

WSSA 2022 Yearend Public Awareness Committee Report

Committee Code and Name: E13, Public Awareness (PA)

Committee Chair: Caren A. Schmidt, NE

Committee Members for this year:

- Neha Rana NC
- Mayank Malik NC
- Reid Smeda NC
- Dawn Refsell NC
- Theresa Piskáčková NE
- Wykle Green NE
- Wes Everman NE
- Erin Hitchner NE
- Bart Clewis S
- Camp Hand S
- Rebecca Fletcher USDA
- Jesse Richardson W
- Dilshan De Silva Benaragama Canada
- Erica Haug APMS
- Sara Kezar Graduate Student Representative
- Lily Woitaszewski Graduate Student Representative
- Taylor Randell WSSA
- Lee Van Wychen Ex Officio
- Eric Gustafson Ex Officio
- Linda Edgerton Ex Officio

Board Liaison:

- WSSA President, Stanley Culpepper

Committee Members Rotating Off:

- Wes Everman NE
- Reid Smeda NC
- Sarah Kezar, Grad Student Representative
- Lily Woitaszewski, Grad Student Representative
- Taylor Randell

Appropriate Replacements:

- Thierry Besancon, NE
- Mark Bernards, NC
- Pamela Carvalo-Moore, Graduate Student
- Lily and Taylor's replacements will be named at WSSA

Summary of Activities

- **What were the committee’s goals for this year?**
 - Increase public awareness of weeds, their impact and effective management techniques
 - Bring attention to important weed control-related programs and challenges
 - Raise the visibility of WSSA and the weed science profession

- **List the committee’s accomplishments (through December 2022):**
 - We created and distributed 12 press releases that span a wide range of topics of interest to our members, the broader industry and the public – from the impact of invasive species to new advances in weed control. (See [“Press Releases by the Numbers” below for topics and performance details](#)). Each was:
 - Distributed online through the [Cision PRWeb](#) distribution service
 - Distributed via SendinBlue to our custom list of more than 270 industry journalists and influencers
 - Emailed to our WSSA members
 - Promoted by our Public Awareness Committee members via social media
 - Posted to the WSSA website
 - We revamped and expanded the [careers section](#) of the WSSA website and created a [promotional careers poster](#).
 - We created and promoted a new backgrounder to clarify [label-mandated plant-back restrictions](#).
 - We created articles for the WSSA website announcing [student winners of 2022 regional weed contests](#) and the [2022 student enrichment program winners](#).
 - We responded to an interview request from *Seed World* magazine to provide background on [sustainable weed control](#), recommending Marty Williams of USDA as a source.
 - We identified a recipient of the WSSA Excellence in Journalism award, to be announced during WSSA’s annual meeting.

PRESS RELEASES BY THE NUMBERS

HEADLINE	TOTAL POTENTIAL AUDIENCE	RELEASE VIEWS & HITS	ONLINE PICKUP	ENGAGEMENT ACTIONS (click-through, share)
Researchers Focus on New Strain of Hydrilla Found Thriving in the Connecticut River Basin , December 12, 2022	30,579,185	2,753	114	96
New Technologies and Precision Weed Management Take Center Stage at Upcoming Annual Meetings November 7, 2022	27,579,398	2,489	164	23

HEADLINE	TOTAL POTENTIAL AUDIENCE	RELEASE VIEWS & HITS	ONLINE PICKUP	ENGAGEMENT ACTIONS (click-through, share)
Scientists Say Diversified Weed Control is Critical to Pumpkin Production , October 17, 2022	26,884,593	2,945	79	16
Scientists Focus on Weed Control to Support Emerging Hemp Market , August 8, 2022	25,858,153	3,573	99	35
Aquatic Plant Management Society Members Gather for 62nd Annual Meeting , July 11, 2022	1,176,145	2,307	81	18
New WSSA Backgrounder Clarifies Purpose and Use of Plant-Back Intervals , June 27, 2022	6,636,878	2,486	89	40
Nation's Top Weed Scientists Recognized by Their Colleagues , May 2, 2022	29,500,889	3,322	97	12
WSSA Says There Are Apps That Can Help You Identify Weeds , April 4, 2022	29,440,347	3,500	106	45
WSSA Announces 2022 Awards for Outstanding Achievements in Weed Science , February 23, 2022	29,783,443	2,672	90	52
New Green Herbicide Offers Hope Against a "Heartbreaking" Invasive Weed , February 7, 2022	30,745,691	2,910	118	17
February is National Pesticide Safety Education Month , January 31, 2022	9,248,704	2,466	96	20
Weed Science Societies Announce Further Details on Upcoming Joint Annual Meeting , January 10, 2022	30,987,560	2,854	117	71

What information was posted on the WSSA website?

- Our 12 press releases were posted to the [press section of the WSSA website](#), as well as a backgrounder on [label-mandated plant-back restrictions](#), expanded [careers information](#),

and articles on student winners of [regional weed contests](#) and [enrichment program awards](#).

