



SOIL
AND WATER
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY

MI-SWCS Newsletter

Soil and Water Conservation Society

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Michigan Chapter

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Of Interest:

Conservogram: Are you On-line?

Conservogram is SWCS's national newsletter and it is available 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

LEARN ABOUT CONSERVATION PLANNING TOOLS AT ANR WEEK

Anyone who is interesting in learning about conservation planning and the tools used by planners should attend "New Tools and Technologies for Private Lands Conservation," on **March 6, 2006** during Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Week at Michigan State University (MSU).

The event will run from **1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Room 101 at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, Michigan State University**. Attendees will get an overview of the Conservation Planning process, and a demonstration of some of the computer and Web-based programs that are used in conservation planning. These include tools, such as the soil erosion prediction program RUSLE2, that are used to assess environmental conditions and evaluate alternative conservation systems and practices.

This is an ideal seminar for anyone who has an interest in Conservation Planning, but is not directly involved in Planning themselves, such as Conservation District Administrators, Executive Directors and District Directors. In addition, individuals who are interested in becoming a Conservation Planner can get a "heads up" on the activities involved in Conservation Planning.

Practicing Conservation Planners, regardless of their level of experience, may see tools that can make their work easier and help them deliver better plans. One presentation will discuss how to navigate the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG). Another presentation will show how the eFOTG helps the Planner find and evaluate alternative Conservation Systems. In addition, property owners can learn what technology goes into conservation planning and how they can use some of the tools on their own.

Advanced registration, by February 24th, is \$10 for SWCS members and \$15 for non-members. Mail registration to: Daniel F. Kesselring, 113 North Dr. E., Marshall, MI 49068. Make Check payable to Michigan Chapter SWCS and write ANR Week in the memo line. Refreshments and handouts will be provided. For more information, see page 6 or contact Kesselring at DFKesselring@aol.com.

For more information about ANR Week events, visit www.canr.msu.edu/anrweek/ or contact program coordinator Sandi Bauer at 517-353-3175, ext. 217, or e-mail bauer@msu.edu.

To foster the science and the art of soil, water, and related natural resource management to achieve sustainability

Michigan Chapter SWCS Awards 2005-2006 Scholarship

The Michigan Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) announced the recipient of the 2005-2006 Scholarship at the Chapter's Annual Meeting in Big Rapids on December 7, 2005.

A scholarship selection committee, composed of Chapter members, and chaired by Wendy Ogilvie, Past President, made the selection based on scholastic achievement, career objectives, demonstrated leadership in student activities, and financial need. There were 6 scholarship applicants from Grand Valley State University and Michigan State University.

Mr. Shane Bennett, a student at Michigan State University, was this year's recipient. Shane is in the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering in the College of Engineering, concentrating on Ecosystems and Natural Resource Engineering. His focus is on ground and surface water hydrology and watershed management.

Shane will be graduating this spring and is pursuing employment with an environmental engineering design and consulting company. Shane is an avid outdoorsman and believes in working in a field that will protect wildlife, the environment, and natural resources in a sustainable manner.

The Soil and Water Conservation Society's mission statement is: *"The Soil and Water Conservation Society fosters the science and the art of soil, water and related natural resource management to achieve sustainability. We promote and practice an ethic recognizing the interdependence of people and the environment."* The recognition of outstanding student leaders in conservation will assist in the development of their understanding of natural resources and help to promote this mission of sustainability.

The Michigan Chapter of SWCS announces the release of the scholarship application every fall and awards the scholarship at their December Annual Meeting

SWCS MI Chapter to Present 4th NRCS Conservation Planning Course in April

The Michigan Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) is planning to conduct its fourth session of the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Conservation Planning Course (Modules 6 through 8) April 24 through 28 in Marshall, Michigan.

The one week course includes classroom and field exercises and training in the Conservation Planning process. Dan Kesselring, retired NRCS District Conservationist and Michigan Chapter SWCS member, will again be the lead instructor.

Over the past two years and the first three sessions of this course, the Chapter has presented this class to 40 Conservation District employees and Private Consultants. We know that there are still more people waiting for the course to be offered again. The NRCS Conservation Planning Course is one of the criteria required for the Certified Conservation Planner category in the NRCS Technical Service Provider Registry.

Prerequisites for this course are: (1) at least one year experience in a conservation oriented position that includes conservation practice application in the field, and (2) successful completion of Modules 1 through 5 of the course, which are available on the internet at:

<http://www.nedc.nrcs.usda.gov/catalog/consplan.html>

The course fee is \$300 for members and \$450 for non-members. Anyone wishing to become a member can contact any of the Chapter Officers listed in this newsletter.

