

## **It happens in year 30 of WASWAC**

### **—Message from 3 Presidents**

Samran Sombatpanit, Miodrag Zlatic, and Li Rui

*(Past President, Immediate Past President, and President of WASWAC)*

It is normal for an association to issue publications, for they serve as the means for communication among members, as well as between members and the association. Certainly, publications may range from a few pages of a newsletter to some kind of bulletin or magazine with lots of news concerning the subjects of interest. The most desired form of publication that an association would like to do, though not always realized, is a scientific journal. However, to publish a journal is not a simple matter; many factors that point to the success or failure of such an enterprise abound.

The World Association of Soil and Water Conservation (originally WASWC and renamed WASWAC in 2010) was established in August 1983, with the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) accepting to take care of its day-to-day work at its headquarters at Ankeny, Iowa State, U. S. A. The late Bill Moldenhauer was the main driving force in getting the idea of the association accepted and in implementing the initial stages. After that, the association was run by a president for a period of three years but Bill was always involved as a member of the council. Presidents from the beginning of the association have been as follows: (the late) Norman W. Hudson, Rattan Lal, Hans Hurni, David W. Sanders, Samran Sombatpanit, Martin J. Haigh, Miodrag Zlatic and Li Rui.

The association issued the quarterly WASWC Newsletter from the beginning, with four pages at first and later expanded to eight pages. Besides that, whenever there was a conference that WASWC was involved in, there would be one proceedings published as a technical publication. This started in 1988 and continued until 2007, with as many as 19 proceedings produced. In addition, the association has started a series of self-published special publications that are available at no cost or at affordable prices from 2003 until now; so far there are eight of them.

A major change in publication issuance occurred at the turn of the new millennium. After the digital technology became widespread for more than one decade, the WASWC Council in 2001 (advocated strongly by Immediate Past President Hans Hurni) agreed it was time to change from paper newsletter, sent by post, to digital newsletter, sent by e-mail. The first ever digital issue of WASWC Newsletter was produced in the autumn of 2001 by Dr. Michael Zoebisch, Deputy President, and gained more popularity with time. The digital newsletter was, however, made available to members who had internet connection while they also received the paper version. Sending both versions to members continued for a 3-year council period, 2002 – 2004, and the digital form has been the only available version from 2005 until now.

In 2006, it was felt that there had been many soil and water conservation activities going on in the world and it was hard for a quarterly newsletter to cope with them efficiently. WASWC HOT NEWS therefore got started in that year but was available irregularly. However, it has become a monthly publication that advertises conferences, publications, exhibitions, study tours, scholarships, awards, etc. from the year 2007 until now, with the first author as the Editor, and then the editorship changed hands to Dr. Du Pengfei, secretary of the WASWAC Secretariat, from July 2012 until the present.

Departure of such urgent news from the mainstream publication left the items like conference reports, features, implemented projects and other items to remain in the WASWC Newsletter. The year 2010 saw two major changes: first of all, the abbreviation of the association's name was changed from WASWC to WASWAC from a deliberation in the autumn of 2009; secondly, it was felt that the quarterly publications should contain matters of a more technical nature. This has resulted in the name being changed from WASWC Newsletter to WASWAC Bulletin. Dr. S. S. Kukal of Punjab Agricultural University in India has graciously volunteered to be the Editor-in-Chief of the WASWAC Bulletin since the change of the publication's name which he produces three times a year.

It had been a rather firm belief of the WASWC Council from the beginning that the association as such would not be able to produce a publication of the "journal" type and quality. However, the idea of producing a journal incubated well in the first few years of this millennium. The idea got crystallized in 2006 when Dr. John Laflen, a councilor/treasurer, agreed to lead the Journal of the WASWC as the Editor-in-Chief, and got assistance from several people. John ran it for four years, i. e. 2006 – 2009, parallel with the Proceedings of the WASWC, which published articles of descriptive types (i. e. reports and assessment), until it was disbanded. Several dozens of articles

were published within that 4-year period. Lack of interest from members to publish articles with us (because our journal was not registered and did not have any impact factor) was possibly the main cause of its termination.

Concerning the implementation of the existing journal, the WASWAC Secretariat, since acquiring the office at the building of the International Research and Training Center on Erosion and Sedimentation (IRTCES) in Beijing in 2010, together with the staff have worked hard to get the approval from the government authorities for WASWAC to publish the journal entitled, The Journal of International Soil and Water Conservation Research (ISWCR). Permission was eventually granted, thus prompting the Secretariat to work very hard to get things on schedule. The issue of ISWCR in your hand is the testimony of the hard work by all persons involved, and we are very grateful to them.

This is certainly the initial stage of the journal, which we expect will serve the association and all the members for a long time. The Editorial Board of the journal, comprising most councilors and members of WASWAC and presently under the direction of the third author, Prof. Li Rui, will have to work hard to make the journal useful for every purpose, with a sound understanding that the Board needs to keep a high technical and editorial standard to attain a satisfactory impact factor within a reasonable time frame in order to become eventually accepted by academics and professionals in these fields.

The result of all this hard work is that up to now WASWAC has been able to complete various publications in order to serve members and non-members from all over the world. They are: (1) Monthly WASWAC HOT NEWS for urgent news about conservation of soil and water resources to be sent to members by e-mail, (2) Thrice-a-year WASWAC Bulletin for technical matters, also to be sent by e-mail, and (3) WASWAC's official quarterly Journal of International Soil and Water Conservation Research (ISWCR) for publishing scientific papers of high quality, to be available both in print and online. The Staff of the WASWAC Secretariat and the Editorial Board will use every effort to make these publications available to members in practical ways, whereby rendering the WASWAC to be an association that supports people and organizations that want to effectively manage and conserve natural resources worldwide.

We congratulate and encourage the staff of the WASWAC Secretariat and the Editorial Board for the challenging and tedious attempt for years to come, so that the journal will reach its accomplishment and can thus represent our association, which has been running without a proper journal for already 30 years. We wish them well and we will offer them every support possible to help the journal and all the other works of the association to reach their goals smoothly and effectively.

As mentioned in the title, this official journal appears only when our association has reached its 30<sup>th</sup> year.