

Diversity in Conservation

PEOPLE • CROPS • TECHNOLOGY

ARKANSAS

17th CONSERVATION IN ACTION TOUR • JUNE 10-11, 2024



Thanks!

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WHOSE GENEROSITY AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT
HAVE MADE THIS TOUR—AND ALL OUR
PROGRAMMING—POSSIBLE.

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DIAMOND LEVEL



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GOLD LEVEL



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North Dakota Natural Resources Trust

Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts

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PLEASE SHARE YOUR TOUR EXPERIENCES AND TAG US!



#ConservationInAction

AGENDA



Monday, June 10

B.B. KING'S BLUES CLUB, BEALE STREET, MEMPHIS

5:00 PM

COCKTAIL HOUR & LIVE MUSIC

6:00 PM

DINNER & PROGRAM

- **ADAM HERGES**
CTIC Board Chair
The Mosaic Company, Ruby Sponsor
 - **ZACH HARTMAN**
Ducks Unlimited, Ruby Sponsor
 - **CAYDEE SAVINELLI**
Syngenta, Ruby Sponsor
 - **CAROLYN JONES**
Chief Executive Officer
Mississippi Minority Farmers Alliance
-

8:00 - 9:00 PM

OPEN BAR & LIVE MUSIC

Tuesday, June 11

7:00 AM

REGISTRATION

Welding Shop, Hyatt Centric Hotel Memphis
Coffee bar provided

7:30 AM

BUS DEPARTS

8:20 AM

ELLIS BELL FARM

Forrest City, AR
Breakfast Refreshments Available

- **WELCOME TO ARKANSAS**
Mike Sullivan
Arkansas State Conservationist, NRCS
Angela Biggs
Deputy Chief Management & Strategy, NRCS Washington D.C.
- **"ELLIS BELL FARM HISTORY AND CONSERVATION PORTFOLIO"** by Ellis Bell
- **"SHI AND THE U.S. REGENERATIVE COTTON FUND'S WORK IN ARKANSAS"** by Emily Ball,
Soil Health Educator with Soil Health Institute
- **"NAVIGATING SUSTAINABILITY AS FARMERS' TRUSTED BUSINESS PARTNER"** by Shelby Myers,
Sustainability Advisor, Farm Credit Mid-America

AGENDA CONT'D

Tuesday, June 11 (continued)

10:45 AM

SCOTT MATTHEWS FARM

Weiner, AR

- **"A DEEP LOOK AT SMART IRRIGATION RICE SYSTEMS"** by Scott Matthews
 - **"SOIL HEALTH CHALLENGES & SUCCESSES IN ARKANSAS"** by Brad & Joyce Doyle
2024 Conservation Legacy Award Winners
 - **"WATER MANAGEMENT SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY"**
Dr. Michele Reba, Research Hydrologist, USDA ARS
Dr. Joe Massey, Research Agronomist, USDA ARS
Jeff Fore, Director of Agriculture, Arkansas Chapter of
The Nature Conservancy
-

12:30 PM

LUNCH Sponsored by Farm Credit Mid-America

- **SPECIAL SPEAKER:** Wes Ward
Secretary of Agriculture Arkansas
 - **FARMER PANEL: "A DEEP DIVE INTO CONVERSATION AGRICULTURE"**
moderated by Debbie Moreland
Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
Featuring: **Clay Smith, Roger Smith, Laurie Isley**
-

2:20 PM

HOLHOUSE FARM SHOP/ SENTER FARMS

Osceola, AR

- **"AG TECH & SUSTAINABILITY"** by Travis Senter & Chase Chafin
 - **"CONSERVATION PROGRAMS FROM A FARMER'S PERSPECTIVE"** by Ryan Sullivan
-

