



SOIL
AND WATER
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY

MI-SWCS Newsletter

Soil and Water Conservation Society
Michigan Chapter

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newsletter and it is
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Michigan Chapter
Newsletter Editor
Daniel F. Kesselring

SWCS Michigan Chapter 2005 Accomplishments

By Tom Fedewa, 2005 Chapter President

It seems like yesterday that Jay Blair, SWCS MI Treasurer, asked me if I was willing to serve the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS), Michigan Chapter, as President. I graciously declined, citing a lack of time. He later asked me to serve as Secretary. I thought I could handle that charge, and I accepted. Now, 6 or 7 years later, I am proud to recognize the dedicated efforts of our Chapter leadership and membership to stick to task and accomplish a great majority of the planned actions spelled out in our very demanding work plan developed and executed during 2005.

SWCS MI Chapter Leadership determined, through strategic planning, that the Chapter's primary objective is to elevate the technical expertise of conservation professionals in the field of soil, water and related natural resource conservation. The Chapter, with this objective in mind, convened a meeting to further define the Chapter's role in professional development. The SWCS-MI work plan was formalized with the assistance of Jim Johnson, Manager, Pollution Prevention Section, Michigan Department of Agriculture; Allen Krizek, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension Liaison to MDA, Kevin Wickey, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Assistant State Conservationist, and Vicki Anderson, NRCS Resource Conservationist. These guests participated in the discussion of the Chapter's role in professional development and helped flesh out the Chapter's objectives into the concrete actions identified in the 2005 Plan of Work.

Chapter Leadership has asserted that the Chapter is well positioned to train conservation professionals in conservation planning methodology, especially in providing training for Conservation District employees and Technical Service Providers. Chapter leadership members Wendy Ogilvie, Dan Kesselring, Larry Foote, Walt Summers, Jay Blair, Jim Robinson, Gay Lynn Kinter and Joni Franklin have been instrumental in this overall undertaking. Thanks for your considerable efforts!

The NRCS Conservation Planning Course Modules 6 through 8 professional development opportunity was ably delivered by dedicated conservationists Dan Kesselring, George Heffner, and Walt Summers. Vicki Anderson provided technical guidance to the trio in delivering the training initiative. Dan Kesselring reported that 12 people completed the 2005 course sponsored by the Chapter. In addition, the Chapter, under the technical leadership of Kesselring, explored the possibility of offering Module 9 plan review for completion of the Conservation Planning Course. Kesselring developed a memorandum of understanding with the Chapter to administer Module 9 of the course.

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(2005 Accomplishments Continued)

The Chapter was awarded a Chapter Achievement Award at the Society's 2005 International Conference. The award read: In recognition of accomplishments during 2004 in a single event or activity to carry out the goals and objectives of the SWCS. This award was garnered by the Chapter largely as a result of the planning training offered, and meeting organizational administrative requirements. Dan Kesselring is to be commended for leading this effort!

The Chapter has also strived to offer technical training opportunities at Michigan State University's Ag and Natural Resource Week (ANR) relating to current conservation issues. Kelly Goward, of the Ottawa/Allegan Conservation Districts, planned an outstanding series of presentations on the "Status and Trends of Michigan's Emerald Ash Borer Control Program." Goward opened the session with a general overview of the issue. The second presenter was Michael Phillip, Invasive Species Program Manager for the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA), Pesticide and Plant Management Division. Mike reviewed the history of the MDA EAB quarantine, the process of de-regulating ash materials, the statewide 2004 and upcoming 2005 trap tree surveys, and the efforts MDA and other partnering agencies have taken to contain and eradicate EAB. The final speaker was Dr. David Smitley, Professor in the Department of Entomology at MSU. Dr. Smitley discussed research on EAB life cycles, control of EAB using various insecticides and natural rates of spread.

The Chapter, under the direction of dedicated Region 1 Director Walt Summers, planned a Native American Culture and Conservation program for the Sault Ste Marie area. I was very pleased with the amount of early registrants, however, paradoxically, the outstanding educational and cultural learning opportunity offered proved cost prohibitive. Walt has been involved in organizing at least 16 Summer Meetings in the U.P. since 1986. Thanks for your dedicated efforts, Walt!

