



***Fostering the science and art of soil and water conservation
in Michigan and the Great Lakes Region.***

FALL 2020 CHAPTER NEWS

Wishing you all a happy, prosperous and, above all, safe and healthy New Year!

It's been a busy quarter for the Chapter, despite the disruption of "normal" business due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Chapter membership has held steady at 53, Executive Council meetings have remained on schedule, the Annual Meeting was held via video conference, and two technical seminars were held with videos uploaded to the [Events and Archives page of the Chapter website](#).

ANNUAL MEETING

Happy Water New Year and Welcome New Officers!

Fall marks the time for harvest and the beginning of the [new hydrologic year](#). It is also when the Chapter holds elections for the [Executive Council](#). Here are the current officers with those newly elected or reelected shown in *italics*. Chapter President Glenn O'Neil was the 2020 President-elect.

Glenn O'Neil, President

Katie Droscha, Vice President

Kelly Goward, Treasurer

Rebecca Bender, Region 1 Director

Gerald Miller, Region 3 Director

Shelby Burlew, President-elect

Tim Harrigan, Past President

Daniel F. Kesselring, Secretary

Zachary Curtis, Region 2 Director

Dan Busby, Statewide At Large Director

Annual Reports

Annual reports from Executive Council and Committee members are submitted in advance of the Chapter Business Meeting: This year's reports prepared by the Committee Chairs include the following:

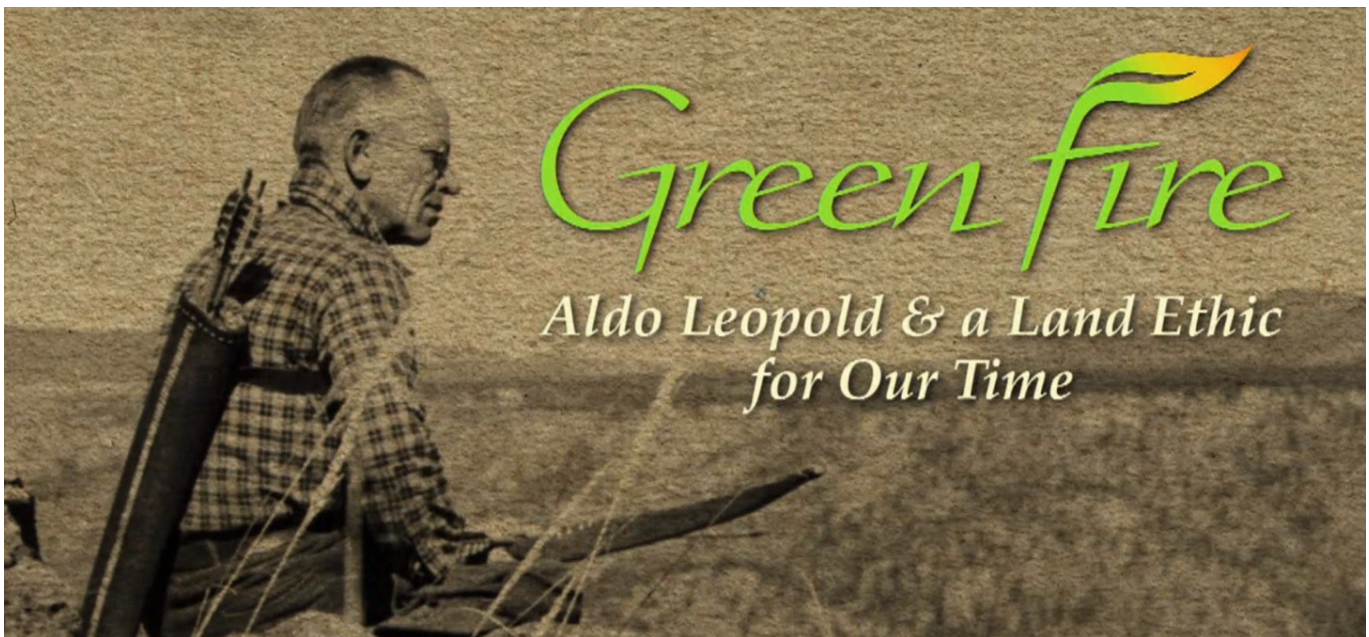
- Professional Development Committee Report for 2020 (Gerald Miller, Chair)
- Fiscal Year 2020 Account Statements and Budget Reports (Kelly Goward, Treasurer)
- Membership and Outreach Committee 2020 Report (John Freeland, Chair)
- Scholarship Committee Report for 2020 (Zachary Curtis, Ph.D. Region 2 Director Chair, Scholarship Committee)

The full text of each report is available on the Chapter website [Events and Archives page](#).