5:00 – 7:00 PM

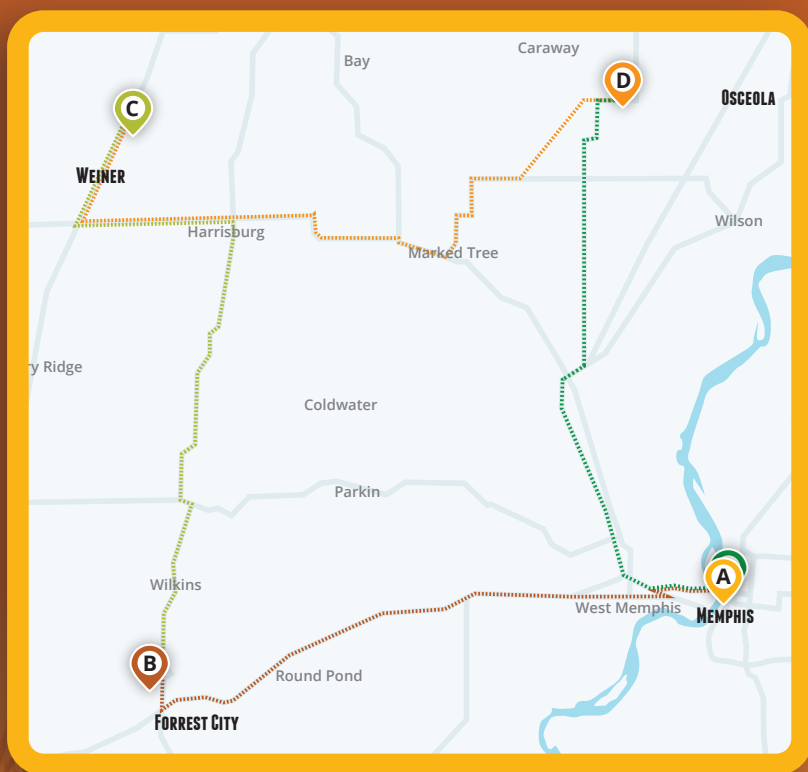
AFTER TOUR SOCIAL AT ROOFTOP LOUNGE

at Hyatt Centric Memphis

Appetizers and open bar available

- **"TOUR REFLECTIONS & LEARNINGS"** by Martie Templeton, Manager Sustainable Ag U.S. East Region, Nutrien Ag Solutions
- **REGROW & CTIC MOU SIGNING**
- **CTIC HALL OF FAME AWARD PRESENTATION**
- **2025 TOUR ANNOUNCEMENT**

Route MAP



HYATT CENTRIC HOTEL
33 Beale St, Memphis, TN



ELLIS BELL FARM
1008 SFC 227 Forrest City, AR



SCOTT MATTHEWS FARM
9852 Senteney Road, Weiner, AR



HOLTHOUSE FARM SHOP
3706 W State Hwy 140 Osceola AR



HYATT CENTRIC HOTEL
33 Beale St, Memphis, TN

Welcome

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF THE CTIC BOARD

As Chair of the CTIC Board, I am thrilled to extend a warm welcome to each of you as we gather for the 17th annual CTIC Conservation in Action Tour. Thank you for joining us on this remarkable journey.

This year, our focus is on diversity in conservation—an essential and timely topic as we strive to ensure inclusivity and representation in our efforts to safeguard our natural resources. From engaging with diverse farming communities to new technologies and approaches, diversity will be at the forefront of our discussions throughout the tour.

Reflecting on our journey thus far, we celebrate not only the remarkable milestone of our 17th annual tour but also the profound impact CTIC has had over the years. From our humble beginnings, advocating for no-till practices, to our current position as a leading voice in conservation farming, our commitment to innovation and progress has remained unwavering.

As we gather in Arkansas, surrounded by the breathtaking beauty of its agricultural landscape, we are reminded of the significance of our mission—to promote conservation practices that enhance soil health, water quality, and economic prosperity for all. Together, we will explore the rich diversity of conservation efforts taking root in this region and beyond, as we seek to inspire positive change and foster a more inclusive future for conservation.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the CTIC staff and the dedicated members of the tour planning committee for their tireless dedication in organizing this exceptional program. Their passion and hard work have made this tour possible, and I am deeply grateful for their contributions.

Thank you once again for joining us on this journey of exploration and discovery. Together, let us embrace the diversity of perspectives, ideas, and experiences that enrich our collective efforts in conservation.

