



Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

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OSCIA Annual General Meeting Minutes - Draft Tuesday, February 8, 2022 Held virtually over Zoom webinar

Session I – Business of the Association

The 2022 OSCIA annual meeting was held over Zoom Webinar due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and is broken down into four two-hour sessions. The first Zoom session focused on OSCIA business.

Welcome and opening remarks

- The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Mr. Francis Drouin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

President's report

- Chad Anderson welcomed everyone to our second virtual annual general meeting and provided his 2021 President report, with mention that the full report, can be found on the OSCIA website.
- Most impressed with how OSCIA pivoted throughout the various challenges of COVID-19. On the program delivery front OSCIA never skipped a beat and continues to be an effective delivery agent for partners.
- ONFARM and Living Lab Ontario has raised our associations profile and our proficiency has helped bring the need to build soil health resiliency into sharp focus.

Executive Director's report

- Andrew Graham, Executive Director, provided his report, which can also be found on the OSCIA website.
- COVID-19 has certainly provided its challenges but has also resulted in opportunities for innovation and efficiencies. The staff continue to rise to the occasion and 2021 was no different.
- OSCIA's four core values, as determined by OSCIA employees in 2021: Embrace Innovation and Growth, Empower Our People, Foster sustainability, and Communicate Effectively.

Approval of 2021 OSCIA annual meeting minutes

Motion #1 – Moved by Peter McLaren (Lanark), seconded by Michel Champagne (East Nipissing/Parry Sound), the minutes of the 2021 OSCIA Annual Meeting be approved as presented. **Carried**

Presentation and Approval of 2021 Audited Financial Statement and Appointment of Auditors for 2022

- Murray Short, a Chartered Accountant with RLB presented highlights of the audited financial statements for the 2021 fiscal year. The financial statements are a fair representation of OSCIA's financial position. OSCIA maintains its records and controls adequately and is financially viable to deliver all projects and programs.
- Chad Anderson wished to remind the membership that the OSCIA Executive and Financial Visioning committee have been looking into cost saving and additional revenue sources since 2019, in order to put OSCIA in a better financial position moving forward.

Motion #2 – Moved by Sandra Vos (Brant), seconded by Kristen Carberry (Dufferin), the audited financial statements for the year ending September 30, 2021, be approved as presented. **Carried**

Motion #3 – Moved by Greg Wilson (Oxford), seconded by Nathan Saarloos (Elgin) to appoint the firm of RLB LLP as auditors for the fiscal year of October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022. **Carried**

2022 Honourary President

- Warren Schneckenburger, in-coming President introduced the 2022 Honourary President, Gilles Quesnel
- Gilles is an independent agronomist in eastern Ontario. Gilles retired in 2015 from OMAFRA Field Crop Team, where he was the Field Crop Integrated Pest Management Program Lead.
- Gilles works closely with local SCIA's to improve agricultural productivity, reduce costs, and minimize environmental impact. He believes strongly in the value of well-designed on-farm trials to validate new technologies.

Ratification of the Board of Directors

- Steve Sickle presented the 2022 slate of Directors, each elected in their respective region, for ratification by the delegates.

The 2022 Provincial Directors are:

East Central	Brady Jones	Northwestern Ontario.....	Stefan Szeder
Eastern Valley.....	VACANT	Ottawa-Rideau	Eleanor Renaud
Georgian Central	Andy van Niekerk	Quinte	Gord Speksnijder
Golden Horseshoe.....	Steve Sickle	St. Clair	Chad Quinlan
Heartland	John Poel	Thames Valley	Phil Oegema
Northeastern Ontario	Birgit Martin		

Motion #4 – Moved by Henry Posthumus (Frontenac), seconded by Allan Mol (Thunder Bay) that the 2022 slate of Directors has been ratified. **Carried**

Slate of Executive Board

- Steve Sickle presented the 2022 slate of the Executive Committee.

