

## Remarks by ASABE President Sonia Maassel Jacobsen

This is the first specialty conference I have attended during my term as President of ASABE. Thank you for inviting me. The topic is of interest to me professionally as well as personally. I commend the conference organizers on a job well done.

Certainly many in this room are aware of the Dust Bowl days of the 1930's in the United States when the drought conditions and strong winds caused the soil to blow all across the plains states. A dust cloud arrived in Washington, DC at the time that Congress was debating soil erosion measures and the creation of the Soil Erosion Service. Hugh Hammond Bennett, the father of soil conservation, used the opportunity to point to the dust cloud out the window, and the problem was quickly recognized and legislation passed.

But erosion control is a global issue, as noted by the participants from many countries present at this conference that are presenting both the challenges and solutions to the movement of soil by wind and water. The conference organizers further recognized that the problem requires an interdisciplinary effort to address the issues. Cooperation and teamwork are critical to address erosion by both wind and water.

Over the 104 year history of ASABE, the Society has recognized the need for erosion control. Many society members have been involved in erosion control efforts. Their work has been lauded with historic landmarks that have been dedicated around the country. In Oklahoma is an ASABE landmark on waterways, which are used to control erosion in agricultural fields. The Universal Soil Loss equation is another historic landmark, as this effort presented a way to quantify and compare erosion rates. The USDA Small Watershed Program had a landmark dedicated just this year. These structures were installed for a variety of purposes including flood control and erosion control.

I am pleased to announce that ASABE has taken over publication of the Soil and Water Conservation Engineering textbook authored by Huffman, Fangmeier, Elliot, Workman, and Schwab. The updated 6<sup>th</sup> edition continues to emphasize engineering design of soil and water conservation practices and their impact on the environment, primarily air and water quality. As in previous editions, the purpose of the book is to provide a professional text for undergraduate and graduate agricultural and biological engineering students and for others interested in soil and water conservation in rural and urban areas. Subject matter includes all engineering phases of soil and water conservation for a one or two semester course. I have a sample copy with me if anyone is interested in perusing it.

A favorite conservationist for me is Theodore Roosevelt. I grew up in western North Dakota and have many memories of family camping trips in both the north and south units of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. One of President Theodore Roosevelt's most lasting and significant contributions to the world was the permanent preservation of some of the most unique natural resources of the United States. According to the National Geographic, the area of the United States placed under public protection by Theodore Roosevelt, as National Parks, National Forests, game and bird preserves, and other federal reservations, comes to a total of approximately 230,000,000 acres or about 84,000 acres per day of his presidential service!

I close with excerpts from Roosevelt's 7<sup>th</sup> annual speech to congress in December 1907, which included these remarks:

The conservation of our natural resources and their proper use constitute the fundamental problem which underlies almost every other problem of our national life.

We are prone to speak of the resources of this country as inexhaustible; this is not so. The mineral wealth of the country, the coal, iron, oil, gas, and the like, does not reproduce itself, and therefore is certain to be exhausted ultimately; and wastefulness in dealing with it today means that our descendants will feel the exhaustion a generation or two before they otherwise would. But there are certain other forms of waste which could be entirely stopped-the waste of soil by washing, for instance, which is among the most dangerous of all wastes now in progress in the United States. This is easily preventable, so that this present enormous loss of fertility is entirely unnecessary.

***There can be no greater issue than that of conservation in this country."***

(Confession of Faith Speech, Progressive National Convention, Chicago, IL, August 6, 1912)

Thank you.