

## **WSSA 2023 Yearend Public Awareness Committee Preliminary Report**

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

**Committee Chair:** Caren A. Schmidt, NE

### **Committee Members for this year:**

- Rebecca Fletcher, USDA
- Mayank Malik, NC
- Dawn Refsell, NC
- Mark Bernards, NC
- Alyssa Eck, AMPS
- Nena Rana, NC
- Thierry Besancon, NE
- Camp Hand, S
- Theresa Piskáčková, WSSA
- Pamela Carvalho, WSSA student rep
- Annu Kumari, WSSA student rep
- Wykle Green, WSSA
- Erin Hitchner, NE
- Bart Clewis, S
- Jesse Richardson, WSWS
- Dilshan De Silva Benaragama, CWSS
- Lee Van Wychen Ex Officio (Science Policy)
- Eric Gustafson Ex Officio (Executive Secretary)
- Linda Edgerton Ex Officio (Writer)
- Gil Gullickson Ex Officio (Writer)

### **Board Liaison:**

- WSSA President, Carroll Moseley

### **Committee Members Rotating Off:**

- Caren Schmidt, Chair, NE
- Linda Edgerton, Ex officio
- Gil Gullickson, Ex officio (writer)
- Erin Hitchner, NE
- Dawn Refsell, NC
- Pamela Carvalho-Moore, WSSA student rep
- Annu Kumari, WSSA student rep

### **Appropriate Replacements:**

- Bart Clewis, Chair
- John Pocock, Ex officio (writer)
- Katelyn Venner, NE
- Brett Miller, NC

- Isabel Werle, Graduate Student Representative
- Annu’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 2023):**
  - 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. Highlights include meeting updates, [student winners of 2023 regional and national weed contests](#), a release on a herbicide-resistant survey, and the EPA’s Endangered Species Act review. Each was:
    - Distributed online through the [Cision PRWeb](#) distribution service
    - Distributed via Brevvo 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 2023 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 2023**

HEADLINE	TOTAL POTENTIAL AUDIENCE	RELEASE VIEWS & HITS	ONLINE PICKUP	ENGAGEMENT ACTIONS (click-through, share)
<a href="#">Weed Science Societies Share Information-Packed Agenda for Upcoming Joint Annual Meeting</a> January 9, 2023	32,508,131	3,066	120	114
<a href="#">National Pesticide Safety Education Month Focuses on Resources and Education to Support Safe Pesticide Handling and Use</a> January 31, 2023	7,015,325	3,676	124	1
<a href="#">WSSA Announces 2023 Awards for Outstanding Achievements in Weed Science</a> February 8, 2023	7,124,138	<u>3,259</u>	<u>143</u>	<u>18</u>

HEADLINE	TOTAL POTENTIAL AUDIENCE	RELEASE VIEWS & HITS	ONLINE PICKUP	ENGAGEMENT ACTIONS (click-through, share)
<a href="#">WSSA Encourages Growers to Act Now to Understand the Impact of EPA's Endangered Species Act Compliance Initiatives</a> April 4, 2023	6,571,177	4,159	<u>99</u>	<u>18</u>
<a href="#">Weed Scientists from Across the Nation Recognized by Peers</a> May 1, 2023	7,587,806	2,051	<u>142</u>	<u>7</u>
<a href="#">Survey of Crop Advisors Highlights Barriers to the Effective Management of Herbicide-Resistant Weeds</a> June 29, 2023	24,995,193	1,645	<u>155</u>	<u>14</u>
<a href="#">Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS) will hold its 2023 annual meeting on July 24-27</a> July 10, 2023	25,191,395	2,489	<u>147</u>	<u>20</u>
<a href="#">Why Growers May Lose Herbicide Options Due to EPA's Strategy for Endangered Species Act Compliance</a> September 25, 2023	<u>22,540,787</u>	5,731	154	<u>467</u>
<a href="#">Students Sharpen Skills in National Weed Science Contest</a> October 30, 2023	17,047,154	3,899	<u>133</u>	<u>40</u>
<a href="#">New Technologies including Genetic Tools and Harvest Weed Seed Control Featured at Weed Science Meetings</a> November 13, 2023	16,791,172	5,948	<u>146</u>	<u>275</u>
<a href="#">Famed Texas Photographer and Weed Science Technologies Highlight 2024 Weed Science Society of America/Southern Weed Science Society Meeting</a> December 19, 2023	16,388,152	3,979	<u>152</u>	<u>21</u>
<a href="#">Northeastern Weed Science Society annual meeting to feature communication, harvest weed seed control sessions</a> December 19, 2023	16,276,689	4,056	<u>147</u>	<u>19</u>

