



WSSA Strategic Plan 2022-2027

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WSSA Strategic Plan 2022-2027

Committee members: D. Refsell (Chair), D. Brainard, J. Byrd, R. Chandran, S. Culpepper, W. Curran, G. Elmore, W. Greene, E. Gustafson, J. McFarland, and L. Steckel

Working group participants: M. Bernards, M. Bish, A. Helm, B. Johnson, B. Miller, J. Norsworthy, R. Richardson, C. Schmidt, S. Senseman, F. Tardif, L. VanWychen, C. Willenborg, J. Wuerffel, B. Young, and select Science Policy Committee Members.

Mission Statement:

The Weed Science Society of America, a non-profit professional society,

- Promotes research, education, and extension-outreach activities related to weeds.
- Provides science-based information to the public and policy makers; and
- Fosters awareness of weeds and their impact on managed and natural ecosystems.

Executive Summary. A special committee was formed by WSSA President Dr. Bill Curran during the fall of 2020 chaired by Dr. Dawn Refsell, WSSA Member-at-Large. The Group met via Zoom over several months and discussed mission, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and other issues affecting WSSA. The committee discussed a number of strategies to help move the WSSA forward. The committee divided into smaller working groups to further develop prioritized strategies into achievable actions and outcomes. A DRAFT document was submitted to the WSSA Board of Directors at the July 2021 summer board meeting. The document was further refined, reviewed, and then approved by the WSSA Board of Directors on August 24, 2022. There are several common themes and potential priorities. Common themes include the following:

1.) The most mentioned need by multiple smaller working groups included various ideas to improve communication within the society and with outside stakeholders. This included expanding linkages to several organizations and seeking ways to better communicate information to affiliate organizations; formalizing partnerships with key organizations; incorporating non-technical summaries into WSSA journal articles and other venues and promoting via social media and other outlets; regularly surveying the membership for input; and one of the most mentioned needs, improving the appearance and functionality of the WSSA website. It was suggested to establish a Communications Manager/Director to help oversee multiple communication avenues. This could also include contracting a website design and management company to carry out the necessary website improvements and management.

2.) The second most recognized need was to increase what we do outside of the WSSA and Regional/Affiliate Group annual meetings by offering more educational events such as symposia and scientific exchanges. This included developing and offering symposia in collaboration with our Regional/Affiliate Organizations as well as offering symposia on career professional development as well as in other areas.

3.) A third common theme across the different strategies was to broaden the opportunities for leadership development and committee service. This would target more interaction between WSSA and Regional/Affiliate Organizations and would also target students and early career members.

Finally, although not implicitly recommended in this plan, several discussions centered on establishing a *Strategic Planning Committee* that meets annually to discuss planning and implementation progress and reviews relevancy and the need for new initiatives.

Table 1. Proposed Strategies, Tactics, and Common Themes.

Strategy 1: Trusted Resource	Strategy 2: Affiliated Relationships	Strategy 3: Communication with key influencers	Strategy 4: Symposia and Scientific Exchange	Strategy 5: Member Engagement and Value of Membership
Expand Liaison model to other groups <i>(communications)</i>	Host Joint/co-sponsor meetings	Formalize partnerships with key organizations or groups <i>(communications)</i>	Host online symposia with affiliate groups (<i>on-line symposia</i>)	Increase leadership and committee opportunities <i>(broad leadership)</i>
Review key issue important to WSSA mission	Co-host symposia/other events outside annual meeting (<i>on-line symposia</i>)		Host scientific exchange forum (<i>on-line symposia</i>)	Website improvement <i>(communications)</i>
Better communicate information to stakeholders <i>(communications)</i>	Strengthen communication between WSSA and affiliates <i>(communications)</i>		Develop government job opportunities session at annual meeting (<i>career opportunity</i>)	Member survey for improve relationships <i>(communications)</i>
	Share financial resources (websites, admin)		Incorporate Non-technical summary into WSSA journal articles and promote via social media <i>(communications)</i>	More symposia on career professional development (<i>on-line symposia and career opportunity</i>)
	Actively seek leadership from regional/affiliates to govern WSSA/ committees <i>(broad leadership)</i>			Apply tools from other disciplines to enhance and improve the knowledgebase of WSSA membership