The 2022 OSCIA Executive consists of:

Immediate Past President.....	Chad Anderson	Honourary President.....	Gilles Quesnel
2022 President.....	Warren Schneckenburger	Executive Director.....	Andrew Graham
1 st Vice President.....	Steve Sickle	OMAFRA Ex-officio.....	Deanna Nemeth
2 nd Vice President	Phil Oegema	U of G Ex-officio.....	Dr. Robert Corry
3 rd Vice President	Eleanor Renaud		

2020 OSCIA OAC Graduate Scholarship winner presentation

- Jacob Coppolino provided a pre-recorded presentation on his research which focused on seasonal phosphorus cycling in a riparian wetland, under his advisor, Dr. Susan Glasauer.
- Interested if phosphorus mobilization increases because of freeze-thaw cycles within riparian buffer zones.

OSCIA Website update

- Baylee Rubinoff, IT Business Analyst, provided a brief presentation on the progress to-date on the redevelopment of the OSCIA website.
- OSCIA has been assessing the website to update it to meet the users' needs and function well as a tool for OSCIA's promotion. Updates include a new navigation structure and new website domain, to increase the site's speed and usability.

Resolutions

- The Resolution Committee, composed of Warren Schneckenburger, Birgit Martin, and John Poel.
- Warren presented and moved each resolution, and then requested a representative from each local who submitted the resolution to come forward to speak to their resolution and second them.

Resolution #1 – Oxford SCIA – Credit Card Payments

WHEREAS Many OSCIA members and most industry supporters are wishing to pay membership and sponsorship fees via credit card, and;

WHEREAS Currently, the only method OSCIA members have to renew memberships by credit card is online through by logging into the membership platform, and;

WHEREAS There is no simple way to invoice and accept credit card payments from industry supporters for sponsorship of local and regional events to enable them to pay via credit card through the membership platform, and;

WHEREAS It would be very time consuming and logistically impeding during an in-person event to have members and industry supporters log in to the membership platform to complete a credit card payment.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the OSCIA acquire 11 point-of-sale card readers, one for each region, in order to accept and accommodate in-person, over-the phone and more easily accessible online credit card payments.

Moved by Warren Schneckeburger, seconded by Greg Wilson (Oxford).

Carried

Resolution #2 – Oxford SCIA – Multi-County memberships

WHEREAS Many extension and industry people hold memberships in several local OSCIA Associations, often spanning across more than one region, and;

WHEREAS Each local association is expected to submit a per-member fee for each member on the county member lists, even if a member appears on multiple county lists, and;

WHEREAS Extension and industry people across the province have repeatedly requested for a “group” membership option in order to streamline their renewals while ensuring they remain on local association email lists, and;

WHEREAS The proposed membership fee increases will be cost-prohibitive for extension and industry people to maintain the level of support local associations have relied on for many years.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the OSCIA develop a multi-association membership price, and;

FURTHERMORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the county per-member fee to be submitted to OSCIA be reduced in some logical manner for any member in good standing holding multiple OSCIA memberships.

Moved by Warren Schneckeburger, seconded by Greg Wilson (Oxford).

Carried

Resolution #3 – Norfolk SCIA – EFP and OSCIA membership

WHEREAS Growers must pay annual membership fees to access government programs facilitated by other farm organizations, and;

WHEREAS OSCIA facilitates the delivery of multiple government programs, and;

WHEREAS OSCIA facilitates the delivery and support of the Environmental Farm Plan, which is specific to soil and environmental protection, and;

WHEREAS To attend a EFP workshop does not require you to be a member of OSCIA.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the OSCIA consider making it a requirement to be a soil and crop member to attend and participate in the EFP workshop and plan review to bolster memberships at the local level.

Moved by Warren Schneckeburger, seconded by James Kingsbury (Norfolk)

Defeated

Resolution #4 – Renfrew SCIA – EFP standardization

WHEREAS The Environmental Farm Plan is recognized as a world-class voluntary education and awareness program & is often the starting point for on-farm stewardship initiatives by allowing farmers to highlight their farm’s environmental strengths, identify areas of environmental concern, and set realistic action plans with timetables to improve environmental conditions, and;

WHEREAS Following best management practices isn't as simple as it sounds and increasing access to tools that help farmers and their crop advisors weigh options to balance trade-offs and find sustainable solutions in their cropping systems that are backed by science and supported by articles and videos can be incredibly beneficial, and;

WHEREAS Farmers have financial and time limitations by the nature of their businesses and find value in simple, effective, and streamlined programs, and;

WHEREAS Resilient Fields (www.resilientfields.ca) is a new, free app designed to help Ontario farmers work through field-specific challenges using sustainable solutions, that was originally funded by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture but will require additional resources to maintain the app and increase awareness of the tool, and;

WHEREAS Duplicative projects & initiatives can be competitors for resources such as time and funding.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association evaluate the potential for the Resilient Fields application to be adapted or integrated into the Environmental Farm Plan to better serve farmers in their evaluation process and action plans moving the Environmental Farm Plan from a 'one and done' item to a more systems approach, perpetuity tool that helps farmers continue to improve environmental conditions in their operations.

*Moved by Warren Schneckeburger, seconded by Jennifer Doelman (Renfrew) **Carried***

Resolution #5 – Norfolk-Renfrew SCIA – OSCIA Membership fee increase

WHEREAS OSCIA has operated financially independent of the local associations for much of its existence collecting a minimal membership fee from the local associations accounting for less than 3% of total budget in 2020, and;

WHEREAS The OSCIA Board of Directors have decided to raise the annual membership fee from \$7.50 to \$25 (233% increase) beginning in 2023, and;

WHEREAS In the last two years most associations have operated virtually and remotely.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the OSCIA provide the local associations with a breakdown of the additional value the OSCIA will be providing to the local associations with the increased provincial organization fee that the OSCIA will collect, and;

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that OSCIA provides a detailed report to the members on how the association is "working on additional cost saving measures and other ways of generating income" that can be used to justify this increase to members with the end result of retaining as many current members as possible.

*Moved by Warren Schneckeburger, seconded by James Kingsbury (Norfolk) **Carried***



Session II – Association updates

The second Zoom session focused on various OSCIA association and program updates.

Living Lab Grazing Cover Crops panel

Tracey Ryan, Applied Research Coordinator chaired this session and panelists each had 10 minutes to present, followed by an open dialogue to answer questions from the delegates.

- Tracey provided an overview of the Living Lab project to-date and introduced the panelists
 - Living Lab is not a research project, it is an innovation project that is supported by research.
 - Testing and research takes place on working farms and involves the producers in the process.
- Mike Groote, Wholesome Pastures Living Lab Ontario farm cooperater and Andy van Niekerk, CCA, IFAO, Living Lab Ontario research coordinator for the farm cooperators and an OSCIA Provincial Director.
 - Mike is working on a grazing system of cover crops after wheat. Labour and cost inefficiencies led to decision to switch to permanent pasture over annual cover crop.
 - Christine O'Reilly is assisting with pasture assessment methodology and information collection will be included in OMAFRA's Ontario pasture assessment.
 - Next steps: Changing to six-year rotation: Corn-Soybeans-WW + three years of permanent pasture; add a livestock performance experiment to Mikes Crazy Strips field 2-3; and include pasture assessments

- Dr. Lori Phillips, Research Scientist, microbial ecology, AAFC, spoke on microbial and soil health research for LL-ON, with main objectives being:
 - Interested in new methods to categorize soil health, including soil biological health.
 - Determine how management activities alter diversity and function of soil biological communities.
 - Quantify links between specific management practices, soil biological communities, and the flow of ecosystems goods and services provided by healthy soils.
- Joining the conversation, for the open discussion portion, included Christine O'Reilly, Forage & Grazing Specialist, OMAFRA, and Steve Sickle, OSCIA 1st Vice President 2022.
- Entering the final year of the current Living Lab Ontario project.

Cost-Share Program and Projects Update

Angela Straathof, Program Director, Provided the 2021 updates on Workshops, Programs & Cost-share Opportunities.

- 2021 continued to pose challenges due to COVID-19, but the OSCIA field and office staff remained very responsive and adaptive, and Angie thanked the team. Grateful to programing funding partners to continue to trust in OSCIA with responsibility of delivery agent.
- Funding opportunities provided by OSCIA in 2021 included:
 - Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) – A five-year federal-provincial-territorial initiative to strengthen the agriculture, agri-food, and agri-based product sector. Sixth and final intake just closed in December 2021 for fourth year of the program. This program is merit based with three priority areas: Economic Development, Environmental Stewardship, and Protection and Assurance.
 - Targeted Intake to Support Managed Bee Health – funding provided through CAP. First targeted intake supported over 350 projects to Ontario beekeepers, and the second intake had a higher level of costshare funding for commercial beekeepers with over 50 or more colonies with roughly 230 projects approved.
 - LEADS – Implementation of BMPs on farms within the Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair watersheds for farmers who have completed a Farmland Health Check-up. Fifth and final intake closed in November 2021.
 - Farmland Health Check-Up is still available for farmers in the LEADS region. This is an opportunity to work with CCA or Professional Agrologist to assess risks to on-farm health and water quality.
 - SARFIP – funded by Ontario Ministry of Conservation and Parks through the Species at Risk Stewardship program. This program will continue to run in 2022 supporting 13 BMPs in habitat creation, enhancement, and protection BMPs that help species at risk. Intake held in Spring 2021 had over \$500,000 in costshare allocated to over 100 projects throughout the province of Ontario.
 - SARPAL – funded by Environmental and Climate Change Canada initiative focused on working with farmers to support the recovery of species at risk on agricultural lands. Funds conservation actions focused on supporting 12 target species at risk. 50 projects were approved for funding in 2021 intake.
 - Operation Pollinator – In partnership with Syngenta, this program promoted the health and well-being of bees, monarchs, and other pollinators. Between 2018 and 2021, 104 acres at 45 sites across Ontario were converted to pollinator habitat.
- Workshops & webinars – educational opportunities, OSCIA workshop leaders continued to provide three workshop types in 2021, GYFP, EFP and Biosecurity.
- On-Farm Applied Research & Monitoring (ONFARM) – a four-year initiative developed by OMAFRA, delivered by OSCIA, focused on soil health and water quality. This program is funded by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP). Partnered with five Conservation Authorities and the Soil Resource Group.

Applied Research Programs Update

Tracey Ryan, Applied Research Coordinator, provided updates on the current applied research projects.

- Agroforestry Land Use for Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Project
 - Led by researchers at the University of Guelph. Five-year project that wrapped up in spring of 2021.
 - OSCIA developed five videos highlighting the research outcomes from this project.
- Reducing Barriers to BMP adoption (Accelerate your Soil Health)
 - Three year applied research initiative that began in 2019 funded by CAP by AAFC
 - Pilot project was launched in spring of 2021 in Simcoe, Renfrew, and Lambton.
 - Each applicant had access to support through Expert Coaches (CCAs)
 - Application form was simplified, where project details were collected via the Expert Coach and applicants were eligible for 60% of the project costs to a maximum of \$2,500 per project.
 - Completed 100 project (60 soil testing and 40 cover crop).

- Now in evaluation process of the pilot project. This is being completed through surveys, interviews with Expert Coaches, meetings with the participants and OSCIA staff debriefing. Final report will be submitted to OMAFRA and should come out late spring 2022.
- Living Labs Ontario Initiative
 - An integrated approach to agricultural innovation that brings farmers, scientists, and other partners together to co-develop, test, and monitor new practices and technologies in a real-life context within the Lake Erie basin.
 - Project is funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and supported by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).
 - Core principles of Living Lab:
 - User-centred innovation – activities focus on the users' needs and users are involved throughout the development process
 - Working in partnership – Experts from various disciplines and backgrounds tackle a common issue
 - Real-life context – testing takes place on working farms where farmers use the technology or practice.
 - Priorities: Soil quality, Water quality, Watershed management, and Biodiversity. Living Lab Ontario innovations focus on maintaining continuous cover and reducing tillage to address the priority issues.

Association Development Advisor Update

Madeline Arseneau, interim Association Development Advisor, provided updates on association activities and achievements.

- Two communication methods of OSCIA are *The Innovator*, our quarterly e-newsletter and *Grassroots Matters*, our weekly e-blast. Circulated a survey on satisfaction for these communication methods.
- Redesign of the Membership platform to allow local SCIA's to manage their membership information in a central location.
- Continuously developing online training modules to ensure skills development are available to OSCIA members – under the Association tab of the website.
- This year also included significant changes to the local constitutions and membership benefits.
- Excitement continues to grow for the rental of the Mobile Soil Technology Suite (MSTS) for the 2022 year. Looking forward to increasing access to research and on-farm knowledge sharing events.
- Excited to announce the launch of the Supporting Partners Program at the end of February.

Passing of the Paddle

- President remarks from our 2022 President, Warren Schneckeburger
- Great honor to be elected the 85th President of OSCIA. Feel privileged to have learned from the grassroots through involvement in OSCIA for over 20 years, as a third generation OSCIA farmer from Dundas. Took the role of Regional Director for Eastern Valley in 2015.
- Strongly believe that working on a common goal such as planning an event, or an in-field trial/plot creates a sense of community that draws members in. Events planned and carried out successfully, engagement flourishes, and the grassroots learning cycle continues.
- Urge the local and regional SCIA's to begin planning sharing information events coming out of COVID-19 to help make 2022 a year to get members re-engaged.

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### **Session III – Awards & Research Panel Presentation**

The third Zoom session focused on the presentation of the OSCIA awards and an OMAFRA panel session.

- Awards were presented by Warren Schneckeburger including some short, pre-recorded acceptance videos.

#### **Presentation of the 2022 Soil Champion winners**

- The 2022 winner of the Soil Champion Award is (Laurent) Woody Van Arkell in the Producer category. Woody and his wife Catherine farm near Dresden in Chatham-Kent, farming contract hogs and a diverse crop rotation of corn, soybeans, winter wheat, sugar beets, and most recently sunflowers.
- Senator Robert Black provided congratulations via a pre-recorded video, as well a Certificate of recognition will be sent to Woody from the Senators office.

### **Don Hill Legacy Award**

- The Don Hill Legacy Award recognizes a recipient who has applied on-farm innovation and ingenuity to effectively address an identified environmental risk associated with soil, water, air, or biodiversity on farm.
- The 2022 winner is Lynn Leavitt for his “Pac-It Basket Compactor” that works to maintain the integrity of agricultural plastic for recycling. This innovation gives farmers a place to put their plastic once they’ve pulled it off the bale, instead of throwing it away.

### **Presentation of the 2021 Soil Health Graduate Scholarship Winner**

- Winner of the 2021 OSCIA Soil Health Scholarship at University of Guelph is Samantha Earl-Goulet.
- Samantha is researching the relationship between soil nitrous oxide production and surface flux under freeze-thaw cycles as impacted by winter warming and cover crops. Research is being completed under the supervision of Dr. Claudia Wagner-Riddle.

### **Soil Champion 2021 Presentations**

- The 2021 winners pre-recorded their presentations, which were shared.
- Research & Extension category: Dr. Laura Van Eerd, Professor of Sustainable Soil Management, in the school of Environmental Sciences, University of Guelph, Ridgetown campus. Laura is internationally recognized researcher and sits on the executive team for the SOILS AT GUELPH initiative, promoting knowledge exchange on sustainable soil management practices.
- Producer category: Henry Denotter operates a 100% no-till field crop farm near Kingsville, Essex County, where they grow both corn and soybeans in 20-inch rows. Henry is a widely recognized and respected advocate of soil health, and has hosted numerous farm tours, research trials, and has been a guest speaker to share his experiences with other growers. Henry is currently involved with the ONFARM program and the Living Lab Initiative as a farm cooperator.

