

WSSA 2024 Public Awareness Committee Preliminary Report

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

Committee Chair: Scott (Bart) Clewis, S, WSSA

Committee Members for this year:

- Rebecca Fletcher, WSSA
- Mayank Malik, WSSA
- Dawn Refsell, NC
- Mark Bernards, NC
- Alyssa Eck, AMPS
- Brett Miller, NC
- Nena Rana, NC
- Katelyn Venner, NE
- Thierry Besancon, NE
- Camp Hand, S
- Wykle Green, WSSA
- Theresa Piskáčková, WSSA
- Isabel Schlegel Werle, WSSA student rep
- Navdeep Godara, WSSA student rep
- Ethan Bertholet, CWSS
- Jesse Richardson, WSWS
- Ryan Hamburg, WSSA-GSO
- Jesse Richardson, WSWS
- Lee Van Wychen, Ex Officio (Science Policy)
- Eric Gustafson, Ex Officio (Executive Secretary)
- John Pocock, Ex Officio (Writer)

Board Liaison:

- WSSA President, Greg Dahl

Committee Members Rotating Off:

- Mark Bernards, NC
- Isabel Schlegel Werle, WSSA student rep
- Navdeep Godara, WSSA student rep
- Katelyn Venner, NE

Appropriate Replacements:

- Fritz Koppatschek, NC (2025)
- Isabel's replacement will be named at WSSA
- Navdeep's replacement 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 2024):**

- We created and distributed 27 press releases (5 additional press releases posted directly to WSSA website) that span a wide range of topics of interest to our members, the broader industry and the public. Highlights include meeting updates, student winners of 2024 regional and national weed contests, a release on [Final Herbicide Strategy for Endangered Species Act](#), and the EPA’s Endangered Species Act Training and Webinar. Each was:
 - Distributed online through the [Cision PRWeb](#) distribution service
 - Distributed via Brevo 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 created articles for the WSSA website announcing the 2024 student enrichment program winners.
- We identified a recipient of the WSSA Excellence in Journalism award, to be announced during WSSA’s annual meeting.

Press Releases by the Numbers: 2024*

Headline	Potential Audience	Release Views/Hits	Media Pickups	Engagement Actions (click-through, share)	Multimedia
Research Unveils Genetic Basis for S-Metolachlor Resistance in Waterhemp January 16, 2024	15,740,320	6,104	12	359	202
WSWS Annual Meeting Features Herbicide-Resistant Palmer Amaranth Management and Endangered Species Act Compliance Symposia January 30, 2024	16,041,797	4,013	127	10	120
National Pesticide Safety Education Month Focuses on Resources and Education to Support Safe Pesticide Handling and Use January 31, 2024	16,041,403	11,172	126	233	150
Climate Change to Bring Invasive Weeds to mid-Atlantic and northeastern U.S. States February 9, 2024	16,079,677	21,341	131	15	516
Hydrothermal Model Predicts Russian Thistle Seedling Emergence February 21, 2024	17,408,708	10,613	133	860	356
WSSA Announces Awards for Outstanding Contributions in Weed Science March 12, 2024	3,818,124	9,534	128	179	293
Study Shines Light on Drill-interseeded Cover Crops in Corn March 20, 2024	2,339,834	5,959	124	26	320
International Weed Genomics Consortium Celebrates Three Years of Achievements April 9, 2024	534,322	11,618	11	157	415
Early Weed Control Vital to Crop and Land Management Success April 11, 2024	3,195,116	2,628	132	8	324
WSSA Applauds Endangered Species Herbicide Strategy Update April 25, 2024	1,713,397	3,689	125	20	632
Aquatic Weed Among 'World's Worst' Expands in Northeastern US May 7, 2024	1,776,681	7,153	129	22	185
WSSA Member Scientist Honored as an American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Fellow May 9, 2024	1,730,705	4,582	127	39	350

