



SOIL
AND WATER
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY

MI-SWCS Newsletter

Soil and Water Conservation Society
Michigan Chapter

February 2007
Vol. 4, No. 1

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Of Interest:

Conservogram: Are you On-line?

Conservogram is SWCS’s national newsletter and it is available to members on-line.

If you do not receive it by e-mail and would like to, sign up at www.swcs.org ❖

Michigan Chapter
Newsletter Editor
Daniel F. Kesselring

A Matter of Balance: Conservation and Renewable Energy

9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 7, 2007

**Room 101, Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center
Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan**

The Michigan Chapter SWCS and the Potawatomi RC&D are sponsoring a unique and important Seminar on the Renewable Energy issue. The “Conservation” part of the title does not refer to energy conservation; it refers to the conservation of the natural resource that is critical to the renewable energy cycle – the soil.

Grain corn to ethanol, and soybeans to biodiesel, are getting the most attention right now, but we’re already reading predictions that these two sources can barely make a dent in the liquid transportation fuel demand, unless we’re willing to forfeit all other uses of corn and soybeans, except for ethanol and biodiesel byproducts.

Now the cellulosic ethanol opportunity is knocking, and agricultural crop residues and forest residues are being considered as primary sources. One of our speakers, Dr. Bruce Dale, Michigan State University, will be presenting “Why Cellulosic Ethanol is Closer Than You Think.”

But, what about the soil? Cellulose is the major source of organic matter in the soil. Our agricultural soils have been losing organic matter since the first pioneers tilled the soil to plant crops. Over the past century changes in farming methods and technology, and the agricultural economy, have brought about both increases and reductions in soil organic matter.

The questions become: “How much organic matter can the soil lose and still remain productive?” “How much crop residue can we remove and still maintain soil organic matter?” “What other affects do we have on soil when we remove crop residues?” and “What management changes can we make to reduce the impact of crop residue removal for cellulosic ethanol?” **It’s all about “soil quality!”**

These are the questions our speakers will discuss in our Seminar. Space is limited, so be sure to get your reservation in now!

See page 6 for Registration Form.

A Matter of Balance: Conservation and Renewable Energy

Speakers and Topics

Mr. Ray Archuleta, Conservation Agronomist, USDA-NRCS, East National Technology Center, Greensboro, NC, will open with a broad overview of soil quality and the reasons for this Seminar. Ray will then close the presentations with a discussion of practices and management for managing soil quality.

Dr. Richard Meilan, Associate Professor of Molecular Tree Physiology, Forestry and Natural Resources Department, Purdue University, will discuss various types of bio-energy crops; the steps involved in bio-ethanol production; describe the barriers associated with cellulosic feedstocks; and Demonstrate how poplars are being engineered to make cellulose more accessible.

Dr. Bruce Dale, Professor of Chemical Engineering, Dept. of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science, Michigan State University, will discuss how national security, environmental and economic issues are converging to prompt cellulosic ethanol, and how technology is improving and supply chains are evolving rapidly.

Dr. George Bird, Professor of Nematology, Michigan State University, will discuss the potential impacts of a bio-economy on soil biology. He will begin with an overview of soil biological habitat; describe the functions and resulting patterns of various organisms; and compare the potential short-term and long-term impacts of five alternative management systems on soil biology in relation to the ability of soil to resist degradation and respond to management.

Dr. Jane M-F Johnson, Soil Scientist, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Morris, MN, will discuss the potential benefits to using recently fixed Carbon for renewable energy compared to using fossil fuels; and the environmental risks that must be addressed as the biomass industry develops. She will discuss the primary roles of biomass in maintaining soil organic matter; how biomass removal can impact these ecosystem services; and current research underway to address establishing biomass guidelines to protect the soil resource.

At the end of the presentations, we will bring our speakers together for questions and discussion with the audience.

Ms. Sarah VanDelfzijl, President, Michigan Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society, and Environmental Quality Analyst, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, will open the session with a welcome and introductions, and **Ms. Kelly Goward**, President-Elect, and District Forester, Ottawa/Allegan Conservation Districts, will be the Moderator.



The President's Message

By: Sarah VanDelfzijl

With the passing of the old year to the new, the Executive Committee of the Michigan Chapter SWCS also changes. Dan Kesselring, President for the past year, has moved into the Past President position vacated by Tom Fedewa earlier in the year and most recently held by Past-Past President Wendy Ogilvie. I have stepped into the President's role from the President Elect position and Kelly Goward was elected as the new President Elect.

The rest of our executive committee is filled out with a few new faces for 2007 with Rebekah Dewind as Vice President and Randy Mellberg as Region 2 Director; and a few familiar faces from 2006 in Jay Blair as Treasurer, Walt Summers as Secretary, Becky Otto as Region 1 Director, Scott Kenreich as Region 3 Director and Vicki Anderson moving from Vice President to Region 4 Director.

In the past three years that I have been a member of SWCS I have gotten the chance to get to know several of you, but I feel an introduction is in order.

I grew up in the Kalamazoo area of Southwest Michigan. I left to pursue a degree in Environmental Studies at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin, located just a couple of miles from Lake Superior. My time there was well spent, and served to develop my passion for natural resources and conservation. Summer jobs and internships in everything from working as an Engineering Technician to tagging fish for the DNR helped prepare me for my leap into the "real world" upon graduating.

Continued

President's Message, Continued

I returned home to the Kalamazoo area after graduating and quickly found work as the watershed coordinator for the Rocky River Watershed Project in St. Joseph, Cass, Kalamazoo, and Van Buren Counties. Working at a Conservation District on a watershed planning grant helped me build valuable professional relationships with other resource professionals in the area. This was also how I was first introduced to SWCS.