Warm regards,

Adam Herges
THE MOSAIC COMPANY
CTIC Board Chair



WELCOME FROM THE CTIC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the 17th annual CTIC Conservation in Action Tour in Arkansas! We're thrilled to have you join us as we embark on an enlightening journey through the diverse landscapes of the Natural State, celebrating diversity in conservation across people, crops, and technology.

Arkansas's farmers are leading the charge in embracing diversity in conservation practices, from innovative crop rotations to cutting-edge technology adoption. Throughout the tour, we'll have the privilege of exploring how these practices contribute to both environmental sustainability and economic prosperity.

As we traverse the fields and farms of Arkansas, we'll meet the diverse individuals who are driving change in the agricultural industry. We'll hear their stories and learn from their experiences, gaining valuable insights into the rich tapestry of perspectives that make up the conservation community.

We'll also have the opportunity to discover the incredible diversity of crops grown in Arkansas, from rice, cotton and soybeans to specialty crops and beyond. Each crop tells a unique story of adaptation and resilience, highlighting the importance of biodiversity in ensuring the long-term health of our ecosystems.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our sponsors and host farmers for their generous support, which has made this tour possible. Their commitment to promoting conservation is truly commendable, and we are honored to have them as partners in our mission. From providing financial support to offering invaluable expertise, their contributions have been instrumental in shaping the success of this tour.

So, let's come together, celebrate diversity, and explore the many ways in which conservation is shaping the future of agriculture in Arkansas and beyond. Here's to an inspiring and memorable tour!

Ryan Heiniger,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CTIC





Monday Night **DINNER & PROGRAM**

Join us at B.B King's Blues Club on Beale St. for a night to remember! A live band and an exciting lineup of speakers will make this a can't miss event!

Don't miss the chance to catch up with old friends, and to meet new ones, at an event that is sure to once again be a highlight of the summer season.

We'll also take the time to thank a few very special people. First, we are very grateful to the farmers we will visit on the tour, as well as the presenters who will share their insights.

A very special thank-you goes out to our 2024 Conservation in Action Tour Planning Committee, led by Kellis Moss of Ducks Unlimited and Heidi Peterson of the Sand County Foundation.

SPEAKERS:

Adam Herges **THE MOSAIC COMPANY**

Adam Herges is Sustainability Agronomist Advisor, Corporate Public Affairs at The Mosaic Company, the world's leading producer of phosphate and potash fertilizers. Adam leads Mosaic's North American 4R Nutrient Stewardship strategic partnerships, as well as provides technical agronomy expertise on key issues related to sustainable agriculture production, carbon, and water quality.



Prior to joining Mosaic in 2015, Adam was Director of Research and Market Development at South Dakota Soybean Research and Promotion Council in Sioux Falls. Earlier in his career, Adam worked in a variety of roles with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and The University of Minnesota.

DINNER & PROGRAM *Continued*



Zach Hartman **DUCKS UNLIMITED**



Zach Hartman currently serves as the Chief Policy Officer of Ducks Unlimited. In this role, Zach leads DU's team of policy volunteers and professionals across the United States in advancing critical policy matters impacting waterfowl and wetlands conservation. Prio to joining DU, Zach served as the Director of Federal Affairs for Anheuser-Busch Companies, a leading agribusiness end user of several commodities. While at A-B, Zach served as the lead several issues but was particularly focused on building strong relationships between A-B and its producers and enhancing sustainability in A-B's supply chain. While working on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., he served as the Senior Legislative Assistant to United States Senator John Boozman (AR). Zach served in Boozman's personal office and was his lead liaison to the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Caydee Savinelli **SYNGENTA**

Caydee Savinelli is the Syngenta U.S. Stewardship Team and Pollinator Lead. In this role, she leads a team with goals of advocating, educating, and collaborating for stewardship of Syngenta products in order to provide American farmers a variety of tools. The team provides catalyst for change through Sustainable and Responsible Business and Good Growth Plan initiatives. Some of the main areas of the stewardship team's focus are environmental issues, endangered species, pesticide safety education and pollinator and biodiversity conservation initiatives.

