

Michigan Chapter SWCS Plans for 2011

March 9, 2011– Agriculture and Natural Resources Week, MSU, Michigan Chapter SWCS Professional Development Program

A Matter of Balance: Ecosystem Services and Sustainable Agriculture

Simply put, ecosystem services are the multitude of benefits provided by the environment. The idea of ecosystem services is nothing new. What is new is the way that ecosystem services are being considered by conservation organizations and natural resource managers.

An ecosystem approach challenges us to consider all aspects of a proposed action, not just the primary purpose. For example, a grassed waterway helps to safely convey excess water off a field to reduce erosion, but how does this practice affect wildlife? Air quality? Carbon sequestration? We will be exploring the world of ecosystem services and how to incorporate these ideas into the ways we manage our natural resources and environment.

Spring 2011 – East-North Central Region Leadership Development Workshop, Hosted by the Michigan Chapter SWCS

One of the roles of the regional team is to provide leadership training annually for current officers, committee chairs, council members, and for those who are interested in assuming a leadership position in the future. The Michigan Chapter is hosting the 2011 workshop, tentatively scheduled for May 5th and 6th. The agenda is not set, but several ideas are under consideration, and planning will be kicking into high gear in the new year. This workshop will benefit you both personally and professionally by developing skills in advocacy, communication and leadership. Additional benefits include:

- Sharing ideas with neighboring SWCS chapters
- Learning how to motivate your members
- Networking with other SWCS leaders
- Bringing information back to make the Michigan chapter stronger and more effective
- Participating in discussions to shape the future of SWCS and the Michigan chapter
- Participating in a tour highlighting area conservation projects/issues

Stay tuned for more information about this excellent training opportunity.

July 17 – 20, 2011 – SWCS Annual International Conference, Washington, DC

The SWCS annual conference brings together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers at all levels of government, business, and nongovernmental organizations to explore current issues in conservation and environmental management science, technology, practice, programs, and policy.

August 2011– Michigan Chapter Summer Meeting and Tour

This year the tour will be held in northern, Lower Michigan. The summer meeting and tour rotates throughout the state from year to year and highlights local topics of interest. Stay tuned for more information!

Fall 2011 – Local Issues/Interest Tour

This past year a local tour was held in Northwest Lower Michigan highlighting Organic Agriculture. The tour was a success, and I believe there is a place to continue to highlight areas that deal with specific areas of interest. Please let us know if you would like to see a tour developed to highlight the great things happening in your area.

December 2011 – Annual Meeting and Technical Session

Held in conjunction with the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts Annual Convention, the Michigan Chapter SWCS Annual Meeting and Professional Development session offers an excellent opportunity to network with conservation professionals while learning about timely and relevant topics in conservation. We are always looking for new topics to explore, so send your ideas to Jean Gagliardo at jean.gagliardo@mi.usda.gov.

Other Chapter Activities

- Website

Please check out our website. Our Webmaster, Dan Kesselring is doing an outstanding job at keeping the website current and interesting. The address is www.miswcs.org

- Membership

In 2010, President Rebekah DeWind challenged us to increase our chapter membership, and I would like to continue that focus in 2011. I welcome your ideas to help grow our organization.