The Chapter exceeded our expectations and prepared and disseminated three, not two chapter newsletters in 2004. Thanks to our diligent article contributors, especially Dan Kesselring and Joni Franklin for their editing efforts.

Gaylynn Kinter and Eckhart Dersch completed the audit of SWCS 2004 financial records on April 5, 2005. The records were found to be correct and in good order. Thanks much to Jay Blair, Treasurer, for his diligent efforts to manage the Chapter's finances in a sound and prudent manner. Dan Kesselring was also instrumental in the Chapter's efforts in developing a budget for the 2005 fiscal year. Thanks, folks, for your hard work!

This year's Grand Valley State Univ. SWCS Student Chapter activities included the spring and fall M-45 highway clean-ups, surveying macro invertebrates in Sand Creek, assisting with the Midwest Wildlife Conference, held in Grand Rapids, bowling, and visits to the Manistee National Forest and Tollgate Wetlands, a constructed wetland designed to treat residential storm water, and a trip to Ludington State Park. Officers included Jaime Fluegge (President), Lisa Beranek (Vice President), Stephanie Baker (Secretary), Rebecca Feuerstein (Treasurer - fall semester), and Bill Poelma (Treasurer - winter semester). Dr. Neil MacDonald continued his role as Faculty Advisor, with help from Dr. Linda Thomasma.

Gaylynn Kinter coordinated the Chapter's two Highway Clean-ups and chaired the Membership Committee. The Chapter gained 11 new members during the year. These 11 came about largely because of the Conservation Planning Class sponsored by the Chapter. Chapter leadership decided that current and new members would receive a member discount on the class registration fee. The class also gained one new member for the Ontario Chapter, as one registrant was from Canada. There are currently 80 Michigan Chapter members.

Tom Fedewa and Dan Kesselring represented the Chapter at the East North Central Leadership Workshop April 7 and 8 at Coshocton, Ohio. The Workshop was held at the Agricultural Research Service's North Appalachian Experimental Watershed (NAEW) Research Station. New SCS employees received training at this facility up to the early 1960's.

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(2005 Accomplishments Continued)

The Chapter really shined in securing items for the International Conference Silent Auction held in Rochester, NY. The Michigan members, and others, donating to the silent auction were June Grabemeyer, The Michigan Bean Commission, Wendy Ogilvie, Dan Kesselring, Ducks Unlimited, Kristine Boley, The Dark Horse Brewery, and Tom Fedewa. The entire auction raised almost \$5,000 for the Society's conservation initiatives.

The Michigan Chapter worked diligently to reinstitute a student chapter at Michigan State University (MSU). SWCS-MI Chapter Leadership, with Eunice Foster, Associate Dean of MSU's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Department Chairs Dr. Doug Buhler (Crop and Soil Science), Dr. Dan Keathley (Forestry), Dr. Ajit Srivastava (Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering-BAE), Dr. Scott Witter (CARS), discussed means to form a Soil and Water Conservation Society on the MSU campus. The SWCS attendees were, W. Ogilvie, T Fedewa, A Raymond and E. Dersch. Ajit K. Srivastava and Johanna Nugent and Andy Lauwers, BAE club officers organized a meeting with BAE Student Club and other ANR clubs with interest in natural resources and the environment on February 23rd to discuss the possible formation of an SWCS Student Chapter.

A mini-job fair was also delivered to the student attendees at the February 23rd meeting. SWCS Michigan Chapter had in attendance T. Fedewa covering employment with NRCS (Federal employment), Andy Raymond covering employment in MDA (State government) and Wendy Ogilvie covering employment with Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr and Huber, a private consulting firm. Eckhart Dersch spoke of the history of the MSU student SWCS chapter. Eckhart Dersch, former MSU Student Chapter advisor advised that there used to be Chapters at MSU, Michigan Technological University, Northern Michigan University and Grand Valley State University. Now only the GVSU Chapter exists. Eckhart has been contacting Faculty Advisors and Student Organization Presidents to get ideas for ways to partner.

The Chapter was actively engaged in the delivery of the 2005 State FFA Land Judging Contest. The field portion of the contest was organized by SWCS members Delbert Mokma, MSU Crops and Soils Professor, Gaylynn Kinter, Soil Scientist, USDA-NRCS, and Dan Kesselring, Retired, USDA-NRCS. Eckhart Dersch, Professor Emeritus, MSU, also assisted.

