Science Policy Committee (E2)
Executive Director of Science Policy Report
Lee Van Wychen
WSSA Annual Meeting, Vancouver, BC
February 24-27, 2025

2024 – 2025 Science Policy Committee Members

1.	Janis McFarland	**Chair**	WSSA
2.	Lee Van Wychen	Executive Director Science Policy	WSSA
3.	Carroll Moseley	Past President	WSSA
4.	Greg Dahl	President	WSSA
5.	Hilary Sandler	President-Elect (**Board Liaison**)	WSSA
6.	Ian Burke	Vice President	WSSA
7.	Mark VanGessel	EPA Liaison	WSSA
8.	Jim Kells	NIFA Fellow	WSSA
9.	Jill Schroeder	CAST & PPDC Rep	WSSA
10.	Bart Clewis	Public Awareness Chair	WSSA
11.	Bill Chism	ESA Committee Chair	WSSA
12.	Craig Alford	HRAC Committee Chair	WSSA
13.	David Shaw	At-Large	WSSA
14.	Stanley Culpepper	At-Large	WSSA
15.	Ray McAllister	At-Large	WSSA
16.	Jay Ferrell	President	APMS
17.	Rob Richardson	APMS Rep	APMS
18.	Dawn Refsell	President	NCWSS
19.	Erin Burns	NCWSS Rep	NCWSS
20.	Erin Hitchner	President	NEWSS
21.	Steve Pyle	NEWSS Rep	NEWSS
22.	Todd Baughman	President	SWSS
23.	Peter Dotray	SWSS Rep	SWSS
24.	Tim Prather	President	WSWS
25.	Lisa Rew	WSWS Rep	WSWS
26.	Sarah Chu	Science Policy Fellow	non-voting
27.	Josh Miranda	Science Policy Fellow	non-voting

Member Rotating Off:	**Position**	**Replacement**:
Jay Ferrell	APMS President	Jeremy Slade
Dawn Refsell	NCWSS President	Mark Bernards
Erin Hitchner	NEWSS President	Thierry Besancon
Todd Baughman	SWSS President	Eric Palmer
Tim Prather	WSWS President	Carl Coburn
Carroll Moseley	WSSA President rotation	Dawn Refsell
Sarah Chu	Science Policy Fellow	TBD
Josh Miranda	Science Policy Fellow	TBD

Science Policy Fellows

Greg Dahl, Janis McFarland and I reviewed and selected two Science Policy Fellows for 2024-2025. **Sarah Chu** is a third year Ph.D. student at Texas A&M studying under the direction of Dr. Muthu Bagavathinnian. **Joshua Miranda** is a second-year Ph.D. student at Oregon State University, pursuing his doctorate degree with Dr. Marcelo Moretti.

- Sarah and Josh will provide oral reports at both the WSSA BOD meeting and the Science Policy Committee meeting. Key activities during their fellowship included attending the EPA and FWS tour on Endangered Species Issues in WI during Sep. 3-5 and travel to DC during Nov. 19-21 to conduct Congressional Visits and meetings with other NGO's.
- Sarah and Josh are also giving a PowerPoint presentation on their experiences during the Student Enrichment Experience section as well as presenting a poster on the 2024 weed survey results in aquatic and non-crop areas.
- The application deadline for 2025-2026 Science Policy Fellows was Feb. 22, 2025. This was earlier than normal because the applicants will need to be able to attend the North American Invasive Species Forum (NAISF) in Washington DC during May 12-15, 2025

Newsletter Reports and Washington Updates Submitted:

WSSA- 4; APMS- 2; NCWSS- 3; NEWSS- 3; SWSS- 3; and WSWS- 3

Weed Science Related Conferences and Meetings Attended (virtually or in-person):

- WSSA- San Antonio, TX
- APMS- St. Petersburg, FL
- NCWSS- Kansas City, DC
- NEWSS- Boston, MA
- SWSS- San Antonio, TX
- WSWS- Denver, CO
- IR-4 Global Minor Use Summit- Madrid, Spain
- Pesticide Policy Coalition: 2 in-person, 3 virtual
- ESA Tour in WI from Sep. 3-5 with top ranking EPA and FWS staff.
- AFRI coalition - 4 virtual
- Friends of ARS - 2 virtual
- IR-4 Gov't Affairs - 4 virtual
- AAPCO/SFIREG – 1 in-person in DC
- PPDC – 2 virtual
- NCFAR- 5 virtual; 1 in-person in DC
- FICMNEW – 2 virtual
- NAISMA Legislative Com. – 2 virtual
- ISAC/NISC – 1 virtual (Jacob Barney)