WSSA Key Tactics Summary for 2022-2027 Strategic Plan

A. Communication

1. Partnerships

- a. Expand liaison model and other methods to formalize partnerships with key groups and organizations – Govt., Science, Commodity, NGO, and others.
- b. Strengthen communication between WSSA and affiliates and other stakeholder groups.
- c. Develop membership “Expertise Matrix” to share with various stakeholders.
- d. Host joint/co-sponsored meetings and other events at annual conferences and during other times of the year.
- e. Offer more symposia on career professional development including Govt., Academia, Industry, and other opportunities in weed science.

2. Website

- a. Website improvement – Provide information for members first and foremost, promote research and education success, communicate weed management information, new innovations, and challenges to key stakeholders, etc.

3. Journals

- a. Incorporate Non-technical summaries into WSSA journal articles and promote via social media and other outlets.

4. Surveys and member listening sessions

- a. Conduct member surveys and listening sessions regularly to improve relationships and help drive direction.

B. Leadership

- a. Actively seek leadership and participation from regional/affiliates to help govern WSSA/committees.

DEFINITIONS

Strategy - a plan of action or policy designed to achieve a major or overall aim
Tactic - an action or strategy carefully planned to achieve a specific end.
Impacts - have a strong effect on someone or something.
Outcomes – the way a thing turns out; a consequence.
Products - a thing or person that is the result of an action or process.
Other considerations – timeline, next steps, communication, people, resources, costs, actions, metrics for success, etc.

WSSA STRATEGIC PLAN (2022-2027) – Condensed

1. STRATEGY - Establish WSSA as the trusted resource of information for weed science stakeholders (including policymakers)

- A. Tactic – Evaluate the need to the expand WSSA Liaison model or other linkages to certain stakeholder groups.
- B. Tactic – Charge appropriate WSSA Standing Committees to review key issues important to the mission of WSSA.
- C. Tactic – Develop methodology to better communicate relevant WSSA information to stakeholders.

2. STRATEGY - Advance relationship between WSSA and affiliated organizations

- A. Tactic - Host joint or co-sponsored meetings on a regular basis.
- B. Tactic - Co-host symposia or other types of meetings outside of WSSA annual conference that includes regionals and affiliates.
- C. Tactic - Strengthen communication opportunities between the WSSA and the Regional/Affiliates.
- D. Tactic - Share financial resources that benefit all groups.
- E. Tactic - Actively seek leadership from Regional/Affiliates to help govern WSSA and serve oncommittees.

3. STRATEGY - Develop communication partnerships with key influencers

- A. Tactic – Formalize partnerships with key organizations or groups.

4. STRATEGY - Provide Forums for Scientific Exchange

- A. Tactic - In collaboration with Regional/Affiliate societies, organize on-line symposia and scientific exchanges.

- B. Tactic – Develop government employees’ opportunities session at annual meetings/online events.
- C. Tactic - Produce non-technical summaries for WSSA journal articles.

5. STRATEGY - Improve WSSA member engagement, experience, & opportunities for leadership and help build the capabilities and effectiveness of WSSA membership capacity and success

- A. Tactic - Increase leadership opportunities and involvement on WSSA Committees.
- B. Tactic - Develop and launch new and improved WSSA web site.
- C. Tactic - Increase the diversity and satisfaction of members and stakeholders through regular membership surveys.
- D. Tactic - Develop Symposia focused on career professional development.
- E. Tactic - Implement inclusive, forward-looking concepts for meetings, publications, and issue statements and apply tools from other disciplines to enhance and improve the knowledgebase of WSSA membership.

WSSA STRATEGIC PLAN (2022-2027) - Full

1. STRATEGY - Establish WSSA as the trusted resource of information for weed science stakeholders (including policymakers) – McFarland, VanWychen, and select Science Policy Committee members

A. Tactic – Evaluate the need to the expand WSSA Liaison model or other linkages to certain stakeholder groups.

Impact/Outcome/Product

- Develop stakeholder partnerships to become a trusted resource for weed science information for a range of government groups(country/state/province), science societies, grower and commodity groups, NGOs, and other groups/associations within the agricultural and conservation community.