This is an example of SWCS carrying out one of its core functions - professional development for conservationists in the field. Questions about the Conservation Planning Course should be directed to Dan at DFKesselring@aol.com.

Minutes of the December, 2005 Michigan Chapter Annual Meeting

A banquet dinner, followed by an address by Rebecca Fletcher, East North Central Regional Representative, SWCS Board of Directors, preceded the Annual Meeting. Ms. Fletcher spoke to the group on the current status and trends of the International Soil and Water Conservation Society organization.

President Tom Fedewa then called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. There were 9 Chapter members, 5 officers, the ENC Regional Representative and 12 guests present.

President Fedewa introduced the Executive Council.

President Fedewa reviewed the **2004 Annual Meeting minutes** which were distributed to members and others present. Moved and seconded to approve the minutes as printed. Motion passed.

Treasurer Jay Blair distributed and presented the **Treasurer's Report** for 2005. Moved and seconded to approve the Treasurer's report as printed. Motion passed.

President's Report: President Fedewa discussed a few of the past year's events. Tom will present a 2005 President's report in an upcoming newsletter.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Wendy Ogilvie, Immediate Past President and Chair of the **Scholarship Committee**, announced that there had been 6 applications for the Michigan Chapter Scholarship Program \$500 scholarship, 2 from Grand Valley State University Students and 4 from Michigan State University Students. The 2005 Scholarship winner is Mr. Shane Bennett, a student at MSU. Mr. Bennett is a Biosystem Engineering major with an emphasis on hydrology.

Membership Committee Chair GayLynn Kinter was not able to be present, so President Fedewa asked Secretary Dan Kesselring to discuss membership changes. Dan reported that the Chapter had gained 11 new members during the year. These 11 came about because of the Conservation Planning Class conducted by the Chapter. Current and new members received a member discount on the class registration fee. The class also gained one new member for the Ontario Chapter. One registrant was from Canada. There are currently 80 Michigan Chapter members.

President Fedewa then asked Dan Kesselring, Chair of the **Elections Committee**, to report on the election results. Dan reported that ballots had been emailed or mailed to all Chapter members. 14 ballots had been returned, a very low percentage for the Chapter. However, Region 1, the Upper Peninsula, had a 50% return. The following officers were elected: Sarah VanDelfzijl, President Elect; Vicki Anderson, Vice President; Becky Otto, Region 1 Director; and Scott Kenreich, Region 3 Director. The position of President was on the ballot because the 2005 President Elect had resigned. There was no candidate on the ballot, but Dan Kesselring received 2 write in votes. Dan said he didn't vote for himself, but was willing to accept the position if the members concurred. It was moved and seconded to approve the election results as presented. Motion carried. Dan Kesselring is the 2006 President.

OLD BUSINESS

Conservation Planning Course – Dan Kesselring reported that 12 people registered for the NRCS Conservation Planning Course Modules 6 through 8 conducted by the Chapter. Of these, 8 were Conservation District employees and 4 were Technical Service Providers. One TSP consultant was from Canada. Dan distributed the final accounting from the course to show members how registration fees were used.

Dan reported that he also has an agreement or memorandum of understanding with the Chapter to also administer Module 9 which is the last module in the course.

Continued

Annual Meeting, Continued

Summer Meeting – Region 1 Director Walt Summers was not able to attend the meeting, so President Fedewa opened the floor for a discussion of the pros and cons of holding a Summer Meeting. Because of the limited membership available to help organize a meeting in Region 1, it was suggested that perhaps the meeting should be tried in another Region. Walt has been involved in organizing at least 16 Summer Meetings in the U.P. since 1986.

Last summer, the Executive Council had also invited comments from the membership and others concerning the reasons the Summer Meeting had to be cancelled. Those comments are on file and available to the Executive Council and Chapter Membership.

The consensus seemed to be that a Summer Meeting was desirable, but perhaps should be shorter than the one attempted this past summer.

Due to the time, and the fact that some members had to return home some distance, President Fedewa decided to adjourn the meeting without further discussion of the priorities for 2006.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Daniel F. Kesselring
2005 Secretary

Looking for History

Have you saved Michigan Chapter SWCS items over the years? Items such as newsletters minutes, programs, photos, etc. If you have, we would like to hear from you.

The MSU Archives and Historical Collections have a considerable amount of history on the Chapter from its beginning to about 1988. Then the record gets messy up to 1993. There are no records after 1993. We would like to bring the record up to date as much as possible.

