural resource issues. Long letters may be shortened. Send letters to Editor, JSWC, 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9764; fax (515) 289-1227 —Editor.



Land and Water: Water and Soil Conservation and Central Government in New Zealand, 1941-1988. by Michael Roche, 1994, by the Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs.

Down to the Sea in Slips. Those six words sum up man's impact on the geology of New Zealand. Land would have slipped into the rivers and oceans without the help of New Zealand's farmers and loggers, but these human beings speeded the process. Michael Roche has written a book with a "provocative" title, *Land and Water*, that has little to do with land and water, and everything to do with the bureaucratic in-fighting, the power struggles, the resistance to change that has marked the growth of soil conservation from 1941 to 1988. A better title might have been, "A Battle of Bureaucrats."

One irony of the book is that it failed to intrigue the very person it should captivate, for I farmed floodable property in New Zealand, dealt with a Catchment Board, and lived near to Basil Parkes (one of the characters in the book). Rather than savoring every syllable, I spent most of my reading time wading through acronyms such as NWASCA and SCRCC. I felt as though I were attending a lengthy board meeting and watching people jockey

for position.

A reader of *Land and Water* should know a few basics about New Zealanders, and Kiwi farmers in particular. Their belief system for decades held that erosion had nothing to do with people. Land slips and mountain scars were highly visible to the earliest white settlers, who arrived after the Maoris (the Polynesians who migrated there much earlier) had been burning scrubland for centuries, in what is called "slash and burn farming." That their agricultural practices might be accelerating erosion didn't seem to occur to them, for they were still burning hill country during my farming years (1972-1989).

Even well-intentioned farmers had the odd disaster, as we learned when putting in a graded access road to our hills. We took a break one day only to return to find that our bulldozer driver had cut a swath straight down a hill, "to clear some scrub." The scar is still there. Also, in our district, burning "got away" on all of us from time to time, sometimes destroying native bush and stands of pine trees planted for timber production. Trying to educate and control the independent farmers (called "cockies") and attempting to have them curtail their ways was a job no one would envy.

Luckily for New Zealand, some scholars, farmers, and advisors concluded that flood control and soil conservation could be enhanced by people working together using sound practices such as retiring unstable "third-class" hill country from farming. Conservation advocates linked floods and soil conservation ideas in the public mind, for flood control affected the townspeople as well as the cockies. River management and soil conservation together paved the way for environmental protection.

Conservation took the form of issuing "fire permits" for those wishing to burn weeds on their land. Naturally, fire permits only worked for the more law-abiding farmers. Noxious animals such as

wild goats, pigs, and deer sped erosion, and local boards worked to suppress these animals.

As the conservation pioneers foresaw, regulation and government resulted in some admirable and some ridiculous projects. To protect themselves, the smarter farmers took seats on catchment boards and made sure their land had, for example, plenty of stop-banks. Basil Parkes' farm was designated as a demonstration farm by the local catchment board; the farm received thousands of dollars in subsidies.

Land and Water is a chronicle of bureaucratization and will be a valuable resource for sociologists and political scientists, because the evolution of Acts and authorities is a complex and intriguing study. However, the book is not intended for a wider audience. Michael Roche could write a very amusing companion piece about misguided or ill-fated attempts to retire unstable farmland, to preserve native bush from cockies (farmers), goats, and pigs, and to tame wild rivers without regard for native wisdom. The next book will be more fun to read.

—review by Marsha Woodbury, associate director of education, Sloan Center for Asynchronous Learning Environments, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Landcare: Communities Shaping the Land and the Future.

By Andrew Campbell and Greg Siepen. 344 pp., 1994. Allen and Unwin Pty. Ltd., 9 Atchison Street, ST. Leonards, NSW 2065 Australia.

Tell me and I'll forget;

Show me and I may remember;

Involve me and I'll understand.