WSSA Committee Work

I continue to work with numerous WSSA committees on various weed science policy issues. This includes:

- **Public Awareness Committee:** advised, reviewed and edited 32 weed science related press releases. Attended 18 meetings. Helped identify "Excellence in Journalism Award" nominee

- **Standardized Plant Names Committee:** Continue to update WSSA's composite list of weeds as well as syncing with the USDA Plants Database, which is maintained by USDA-NRCS. Delays in updating software platforms at NRCS have hampered efforts to launch their new website and update the USDA Plant Database, ie. *Amaranthus palmeri* still has a common name of

"carelessweed". With over 1,500 NRCS positions recently terminated, delays are possible.

- **Research Priorities Committee**: Continue to disseminate and highlight the 2023 weed research priorities survey (*Weed Sci*. 71: 330–343.). The committee is currently focusing their work on designing potential strategies to incorporate AI and robotics into weed research. Discussion around education status and perspectives, and funding needs.

- **Website Committee**- Continue work to update and refresh the WSSA science policy website with both regulatory and research issues as well as newsletter reports: https://wssa.net/society/science-policy/ I also work to update and maintain the common and troublesome weed survey webpage: https://wssa.net/weed/surveys/

- **Invasive Plants Committee:** Advocating and planning for NISAW issues. Maintaining a strong presence in the invasive plant community and promoting the Invasive Plant Science and Management journal. This committee has struggled this past year as everyone is stretched to the limit on work responsibilities.
    - The WSWS has revitalized their Invasive Species committee recently under Tim Prather's guidance and I would suggest that WSSA incorporate as many WSWS invasive plants experts as needed since a majority of the 500 million acres of federally owned land under BLM, Forest Service, National Park Service, and FWS are in the WSWS region.

- **Endangered Species Act Committee:** Helping assimilate and circulate information on how the Endangered Species Act (ESA) will impact weed management in agriculture and the environment. Worked with Bill Chism, Stanley Culpepper and the entire committee to write and review ESA educational info for EPA's Herbicide Strategy. Helped organize a tour for senior EPA and FWS staff, in conjunction with the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC), that reviewed ESA issues and EPA's Herbicide Strategy.

- **Herbicide Resistance Education**- oversight on how we can advocate for Federal public policy that will reduce herbicide resistance but keep a level economic playing field. Many thanks to Jill Schroeder for her leadership on this large and active committee.

Weed Science Presidents Travel to DC to Promote Ag Research Funding

During the week of May 6 – 9, 2024, five weed science society presidents visited Washington DC to advocate for federal agriculture research funding. They also attended the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR) annual meeting, which provided a great overview of federal agriculture spending and priorities. We also heard from the main House and Senate Ag Committee staff working on the Research Title in the Farm Bill. This included:

- **Brandon Honeycutt** with Senate Ag Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow
- **Jeremy Witte**, with Senate Ag Committee Ranking Member John Boozman
- **Ricki Schroeder**, with House Ag Committee Chairman G.T. Thompson (he is now Chief of Staff for the new USDA-REE Under Secretary)
- **Emily Pliscott**, with House Ag Committee Ranking Member Austin Scott

Weed Science Society Presidents visit to Washington DC in May 2024.

From L to R: **Lee Van Wychen**, Executive Director of Science Policy; **Dawn Refsell**, NCWSS President; **Todd Baughman**, SWSS President; **Tim Prather**, WSWS President; **Greg Dahl**, WSSA President; and **Erin Hitchner**, NEWSS President

We visited 25 Congressional offices. Our top priority issues were:

1. Support the USDA NIFA Crop Protection and Pest Management (CPPM) program at $21 million in FY 2025. The President's Budget Request for FY 2025 slashed this program by 85% to $3 million. The CPPM was funded at $21 million in both FY 2023 and FY 2024. The CPPM tackles real world weed, insect, and disease problems with applied solutions through the concepts of integrated pest management (IPM). The CPPM funds Extension IPM personnel as well as a competitive IPM grants program.

