



*Flint River*

*Photo credit: Evan Bornholtz*

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/49028945@N00/4058838008/>

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

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Greetings Michigan chapter members! It has been a while since we put out our last newsletter. John Freeland did a fantastic job as the newsletter editor for the past two years but decided that it was time to let others inform the membership about upcoming events, news from the field of soil and water conservation research, updates on policy, new conservation tools, and member profiles. I will take over editor duties going forward, but the content of the newsletter will continue to come from our generous and dedicated chapter members. I welcome any feedback you are willing to share, and any pictures you have taken that capture the beauty of Michigan's soil and water resources that we are all striving to protect.

Glenn O'Neil ([oneilg@msu.edu](mailto:oneilg@msu.edu))

## Chapter News and Upcoming Events

The **chapter's Annual Meeting** to review the past year and look ahead to the next will be held virtually on Friday December 16, 2022, at 12:30PM EST. A Zoom link for this meeting will be sent out to all chapter members.

A webinar workshop starting at 2PM will follow the annual meeting and will feature a talk from Jeremiah Asher of Michigan State University's Institute of Water Research. Mr. Asher will share results from a recent edge-of-field monitoring project that evaluated the tillage impacts on water quality and quantity. A separate Zoom link for this workshop will be sent out to all who registered for it, prior to the meeting. We look forward to seeing you there ... even if it is in pixelated form.



*Jeremiah Asher  
Assistant Director  
IWR-MSU*

Add it to your 2023 calendar: the chapter's **annual ANR seminar** will take place from 9AM – 4PM EST on Friday March 23 at the AgroLiquid Conference Center in St. Johns, MI. Members can look for an agenda and registration link in their inboxes soon!

On the calendar for the national SWCS office, the next virtual workshop for the Student Professional Development Series will take place on Thursday January 26 at 6PM EST. Registration is required: <https://www.swcs.org/resources/student-and-early-career-resources/virtual-student-events/>

## Member profile: *Katie Droscha*

Our member profile for this newsletter is Katie Droscha



### *1. Where do you work and what do you do there?*

Kent Conservation District. I work with farmers and private landowners to address natural resource concerns.



2. *When and why did you join MI-SWCS?*

2018, I saw a handout at a conference.

3. *What do you see as a major challenge to conservation efforts in Michigan?*

Money and permitting.

4. *How have you participated in the MI SWCS chapter?*

I have served on the chapter's Executive Committee for the past few years, as a vice president, president-elect, and as president next year. I also serve on the professional development committee and have organized a few conference sessions and webinars for the chapter.

5. *How do you feel your membership to the MI SWCS is valuable?*

I hope to facilitate outreach and develop ideas for educational sessions.

6. *What advice do you have for aspiring or early career natural resource professionals?*

Talk to folks who are already employed at an organization; ask about the pros/cons before applying or accepting a position. Network.

7. *Where were you born, and where did you grow up?*

I was born near and grew up around Charlotte, MI.

8. *What is your favorite place in Michigan to visit?*

Marquette, MI.

9. *What do you like to do in your free time?*

Podcasts, organize and clean, create small pollinator habitats, aerobics.

10. *Best place to eat in your area, and what to order there?*

Asia's Finest Restaurant in south Lansing. Bun Dac Biet (a delicious noodle dish).

11. **Bonus:** *What is your favorite dessert?*

Pie.

If you're in the capitol region and are craving noodles, check out Asia's Finest and maybe you'll run into Katie. Buy her some pie and she'll give you the presidential tour of the headquarters of the Michigan Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (... if we ever get one).

## **JSWCS Highlight**

SWCS members have access to the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, where they can learn about the latest research around the globe in conservation science. In this section we highlight an article in the most recent journal issue.

In the Sept./Oct. 2022 issue Weigel, Cruse, and Reddy evaluate efforts to improve farmer communication in their article "Using targeted messages to improve farmer engagement in conservation programs," (doi:10.2489/jswc.2022.00145). The authors carried out a randomized messaging and survey program among farmers in Iowa, gauging their views on soil erosion conservation practices. Around 3,000 farmers were contacted through physical mail and email. Some of the farmers received messages that framed the survey in a state-wide context by including a map of Iowa and information about average soil erosion rates across the state. Other farmers received a more locally targeted message, which included a map of their county and local watershed, and the average soil erosion rates in their region. The authors then compared the survey response rates to see if the targeted/localized messaging improved farmer engagement. Results showed that targeting messages increased the relative survey response rate by 20% and, surprisingly, that 90% of respondents sent in their answers via physical mail rather than complete an online survey. The study provides some potentially useful insights for members of our community who regularly try to engage farmers in discussions around conservation opportunities in their communities. Check out the latest issue of the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation to learn more about this study.

## Conservation Tools Highlight

The Michigan EnviroImpact tool helps farmers monitor rain forecasts and ground conditions so that they can more efficiently apply manure to their fields. By providing users with forecasts for rainfall, snow, and soil temperatures, farmers can better evaluate whether a large portion of manure application may end up as surface runoff. Users can view maps that gauge runoff risk across the state, in addition to forecasted maps of the data used to calculate that risk (precipitation, snowfall, soil temperature, and others). The forecasts are generated multiple times a day by NOAA, which are sent out to partner organizations in each state. In Michigan, a website maintained by Michigan State University updates statewide maps and sends alerts to registered users when needed. Check it out: <https://enviroimpact.iwr.msu.edu/>



## 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 members of the Executive Council.

## Membership

If you are not currently a member of the Soil & Water Conservation Society, membership has many benefits. By joining the national Society, members are automatically affiliated with their state chapters. This is an opportunity to network with professionals in the conservation field and support the Society's critical mission. Information about how to join is available through the link: <https://www.swcs.org/get-involved/join/>

## ***Links of Interest***

[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 \(glc.org\)](#)

[MSU Water Withdrawal Statistics](#)