2019-2020 Scholarship Award

From Dr. Curtis: “This year’s scholarship was awarded to April Savickas, a senior at Grand Valley State University majoring in Natural Resources Management, with a minor in Biology. April completed volunteer work with the Kent Conservation District and the Thornapple River Watershed Council, among others. She also joined the GVSU Student Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, and served on the Executive Council as Chapter President. The Chapter will offer a student scholarship for the Fall 2020-Spring 2021 academic year. As you probably know, the \$500 award is made to a deserving student who shows promise in the field of natural resources conservation. A call-for-applications is now available for the Fall 2020-Spring 2021 academic year. ...Applications will be received by the Scholarship Committee until January 31, 2021. The recipient will be selected by February 15, 2021. The Scholarship Committee responsible with reviewing this year’s applications and selecting a recipient includes Kelly Goward, James (Jim) Rasmussen, and myself (Chair).
Zachary Curtis, Ph.D. Region 2 Director and Chair, Scholarship Committee “

Must See Video



The Aldo Leopold Foundation has produced an impressive movie narrated by Peter Coyote. Viewers are likely to be impressed by the excellent videography and learn something about Leopold and his influence on the conservation movement. The video is 56 minutes long and it is available through the following link. View it in its entirety by logging in with an email address and your name. The DVD can also be purchased for \$20 USD. Having watched it, I highly recommend it! -(John Freeland, Newsletter editor). [Digital Learning Resources | The Aldo Leopold Foundation](#)

Soliciting Help Reviewers for Professional Manuscripts

Review of Professional Manuscripts. The chapter received a request from a member for assistance in reviewing professional manuscripts prior to submission to the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation or other professional journals. Michigan Chapter members interested in providing this assistance can contact John Freeland, Newsletter Editor freeland.nrc@gmail.com or Dan Kesselring, Secretary dfbjkring@att.net for information to connect with the Michigan Chapter member.

Pictures for the Newsletter

Have some interesting pictures to share with a Michigan Soil & Water theme? If you would like to share them with the Chapter, please send them to John Freeland, Newsletter editor at freeland.nrc@gmail.com

