

Citizen Scientists: Where science meets society – Soil Science Society of America efforts to inject science into policymaking

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Key Words

Congressional soils caucus, core constituent scientist teams, science policy, grassroots advocacy, legislation.

Description of the society

The Soil Science Society of America (SSSA), the largest life science professional society in the United States dedicated to the soil sciences, encompasses approximately 6,000 members plus more than 1,000 professional soil scientists who are a direct conduit to land managers across the U.S. The Soil Science Society of America's federal science policy programs, active for decades, include Washington, DC-based Director of Science Policy, Policy Programs Coordinator, Congressional Science Fellows and Science Policy Interns.

Highlights of science policy activities

Science policy activities encompass education and advocacy. Tools employed include media relations workshops and special sessions on how to communicate with policymakers for members, development of a Rapid Response Team electronic listserve, which allows for rapid access to experts and scientific expertise, a Congressional Soils Caucus, and most recently the development of Core Constituent Scientist Teams, composed of SSSA members who actively engage with Congress to promote soil and the soil sciences..

Proposed approach to 4.4.1 symposium, “Delivery of Soils Information to Non-agriculture Users.”

I will provide a quick overview of the US SSSA science policy office and strategies and tools used to influence Congress and the Administration, including the federal agencies. I will then entertain a discussion of how IUSS member countries can begin the development of their own science policy office.