2. Support the USDA NIFA IR-4 Project funding at $25 million in FY 2025. The IR-4 Project was funded at $15 million in FY 2024. The President's Budget Request for FY 2025 is $15 million. The IR-4 Project conducts research and develops the data needed to facilitate the registration of crop protection products, including reduced risk and bio-based pesticides, for fruits and vegetables, as well as herbs, spices, ornamental plants and other horticultural crops. The IR-4 Project provides an incredible return on investment as it contributes $8.97 billion to the annual U.S. GDP. (A return of almost $600 for every $1 spent).

Other issues discussed included:

- Support $8 billion in **mandatory** agricultural research funding in the next Farm Bill. U.S ag research funding peaked in 2002 and has declined by 1/3 since then, hitting the lowest levels since 1970. While U.S. investments decline, China's funding for ag research has grown to more than $10 billion – **double of what the U.S. currently spends**. Current U.S. federal ag research funding is just under $5 billion and most of that is discretionary funding that relies

on year-to-year appropriations from Congress.

- Support infrastructure funding for land grant universities. There is estimated to be about a $11 billion backlog in aging and dilapidated ag research buildings and facilities. USDA currently has about $1 million for a competitively awarded infrastructure improvement program called the Research Facilities Act Program (RFAP). In the Farm Bill drafts from last year, we were happy to see that both the House and Senate had suggested **$2.5 billion** in mandatory funding the RFAP. However, that was in the 118th Congress. It remains to be seen how a new Farm Bill will be drafted in the 119th Congress.

Overall, the Congressional visits were very successful. The House and Senate Ag Appropriations Committee restored the USDA NIFA CPPM program funding to $21 million for FY 2025. For the IR-4 Project, the House Ag Appropriations Committee provided a $750,000 increase for FY 2025 to $15.75M. However, there is uncertainty as the FY 2025 appropriations bills are still being deliberated.

The Weed Science Society Presidents also met with several other agricultural groups, including the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC) and the National Farmers Union (NFU). One of the outcomes of those meetings was a tour for EPA and FWS to review Endangered Species Act issues in Wisconsin. The tour was co-sponsored by WSSA and NAICC and was held during September 3-5.

We discussed mitigations for endangered species like the Massasauga Rattlesnake and the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, observed the unique challenges posed by WI's Central Sands hydrology and irrigated potato production, and viewed IPM practices being used in cranberry production. Finally, the group toured the Winfield United Innovation Center in River Falls, WI to view the latest research in spray drift reduction technologies.

<u>118th Congress Punts Farm Bill and Government Funding Decisions into 2025.</u>

- The House Ag Committee passed their Farm Bill draft on May 24, 2024. Senate Ag did not release their draft of the Farm Bill until November 19, 2024, almost two weeks after the elections.
- The 2023 Farm Bill extension had expired on Sep. 30, 2024
- On December 21, 2024 the House (366-34 vote) and Senate (85-11 vote) passed a continuing resolution (CR) extending FY 2024 government funding levels to March 14, 2025. The CR also contained language that authorized a one-year farm bill extension to Sep. 30, 2025 and provided emergency funds for farm and disaster aid.
- If Congress can't pass the FY 2025 appropriations bill by March 14, there will likely be a CR for the rest of the year, which mandates a 1% cut across the board for all programs.
- The FY 2026 appropriations process will begin after March 14, 2025. I plan to submit appropriations requests for a number of USDA NIFA programs (IR-4, CPPM, Hatch Act, Smith-Lever b&c) as well as ARS and FFAR. Please let me know if you have any questions.

House and Senate Leadership: 119th Congress

Below are House and Senate leaders as well as chairs and ranking members of key authorizing and appropriations committees that affect weed science.

House Leadership	Senate Leadership
Mike Johnson (R-LA), Speaker of the House	John Thune (R-SD), Majority Leader
Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), Minority Leader	Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Minority Leader
House Appropriations (full committee)	**Senate Appropriations (full committee)**
Tom Cole (R-OK), Chair	Susan Collins (R-ME), Chair
Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Ranking member	Patty Murray (D-WA), Ranking member
House Agriculture Appropriations	**Senate Agriculture Appropriations**
Andy Harris (R-MD), Chair	John Hoeven (R-ND), Chair
Sanford Bishop (D-GA), Ranking member	Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) Ranking member
House Agriculture Committee	**Senate Agriculture Committee**
G.T. Thompson (R-PA), Chair	John Boozman (R-AR), Chair
Angie Craig (D-MN), Ranking member	Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Ranking member
House Interior & Enviro Appropriations	**Senate Interior & Enviro Appropriations**
Mike Simpson (R-ID), Chair	Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Chair
Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Ranking Member	Jeff Merkley (D-OR) Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee	**Senate Energy & Natural Resources Com.**
Bruce Westerman (R-AR), Chair	Mike Lee (R-UT), Chair
Jared Huffman (D-CA), Ranking Member	Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Ranking Member
House Energy & Water Appropriations	**Senate Energy & Water Appropriations**
Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN) Chair	John N. Kennedy (R-LA), Chair
Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) Ranking Member	Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) Ranking Member
House Transportation & Infrastructure	**Senate Environment & Public Works**
Sam Graves (R-MO) Chair	Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Chair
Rick Larsen (D-WA) Ranking Member	Sheldon Whitehouse(R-RI), Ranking Memb.