## **What information was posted on the WSSA website?**

- Our 12 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:** \$18,000
- **2023 Spending:** \$12,400

### **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 2023 press coverage are listed below– triggered by our press releases and by the visibility of WSSA and its members:

- **AgDaily.** [Celebrating National Pesticide Safety Education Month](#)
- **Ag Net West.** [Growers Encouraged to Prepare for Updated ESA Workplan Impacts](#)
- **AgriLife Today** [What is Weed Science?](#)
- **AgriMarketing.** [Weed Science Societies Announce Agenda for Upcoming Joint Annual Meeting](#)
- **AgriTech Tomorrow:** [New Technologies Including Genetic Tools and Harvest Weed Seed Control Featured at Weed Science Meetings](#)
- **Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.** [Researchers, grad students shine at weed science meetings](#)
- **Cotton Farming** [Heads Up on Endangered Species Act](#)
- **DRG News.** [Survey Highlights Barriers to Effective Herbicide-Resistant Weeds Management](#)
- **DTN/Progressive Farmer.** [EPA's plan to Protect Endangered Species from Herbicides Draws Criticism](#)
- **DTN/Progressive Farmer** [Survey Reveals Barriers to Managing Herbicide Resistance](#)
- **FarmDoc** [Implications of the Endangered Species Act on Pesticide Applications in Illinois](#)
- **Farm Progress** [Weed Science Society honors individuals](#)
- **Floral Daily** [National pesticide safety education month focuses on resources and education to support safe pesticide and use](#)
- **Grow Plant Health Exchange Episode 30:** [How we got here, where we're headed](#)
- **Marketwatch** [Why Growers May Lose Herbicide Options Due to EPA's Strategy for Endangered Species Act Compliance](#)
- **Missouri Ruralist.** [Review your pesticide safety practices](#)
- **Mississippi State University.** [MSU students weed out competition at national and regional competition](#)

- **MMJ Daily.** [National pesticide safety education month focuses on resources and education to support safe pesticide handling and use](#)
  - **Morning AgClips.** [Thierry Besancon Wins 2023 Weed Science Outstanding Educator Award](#)
  - **National Library of Medicine.** [The silver bullet that wasn't: Rapid agronomic weed adaptations to glyphosate in North America](#)
  - **National Library of Medicine.** [Do Traits Travel? Multiple-Herbicide Resistant \*A. tuberculatus\*, an Alien weed species in Israel](#)
  - **New York Times.** [Attack of the Superweeds](#)
  - **Ohio's Country Journal.** [National Pesticide Safety Education Month—Learn and Practice Principles of Safe Pesticide Handling and Use](#)
  - **Purdue University.** [Meyers Receives Young Scientist Award from the North Central Weed Science Society](#)
  - **RealAgriculture** [University of Guelph student winners at national weed science contest](#)
  - **Rutgers University.** [National Pesticide Safety Education Month Focuses on Resources and Education to Support Safe Pesticide Handling and Use](#)
  - **Southeast Farm Press.** [Endangered Species Act isn't going away for agriculture](#)
  - **University of Arkansas.** [U of A Weed Science Team, All Crop Science Team, Wins National Team](#)
  - **University of Illinois.** [Implications of the Endangered Species Act on Pesticide Applications In Illinois](#)
  - **University of Missouri** [Three CAFNR Researchers Honored by WSSA](#)
  - **University of Nebraska.** [North Central Weed Science Society names Knezevic Fellow](#)
  - **University of Nebraska.** [Husker Weed Science Students earn top honors at WSSA competition](#)
- **What is the current state of the committee's projects and activities?**
    - A draft of an innovations release aimed at weed control innovations based on a survey of weed scientists has been drafted and is scheduled to release sometime in Q1 2024.
    - A release will be sent out in late January/early February for the upcoming National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) and the Western Society of Weed Science in late February/early March.
    - There are several ideas that likely will be rolled out in 2024, such as the roll of uncontrolled management of invasive grasses on fueling fires and a common weed name review.
    - 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.
  - **2024 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:**
  - 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 2024:**
  - \$18,000 for Public Awareness initiatives
  - Other requests: Currently there are no other requests.