We worked long and hard to plan and conduct the Chapter's Annual Meeting December 7, 2005. The Professional Development Committee planned for the Annual Meeting Afternoon Technical Session "Conservation: Doing It Better with Partnerships." Ms. Rebecca Fletcher, of the SWCS Board of Directors, East North Central Region Representative delivered Opening remarks about the Society and the benefits of being a member. Ms. Marcy Colclough, Senior Planner, Southwestern Michigan Commission, spoke on "Using partnerships to enable various planning projects in Southwest Michigan to reach common goals in their Master Plans and other land use planning activities." Ms. Kristine Boley-Morse, Battle Creek River Watershed Coordinator, Calhoun Conservation District, advised of "Using Partnerships to collect Hydro-Geomorphology data on the Battle Creek River and gain experience with the technology." John Leif, of the NRCS, Rose Lake Plant Materials Center informed the group of "Using Partnerships to collect seeds from our threatened ash trees to preserve for the future." Wendy Ogilvie, Past-President Michigan Chapter SWCS, facilitated the well attended session.

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

Wendy Ogilvie, Scholarship Committee Chair, 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 Biosystems Engineering major with an emphasis on hydrology. Congratulations, Shane!!

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(2005 Accomplishments Continued)

The Chapter also supported the Michigan Envirothon with a \$250 donation to support the Envirothon Fundraising bowling event held during the MACD Convention.

The Nominations Committee, chaired by Dan Kesselring presented an excellent slate of officers for 2006, per mailed ballot to Chapter membership. 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. Congratulations Dan, and thanks for the outstanding assistance in 2005!!!

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.



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.

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," sponsored by the Michigan Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society 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. Refreshments and handouts will be provided. For more information contact Kesselring at DFKesselring@aol.com.

New Tools and Technologies for Private Lands Conservation Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Member of Soil and Water Conservation Society? Yes No

Amount Enclosed: _____ \$10 for SWCS members

\$15 for nonmembers

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

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.

MI-SWCS Executive Committee

Officers

Daniel F. Kesselring, President
113 North Dr E
Marshall, MI 49068
(H) 269-781-6268
DFKesselring@aol.com

Sarah VanDelfzijl, *President-Elect*
MDEQ-WD
7953 Adobe Rd
Kalamazoo, MI 49009-5026
(W) 616-356-0271
VANDELFIJLS@michigan.gov

Tom Fedewa, *Past President*
USDA-NRCS
3001 Coolidge Rd Ste 250
East Lansing, MI 48823
(W) 517-324-5275
(F) 517-324-5180
tom.fedewa@mi.usda.gov

Vicki Anderson, *Vice President*
USDA-NRCS
3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 250
East Lansing, MI 48823-6321
(W)(517) 324-5158
Vicki.Anderson@mi.usda.gov

Jay Blair, *Treasurer*
USDA-NRCS
1739 N Saginaw, Ste 300
Lapeer, MI 48446
(W) 810-230-8766x3
(F) 810-664-8254
jay.blair@mi.usda.gov

Walter Summers, *Secretary*
4780 Lincoln Ave
Quinnesec, MI 49876
(H) 906-774-5868
wsummers@chartermi.net

Regional Directors

Becky Otto
Region 1- UP Michigan
USDA-NRCS
780 Commerce Dr.
Marquette, MI 49855
(W) 906-226-9460
becky.otto@mi.usda.gov

Dan Hovland
Region 2- Northern Lower MI
USDA-NRCS
501 Norway St.
Grayling, MI 49736-1719
(W) 989-348-9523 Ext. 23
dan.hovland@mi.usda.gov

Scott Kenreich
Region 3- SW Lower MI
USDA-NRCS
16731 Ferris St.
Grand Haven, MI 49417
(W) 616-842-5852
(F) 616-842-2820
Scott.Kenreich@mi.usda.gov

Lawrence Foote
Region 4- SE Lower MI
Meridian Shores
5636 S Meridian Rd
Mt Pleasant, MI 48858
(W) 517-772-3230
wrenfoote@aol.com



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