



WEED SCIENCE SOCIETY of AMERICA

RESEARCH - EDUCATION - INNOVATION
FOUNDED 1956

2025/2026 WSSA Committee Report

COMMITTEE: Science Policy E2

Date: January 23, 2026

BOARD LIAISON: Hilary Sandler

Include in Consent Agenda: Yes (no discussion needed, just informational update)

No (items in report require discussion or action)

Name	Term Ending	Role	Region/ Affiliation

1. Janis McFarland	2026	Chair	WSSA
2. Lee Van Wychen		Executive Director Science Policy	WSSA
3. Greg Dahl	2026	Past President	WSSA
4. Hilary Sandler	2027	President	WSSA
5. Ian Burke	2028	President-Elect (Board Liaison)	WSSA
6. Dawn Refsell	2029	Vice President	WSSA
7. Mark VanGessel		EPA Liaison	WSSA
8. Jim Kells/Todd Baughman		NIFA Fellow	WSSA
9. Jill Schroeder		CAST Rep	WSSA
10. Bart Clewis		Public Awareness Chair	WSSA
11. Bill Chism		WSSA Regulatory Consultant	non-voting
12. David Belles		HRAC Committee Chair	WSSA
13. Becca Haynie		CropLife America Science Policy	WSSA
14. Stanley Culpepper		At-Large	WSSA
15. Cameron Douglass		At-Large	WSSA
16. Ray McAllister		At-Large	WSSA
17. Lyn Gettys	2026	President	APMS
18. Rob Richardson		APMS Rep	APMS
19. Mark Bernards	2026	President	NCWSS
20. Erin Burns		NCWSS Rep	NCWSS
21. Thierry Besancon	2026	President	NEWSS
22. Steve Pyle		NEWSS Rep	NEWSS
23. Eric Palmer	2026	President	SWSS
24. Peter Dotray		SWSS Rep	SWSS
25. Carl Coburn	2026	President	WSWS
26. Lisa Rew		WSWS Rep	WSWS
27. Aleah Butler-Jones		Science Policy Fellow	non-voting
28. Cole-Woolard		Science Policy Fellow	non-voting

Reviewed MOP for updates: YES NO

Comments re: MOP:

The Science Policy Committee MOP (4.3) was revised in 2025, with changes approved during the fall board meeting. During the 2026 annual board meeting, the board should discuss the potential addition of a new vice-chair position. At the conclusion of 2026, the process for board endorsement of position letters should be reviewed to assess whether further modifications are warranted.

Committee Actions/Impacts/Activities: (see EDSP reports for additional details)

The WSSA sent letters of support and comments and members participated in multiple meetings with stakeholders to advocate for increased government funding for weed and invasive plant research, education, and extension; as well as support for the agriculture labeling uniformity act; comments on the USDA reorganization plan and USDA's biocontrol and bio-based tools roadmap, the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) report, and others.

Key Successes in the funding areas included increased funds for the US Army Corps of Engineers Aquatic Plant Control Research and Management, as well as restored funding for USDA NIFA capacity programs, Crop Protection and Pest Management, the USDA IR4 Program, and the USGS Ecosystems Mission Area.

Developed a proposal and job description for a new WSSA Regulatory Contractor role and secured board approval. Key objectives included enhancing EPA Herbicide Strategy for Endangered Species Act compliance and standardizing pesticide labels for all registrants. Dr. Bill Chism was hired and has done outstanding work.

<https://wssa.net/endangered-species/>

WSSA advocated for improvements to the government's May 2025 Draft MAHA report and members engaged in stakeholder meetings to address the need for correcting inaccuracies and improving the report. The final report released in September reflected some improvements and acknowledged the EPA as a leader in science-based risk management and recommended increased funding for pest management as well as the initiation of a regenerative agriculture pilot program.

The SPC received the largest number of applicants for 2025 WSSA science policy fellows since the program began. Aleah Butler-Jones and Matthew "Cole" Woolard were selected as the 2025/26 science policy fellows and have been excellent contributors to the committee. The fellows analyzed the [2025 Weed Survey data](#) for common and troublesome weeds in broadleaf crops, fruits and vegetables; helped build a database of Congressional contacts focused on agriculture and agriculture appropriations, reviewed reports and participated in the ESA field tour and in congressional and stakeholder visits on agricultural research funding and other weed science topics,

The SPC collaborated with the Endangered Species Committee and helped facilitate a successful WSSA/NAICC field tour for EPA/USFWS staff focused on ESA-related matters and IPM.

