

NORTH CENTRAL WEED SCIENCE SOCIETY: THE PATH TO OUR 60TH CONFERENCE.

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Our 2005 meeting in Kansas City, MO marks the 60th time we have gathered as a society to ponder those plants we call weeds. The reason this is our 60th meeting while the Society is 62 years old (created in 1944 in Omaha, NE) is that in the 1960s we met biennially with the WSSA on two occasions, thus creating the two-year gap in our age and number of meetings. The biennial meetings with the WSSA were deemed unwise by the NCWCC board of directors and we have met annually ever since 1966.

The founding state members of the NCWCC were Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Several Canadian provinces joined later and today Ontario remains as one of the 17 active state/province members of the Society. Interestingly, Colorado and Wyoming were represented at the 1944 meeting but did not become official members until 1991. Ninety-one people attended the very first meeting in Omaha. Attendance swelled to 629 in 1947 and the highest attendance ever for the Society of 841 occurred in St. Louis in 1985. Four cities have hosted the conference of the Society six times: Kansas City, Milwaukee, St. Paul and St. Louis. Missouri is the state that has hosted the most meeting: six each in Kansas City and St. Louis, which represents 20% of our conferences. We have met in Winnipeg, Canada four times.

The histories of the WSSA and the NCWSS are closely linked as the First National Weed Control Conference was held in conjunction with the 10th meeting of the North Central Weed Control Conference in 1953, interestingly also in Kansas City, MO. Three years later (1956) Weed Society of America was created. The WSA evolved into the WSSA and that society is celebrating its golden anniversary in 2006 in New York City where its first meeting was held in 1956.

Remarkably, the objectives of the Society have changed little in 60 years. A primary focus was and is “to facilitate the exchange of ideas, experience, opinions, and information.” To that end the NCWSS has a long history of publishing the proceedings of our annual gatherings (annually as volume 60 will appear in 2005). Our Research Reports were published yearly even when the Society did not meet annually in the 1960s as the 2005 Reports will be volume 62, the same as the Society’s age. Major events in the life of the North Central Weed Science Society to support the professional training of students include creating contests for written essays (1955), oral presentations (1972), summer field events (1981) and poster presentations (1984). A history of the summer contests is found in our 2004 Proceedings. The name changed from the North Central Weed Control Conference to the current name in 1988.

The history of the Society from 1944 through 1988 is summarized in the book “The North Central Weed Control Conference: Origins and Evolution” by Robert Andersen published in 1988 to commemorate the name change of our Society. This book is still available from our headquarters office. In it you will find answers to these questions: Who is considered the “Father of the NCWCC?” When did the NCWCC first meet in Canada? If 2,4-D was the “star herbicide” of the 1940s, what weed “caused” the NCWCC to come into existence? What city and state have hosted the most NCWSS annual meetings? Who was the last NCWCC president? Who was the first NCWSS president? In what years did the NCWCC meet every other year? Who was the first Honorary member of the NCWCC? Who was the first woman honored as a NCWSS Fellow?