Next Steps

- Prioritize key partners and conduct listening sessions to facilitate conversation for mutual strategic goals, coordinate activities and leverage unified messages to improve research, education and science regulatory policy related to weed science and invasive plants
- Formalize liaison, volunteer roles, and key contacts with partner organizations and other science societies such as tri-societies, entomology, plant pathology, ecology, and others as well as additional federal and state departments, and grower, commodity and conservation councils and groups.

B. Tactic – Charge appropriate WSSA Standing Committees to review key issues important to the mission of WSSA.

Impact/Outcome/Product

- Develop annual review process to prioritize science, policy, conservation, legislative and regulatory committees, boards and advisory panels in the US and Canada that are important to the mission of WSSA and that would benefit from weed science expertise.
- Develop a plan to support and promote the work of the EDSP, procure grants to advance WSSA's strategic goals, and communicate information to members and stakeholders.

Next Steps

- Develop a survey/questionnaire to help Standing Committee's review and answer important questions that help prioritize their direction and future goals.

C. Tactic – Develop methodology to better communicate relevant WSSA information to stakeholders.

Impact/Outcome/Product

- Leverage information and outreach from WSSA to share with stakeholders.

Next Steps

- Develop weed science expertise resource matrix that can be shared with country/state and province government and legislative initiatives.
- Improve WSSA website, promote research, and communication materials for easy access to information on emerging weed science priorities, research initiatives, innovations, and challenges.

Resources needed for Strategy 1.

- Volunteer leadership (potentially tied to committee chairs)
- Updated communication (leverage website, journals)
- Monetary cost for liaison to other organizations
- Monetary costs to cover website activities

2. STRATEGY - Advance relationship between WSSA and affiliated organizations – Curran, Byrd, Chandran, Culpepper, Helm, Miller, Richardson, and Tardif

A. Tactic - Host joint or co-sponsored meetings on a regular basis

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- Increased attendance, greater diversity of topics, visit new places, greater collaboration, more industry participation, more student participation, more contact between societies.
- Greater student and newer (younger) member exposure to broader range of weed science topics, crops, networks.
- Increase society membership, more engaged WSSA and Regional/Affiliate memberships

Next Steps

- Establish a joint conference committee that includes WSSA and Regionals/Affiliates – then develop a meeting template, calendar, and work on a shared budget.

B. Tactic - Co-host symposia or other types of meetings outside of WSSA annual conference that includes regionals and affiliates. Could also include Co-hosting symposia with a regional society at the WSSA conference or at one of the regional conferences.

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- More opportunities for membership education, communication, and collaboration. Involve experts outside of WSSA. Focus on timely topics that cannot always be included in annual conferences.
- Increased engagement from people that generally only attend a Regional/Affiliate meeting.
- Joint webinars, workshops, or interviews with scientists on topics of common interest. Might be in-person or virtual.
- Joint sponsored or Regional/Affiliate sponsored Symposia or sessions at WSSA conference. WSSA sponsored Symposia or sessions at regional affiliate meetings.

Next Steps

- Reach out to WSSA and Regional Boards and Liaisons and standing committees within WSSA and Regionals/Affiliates to gauge willingness to participate. Survey members about topics of interest

C. Tactic - Strengthen communication opportunities between the WSSA and the Regional/Affiliates.

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- Better communication within and between societies, increased collaboration, greater awareness of events and activities.
- WSSA President attends regional board meetings and provides a report.
- EDSP (Lee VanWychen) attends various meetings to help strengthen communication between WSSA and Regional/Affiliates.
- Include Regional/Affiliate updates at the annual meeting provided by board members or selected individuals (could even be a general session or breakout).
- Develop joint press releases on high profile topics.
- Promote joint society activities (field days, interviews, meeting broadcasts, etc.).
- Share membership lists between organizations (also mentioned in #5)

Next Steps

- Board officers and/or key members from various societies form a committee and meet quarterly to help develop communication guidelines.
- WSSA Executive Secretary organizes quarterly meetings with the proposed Communication Director/Committee.