Caydee has focused on pest management, product development and crop protection throughout her 37-year career and has worked in the U.S., Europe and Latin America. Caydee holds a Ph.D. in Entomology with a minor in Crop Science from North Carolina State University, a M.S. in Entomology from The Pennsylvania State University and a B.A. in Biology from Gettysburg College. Caydee's interest in agriculture and entomology started in childhood during the time spent at her grandfather's orange grove in Florida.



DINNER & PROGRAM *Continued*

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: _____

Carolyn Jones **MISSISSIPPI MINORITY FARMERS ALLIANCE**

Carolyn Jones is the Chief Executive Officer of Mississippi Minority Farmers Alliance, (MMFA). A community based non-profit organization established by a group of Black farmers who saw a need within their community to come together to preserve their community and legacy of the Black farmer.

Carolyn currently works with new and beginning farmers, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, veteran farmers and ranchers and local communities on issues of sustainability & diversification; environmentally friendly farming; land retention; succession planning/heirs' property management; financial management; marketing and community growth and development.

She and her husband (Chris) are veterans farmers and have been engaged in farming since 1976. They currently operate a 200-acre beef cattle ranch in Northeast Mississippi.

In her work with MMFA she has been very vocal and outspoken in her quest to ensure that Black farmers and their communities have the same opportunities as other farmers and their communities. She has served on various committees advocating for equity and inclusion for Black farmers.

Under Carolyn's leadership in December 2016 MMFA opened the North Mississippi Agri-Business Center, commonly referred to as "The Market." The Market is centrally located at the crossroads of three (3) counties in Northeast Mississippi. The center serves as a community hub for local farmers and other community members. It also serves as an agricultural training center and demonstration farm. During the summer months the center serves as a farmers' market, providing local farmers and growers a place to sell their produce. The uniqueness of the center is that it embodies the "Whole Community" by providing Community Membership, Community Respect, Community Fulfillment and Community Pride.





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America's farmers.**

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ELLIS BELL FARM

FORREST CITY, AR

Ellis Bell's love for farming traces back to his earliest memories. As a fourth-generation farmer, he proudly oversees an Arkansas Century Farm established in 1878 in Forrest City, Arkansas, a legacy passed down from his great-great grandfather, a Civil War veteran.

After graduating high school in 1956, Bell intended to return to the family farm. However, fate led him to St. Louis, where he spent 13 years as an aircraft mechanic. Later, he transitioned to the insurance industry, building a successful brokerage business while still maintaining his ties to farming, often assisting on weekends.

In 1971, when his father retired, Bell faced a pivotal decision. Opting to return to farming full-time, he streamlined his commute by purchasing an airplane for travel between St. Louis and Forrest City. Driven by his passion for agriculture and a desire to support minority youth, Bell founded FARMY, later renamed Bell's Agriscience, to promote agricultural education and resources. In 1990, he was formally recognized as a farmer by the county where his farm resides.

Today, Ellis Bell Farm spans approximately 570 acres, a testament to Bell's enduring dedication to the land and his community.



SCOTT MATTHEW'S FARM *WEINER, AR*

Scott Matthews, a farmer based in Weiner, AR, has been at the forefront of innovative farming practices for decades. Operating the Matthews Farm Partnership, he oversees the cultivation of 1,400 acres of rice and soybeans in a meticulous one-in, one-out rotation.

Matthews' journey into no-till farming began in 1984, driven by a desire for efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Despite the lack of available technology, he pioneered a makeshift no-till drill, enabling the transition to a no-till system. His forward-thinking approach pushed traditional planting boundaries, leading to earlier planting dates for rice, which were unconventional at the time.

Despite challenges such as adverse weather and water scarcity, Matthews remains adaptable, implementing precision management strategies to maintain crop yields and promote sustainability. Beyond farming, he actively supports wildlife habitat on his land. With his innovative methods and commitment to sustainability, Matthews continues to lead the way in modern agriculture, setting a precedent for efficiency and environmental stewardship in farming practices.



