SSSA President’s Message

Help Us Make the International Year of Soils a Success

Soil scientists have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity ahead. FAO has designated 2015 as The International Year of Soils. Our goal will be to elevate soil science in the public’s consciousness higher than it has ever been. We started this process with Dig It! The Secrets of Soil; continued it with our K-12 endeavors and our 75th anniversary campaign—I ♥ Soil; and will cap it off with activities throughout 2015. During the The International Year of Soils, we will promote our science and all it entails: from feeding, clothing, and sheltering the world to filtering our water and providing the lynchpin to innumerable ecosystems. We will need to expound upon our role in the rural landscape as well as urban environs.

To accomplish this, we are starting the planning and development process now. I will be chairing our outreach efforts and identifying projects over the next 13 months as we prepare to tell the world about the importance and significance of soils. I’ll need all of you to help in order to be successful. We’d like to hear your concepts on how best to reach the policymakers, professionals outside our Society, K-12 students and teachers, and the public in general. If you have ideas, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at david_lindbo@ncsu.edu or check out our web page (www.soils.org/IYS). Think big and think differently! How can we inspire people to not think of soils as dirt?

As The International Year of Soils approaches, we should consider our relationships with our allies in related fields, those with goals we share. In my presidential address in Tampa, I said “I am a soil scientist.” This statement, which applies to each of us, is far reaching, for as soil scientists, we are multidisciplinary. We work in agriculture, crops, plant science, horticulture, ecology, wetlands, geosciences, and biology. We represent the interdisciplinary science that will be honored and elevated in the public’s eye by the International Year of Soils. In the months to come, look for more ways to promote soil science and “I Am a Soil Scientist.” Contact us with your ideas, contribute to our blog (http://soilsmatter.wordpress.com), soil sightings (www.soils.org/discover-soils), and Ask a Soil Scientist (www.soils4teachers.org/ask). We will make The International Year of Soils a huge success with your help.

Finally, as this is my last column as president of SSSA, I want to thank all of you for your confidence in electing me as president of the Society. It’s been a year of progress, but there’s always something for the next president to do! In the coming year, I look forward to supporting Jan Hopmans as president and continuing the work of SSSA. Again, thank you. And remember, say it with pride: “I am a Soil Scientist.”

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