WRDA 2024 Signed Into Law on Jan. 4, 2025

The bipartisan Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) was signed into law on January 4, 2025, a month after the leaders of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee announced a final agreement on December 3, 2024. Congress has passed WRDA legislation on a biennial basis since 2014. WRDA 2024 maintains the regular consideration of this infrastructure legislation, and it provides Congress the opportunity for input into the projects undertaken by the U.S Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE).

Section 104 of the River and Harbor Act of 1958 (33 U.S.C. 610) directs the Secretary of the Army to enter into partnerships with applicable States and other Federal agencies to carry out actions to prevent the introduction of, control, or eradicate, to the maximum extent practicable, invasive species that adversely impact water quantity, water quality, or ecosystems in the Platte River Basin, the Upper Colorado River Basin, the Upper Snake River Basin, the Lake Erie Basin, the Ohio River Basin, and the Upper Missouri River Basin. The Secretary of the Army shall give priority to projects that are intended to control or eradicate Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*), or saltcedar (of the genus *Tamarix*).

WRDA 2024 added the Connecticut River Basin to that list of priority areas to carry out actions to prevent the introduction of, control, and eradication of hydrilla.

GLRI Funding Bill S.528 Reintroduced in 119th Congress

On February 11, Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), Todd Young (R-IN) and Elissa Slotkin (D-MI) reintroduced bipartisan legislation, S.528, that increases authorized funding from $475 million to $500 million between FY 2026-2031 for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The GLRI is a collaborative effort on behalf of the EPA and 15 other federal agencies to address the most significant environmental concerns of the region. More than 180 non-native species are considered established in the Great Lakes. Every dollar spent under the GLRI is projected to generate more than three dollars in additional economic activity. The GLRI focuses on projects in the following focus areas:

- Toxic Substances and Areas of Concern
- Invasive Species
- Nonpoint Source Pollution Impacts on Nearshore Health
- Habitats and Species
- Foundations for Future Restoration Actions

WSSA Endangered Species Act Committee

- EPA released its "final" Herbicide Strategy Aug. 20. https://downloads.regulations.gov/EPA-HQ-OPP-2023-0365-1137/content.pdf
- Draft Insecticide Strategy released July 25. https://www.regulations.gov/docket/EPA-HQ-OPP-2024-0299/document The final insecticide strategy, by court order, must be completed by March
- The spray drift and runoff/erosion mitigation strategies for herbicides and insecticides share significant similarities
- The WSSA ESA committee continues to expand and widen its representation across disciplines. I want to recognize these committee members for their excellent work.
  - Bill Chism, chair
  - Stanley Culpepper, UGA
  - Lee Van Wychen, WSSA
  - Cameron Douglass, USDA OPMP
  - Leah Duzy, CSI
  - Taylor Randell-Singleton, UGA
  - Aaron Hager, U of Illinois
  - Brad Hanson, UC-Davis
  - Carroll Moseley, Syngenta
  - Mark VanGessel, U of Delaware
  - Nicole Zinn, EPA OPP
  - Emily Unglesbee, GROW
  - Frank Wong, American Phytopath (APS)
  - Tom Anderson, Entomological Society
  - Sarah Chu, Grad Student Rep, TX A&M
  - Daewon Koo, Grad Student Rep, VA Tech

- A special thanks to **Bill Chism** for his outstanding work and leadership on behalf of the committee. Bill received the NAICC's "Service to Agriculture Award" for his ESA work
- WSSA website for ESA resources: https://wssa.net/endangered-species/

Weed Science Societies Support the Use of DRAs for ESA Mitigations

The six National and Regional Weed Science Societies sent a letter to EPA supporting the addition of Drift Reduction Adjuvants (DRAs) to the list of mitigation options available to pesticide users for Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance. EPA's Draft Herbicide Strategy did not initially include DRAs as a tool to reduce spray drift. Growers are already using DRAs on over 100 million acres every year.