Several congressional and government meetings were held with leadership from WSSA, APMS, and our affiliate membership to discuss priorities important to the WSSA mission. A document developed on [WSSA Policy Priorities](#) focusing on ensuring a safe, secure, and reliable food and fiber supply was shared with congress and other stakeholders and was well received.

Planning and strategic support was provided for the upcoming National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW), February 23 to 26, 2026. <https://naisma.org/programs/nisaw/> -

Science Policy Information Shared with WSSA and affiliate members. The membership of the SPC committee includes leadership from WSSA, APMS, NCWSS, SWSS and WWSW as well as the WSSA liaisons for NIFA, EPA and CAST/Others. Our website <https://wssa.net/society/science-policy/> is updated regularly and provides access to policy updates and letters impacting weed science research funding and regulatory issues (9 letters were endorsed by WSSA in 2025). It also provides access to WSSA newsletter/science policy reports, WSSA Weed Science Research Priority survey results, GAO reports, Farm Bills, and an excel database of key agricultural Congressional contacts. In addition, Dr. Lee Van Wychen our WSSA Executive Director of Science Policy (EDSP), participates in approximately 10 coalitions and federal advisory committees on a regular basis to support and promote initiatives critical to the mission of the Weed Science Societies. Lee submitted 15 newsletter reports to WSSA and affiliates and attended each of their annual meetings, plus additional quarterly or semiannual meetings as requested. Lee also participates in five WSSA committees to share and discuss science policy related information. This includes biweekly meetings of the Public Awareness Committee to discuss messaging and communications to the public and to promote weed science, the Weed Science Societies and members. Lee also spearheads several ongoing communications with key science leaders in the government and with other stakeholder groups.

Five SPC committee meetings took place since the 2025 WSSA annual meeting and meetings had strong participation. Several subgroups of committee members met throughout the year on priority projects.

Stanley Culpepper (Chair) and Cameron Douglass (Vice-Chair, to be defined by new MOPs) were selected to lead the SPC when Janis McFarland ends her term at the February 2026 meeting. Two new Members-at-Large will need to be identified.

2026 Committee Meeting Schedule

February 8, 2026 at noon during the WSSA annual meeting (hybrid option) and 4:00 pm EST meetings scheduled for April 8, May 20, July 22, Sep. 16, and Nov. 18. An in-person meeting is planned for Feb. 8, 2027, at the WSSA annual mtg in CO.

Budget needs: The Science Policy Committee's annual budget allocation is \$6,000. In 2025, we spent approximately \$2,500. The budget supports the EDSP and activities and goals of the SPC.

Areas of improvements/concerns Questions/topics to discuss with Science Advisory Committee prior to finalizing

The SPC would like to improve our information gathering on key science policy priorities at the regional and affiliate level. The SPC would like to request the board champion a project to develop economic data on the agricultural, land management and environmental benefits of weed science research, weed ecosystems and weed management. The SPC will seek input from the board as the committee reviews our coalition and stakeholder partnerships. Should WSSA appoint a liaison with ARS?

Opportunities for future discussion (symposia, speakers, communication, general):

"Regenerative agriculture" and site-specific weed management; Farm Bill 2.0 and impact on WSSA; Precision Ag and emerging technologies for the management of weeds, weeds resistant to herbicides and invasive plants; improving risk and exposure assessments used in Endangered Species Protection, and net conservation benefit processes; progress on Uniform Pesticide Labeling with herbicide examples; impacts of climate changes on weeds and invasive plants.

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General areas for SPC discussion: Improve Weed science research, education, extension and management funding; increase the number of weed science leaders at federal agencies and offices; increase participation of weed scientists on key science advisory boards and committees at the local and national level, facilitate the training of more weed scientists, support the development of economic data on the benefits of weed science research and weed management. Provide weed science expertise and science-based information for regulatory processes on herbicides and biological and biocontrol tools, ESA risk/exposure assessments, ESA net conservation benefits, uniform pesticide labeling and best management practices for agriculture and land management. Goals for 2026 will be discussed at the next SCP meeting on February 9, 2026.

2026 Weed Science Society Meetings

Feb. 9 - 12, 2026 Weed Science Society of America (WSSA), Raleigh, NC www.wssa.net
Mar. 2 - 5, 2026 Western Society of Weed Science (WSWS), Tucson, AZ www.wsweedscience.org
Mar. 8 - 12, 2026 Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS), Nashville, TN www.swss.ws
Jul. 13 - 16, 2026 Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS), Phoenix, AZ www.apms.org
Dec. 7 - 10, 2026 North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS), Columbus, OH www.ncwss.org
Dec. 7 - 10, 2026 Northeastern Weed Science Society (NEWSS), Columbus, OH www.newss.org

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