D. Tactic - Share financial resources that benefit all groups

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- Increase funding level by sharing resources. Provide funding for positions or activities that are difficult or unlikely due to limited resources especially at the regional level. Greater collaboration and ownership across societies.
- EDSP co-founding (already happening), website design and maintenance, meeting management, liaison appointments, weed contests, etc.

Next Steps

- Identify critical areas that can benefit from shared financial support. Establish a committee that includes officers and members of WSSA and Regional/Affiliate's finance committees.

E. Tactic - Actively seek leadership from Regional/Affiliates to help govern WSSA and serve on committees.

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- Have a broad diverse group of individuals leading WSSA.
- WSSA Board and committees include membership from all Regionals/Affiliates, academia, govt., industry, students, etc. Regional/Affiliates and WSSA share membership contact information to allow greater interaction.

Next Steps

- Analyze current, recent, and past board/committee members to help determine where we are and where we have been relative to committee diversity across Regions/Affiliates.
- Include or expand guidelines within WSSA MOPs to seek diverse membership more actively on Boards and Committees.

Resources needed for Strategy 2.

- Selected members from WSSA and Regional Boards meet to discuss how to broaden regional/diverse participation within WSSA.
- Excited active members, budget for honoraria for outside speakers, travel budget for in-person events, etc.

Other Tactics Considered in Strategy 2.

- Develop continuing education programs to train technical staff that do not attend annual conferences. - This could be developed several ways from short courses to more in-depth certificate programs or symposia. Partner with other organizations. Look at the WSWS Noxious Weed Short Course as an example.
- Establish a WSSA strategic planning committee. - Meets regularly to plan and review longer-range planning that includes regional/affiliate representation.
- Expand opportunities for APMS to participate in WSSA activities. - Suggested action items include a. Continue legislative staffer visits hosted by EDSP with weed science societies and APMS – Currently conduct separate visits with weed science societies and APMS. b. Expand the Student Science Policy Fellowship program to include APMS and perhaps other organizations. Currently have two fellows/year. One individual could focus on aquatic issues or expand the program to cover more areas (visit with EDSP to determine what is possible).
- Explore opportunities to connect and engage with international organizations. - This could also help facilitate international experiences for students with industry and academic institutions. Might establish liaisons to important groups.

3. STRATEGY - Develop communication partnerships with key influencers – Steckel, Bish, B. Johnson, Norsworthy, Schmidt, VanWychen, and B. Young

A. Tactic – Formalize partnerships with key organizations or groups

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- Partner with USHRAC/Take Action/and others to increase key influencers and therefore public awareness of weeds, their impact and effective management techniques.
- Partner with Take Action to promote the latest science on weeds.
- USHRAC increased awareness of change in herbicide classification.
- Promote Podcasts, social media platforms and other weed science extension and outreach efforts to reach retailers.

Next Steps

- Public awareness committee has been working on communication partnerships with influencers. The main step would be to keep enabling them to continue these efforts.
- Promoting activities of WSSA members such as “War Against Weeds” podcast by Bish/Lancaster/Ikley via social media and newsletter.
- Partner with HRAC to increase awareness of new herbicide classification.
- Increase in effective social media presence.
- Partner with Take Action to facilitate the ease of access of weed science research to crop consultants and AG retailers.

- Work with EPA Liaison.
- Partner with CropLife.
- Promote Excellence in Journalism Award.

Resources needed for Strategy 3.

- Continued support for the Public Awareness Committee.
- Time needed to find out how WSSA could partner with Take Action and the United Soybean Board and the public relation company Osborn/Barr.
- Succession planning for Public Awareness Committee.