After reviewing the information and data, EPA has included some mitigation options for DRAs in their Final Herbicide Strategy in terms of percent reduction of buffer distances for spray drift. The DRA letter is at: https://wssa.net/2024/07/national-and-regional-weed-science-societies-support-drift-reduction-adjuvants-dras-as-mitigation-options-for-endangered-species-act-esa-compliance/

EPA Pesticide Label Reform

EPA is working to adopt digital pesticide labels that will make labeling information clearer, more consistent, and more accessible to users. EPA's plan for digital labels covers the creation of both a structured label—which would provide a framework for consistently placing and ordering label information—and a digital label, which would organize the label information as electronic data. Drs. Stanley Culpepper and Bill Chism have been leading this effort with advice and support from a distinguished group of Extension Weed Scientists.

That group has developed a standardized label format to provide a consistent organization to labels, a table of contents, and concise information in standardized boxes (tables) instead of describing key information in the middle of a paragraph. With the support of Adama and the EPA Herbicide Branch, Stanley and Bill helped design the first pesticide label using this new format. However, because of the current Administration transition, the EPA has not released the new label allowing the WSSA to describe this major label improvement. This effort will also help electronic labels because a uniform format will be necessary to present information in this kind of system.

Currently, the pesticide product label registration process is mostly manual, with EPA staff reading through long, detailed label submissions to pull out specific information, like application rate, to enter into the EPA's Pesticide Product and Label System.

This has led to time-consuming reviews and high cost to registrants and regulators. Further, the increasing complexity of pesticide labels and lack of standardized label format and language can create challenges for pesticide users and the public seeking information about which products to use and how to use them, not to mention the upcoming changes required by EPA's Herbicide Strategy for ESA mitigation.

EPA Increases Atrazine CE-LOC From 3.4 to 9.7 µg/L. Seeks Comments by April 4, 2025

On July 7, 2024, the EPA updated the level at which atrazine is expected to adversely affect aquatic plants, concentration equivalent level of concern (CE-LOC), from 3.4 to 9.7 µg/L. The revised atrazine concentration of 9.7 µg/L was derived following an August 2023 FIFRA Science Advisory Panel (SAP) peer review. Many thanks go to Aaron Hager, Jay Ferrell, John Madsen and Kurt Getsinger for their service on the 2023 FIFRA SAP.

On December 3, 2024, EPA announced the availability of and is requesting comment on its proposed updates to the mitigation in the interim registration review decision for atrazine (Case Number 0062). The updated mitigation proposal for atrazine reflected in the memo being released for comment incorporates the revised level of concern of 9.7 µg/L as well as corrections to exposure modeling and feedback received during the 2022 public comment period. EPA is releasing its updated mitigation proposal to reduce run-off/erosion, which will expand the number of options of mitigation measures growers can choose to implement to reduce potential exposure and risk to aquatic plant communities from atrazine runoff in vulnerable watersheds. The proposal includes placing mitigations on the product labeling, directing users to EPA's mitigation menu website and Bulletins Live Two system. EPA is not soliciting comment on any other aspects of the atrazine interim registration review decision.

The Updated Mitigation Proposal for Atrazine, along with all atrazine registration review documents, are available at: https://www.regulations.gov/docket/EPA-HQ-OPP-2013-0266/document Comments are **due by April 4, 2025**.

FWS Proposes That Monarch Butterfly Be Listed as "Threatened" Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published a 12-month finding on the endangered species listing status of the monarch butterfly as "threatened" on December 12, 2024. The USFWS is seeking public input on a proposal under section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Comments are **due March 12, 2025**. https://www.regulations.gov/document/FWS-R3-ES-2024-0137-0001 The USFWS will then evaluate the comments and any additional information on the species and determine whether to list the monarch butterfly.

With monarchs being listed as "**threatened**" (as compared to "endangered"), the USFWS can issue a more flexible 4(d) rule, including special rules to tailor protections to the specific needs of the threatened species. Based on public comments received, a 4(d) rule can modify or exempt certain species protections to balance conservation efforts with economic impacts. It allows flexibility to incentivize positive conservation actions. For example:

- Balance agricultural productivity with conservation efforts.
    - Farmers depend on herbicides to control weeds that can severely reduce crop yields, threaten food security, and impact the economy.
    - By permitting herbicide use, this will support the agricultural sector while still implementing measures to safeguard monarch populations.