The short triad above (also quoted in the book) contains the essence of landcare as presented by Campbell and Siepen. Landcare is an Australian system of community-based groups directly involved in rural land conservation, ecological restoration, and sustainable agriculture. The most engaging premise of the book is

that direct interaction with the landscape will help develop a lasting and loving human bond with the environment. This concept permeates each story told in the book and guides the basic principles of landcare. The book is developed more as a well-documented success story than a guide for establishing a landcare system or group. However, the ample references, thick bibliography, and list of landcare contacts allow someone interested in implementing landcare practices to locate more how-to information. It is a book about people not procedure, about families and communities "working to find solutions that get them off the accelerating treadmill of decline, and on to a more self-reliant and sustainable path" (p. 21). Although there are two credited authors, its literary style and format reveal the touch of countless landcare people who contributed to its creation. The authors use common, accessible language to discuss landcare's grass-roots, community-level structure; its organic development comes through clearly. The result is a messy, thought provoking, and rich work jammed with a diverse collection of studies.

The book might interest soil conservationists, ecologists, rural environmental planners, as well as educators. Its anecdotal presentation doesn't lend itself to technical textbook use, but it may appeal to educators interested in citizen participation, rural planning, and economic, ecological, and social connections to agricultural land use and conservation in arid regions. Issues of land conservation include: soil salinity, aridity, erosion, revegetation, and catchment and farm planning. Because landcare participants view conservation and restoration holistically, the book also addresses concerns often left out of scientific publications, such as land ethics and literacy, gender and culture, cooperative learning, and participatory planning. Landcare advocates what Silvio and Ravetz

(1991) call post normal science, a theoretical framework that acknowledges contributions beyond experts in conducting and utilizing quantitative field research, and that uses a wider lens through which to view science.

Rural Australian history parallels in many ways the agricultural developments of the arid American West. Thus, much of the tenets of landcare are relevant to contemporary conditions in the western states. In addition, the community-based philosophy seems compatible with the West's current sociopolitical climate, which is growing more hostile toward strong federal governance. This final point is controversial among critics and advocates of landcare. Some view the relationship between rural communities and government through landcare as hegemonic; government is seen to use landcare's popularity as a way to put a familiar and friendly face on their top-down policies and practices. Community autonomy is illusion. The authors (as *Landcare* clearly advocates) acknowledge the peculiar marriage of federal government and rural communities, though they don't see it as unbalanced. They support a landcare system that is grounded in the rural communities, but that benefits from financial and technical assistance from government. Decisions are made and actions are taken locally, American rural communities might stem the tide of decline by adapting landcare practices. However, the practices will be less useful in regions of the United States where large absentee farming systems prevail. A community must first exist before landcare's community structure can be applied. The book is informative, tangible, and passionate; I recommend it.

—review by Rebecca Fish, assistant professor, School of Planning and Landscape Architecture, Arizona State University, Tempe.

Soil Science and Sustainable Land Management in the Tropics. Edited by J.K. Syers and D.L. Rimmer. 290 pp., 1994. CAB International, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 8DE, United Kingdom.

Books, articles, conferences, and discussions on sustainable development, including agricultural land use, have abounded in the last decade or so, reflecting global concerns with the state of our natural

resources and environmental quality. These culminated in the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and subsequent actions, including Agenda 21. This particular volume is a product of a conference held in 1992 under the auspices of the British Society of Soil Science. The conference was designed to address the role of soil science in providing sustainable land management in tropical regions. The book contains 20 chapters contributed by participants; the opening and concluding chapters provide an integrated perspective of both the scope of the meeting and the contents of the resulting book. Other individual chapters address quantitative criteria for judging sustainability, uses of agrohydrological modeling, relevance of soil erosion and conservation, soil chemistry and nutrient management, roles of soil organisms/biological nitrogen fixation/organic matter, agroforestry, and examples of technological advances for rainfed farming in both humid and semiarid tropical regions. Irrigated agricultural systems, which have a host of sustainability "challenges," are not included. The chapters are well supplemented by ample references for further perusal of treated topics.