Tuesday
LUNCH

SPECIAL SPEAKER:

Wes Ward **SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR ARKANSAS**

Wes Ward is serving as the 3rd Secretary of Agriculture for the State of Arkansas. He was first appointed to the position in 2015 by Governor Asa Hutchinson and reappointed in 2023 by Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Wes is from the small town of Lake City in Northeast Arkansas and is a graduate of Riverside High School. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Business with an emphasis in Agricultural Finance from Arkansas State University. Wes has also earned a law degree (JD), a Master of Laws degree (LL.M.) in Agricultural and Food Law, and a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Arkansas.



Wes has been serving in the United States Marine Corps for over 23 years and has completed deployments and exercises in Afghanistan, Jordan, and Japan. He is currently serving in the Marine Corps Reserves as a Detachment Commander with the 1st Civil Affairs Group in Camp Pendleton, California.

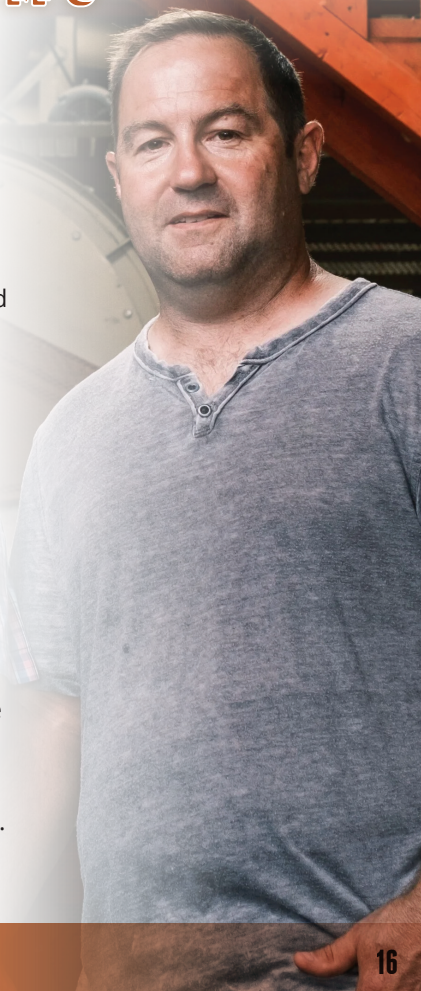




HOLTHOUSE SHOP/ SENER FARM

OSCEOLA, AR

For years, the Senter and Holthouse families worked neighboring lands, initially in competition. In 2011, they shifted to collaboration, pooling resources. Seeking innovation, they turned to the USA Rice-Ducks Unlimited Rice Stewardship Program (Rice Stewardship), enhancing efficiency and water management. Utilizing surface water for irrigation, they prioritize sustainability, benefitting both operations and the environment. Their commitment to stewardship ensures a brighter future for farming and wildlife alike. They farm almost 4,500 acres together. They both plant cotton, corn, soybeans, and rice. Together, they have just more than 1 million bushels of on-farm grain storage capacity. The Senter farm includes a small cotton gin.



Tuesday Night ROOFTOP SOCIAL

Join us for an unforgettable Tuesday night social on the stunning rooftop of the Hyatt Centric! Enjoy breathtaking city views as you mingle under the stars with fellow attendees. With inspiring speakers sharing their insights and a special CTIC Hall of Fame induction ceremony, this is an evening you won't want to miss. Come for the connections, stay for the celebration – see you on the rooftop!

SPEAKERS:

Martie Templeton **NUTRIEN AG SOLUTIONS**

With over twenty years of previous experience in agriculture, Martie began his career in 2014, with Nutrien, as a legacy crop consultant with Crop Production Services in the TN/Western KY Division. He has brought “boots-on-the-ground” experience from ag retail to Nutrien’s Sustainable Ag Field Team since 2020. He continues his work with growers and crop consultants focused on soil health and sustainability as Nutrien Ag Solutions’ U.S. East Region Manager for Sustainable Ag. In his spare time, Martie continues his involvement with row crop agriculture and the family farm, Ward Farms LLC, in Clinton, KY, where he resides with his wife, Erica, and their three sons, Will (23), Micah (18) and Mac (10). He holds a B.S. from Murray State University with an Area in Occupational Safety and Health.



