

Michigan Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society
2018 President's Annual Report from Hugh Brown
Annual Meeting October 29, 2018

Thanks to excellent work by the Executive Council, members, and conservation partners, we have had a productive year (November 2017 to October 2018). We had several successful professional development programs and promoted conservation in Michigan.

Professional Development

On March 2 at the Kellogg Conference Center, we presented our Agriculture and Natural Resources Week Seminar entitled: A Matter of Balance: Managing Soil and Crop Nutrient Systems to Protect Water Quality. Conference speakers included national experts and experienced crop producers who shared insights into how to capture crop nutrients and organic inputs in the root zone for crop use, and to build soil health and protect waterways.

- Dr. Carrie Laboski, Professor of Soil Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison
"In-season N Applications for Corn: Pros & Cons" and "Dairy Manure N Availability as Influenced by Application Timing, Manure Treatment, and Nitrification Inhibitor Use"
- Clare Lindahl, CEO Soil and Water Conservation Society
"Professionals and Partnerships for Progress"
- Dr. Ehsan Ghane, Assistant Professor MSU Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering
"Collaborative Edge-of-Field Projects to Protect Michigan Water Quality"
- Brock Gobrogge, CCA, Crop Manager, Dykhuis Farms, Inc. Holland, Michigan
"A Farmer's Perspective on Managing Soil Sustainability"
- Aliana Nunn, Research Associate Institute of Water Research MSU
"Impact of Water Quality Data on Farmer Attitudes, Knowledge, and Behavior toward Conservation: A Case Study"

We are currently planning for the March 6, 2019 program with Tim Harrigan from MSU (and Region 4 Representative) providing leadership. It will be held at AgroLiquid's facility in St. Johns, MI. Details will be provided as the program is developed.

Summer Program

On June 4, Jon Bartholic, SWCS Michigan Chapter Past President, Katie Droscha and Laura Young organized a session on "Web-based Mapping Analysis Tools to Assist Farmers with Conservation Assessment and Planning Support." The program examined several tools to enhance resource management:

- Utilizing the Great Lakes Watershed Management System (GLWMS), Getting Started and Early Successes.
- Employing the GLWMS Operationally with Farmers to Guide Field Practice Selection, Estimation of Benefits, and Accumulation of Results.
- Groundwater Recharge (GWR) Goal Setting for Saginaw Bay Watershed and Assessing the Impact of GWR Practices Using the GLWMS.
- Using the State Wide Sensitive Areas Identification System to Assess Field Practices and Connect to NRCS.

NRCS Training Session

Katie Droscha and Tori Harris held a training session covering the Michigan Sensitive Areas Identification System tool and the Great Lakes Watershed Management System tool for the Area 3 (West and SW) NRCS Field Offices on July 24, 2018. The session was attended by 22 staff from 19 different counties. For more information, see:

<http://www.iwr.msu.edu/Tools-Data/index.asp>

MACD Annual Conference Session

Jon Bartholic, Katie Droscha and others developed a session which will be held Tuesday, October 30th from 3:30pm to 5:00pm on “Computer Assisted Nutrient Management Planning Program (CANMaPP)” which will feature a discussion with developers, farmers and conservation field staff for tool integration, planning, support and conservation assessment. This project is led and developed by the Michigan State University Institute of Water Research (IWR) and is supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Part 1 starts with a panel that includes farmers discussing the challenges of performing nutrient management on their land. Part 2 will be a discussion of the CANMapp Tool development and future goals by the NRCS State Office. Part 3 will end with a discussion led by developer Laura Young (IWR), covering the potentials of the CANMaPP tool and the project rollout.

SWCS Fall Field Trip

The Michigan Chapter’s Fall Field Trip will be held later today and features a visit to Providence Farms to discuss soil health, water quality, and sustainability. The program was organized by Dan Busby, MEAP Verifier and SWCS Region 2 Representative with assistance from Pepper Bromelmeier, NRCS District Conservationist.

International SWCS

Dr. Zouheir Massri attended the SWCS International Conference in Albuquerque NM and he represented the chapter at the House of Delegates Meeting. The 2019 event to be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania from July 28–31, 2019 should be accessible for Michiganders and I encourage you to attend if possible.

Finance Committee

Treasurer Kelly Goward has been maintaining our accounts and paying bills. She will provide an update for the annual meeting, but as of the end of September, the Chapter had a total of \$19,593.90 in four accounts: Chase Savings, Chase Checking, Marshall Community Credit Union (a \$4K one year CD and a \$5K five year CD) and Vanguard (\$6,364 in two mutual funds: High Dividend Yield and Long-term Investment Grade).

Strategic Planning

We had two sessions in East Lansing to review progress on our Strategic Plan: the first was on March 1 and the second was on August 8. Claire Lindahl, the new SWCS CEO, and Susan Meadows, SWCS Regional Representative from Indiana, participated at the March program along with several Executive Council members. Initiatives that will be explored include appointing liaisons to improve communication between the Michigan Chapter and other conservation agencies and organizations, surveying members to better understand what chapter services are desired, creating a communication internship position to assist with social media and student groups, and forming an Early Career Professionals Committee to improve our outreach to young individuals. Hugh also had conversations with Rebecca Powers, the newly elected North Central Regional Representative about the chapter's programs.

Membership and Outreach

Rebecca Bender, Committee Chair, has been editing the chapter's monthly newsletter using Mail Chimp. She is also communicating with new and lapsing members to increase or maintain the current level of about 60 members. One strategy to attract more members is to improve communication and provide more services so that individuals get value for their dues.

Legislative Committee

Tim Catron, Committee Chair, developed an informational piece on HB 5638 that changes the approval process for water withdrawals that was sent out to members. We have kept track of other legislation such as HB 5752 and HB 5753 that affects natural resource management.

Annual Meeting

New officers will be announced at the Annual Meeting today along with the results of the Bylaws Amendment to reorganize the chapter's regions for selecting representatives to the Executive Council. Committee Chairs will report on their activities over the past year.

Summary

I am confident that the coming year will be productive and that John Freeland, the incoming President, will guide the Society in a positive direction. Thanks to Secretary Dan Kesselring, all the others on the Executive Council, and members for your support and hard work on the chapter's business. I appreciate the opportunity to serve the chapter and will continue my efforts in the coming year as Past President.