4. STRATEGY - Provide Forums for Scientific Exchange – Chandran, Byrd, Greene, and Willenborg

A. Tactic - WSSA, in collaboration with affiliate societies organize on-line Symposia and Scientific Exchange.

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- As WSSA strives to expand educational opportunities in the future, symposia offered on-line outside the Annual Meeting(s) may be a forum to enhance exchange of science-based weed management with larger, more expansive audiences.
- Affiliate societies could take turns offering online symposia and make reciprocal arrangements towards attendance for all Affiliate members.
- Help connect graduate students with researchers (laboratory and field) across institutions (both University and Industry).
- Jointly organized on-line symposia and scientific exchanges.

Next Steps

- Develop an avenue to share costs with affiliate societies to host on-line symposia (technology, honoraria) and explore advertising symposia with potentially interested audiences outside WSSA and affiliate memberships and serve as a central for participant payment.
- Affiliate societies organize symposia in conjunction with their annual meetings (so that there is an expectation every year).
- Some symposia could be grower-centric (they could serve as avenue to connect all members with top growers).
- Section Chairs related to various sub-disciplines in WSSA team up with respective counterparts at the affiliate society levels to organize such forums.
- Facilitate participation from growers/producers/golf-coursesuperintends etc. to share their field problems.
- Encourage participation of crop-consultants, industry experts, Ag-agents etc.
- Some of these forums could be designed as meeting points (focus-groups) for

global collaboration among weed scientists.

B. Tactic – Develop Government Employees’ Opportunities Session at Annual Meetings/Online Events.

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- Help inform members of potential Federal, and State weed science-related job opportunities.
- An effort to include a session to address this deficiency would be considered valuable not only to provide more job-opportunities for weed science students but also to improve the presence of our discipline in government agencies.

Next Steps

- Encourage appropriate federal and state WSSA members and other individuals to develop a symposium related to this interest.

C. Tactic - Produce Non-Technical Summaries of WSSA Journal Abstracts.

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- WSSA journal articles that contain practical or useful information could generate interest from a wider audience, especially from those outside our discipline.
- WSSA journal articles could feature a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) following each Abstract.
- This would be a requirement for manuscript submission and would also help authors “frame” their findings from a lay person’s perspective.
- The NTS would provide a short summary, which includes both Metric and Standard Units, which would convey the story to a reader not familiar with weed science jargon.
- Promote the NTS via social media such as Facebook and Twitter.
- Some NTS’s could be adapted for greater distribution by WSSA Public Awareness Committee

Next Steps

- Work with the Publications Committee to develop an avenue to develop and include an NTS for journal submissions.

Resources needed for Strategy 4.

- Communications leader, technical writer, social media presence, money to support efforts, time, engagement of Publications & Public Awareness committee.
- Provide complimentary registrations for government employees ~~participate~~ in such sessions at in-person meetings (with invitations to justify travel to employer)

- Establish Partnerships between Publications Committee, communications person(s), technical writer, social media presence, money to support efforts, time, engagement of Publications & Public Awareness committee.

5. STRATEGY - Improve WSSA member engagement, experience, & opportunities for leadership and help build the capabilities and effectiveness of WSSA membership [capacity and success] – Elmore, Bernards, Greene, Gustafson, Senseman, and Wuerffel

A. Tactic - Increase leadership opportunities and involvement on WSSA Committees

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- Productive and focused committees of existing WSSA members.
- Provide more student opportunities on committees (learning and active participation).
- Prepare people for future leadership in the WSSA.
- Committees generate ideas to improve the WSSA.
- Include ideas in annual committee reports.

Next Steps

- Active recruitment into committees, setting up a table or booth, luncheon. Encourage people to attend committee meetings in which you are interested. Recruit people from regional societies for active WSSA leadership (including graduate students). Identify mentors for connections within WSSA – encourage committee chairs to invite younger folks to participate on the committee. Dinner night out with graduate students.
- Train Board liaisons to communicate information from the BOD to committee chairs and vice versa (WSSA President does this) – template of questions for metrics for each committee. Encourage entrepreneurial (free thinking) input from the committees rather than top-down ideas from the WSSA BOD.
- Quarterly committee meetings (via Zoom) – can reduce committee meeting time at the annual meeting
- Audit committees we have and determine if there are additional committees that should be created or retired. Example: address education and outreach by potentially creating a committee or combining committees? Create a committee audit schedule (every three years?).