Special Event – **REGROW & CTIC MOU SIGNING**

Following the 17th annual CTIC Conservation In Action tour, Regrow Ag and CTIC will announce a renewed partnership to utilize satellite-based data for reporting climate-smart agricultural practices. Over nearly 15 years ago, Regrow and CTIC, along with The Nature Conservancy, developed OpTIS, tracking such practices using remote sensing data, supporting Regrow’s Agriculture Resilience Platform. OpTIS data feeds into Regrow’s DNDC model, estimating greenhouse gas emissions and reductions. CTIC sees this partnership as crucial for addressing conservation agriculture challenges and promoting environmentally beneficial farming. Together, they aim to secure funding for annual OpTIS updates, recently released for 2015-2021, and raise \$3 million for six years of development. This collaboration seeks to advance climate-smart farming and facilitate increased adoption through government, private sector, and academia engagement.

Tuesday Night
ROOFTOP SOCIAL



HALL *of* FAME

Dr. Linda Prokopy **PURDUE UNIVERSITY**

Dr. Linda Prokopy is Professor and Department Head in the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture at Purdue University. Dr. Prokopy is an interdisciplinary social scientist who is recognized nationally and internationally for her work incorporating social science into the fields of agricultural conservation, agricultural adaptation to climate change, and watershed management. Dr. Prokopy has published over 140 peer-reviewed articles in consistently high-tier journals, she has delivered over 100 invited presentations to diverse audiences about pathways to increase adoption of conservation practices, she has generated over \$33 million in competitive research funds, and she has graduated and mentored numerous graduate students and postdocs. She is currently the Project Director for a \$10 million Sustainable Agriculture Systems grant from USDA-NIFA, entitled Diverse Corn Belt, that is focused on diversifying the agricultural landscape of the Midwestern U.S.



Unearthing the Power of Regenerative Agriculture

The Nature Conservancy 

nature.org/glagriculture

It's time to go from demo sites to broad scale adoption of regenerative practices like cover crops and edge of field practices.

Getting there will take the power of collaboration. The Nature Conservancy is mobilizing people and organizations from across the supply chain—from farmers who work the soil to agricultural businesses and innovators that influence farming approaches on the ground.

Join the partnership. Connect with TNC to advance regenerative agriculture.





CTIC PROJECTS

CTIC is engaged in a wide range of projects, carrying out its mission to bring people together around the subject of conservation agriculture, provide information on sustainable agriculture systems and climate-smart approaches to farming, and champion conservation to a wide range of stakeholders.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE LATEST HIGHLIGHTS:

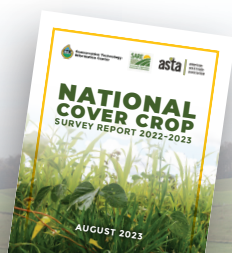


CTIC is a partner in **Farmers for Soil Health** in South Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin along with the South Dakota Soybean Association, Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, and Wisconsin Soybean Association. CTIC is helping the American Soybean Association, United Soybean Board, National Corn Growers Association, National Pork Board, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and other stakeholders scale up cover crop adoption by 2030. We are engaged in technology transfer and communications in those three key states, and have brought on 3 soil health specialists to lead the charge. Thanks to a generous grant from General Mills, cover crop coaches are now available through the Cover Crop Coach program to help farmers navigate the complexities of cover crop selection, planting, and management, tailoring solutions to each farmer's specific needs and circumstances. This new program aims to further support farmers across Minnesota, Wisconsin, and South Dakota as part of the Farmers for Soil Health program.

The Conservation Technology Information Center, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, Houston Engineering, USDA Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities and OpenTEAM, is leading the development of a new online tool, **the Connector**. The Connector will allow producers and landowners to find programs and service providers who can help plan, implement, and verify voluntary conservation and climate-smart ag practices. Additional Connector capabilities, including the ability to automatically tap MMRV resources, are planned as later phases of the overall OpenTEAM project.