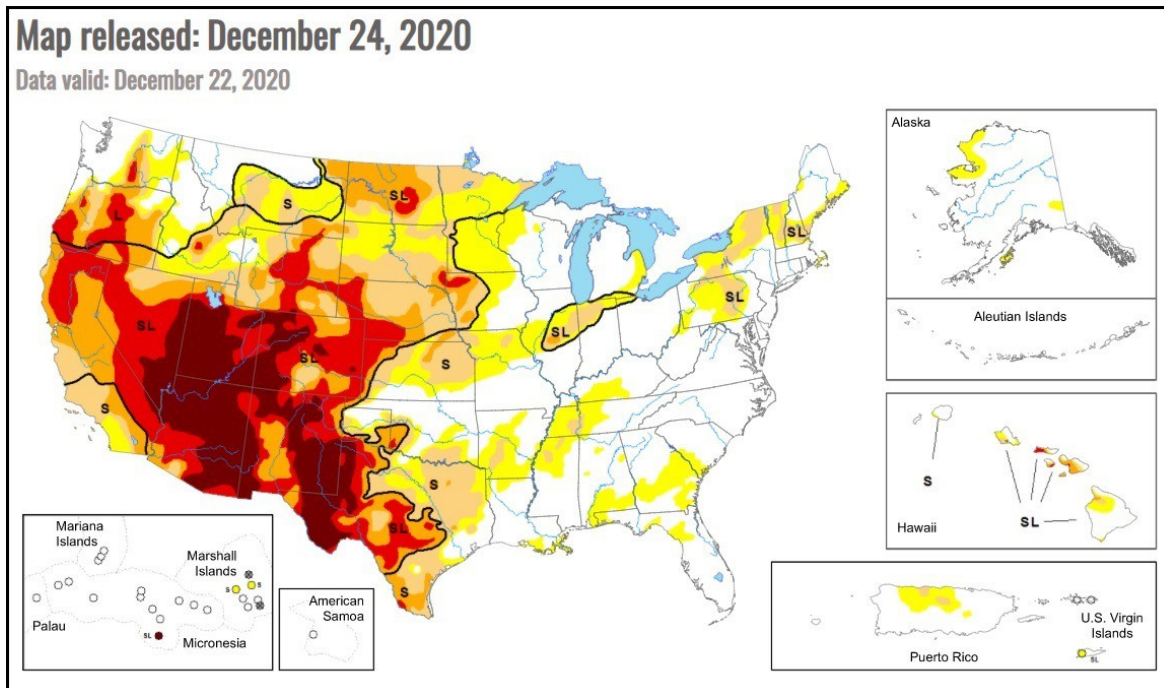


Geese on the River Raisin, Blissfield Michigan December 10, 2020. (Photo by John Freeland)

Our ability to perceive quality in nature begins as in art with the pretty. It expands through successive stages of the beautiful to values yet uncaptured by language.” - Aldo Leopold.

National Perspectives

Because we Michiganders are *peninsular*, not *insular*, we are connected to the rest of the nation and interested in it's soil and water realm. [Current Map | United States Drought Monitor \(unl.edu\)](#)
The dark brown area is "exceptional drought." If these trends continue, what are the implications for Michigan growers and USDA funding priorities?



Technical Notes: NRCS Drainage Water Management Code 554

[Drainage Water Management USDA-NRCS Video](#)

You may notice more boxes next to ditches and farm fields. These are water control structures connected to drain tiles used to optimize water made available to crops and reduce nutrient losses and water pollution.



CONDITIONS WHERE DWM PRACTICE APPLIES – *A few highlights from Code 554*

- Agricultural lands with surface or subsurface agricultural drainage systems that can be adapted, or are partially adapted, to allow management of drainage volume and water table by changing the elevation of water level at the outlet(s).
- Topography is relatively smooth, uniform, and flat to very gently sloping.
- Raising the outlet elevation of a water control structure in a flowing drain must result in an elevated free water surface within the soil profile.
- In cold climates, lower the outlet elevation during winter after drain flow has stopped. This will avoid freezing damage to the water control structures. Raise the water to the planned elevation when flow resumes.
- Adjust the water levels throughout the year to allow for proper root zone development. Specify conditions where adjusting the outlet elevations may be required, such as significant rainfall events. Describe what those adjustments might be. Provide means for the operator to monitor and record the water levels in the water control structure(s) and the water table within the control zone(s).
- Raise the outlet within 2 weeks after final field operations following harvest. Change to free drainage mode no more than 2 weeks before the planned commencement of the next season's field operations, except during system maintenance periods or to provide trafficability when field operations are necessary.
- In cold climates, lower the outlet elevation during winter after drain flow has stopped. This will avoid freezing damage to the water control structures. Raise the water to the planned elevation when flow resumes.
- In fields with winter cover crops, lower the outlet elevation during winter to within 0.5 feet of the expected cover crop rooting depth. Raise the outlet elevation of the water control structure to within 0.5 feet below the control elevation or just below the root zone of an actively growing crop prior to and during liquid manure applications in order to prevent direct leakage of manure into drainage pipes through soil macro pores (cracks, wormholes, root channels).
- Maintain the raised outlet elevation for at least 15 days following manure application or until the next precipitation event that produces drain flow.
- Monitor the control structure(s) for trapped manure. Remove liquid manure trapped in the structure(s) and dispose of it in an appropriate manner.

The full text of NRCS Code 554 can be found [here](#).

Links

[Michigan Soil and Water Conservation Society - YouTube](#)

[North Central Region | Soil and Water Conservation Society \(swcs.org\)](#)

[Great Lakes Echo - Environmental news across the basin](#)

[Michigan Farmers Union | United to Grow Family Agriculture](#)

[American Farm Bureau Federation - The Voice of Agriculture | Homepage \(fb.org\)](#)

[W.K. Kellogg Biological Station • Michigan State University \(msu.edu\)](#)

[Great Lakes Restoration Initiative | Great Lakes Restoration Initiative \(glri.us\)](#)

[Home | Hoosier Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society \(hoosierchapterswcs.org\)](#)

[GLIN: Great Lakes Information Network - Great Lakes Commission \(glc.org\)](#)



Town park on the South Branch of the Kalamazoo River, Homer, Michigan, September 2020 (*Photo by John Freeland*)