It would be fair to state that the intent to emphasize sustainability issues that are specifically relevant to tropical regions was only partly fulfilled; this is due to the impossibility of covering comprehensively the very diverse agroecological zones of tropics in a single meeting or book. One might make the implicit assumption that "principles" of sustainable management, as discussed by the various authors, are transferable across different regions. This may be true for biological and physical (technological) dimensions; however, the socio-economic-cultural-policy dimensions are generally site-specific and most often become the ultimate determinants of success in technical transfer (Napier et al. 1994).

A refreshing perspective throughout the book is the positive tone attached to the planning and management of sustainable agriculture. This is somewhat in contrast to the standard, and negative, use of land degradation threats as the primary incentive for sustainability adoption. On the other hand, the discussions are overwhelmingly driven by a production-agriculture focus; environmental and ecological im-

pacts of land use are far less emphasized. This is somewhat surprising in view of the recent emergence of "soil quality" as a crucial attribute for both productivity maintenance and environmental enhancement. The lack of environmental emphasis may be an outcome of overlooking the "scale of focus" as an important element of sustainable development. Spatially, environmental considerations emerge prominently when dealing, not only with a single farm, but with watersheds or larger land areas. Temporally, environmental evaluations require "many" years. Few of the book's chapters reported on management which has been tested for large areas or long periods; most reported on farm performance in single years or growing seasons. The substantial experience and inter-disciplinary emphasis of international agricultural research institutes would have a positive impact on addressing these aspects.

Members of SWCS and readers of the *JSWC* will find in the book several treatments of water-induced erosion and conservation issues. Most interesting among these is a case study of the effects of erosion and sedimentation on land quality, using a pedogenic baseline approach. However, integration of requisite conservation issues into overall sustainability objectives is only inferred, not explicit.

Finally, I must confess that the phrase "sustainable land management," when stated as an objective, leaves me with a contradictory feeling about the intended "product" of the debate about sustainability. It conveys the need for "sustainable management" as a target, rather than sustainable development. If this is the case, then the agroecosystem subject to such sustained attention is likely to be far from achieving sustainability. Overall, however, the book makes a worthy acquisition to institutional libraries and can serve, at least in part, as a reference for undergraduate, upper division teaching on sustainable agriculture.

—review by Samir A. El-Swaify, professor of soil conservation, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii.

REFERENCE CITED

Napier, T.L., S.M. Camboni, and S.A. El-Swaify. 1994. Adopting Conservation on the Farm: An

International Perspective on the Socioeconomics of Soil and Water Conservation. Soil and Water Conservation Society, Ankeny, Iowa.

General

Natural Resource Conservation and Management in the SADC Region: Challenges and Opportunities. Edited by Raban Chanda and Faustin Kalabamu. 177 pp., 1995. SADC Environment and Land Management Sector (ELMS) Coordination Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Co-operatives and Marketing, P.O. Box 24, Maseru 100, LESOTHO.

TIMESCAPE™ ATLAS: Odyssey of Our Changing Planet. From Now What Software. A CD-ROM for observing global change over time. 1995. Contact: Now What Software, 2303 Sacramento St., San Francisco, CA 94115; phone 415-885-3432.

Agriculture

Forages: The Science of Grassland Agriculture, Volume II. Under the editorial authorship of Robert F. Barnes, Darrell A. Miller, and C. Jerry Nelson. 416 pp., 1995. Iowa State University Press, 2121 S. State Avenue, Ames, IA 50014-8300; phone 800-862-6657 or 515-292-0155. \$49.95 hardcover.

Forestry

Woodland Stewardship: A Practical Guide for Midwestern Landowners (item MI-5901-NR4). From the University of Minnesota Extension Service. 194 pp., 1995. Contact: MES Distribution Center, University of Minnesota, 1420 Eckles Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108-6069; phone: 612-625-8173. \$14.95.

Water Resources

Water Harvesting: Proceedings of the SADC ELMS Practical Workshop. Edited by Moshe Finkel and Mikael Segerros. 201 pp., 1995. SADC Environment and Land Management Sector (ELMS) Coordination Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Co-operatives and Marketing, P.O. Box 24, Maseru 100, LESOTHO.