

**Report for Michigan Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society
Annual Meeting, November 1, 2017
From Hugh Brown, Committee Chair**

Membership

According to the International Society's website, there are currently 60 members in the Michigan Chapter which is down two from the beginning of the year tally. We have obtained several new members, but lost more than we gained. We are a sponsor of the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts meeting and are providing registrants with the International Society's membership form. Current members are encouraged to make individual contact with prospective members and can use the information in the brochure to highlight the benefits of joining. We should also accomplish the action items in the Chapter's 2014-2019 Strategic Plan that relate to membership.

Rebecca Bender will serve as the Membership Chairperson beginning on November 1 and Katelyn Walters (current scholarship recipient) has agreed to help out with communications on Facebook.

The Grand Valley Student Chapter is active on campus, but not in the International Society. Mary Parr is serving as a student liaison to the Michigan Chapter.

Policy

The Executive Council and the Policy Committee have been considering a reorganization of the chapter's regions that involves the merger of Regions 1 and 2 and adding an at-large director. The main justification for the proposed bylaws change is to provide more equitable representation on the Executive Council. Current numbers in the Regions are 1=3, 2=8, 3=24, and 4=29. The at-large Director would provide geographical flexibility to the Nominating Committee (for example in a case where two good candidates are from the same region).

A draft of the Chapter Bylaws revision (see below) proposes combining regions 1 and 2 (along with a shift of Bay, Isabella, and Midland Counties from existing region 4) and providing for an at-large regional director. If this is approved, we would need to have a transition to a three-region configuration after a future election.

In the Executive Council's Sept. 9 teleconference, authorization to proceed with the merger proposal was granted. We would like to obtain feedback on the bylaw revision from the membership prior to putting the bylaw revision proposal to a vote. Note: the current bylaws are on the chapter's website.

New Article IV Officers

Section 3 - The President-Elect and Vice-President shall be elected annually as hereinafter provided. The current year President-Elect shall automatically assume the position of President the following year. However, if the President-Elect is unable to assume the position

of President, then the position of President shall be elected to fill the vacancy. The four regional directors shall be elected for a term of 2 years hereinafter provided. Regional directors of regions 1 and 3 shall be elected in odd-numbered calendar years. Regional directors of regions 2 and the at-large director (4) shall be elected in even-numbered calendar years.

New Article VII Regions

a) To give the membership the greater opportunity to participate in Chapter affairs, the Chapter will be divided into three regions. A member's voting region shall be the area in which is based on the member's address of record at SWCS Headquarters is located.

The regions of the Chapter are:

1. Northern Region - Comprising all the upper peninsula of Michigan Comprising and the counties of Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Arenac, Bay, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Clare, Crawford, Emmet, Gladwin, Grand Traverse, Iosco, Isabella, Kalkaska, Lake, Leelanau, Manistee, Mason, Midland, Missaukee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Osceola, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle, Roscommon, and Wexford.

2. Southwestern Region - Comprising the counties of Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Clinton, Eaton, Ionia, Kalamazoo, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Ottawa, St. Joseph, and Van Buren.

3. Southeastern Region - Comprising the counties of Genesee, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Huron, Ingham, Jackson, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, St. Clair, Tuscola, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

b) A fourth Regional Representative to serve on the Executive Council shall be chosen at large from any of the three regions listed above. This bylaw change will go into effect at a time that will allow the current Regional Representative in either 1 or 2 (whichever one's term expires earlier) to become the at-large member.

Scholarship

The Executive Council decided to give a Five Hundred Dollar Michigan Scholarships in Conservation Award for the 2017-2018 school year. Dan has sent out an announcement for the scholarship and I will follow up with my contacts. Kelly Goward and Martin Alford have agreed to serve on the Scholarship Committee but I need one or two additional persons to serve on the committee.

The chapter's scholarship funds have been invested in two certificates of deposit at the Marshall Community Credit Union and in two Vanguard funds (High Dividend Yield Index and Long Term Investment-Grade Fund). The first Vanguard fund is equities and the second is in bonds. Collectively, these investments should generate income to help cover the cost of the scholarship in years to come.