Once again, CTIC has teamed up with USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program and the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) to gather perspectives on cover crops. This year the survey will focus on perspectives from trusted advisors across the country. Those trusted advisors include CCAs, non-profit staff, extension, SWCD/NRCS staff, seed dealers and more. Be on the lookout for the survey which will be released after July 4, 2024.

Previous **SARE/CTIC/ASTA Cover Crop Survey Reports** have been cited in research around the world and presented in Congressional testimony. [Click here](#) to see previous reports.





CTIC PROJECTS

Algorithm upgrades, and new data have honed the **Operational Tillage Information System (OptIS)**, which analyzes publicly available data to track tillage practices and cover crop adoption across millions of acres of cropland and rangeland from 2005 through 2021. The recent webinar **found here** (<https://ctic.org/OptIS>) delves into OptIS upgrades and innovative uses of the data. Explore the versatile (and fun!) **OptIS visualization tool** free on the CTIC website, and watch as the data now covers all 48 continuous states.



CTIC is among more than 30 partners in the **Diverse Corn Belt (DCB) Project**, a multi-disciplinary effort funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture through an Agriculture and Food Research Initiative competitive grant. The goal is to explore the opportunities and challenges of diversifying Midwest agriculture at the farm, market, and landscape levels. Research—ranging from focus groups and farmer surveys to interviews with food processors and retailers, modeling environmental and economic outcomes, gathering extensive on-farm data, and developing educational modules—is now underway, and CTIC is helping spread the word as a key player in the communications effort.

In addition to exercising our expertise at spreading messages outward, CTIC is also looking inward as we develop our new **Strategic Plan**. Underwritten by generous funding from the Walton Family Foundation and facilitated by The Support Center for Nonprofit Management, the strategic planning process is tapping into perspectives of board members, partners, staff, friends, and colleagues to assess the conservation agriculture landscape and chart a course to CTIC's future within it.





BOARD *of* DIRECTORS

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The Mosaic Company

TREASURER: *Kellis Moss*
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

PAST CHAIR: *Mark Schmitt*
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Kellie Bray
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International Certified Crop
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National Association of
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Rachel Ort
National Corn Growers
Association

Martie Templeton
Nutrien Ag Solutions

Heidi Peterson
Sand County Foundation

Mary Sutton Carruthers
Syngenta Crop Protection, LLC

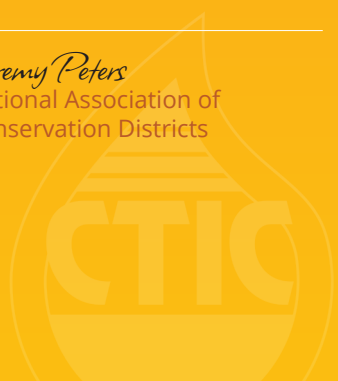
Leanna Nigon
The Fertilizer Institute

Mary Fales
The Nature Conservancy

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Ryan Heiniger
Conservation Technology
Information Center

Jeremy Peters
National Association of
Conservation Districts





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Crystal Hatfield
Operations Director

Sue Tull
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Catie Geib
Soil Health Specialist

Dan Cottman
Soil Health Specialist

Julia Gerlach
Soil Health Specialist

Dave Gustafson
Project Director

Steve Werblow
Communications



JOIN CTIC

The Conservation Technology Information Center brings together people from across agriculture and other stakeholder communities like no other organization, creating a focal point for advancing agricultural systems that are both environmentally and economically sustainable.

As a member of CTIC, you'll be connected to a world of people from government, academia, the nonprofit sector, agribusiness, the agriculture and food supply chain, and the farm who are deeply committed to practical, productive conservation farming systems.

Spot the trends, get hands-on in our projects and programs, learn from many of the top experts on conservation farming. stay connected, and keep the conversation going. Join us and help CTIC continue more than four decades as a trusted source of information on conservation farming practices.

A suite of membership levels provides opportunities for individuals, organizations, and companies to get involved. [Click here](#) to download more details on how you can join CTIC.

***DON'T FORGET TO SHARE YOUR PERSPECTIVE
THROUGHOUT THE TOUR AND TAG US!***