Therefore, if you have any documents or information you would like to share with us, contact any of the Chapter Officers. See page 5 for contact information.

NRCS Conservation Planning Course, Module 9

The Michigan Chapter Executive Council is offering the last Module of the NRCS Conservation Planning Course to non-NRCS employees and Technical Service Providers. Module 9 is the final step of the NRCS Conservation Planning Course and requires the participant to write a Conservation Plan at the RMS (Resource Management System) level, review a Conservation Plan and Revise a Conservation Plan. Each of these three parts must be reviewed by the Instructor with an NRCS plan review checklist.

When the three parts are satisfactorily completed, the participant will be presented a certificate of course completion. This course satisfies part of the criteria in the options for Certified Conservation Planner in the NRCS Technical Service Provider registry.

If anyone is interested in completing Module 9, they should contact Daniel F. Kesselring, Instructor, at DFKesselring@aol.com for more information.

SWCS Highway clean-up Friday, May 12, 2006

The next SWCS Highway clean-up will be Friday May 12, 2006. We will meet at the parking lot of the NRCS State Office at noon.

We appreciate the commitment of those who have helped keep this worthwhile project alive. Last fall we had Diane Fielder, Tom Fedewa, Penny Derbyshire, Andy Raymond, Joe Calus, Dan Kesselring, and, of course, GayLynn Kinter, Membership Chair.

We really need at least 10 people to make this job go quicker so please consider taking an hour or 2 out of your busy schedule to be involved in the worthwhile project.

Many thanks to GayLynn Kinter for her efforts in planning, organizing and carrying out this event.



2006 International Conference

The 2006 International SWCS Conference will be held on July 22 through July 26 at the Keystone Resort in Keystone, Colorado.

The SWCS annual conference brings together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers at all levels of government, along with a broad cross-section of other interest groups, to explore current issues in natural resource management and planning.

Just 90 minutes away from the Denver International Airport, Keystone Resort is Colorado's most accessible resort, and is surrounded by National Forest in the heart of Summit County.

Summer is a wonderful time to take in the surroundings of this full-service resort, which has activities such as biking, championship caliber golf courses, walking trails, and horseback riding.

Reservations

Hotel reservations are now being taken for the conference. The number to call is (800) 258-0437 or fax (970) 496-4343. Be sure to refer to the SWCS group code CBØCSNW.

In 2004, Keystone Resort added a million dollars in restaurant and nightlife improvements, and now, you get to experience them. They have over 30 casual and many award-winning restaurants, including the [Keystone Ranch](#).

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Tools and Technologies for Private Lands Conservation

1:00-5:00 PM, Monday, March 6, 2006

Ag and Natural Resources Week

Room 101, Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, Michigan State University

An overview of NRCS Conservation Planning philosophy and the tools available to assist with planning, such as, the Field Office Technical Guide, Web Soil Survey, Soil Data Mart, RUSLE2, and the NRCS PLANTS Database. The NRCS Conservation Planning Process is the basis for all USDA Financial Assistance Programs.

Program agenda

- 1:00-1:15 PM **Registration**
- 1:15-1:45 PM **What do those Conservation Planners do, anyway?**
A brief overview of the NRCS Conservation Planning Process
 Daniel F. Kesselring, Instructor, NRCS Conservation Planning Course
- 1:45-2:30 PM **eFOTG – All you wanted to know, and more!**
NRCS Practice standards -- how to use them
Navigating the NRCS electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG)
 Gary Rinkenberger, Resource Conservationist
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, East Lansing, MI
Putting together systems of practices
 Vicki Anderson, Resource Conservationist
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, East Lansing, MI
- 2:30-3:00 PM **Soils, Soils Everywhere! Web Soil Survey and Soil Data Mart**
 Steve Tardy, Soil Scientist/MLRA 97/98 Project Leader
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Grand Rapids, MI
- 3:00-3:15 PM **Break**
- 3:15-4:00 PM **The Power of RUSLE2! (Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation, 2nd Release)**
 How this tool is used to assess current resource conditions and evaluate alternative conservation systems.
 Jerry Grigar, State Agronomist
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, East Lansing, MI
- 4:00-4:30 PM **If it's Green and it Grows, it's Here! NRCS PLANTS Database**
 Access a wealth of information on plants for you or your client
 John Durling, Agronomist, Rose lake Plant Materials Center
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, East Lansing, MI
- 4:30-5:00 PM **Phosphorus Index – A new tool to work with**
 Introducing the recently developed Michigan Phosphorus Index
 Mike Gangwer, Soil Conservationist
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, East Lansing, MI

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