- Integrated pest management (IPM) practices.

    - Allowing pesticide use under the 4(d) rule can encourage farmers to adopt more sustainable and targeted approaches.
    - For example, applying pesticides during times when monarchs are less active, or utilizing precision application technologies can have positive impacts.
- Collaboration between stakeholders.
    - The flexibility of the 4(d) rule can facilitate partnerships between farmers and other stakeholders.
    - Cooperative approaches can lead to innovative strategies that might not emerge under stricter regulations.

If USFWS does list the monarch butterfly as a threatened species, the EPA must include it within its standard process for pesticide label registrations, treating it with the same consideration as other protected species. Potential impacts to pesticide labels will probably be seen starting in **2026** as new and previously registered active ingredients undergo review.

Drift mitigation will be a primary tool to help ensure that aerial and ground pesticide applications minimize effects to monarch butterflies. Drift mitigation measures already required on pesticide labels will minimize the risk of potential insecticide exposure to monarch butterflies, while herbicide drift reduction will minimize the impact on milkweed patches and other nectar plants that are important monarch habitat.

The USFWS is also proposing critical habitat for the **western migratory monarch** at a portion of its overwintering sites in California. In total, the USFWS is proposing 4,395 acres of critical habitat for the following seven California counties that border the Pacific Ocean between Los Angeles and San Francisco: Alameda, Marin, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz and Ventura counties. A critical habitat designation does not impose requirements on state or private land, **unless** the action involves federal funding, permits or approvals.

WSSA EPA Liaison: Mark VanGessel

- First new registration under EPA's Herbicide Strategy- glufosinate-P
- First new re-registrations coming under EPA's Herbicide Strategy- metribuzin, oxyfluorfen, (eventually atrazine)
- Larry Steckel gave a seminar to EPA about herbicide resistance in Palmer amaranth.

WSSA NIFA Fellow: Jim Kells

- Todd Baughman, Texas A&M, approved by WSSA BOD as next NIFA Fellow
- Todd will start as NIFA Fellow after his service on NIFA review panel.
- Jim will overlap with Todd for 1 year to help transition.

USDA-ARS NP 304 Stakeholder Review

In March 2024, USDA-ARS held a stakeholder meeting to review their National Program 304 (NP-304) and layout research priorities for 2025-2030. The NP-304 covers research for systematics, weeds, insects, and post-harvest pest management. Many thanks to those who

could attend and represent weed science interests: Ian Burke, Carroll Moseley, John Byrd, Bill Chism, Jim Anderson, Dave Horvath, and Emily Unglesbee. A special thanks goes to ARS scientists Steve Young and Steve Mirsky for presentations on weed science issues during the review.

The 2025-2030 strategic plan was released on July 27, 2024. Overall, the plan reflects well on the priorities and challenges we face in weed science: ……***ARS will leverage recent advances in robotics and machine learning, genome sequencing, gene editing, crowdsourcing and information analysis, biochemistry, plant physiology and development, and population genetics to develop novel, affordable, safe, and effective weed control strategies, and to anticipate and prevent the introduction and spread of weeds***.

The question is if ARS will provide enough resources to meet those challenges. My Science Policy Fellows have drafted a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture and Congress discussing the importance of funding for federal research for weed management. We heard from at least four major commodity groups (cotton, soybean, sorghum, sugarbeets) during the stakeholder meeting that weed management and herbicide resistance issues are at the top of their list for the biggest challenges faced by their growers. USDA and Congress need to hear about those challenges.

BLM Receives a Final Record of Decision for Seven Herbicides

The National and Regional Weed Science Societies worked with the Department of the Interior (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) over the past several years to get approval on final programmatic environmental impact statements (PEIS) for the use of the following seven herbicide active ingredients on federal BLM land:

1) aminocyclopyrachlor
2) clethodim
3) fluazifop-p-butyl
4) flumioxazin
5) imazamox
6) indaziflam
7) oryzalin

On July 8, 2024, a final Record of Decision was signed and a Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register. The Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments for these active ingredients were previously completed by the U.S. Forest Service and the BLM has adopted these assessments.

NISAW is February 24 – 28, 2025.