B. Tactic - Develop and Launch New and Improved WSSA Web Site

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- Outside group create an interactive, social media rich, attractive, easily maneuvered, outreach to those seeking information on WSSA (better visibility, engaging people, marketing the WSSA).
- Serve the current membership and entice new members to join the society.

- Make sure the web site is constantly up to date (continuous content addition/change).
- New website.

Next Steps

- Determine what are the objectives for the WSSA web site.
- Determine who we need (what skill set) to help create or recreate the web site and keep it updated.
- Determine what platform we need to use for the web site.
- Determine the budget that is needed to create or recreate and maintain the web site.
- Determine where management of the WSSA web site should reside (with the director of publications now but should it be under Public Relations and social media? Should there be a board position specifically focused on the web site?).

C. Tactic – Increase the diversity and satisfaction of members and stakeholders through membership surveys

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- Prioritize and direct further efforts of the WSSA.
- Understand satisfaction of membership and stakeholders (regional societies).
- Identify groups of folks the WSSA is serving (graduate student, female, member for how many years, ecologists, pesticide residue experts, diversity of subject matter, industry, etc.). Understand satisfaction with different groups of people and how to better serve the membership.
- Member survey(s).

Next Steps

- Identify a small committee or sub-committee within the WSSA.
- Create the survey (may be multiple groups wishing to do a survey and serving membership could be one part) access to meeting, price, involved in committees
- Send out the survey to members
- Analyze survey results and provide a recommendation to the board based on results

D. Tactic - Develop Symposia focused on career professional development

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- Provide young professionals with development opportunities that add value to their WSSA membership.
- Help members understand the professional development opportunities of being involved in the WSSA.

- What are opportunities within Weed Science (maybe an on-line symposium that includes roles with government, industry, academia, other). What are opportunities beyond what we think of weed science – Extension Agronomists, Department Chairs, etc.
- Advertise symposia or panel discussion as a draw to the annual meeting or as an on-line source of personal development.

Next Steps

- Offer symposia at different times (not just annual meeting) – quarterly, on-line, workshops.
- Take the symposia from the annual meeting and expand reach and content to other times (professional development off cycle).
- Sponsor round tables and discussion sessions on interesting topics that appeal to different groups of people (graduate students, undergrad students, early career people, late career people, industry, academics, USDA, women in weed science, new faculty members, teaching)
- On-line ZOOM (up to 500 people) webinar symposium or panel discussion on different career options within weed science (can record and post on the website).
- Solicit symposia ideas for next WSSA annual meeting.
- Look into topic areas like leadership classes, work-life balance, seven habits for highly effective people, how to avoid burnout, how to run a meeting, understanding US agribusiness, DiSC training, mock interviews, creating a solid CV, how to put a dossier together, grant writing, etc.
- Consider a fee for attending on-line seminars.

E. Tactic - Implement inclusive, forward-looking concepts for meetings, publications, and issue statements and apply tools from other disciplines to enhance and improve the knowledgebase of WSSA membership

Impacts/Outcomes/Products

- Invite more engineers, social scientists and others that would change the dynamic of our membership
- See more precision ag, alternative weed management, IWM, molecular biology research published in our journals
- Diversify our membership (why is John Deere not a sustaining member of WSSA?)

Next Steps

- Recruit industries that provide other methods of weed management (like Blue River, John Deere, Case IH, Seed Terminator, Weed IT, etc.) Example of where other members could come from: American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers

- Offer symposia on alternative methods of weed control, precision application, BIG DATA, etc.
- Consider a trade show as a draw for companies that promote alternate methods of weedmanagement

Resources needed for Strategy 5.

- Active members.
- Proposed budget for some activities.
- Contract company to create the web site (or update).
- Pay someone to make sure content is constantly updated.
- Use Survey Monkey to conduct surveys.
- Bring in a social scientist to help develop surveys.
- For symposia – need a proposal and any resources needed for travel (if at annual meeting).