- **How much funds were requested? How much was spent?**

- Requested: \$18,000
- 2022 Spending: \$14,169

- **What was the impact of the committee activities/accomplishments on the following: membership, publication, policy, legislation, and/or education?**

Our press releases and other outreach initiatives have raised the visibility of WSSA, its members, weed science and weed-related issues among readers of a wide range of industry trades, newspapers and online media. A few examples of our 2022 press coverage are listed below—triggered by our press releases and by the visibility of WSSA and its members:

- **AgFax:** [Need Help Identifying Weeds? There Are Apps for That!](#)
- **Almanac:** [6 Noxious, Destructive, Invasive Weeds—and How to Get Rid of Them!](#)
- **Benzinga:** [New WSSA Backgrounder Clarifies Purpose and Use of Plant-Back Intervals](#)
- **Canada Today:** [Researchers focus on new hydrilla strain thriving in the Connecticut River](#)
- **Crop Life:** [New Technologies and Precision Weed Management Take Center Stage at Upcoming Annual Meetings](#)
- **CT Insider:** [Scientists discover new invasive plant on Connecticut River](#)
- **Elizabethton Star:** [New WSSA Backgrounder Clarifies Purpose and Use of Plant-Back Intervals](#)
- **Farm Table:** [New Technologies and Precision Weed Management Take Center Stage at Upcoming Annual Meetings](#)
- **FarmWeek Now:** [Scientists say diversified weed control critical to pumpkin production](#)
- **Grow:** [EPA Visits MD Farms to Talk Weeds & Pesticide Labels](#)
- **Industry Update:** [Need help identifying weeds? There are applications for this!](#)
- **International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center:** [CIMMYT scientist receives award for weed research](#)
- **LaGrange Daily News:** [Scientists Say Diversified Weed Control is Critical to Pumpkin Production](#)
- **Mississippi State University:** [MSU's Tseng honored by nation's premier weed science association](#)
- **Purdue University Vegetable Crops Hotline:** [Am I Properly Rotating My Herbicides?](#)
- **Rutgers Cooperative Extension Plant & Pest Advisory:** [Herbicide Plant-Back Restrictions Explained: Purpose and Application](#)
- **Seed Today:** [Need Help Identifying Weeds? WSSA Says There Are Apps for That](#)
- **Seed Quest:** [Weed Science Society of America announces 2022 Awards for Outstanding Achievements in Weed Science](#)
- **Seed Quest:** [Weed Science Societies of America announce further details on upcoming Joint Annual Meeting](#)
- **Southeast Farm Press:** [Nation's top weed scientists recognized](#)

- **The Barn's AG News:** [New WSSA Backgrounder Clarifies Purpose and Use of Plant-Back Intervals](#)
 - **The Berkshire Eagle:** [Pull those flowering weeds before they go to seed and overrun your garden!](#)
 - **The Daily Scoop:** [400 Farmers Shared Their Weed Nemesis, Does Yours Match?](#)
 - **The Natchez Democrat:** [New Green Herbicide Offers Hope Against a "Heartbreaking" Invasive Weed](#)
 - **The Oxford Eagle:** [New WSSA Backgrounder Clarifies Purpose and Use of Plant-Back Intervals](#)
 - **The Vicksburg Post:** [Scientists Focus on Weed Control to Support Emerging Hemp Market](#)
 - **UC Weed Science Blog:** [New WSSA Backgrounder Clarifies Purpose and Use of Plant-Back Intervals](#)
 - **United Cooperative:** [The Most Diversified Weed...Waterhemp!](#)
 - **University of Arkansas:** [Crop Science Students Win Weed Science Society Southern Region Title](#)
 - **University of Guelph:** [Peter Sikkema receives the Weed Science Society of America "Fellow" Award](#)
 - **University of Maine News:** [Sonora Ortiz: Using physics to pull weeds](#)
 - **Vegetable Growers News:** [Weed science webinar series offered](#)
- **What is the current state of the committee's projects and activities?**
 - A second press release on 1ST quarter annual meetings is planned for January 2023.
 - We have a variety of other press release ideas in queue on topics that range from water milfoil infestations in Wisconsin lakes to new biocontrols for tree of heaven.
 - We have compiled a list of potentially "evergreen" seasonal press releases previously issued. We are considering a plan to vet these older releases for accuracy and send a note to offer them up again to editors who might have missed them the first time around.
 - **2023 Plan for Committee Activities**
 - Increase public awareness of weeds, their impact and effective management techniques
 - Bring attention to important weed control programs and challenges
 - Raise the visibility of WSSA and the weed science profession
 - Plan of Action:
 - Continue meeting every two weeks by teleconference to plan press releases, fact sheets and other public awareness initiatives.
 - Continue to increase our social media presence.
 - Continue to identify and act on emerging issues.
 - Engage with Herbicide Resistance Education Committee, GROW and with "Take Action" commodity group committees to align messaging related to herbicide resistant weeds.
 - Continue to work with Science Policy and Weed Loss committees to conduct national weed surveys.

- **Recommendations for Board/Society Action:**
 - WSSA will need to select a new Chair for 2024-2026, to replace current Chair Caren Schmidt

- **Funds requested for 2023:**
 - \$18,000 for Public Awareness initiatives
 - Other requests: Currently there are no other requests.