

# **SUSTAINABLE INTENSIFICATION OF THE RURAL LANDSCAPE:**

## *Protecting Soil Health, Water Quality and Farm Profitability*

March 8, 2024, Michigan Chapter SWCS ANR Seminar  
**SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

### **David Karpovich, Ph.D.**

H. H. Dow Endowed Professor of Chemistry at SVSU  
Director of the Saginaw Bay Environmental Science Institute

Currently, I serve as the H. H. Dow Endowed Professor of Chemistry and the Director of the Saginaw Bay Environmental Science Institute at SVSU. My research involves Michigan's environment, water resources, and agriculture with a common theme being the wise use of natural resources. I also lead the Dow Science and Sustainability Education Center at SVSU which provides opportunities for many high school students, teachers, and college students to become involved in environmental science research. My B. S. in chemistry is from SVSU, and my Ph. D. in analytical chemistry is from Michigan State University. I spent two years at the Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Washington before joining SVSU's faculty in 1998.

### **Doug Pearsall, Ph.D.**

Senior Conservation Scientist  
The Nature Conservancy, Midwest Division

After 28 years as a scientist and conservation planner in the Michigan Business Unit, I am now a Senior Conservation Scientist with TNC's Midwest Division. I manage a few Michigan-based projects including the Keweenaw Heartlands Inventory and Saginaw Bay Monitoring Consortium. For the MWD, I focus mainly on Strategy: facilitating Conservation by Design 2.0 (TNC's strategy development framework) modules for strategy and project teams and helping to develop a general level of competency with CbD 2 across conservation staff. I have led and contributed to conservation planning initiatives for the Great Lakes and in Michigan, including the biodiversity conservation strategies for Lake Michigan and Lake Erie. I represent TNC on the Great Lakes Coastal Assembly – a bi-national collaborative seeking pursuing science and planning priorities for coastal resilience in the Great Lakes. I serve on the Core Team of the North America Regional Network of the Global Conservation Coaches Network, an international organization applying, promoting, and advancing the Open Standards for Conservation.

I received my Ph.D. in natural resources in 1995 from the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE), Ann Arbor. My wife Nancy and I have two grown sons and live in East Lansing, MI, where we enjoy walking, biking, and hiking, especially in the forests and on the shorelines of the Great Lakes.

### **Robyn Wilson, Ph.D., Professor**

School of Environment and Natural Resources  
The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

Dr. Wilson is a behavioral decision scientist studying individual decisions under risk. She is also interested in the development of strategic communication efforts, as well as the design of decision-support tools that assist individuals in making more informed choices. Her current research focuses on adaptation to climate-exacerbated hazards and what motivates and constrains land use and land management decisions on private and public lands. She received her M.S. and Ph.D. from Ohio State's SENR and her B.A. in Environmental Studies from Denison University.

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## **Colleen Forestieri**

Conservation Technician  
Van Buren Conservation District

Colleen Forestieri helps growers reduce their environmental impact while improving resilience and profitability on their farm. She was born and raised in the “fruit belt” of Southwest Michigan where she learned early on that food does not come from a can or box, but it comes from the soil and is cultivated by farmers. Forestieri has built strong relationships with growers by focusing on economics and management hurdles when making recommendations. When she is not talking about soil health or digging in farm fields, you can find her hanging out with her husband and 2 children in Paw Paw, Michigan.

## **Blaine Baker, Owner**

Bakerlads Farms, Clayton, Michigan

Blaine Baker and his wife Barbara milk 520 cows and farm 2,000 acres in south central Michigan. Blaine, an NACD Soil Health Champion, has been total no-till since 2008, and are 100 percent covered with annual rye, rye rape, or rye rape clover. The Bakers have about three miles of buffers along their ditches – some of which were installed with assistance through CRP and CREP. He started using filter strips around 1990, and applies fertilizer using variable rate technology and plants according to yield monitoring data.

## **John Burk, Owner**

Burk Farms, Bay City, Michigan

John P. Burk has a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Engineering from Michigan State University and a Masters Degree in Crop and Soil Science from Michigan State University. He has worked as an Agriculture and Natural Resources educator with MSU Extension based in Bay and Arenac Counties, previously served as a director with Bay County Soil Conservation District for about 20 years with 15 years as Chairman. John also served on the State Council with the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts during part of his tenure as a director. He has been involved on the forefront of conservation implementation in the Saginaw Bay Watershed for most of his career.

## **Lee & Marilyn Thelen, Owners**

Thelen Farms, St. Johns, Michigan

Lee and Marilyn Thelen farm in St. Johns, Michigan. Lee began farming in 1981 and Marilyn joined the operation in 1987. Over the last 43 years we have grown the farm to 1800 acres where we raise corn, soybeans, wheat and finish Holstein steers. We also grow some rye, oats and occasionally oilseed radish seed which is used to seed cover crops. Lee is dedicated to enhancing the soil health on the farms by implementing minimal tillage, utilizing manure in the system and planting cover crops. In addition to farming Lee is the Greenbush Township Supervisor.

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**Randy Schaetzl**, Professor  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan

Randy Schaetzl is a University Distinguished Professor at Michigan State University. Trained as a geographer, he makes his academic home in the Department of Geography, Environment, and Spatial Sciences. He specializes research and teaching in the areas of in soils and geomorphology, with an emphasis on the Great Lakes region.

**Jennifer Kanine**, Director of Natural Resources  
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, Dowagiac, Michigan

Dr. Jennifer Kanine obtained her bachelor's in natural resources and master's in conservation biology from Central Michigan University. Jennifer graduated with a Doctorate in Forest Resources from the University of Georgia in 2013. Dr. Kanine is a TWS certified wildlife biologist with over 20 years of natural resources experience. For the past nine years, Dr. Kanine has been the Director of the Kowabdanawa odë kè Department ("They watch over this land") for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians.