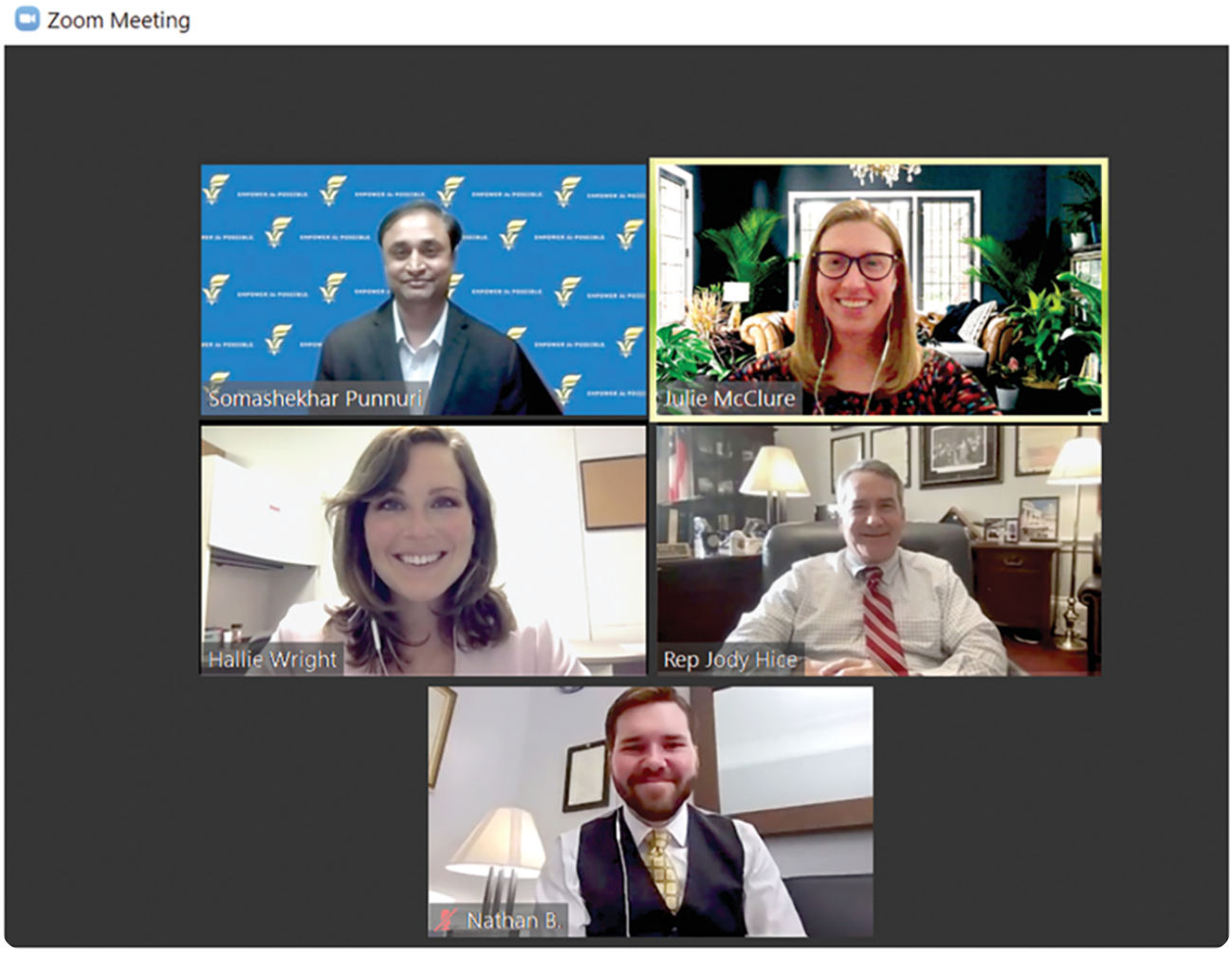
Science Societies

Advocate for our sciences at the 2022 congressional visits day

By Julie McClure, Science Policy Manager, jmcclure@sciencesocieties.org

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Team Georgia meets virtually with Rep. Jody Hice (GA) and Nate Barker (who works in Rep. Hice's office) for the 2021 Virtual Congressional Visits Day.

For 2021, the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Science Policy Office made the tough decision to shift Congressional Visits Day (CVD), normally held in Washington, DC, to a virtual event. While we certainly missed shaking hands with staff members and bumping into other participants in the halls of Congress, the virtual format allowed a record number of Society members to advocate for research funding.

In a year when many organizations cancelled or scaled back their advocacy efforts, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA were thrilled to see the CVD program *grow*. We had 110 Society members, students, and CCAs representing 38 states who participated in the 2021 Virtual CVD, making it our largest ever advocacy event. Participants met with 131 congressional offices, submitting 198 funding requests for USDA research programs. The event was incredibly successful!

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Bringing Forward the Best of Both In-Person, Virtual Formats



Team North Dakota–South Dakota meet with Sen. John Thune (SD; second from right) for the 2020 Congressional Visits Day.

As we look ahead, we want to bring the lessons learned and best practices from both the in-person and virtual formats to the 2022 CVD. While there are still many unknowns, our goal is to once again bring Society members to Washington, DC for in-person meetings in 2022. To meet with as many congressional offices as possible, we also plan to supplement the in-person event with virtual meetings. We are excited to provide Society members with multiple options to engage in advocacy.

All CVD participants will receive extensive advocacy and communication training before meeting with their members of Congress. You will work in small teams with other Society members, students, and CCAs to share the impact and importance of funding for food, agriculture, and natural resources research. Participants will also have the opportunity to hear presentations from federal agency leadership. And whether you participate in person or virtually, you will have the opportunity to meet other science advocates from across the country and form invaluable professional networks.

The 2022 CVD will be held on 7–8 March at the beginning of the annual federal funding process. It's imperative that members of Congress hear from constituents like you to understand how federal funding addresses local agricultural challenges and benefits their congressional district or state. Participants at CVD have been a powerful force in raising awareness for USDA research programs and communicating how these programs help local producers be more efficient and sustainable.

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Award Applications Now Open

Applications are now open for two awards to participate in the 2022 CVD. The Future Leaders in Science award is open to any graduate student Society member, and the Excellence in Advocacy award is open to non-student members (early-, mid-, or late-career members). We encourage Society members from all career stages and professional affiliations (academia, industry, and consulting) to apply. If you want to be an advocate for science, then consider applying today! Both award applications are

open now through Friday, 3 December.

Learn more about CVD and how to apply for the 2022 CVD awards here:

www.soils.org/science-policy/get-involved/congressional-visits.

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Back to issue

Back to home

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