WSSA once again is a proud sponsor of NISAW this year. Unfortunately, NISAW overlaps directly with the WSSA annual meeting this week. NISAW has always been held the week after President's Day when Congress returns from its one-week break. This is the first time in 26 years that the WSSA meeting and NISAW have overlapped.

There are 10 invasive species webinars scheduled during NISAW 2025. For more information and to register for the webinars, please visit: https://naisma.org/programs/nisaw/

Annual Survey of the Most Common and Troublesome Weeds

- The 2024 data for common and troublesome weeds in **Aquatic and Non-Crop Areas** has been compiled and summarized. The 2024 survey, as well as all the weed surveys going back to 2015 are available at https://wssa.net/weed/surveys/
- **The 2025 survey** will focus on common and troublesome weeds in **broadleaf crops, fruits & vegetables (and hemp)**.
- I have started work with Sarah Ward on **publishing an open-access paper in *Weed Sci*** that will summarize the past 10 years of weed survey results. Each of the categories: 1) broadleaf crops, fruits and vegetables; 2) grass crops, pasture and turf; and 3) aquatic and non-crop areas now have 4 complete years of survey results. https://wssa.net/weed/surveys/

2024-2025 Proposed Committee Activities

1. Promote and advocate funding for weeds & invasive plant programs in FY 2025 & FY 2026
    a. Increase IR-4 funding to $16 million and CPPM funding to $22 million
    b. Maintain capacity funding levels for Hatch Act at $265 million and Smith Lever b&c at $325 million
    c. Maintain USDA-ARS and AFRI funding at FY 2025 levels
    d. Maintain funding for DOI programs that support invasive weed research, prevention and management within BLM, USGS, NPS, FWS and USFS.
    e. Support cost share funding for the Army Corp of Engineers Aquatic Plant Control Research Program
    f. Support passage of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). S.528 and investigate the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act (HABHRCA) of 2025, introduced by Sen. Sullivan (R-AK) and Reps. Joyce (R-OH) and Bonamici (D-OR).

2. Implement the proposal for Weed Science Society Growth.
    a. Advertise, interview, and hire a:
        i. WSSA Regulatory Consultant
    b. Continue to investigate a Professional Development and Membership Contractor.

3. Monitor and provide input to improve EPA's Herbicide Strategy for ESA mitigations.

4. Conduct and report the results of the 2025 National Weed Survey for the Most Common and Troublesome weeds. The 2025 survey will focus on weeds in broadleaf crops, fruits and vegetables.
    a. Finish open-access *Weed Science* publication that summarizes weed survey data from 2015 to 2024.

5. Hire and conduct a training program for two Science Policy Fellows

6. Work to identify and support a new USDA-ARS National Program Leader for Weed Science.

7. Work with WSSA-EPA Liaison on herbicide stewardship and other FIFRA regulatory issues.

8. Work with WSSA-NIFA Fellow to promote weed science research and funding.

9. Monitor and provide input to the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR).

10. Support 2025 National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) and strategize for 2026. Investigate the possibility for a national invasive species prevention and management fund.

11. Continue work with the WSSA Standardized Plants Name Committee to sync USDA Plants Database with WSSA Composite List of Weeds.

12. Sell Weed Bingo. (Handed out 18 games to Congressional offices in 2024).

Funds Requested for 2025

- The Science Policy Committee's (SPC) annual budget allocation is **$6,000.**

- **$20,000 plus up to $10,000 in travel** for a WSSA Regulatory Consultant.

- WSSA is sponsoring NISAW at **$2500** as a "Gold Partner" for 2025. https://naisma.org/get-involved/partnership/. This is the same amount WSSA approved last year for NISAW.

- Open Access publishing fees, **$TBD**, for a *Weed Sci* paper summarizing the past 10 years of the Most Common and Troublesome Weeds Survey results.

2025-2026 Weed Science Society Meetings

Feb. 24 - 27, 2025 Weed Science Society of America (WSSA), Vancouver, BC www.wssa.net
Mar 10-13, 2025 Western Society of Weed Science (WSWS), Seattle, WA www.wsweedscience.org
Jul. 14 - 17, 2025 Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS), Providence, RI www.apms.org
Dec 15-18, 2025 North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS), Grand Rapids, MI www.ncwss.org
Jan. 5 - 9, 2026 Northeastern Weed Science Society (NEWSS), Hershey, PA www.newss.org
Jan. 26 - 29, 2026 Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS), Nashville, TN www.swss.ws