The Rocky was a primarily agricultural watershed, so I was able to learn a ton about the role of agriculture in resource protection through NRCS and my conservation district colleagues. I became a member of SWCS during that time and was one of the participants in the inaugural conservation planning course offered in conjunction with SWCS. In the two years that I worked on the Rocky we completed an EPA approved watershed plan and created within the community a renewed interest in Rocky as a "surprisingly wild and surpassingly beautiful" resource that should be protected.

A job found me just as the Rocky grant was drawing to a close and I began working as an Environmental Quality Analyst for the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. Currently, in my third year working with the MDEQ, I work primarily in Allegan, Kalamazoo, and Calhoun Counties and have responsibilities in the Construction Stormwater, Municipal Stormwater, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control, and Agriculture Compliance programs.

Continued next page

President's Message, Continued

My involvement in SWCS has provided some personal and professional rewarding experiences. I have had the opportunity to meet many resource professionals who have provided guidance and training opportunities that many agencies can no longer provide their employees because of loss of staff and/or budget crises. I have also been able to pick the brains of retired professionals, whose institutional memories are so valuable to new recruits like myself and the agencies for which we work.

It is my hope that throughout my term as President and beyond, Michigan SWCS will continue its mission of providing quality professional development for members and nonmembers and will strive to facilitate fellowship opportunities for our members that will foster the building of professional relationships within the Chapter.

2007 will be another busy year for the Michigan Chapter. It will include: "A Matter of Balance: Conservation and Renewable Energy" our Agriculture and Natural Resources Week seminar on March 7, 2007; the East North Central Regional Leadership Development Workshop which will be held sometime in the spring, and our Annual Summer Tour and meeting with a date and location to be determined.

Truly, the best way to get the most out of your SWCS membership is to attend SWCS sponsored events and/or participate on a SWCS committee or event planning team. Becoming actively involved in chapter activities can help you meet other members and build professional contacts, can build resumes for younger professionals, and can be quite fun.

Continued

President's Message, Concluded

In the next few weeks, I will be sending off a committee list and an outline of the responsibilities of each committee. I would encourage each of you to consider if you can spare some time to serve on a committee. Much of our committee work is done today via email or through teleconferences, so you can even participate without leaving home.

We need to hear from you whether or not you are able to participate in SWCS activities. If you have training needs or ideas, if you have suggestions, comments or concerns, the executive committee wants to hear them. Please feel free to contact me or any of the executive committee members to let us know what you think. You can find our contact information on the last page of the newsletter.

Best wishes for a happy and successful 2007!



Passing the Gavel!

Daniel F. Kesselring, outgoing President, passes the gavel to incoming President, Sarah VanDelfzijl, at the December 6, 2006 Annual Meeting of the Michigan Chapter. 15 Chapter members were registered and present.



Soil & Water Conservation Society Silent Auction Donations

The Florida Chapter of SWCS will be hosting the 2007 SWCS International meeting at Saddlebrook Resort near Tampa this coming July. The local Chapter has traditionally organized a silent auction. Proceeds will be used to support the environmental education programs the Florida Chapter sponsors.

Each year the Chapters across the county donate items to help support the Chapters sponsoring the International Meeting. We are currently calling for donations of silent auction items to send down on behalf of the Michigan Chapter. We don't need items right away, but we do need to let the Florida Chapter know what we will be donating by June 1, 2007. We will collect items in early July to send down with Chapter members who will be attending the meeting.

We would like to have an assortment of items that really show off what makes our region special. If you would like to donate an item we will need a description of the item and an estimated value. We would like to have commitments of donations and the aforementioned donation information by May 1, 2007. Please contact our Chapter President at vandelfzijls@michigan.gov with your commitment.

Potential Ideas for Auction Items:

- Michigan Products
- Framed Art or Photos
- Bird House/Feeders
- Outdoor Gear
- SWCS/NRCS Memorabilia
- Theme Baskets
- Wine

You could also donate money which our Chapter will use to purchase items for the silent auction.

The Treasurer's Report From the 2006 Annual Meeting

The Treasurer's Report for 2006 was presented at the Annual Meeting on December 6, 2006, by Treasurer Jay Blair. For members who were unable to attend, following is the narrative report.

The checking account had a beginning balance of \$1364.19, an income of \$9635.59, disbursements equaling \$9292.94, and an ending balance of \$1710.84. The Scholarship fund has \$514.81 in savings and \$9055.54 in Certificate of Deposits for an ending balance of \$9570.55. The ending balance in the Scholarship Income was \$925.35, consisting of \$6.34 in savings account interest, \$259.01 in interest from Certificates of Deposit, \$160.00 in membership dues, and \$500.00 from the Summer Tour.

Get Involved! Join a Committee

There are several ways to get involved in your Michigan Chapter. One of the ways is to volunteer to help on a Committee. The saying "Many hands make light the work!" definitely applies with committees.

Following are some of the Michigan Chapter Committees looking for volunteers.

- Nominations
- Elections
- Annual Meeting
- ANR Week
- Archives
- Audit
- Awards
- Membership
- Newsletter
- Professional Development
- Scholarship
- Summer Meeting

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A MATTER OF BALANCE: CONSERVATION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
Seminar Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Member of Soil and Water Conservation Society? ___ Yes ___ No

Amount Enclosed: _____ \$30 for SWCS members - \$40 for nonmembers before 2/23/07.
(\$35 and \$45 after 2/23/07) (No refunds after March 1, 2007)

Make Checks payable to "Michigan Chapter SWCS."

Mail to: Daniel F. Kesselring, Michigan Chapter SWCS, 113 North Dr. E., Marshall, MI 49068