WSSA Survey Identifies Gap Between Research Priorities and Skillsets May 15, 2024	3,190,791	2,954	134	31	145
Sterile Pollen Technique Shows Promise for Palmer Amaranth Weed Control May 22, 2024	3,221,993	5,535	133	60	227
Diflufenican Proves Promising to Control Herbicide-Resistant Waterhemp June 5, 2024	3,206,734	3,481	132	303	87
Innovative Approach Aims to Control Turf Grass Weeds and Golf Ball Roll June 11, 2024	1,666,866	3,648	124	242	95
WSSA Celebrates Dr. Scott Senseman's Selection as AAAS Fellow June 20, 2024	3,100,984	3,472	127	153	238
WSSA Requests EPA Approval of Drift Reduction Adjuvants for Endangered Species Act Compliance July 30, 2024	2,285,283	2,399	125	22	177
WSSA Member Scientist Receives \$10 million Grant for Climate-Smart Cotton Research September 4, 2024	2,407,937	3,939	130	27	394
WSSA Announces 2024 National Weed Science Contest Award Winners September 10, 2024	2,372,807	4,412	126	8	744
WSSA Commends EPA and its Final Herbicide Strategy for Endangered Species Act Compliance September 12, 2024	2,378,569	2,223	126	9	187
Post-Harvest Weed Control Helps Minimize Spring Weed Emergence October 8, 2024	2,373,516	2,177	125	73	555
Mushroom Production Shows Promise with Invasive-Species Tree Logs October 15, 2024	2,403,375	3,946	131	18	229
GROW Releases New Herbicide Resistance Resource for the Industry October 17, 2024	3,804,817	2,580	133	200	180
WSSA Empowers Endangered Species Act Training and Webinar October 31, 2024	2,402,229	4,253	134	72	670
Weed Scientists to Share New Research Findings at Upcoming Meetings December 6, 2024	3,787,701	4,120	127	281	616
Machine-Vision Technology Shows Promise to Reduce Herbicide Use December 9, 2024	2,341,393	2,951	123	49	328
Total 2024 Press Release Performance (27 Releases)	137,365,079	150,499	3,235	3,476	8,735
	Total Potential Audience	Total Release Views/Hits	Total Media Pickups	Total Engagement Actions	Total Multimedia

*Five additional WSSA press releases were posted in 2024 on the WSSA website but not distributed via PR Newswire (or were distributed with no data collected).

- **What information was posted on the WSSA website?**
 - Our 32 press releases were posted to the [press section of the WSSA website](#), including an article on student winners of enrichment program awards.
- **How much funds were requested? How much was spent?**
 - **Requested:** \$16,000
 - **2024 Non-Journal Expenditures:** \$14,063

- **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.

*There was a change in distribution platform late in 2024 as we were migrated over to PR Newswire from Cision. With this change the pickup data for 2024 reports are not available as they are in the old database of Cision and have not been made available to date.

- **What is the current state of the committee's projects and activities?**

- Current press releases in 2025:

- *Topple Weeds with a PRE-POST Combo – 2/18/25 (WT)*
- *WSSA Celebrates NAICC's Service to Agriculture Award for Bill Chism – 2/4/25*
- *National Pesticide Safety Education Month Spotlights Resources to Support Safe Pesticide Handling and Use – 1/30/25*
- *Study Shows Seed Impact Mills Clobber Waterhemp Seed Viability – 1/21/25 (WS)*
- *US and Canadian Weed Scientists Convene for 2025 Annual Meetings – 1/15/25*
- *Planting Soybean Green Proves Effective for Waterhemp and Palmer Amaranth Suppression – 1/2/25 (WS)*

- A release will be sent out for the Western Society of Weed Science in late February/early March.
- There are several ideas that likely will be rolled out in 2025, such as 2025 worst weed and worst invasive weed, Resistance *Amaranth sp* modelling techniques out of IL, highlight weed science podcast from our members. Continue to update members Endangered Species Act progress.
- Other more distant ideas are in the "parking lot" of each WSSA PAC agenda.
- 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.

- **2025 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 "Take Action" commodity group committees to align messaging related to herbicide resistant weeds.
 - Continue to work with Science Policy and Weed Loss committees to publicize weed survey results as well as highlight weed impacts on crop yields.

- **Recommendations for Board/Society Action:**

- We have several committee members that have not been active this year due to other commitments. Recommend finding replacements that can be more active.

- **Funds requested for 2025:**

- \$16,000 for Public Awareness initiatives
- Other requests: Currently there are no other requests.