### **Panel featuring Efficiency in Fertilizer use presentation**

Dr. Claudia Wagner-Riddle, Professor & Research Leadership Chair, School of Environmental Sciences

- Dr. Claudia Wagner-Riddle spoke on practices for Fertilizer Emission reductions in crop production.
- Claudia’s research focuses on greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from agriculture and provides information to farming organizations and government to help develop policy decisions. Her research also looks at soil health and its impact on soil ecosystem services such as water quality, water filtration by soils and all that soil can do to reduce the impact of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Targets set by the Federal government focused on reduction in fertilizer emissions, not reduction in fertilizer use, which is an important distinction. The Healthy Environment and Healthy Economy plan has a national target of 30% below 2020 levels for fertilizer emissions. Through improving how fertilizers are used with better products and practices to help save farmers time, money and help protect Canada’s land and water. The 2021 budget of \$200M in new funding over two years to support farmers to reduce emissions – through improving nitrogen management, increasing adoption of cover cropping and normalizing rotational grazing.

Dr. Alfons Weersink, Professor, Agri-environmental Policy, Farm Structure, Production Economics

- Dr. Weersink is an agricultural economist and much of his work is applied research and results in tangible outcomes. Alfons often analyzes the feasibility of a new technology such as biomass crops, methane digesters and bioproduct plastics, to determine whether it is a valuable innovation and under what conditions it is most beneficial.
- Alfons spoke on economic issues related to fertilizer use. Need to examine economic issues regarding the use of fertilizer and its role in GHG emissions.
- Right placement and right timing play a role under specific spatial conditions, but right rate appears to be the most effective means to mitigate the environmental impacts of corn N application.



## **Session IV – Knowledge Transfer session**

The final Zoom session of the day focussed on Soil Carbon Sequestration

### **Soil Carbon Sequestration Panel**

Cam Ogilvie, Knowledge Mobilization Coordinator, SOILS AT GUELPH, UofG (Former) pre-recorded presentation. Cam has since taken a job at the Soil Health Institute as the Soil Health Educator for Canada.

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- A University of Guelph initiative to advance sustainable soil management in Ontario by bridging gaps, making research accessible and facilitating knowledge exchange between farmers, researchers, industry, government, and the public.
- Presentation focused on UofG research on Carbon Capture and Soil Health.
  - 68% of Ontario farmland is estimated to be in an unsustainable erosion risk category (losing topsoil).
  - 82% of Ontario farmland is losing more carbon than it is sequestering.
  - Total soil organic carbon is highest under cropping rotations that have living roots in the ground for the longest periods. Organic matter results in better yield and better yield stability.
  - Soil Health is defined as the continued capacity of a soil to function, i.e., growing crops and providing ecological services.
  - Five regenerative practices: Minimize disturbance, Keep it covered, Living roots, Diversify, Incorporate animal manure(s).

Ben Gordon, Carbon & Ecosystem Services Global Portfolio Leader, Corteva Agriscience, San-Francisco, California, USA.

- Responsible for developing holistic solutions to reward farmers for sustainable outcomes and drive farm profitability. Presentation focused on Insights from Carbon Markets. A Carbon Market is agronomy plus economics and a voluntary carbon market has large and growing opportunities for agriculture.
- Carbon impact is measured by establishing the starting carbon levels on the farm through randomized soil samples. Then modelling changes from conducting new practices vs. historical practices. Next calculate the difference to determine the impact, and then verify practices have been taken.
- Corteva developed a Carbon Market program the addressed adoption concerns and questions by focusing on three core things:
  - Confidence – guarantee that the farmer will always get 75% of credit value sale, and get paid on the outcomes and not the locked into low \$/ac payments
  - Simplicity – farmers can easily input their data; they can rely on dedicated Carbon Specialists for support and the know their data is protected by Corteva’s data privacy policy.
  - Flexibility – farmers can use the practices that work for them; they can change field plans as needed; and they can see their payments grow with the market while getting 75% of the credit sale price to always capture the upsides of the market.
- Currently the Carbon Initiative is available in 11 states, with firm plans to expand soon. This includes 17 eligible crop types.
- Presentation ended with a question period for Dr. Laura Van Eerd (on behalf of Cam Ogilvie) and Ben Gordon.

The conference ended at 8:45PM.

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Andrew Graham, Executive Director

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Warren Schneckeburger, 2022 President