



# Michigan Chapter

## Annual Business Meeting Friday, December 15, 2023

Held by Remote Video Conference

### MINUTES

**Call to Order:** 10:06 a.m. by President Katie Droscha

**Roll Call:** Chapter Secretary Daniel Kesselring reported that there were 9 officers present and 14 members who were not officers present. Since the Bylaws call for at least 5 officers and at least 5 members who are not officers be present to represent a quorum, Dan stated that a quorum was present. Those Chapter Officers and members attending were as follows.

**Chapter Officers Attending:** Katie Droscha, President; Gerald Miller, Vice President; Dan Kesselring, Secretary; Kelly Goward, Treasurer; Steve Schaub, President-elect; Tess Van Gorder, At-large Director; Dan Busby, Region 1 Director; Zachary Curtis, Region 2 Director; and Gary Boersen, Region 3 Director.

**Other Chapter Members attending:** Glenn O'Neil, Adam Reimer, Heather Varboncoeur, James DeYoung, Mila Resetar, Radwin Askari, Sarah Bowman, Sarah Fronczak, Shaya Williams, Patty McNinch, Tim Harrigan, Laura Campbell, Zouheir Massri, and Jon Bartholic.

**Others present:** Alexa Hempel, Scholarship recipient, Michigan Scholarships in Conservation Program.

**Agenda:** President Droscha asked if there were any additions or corrections to the agenda as presented. Moved by Laura Campbell, supported by Gerald Miller, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed by voice vote.

**Introductions:** President Droscha then introduced the Chapter Officers in attendance.

**12/16/22 Annual Meeting Minutes:** The 2022 Annual Meeting minutes had been provided on the Chapter website prior to this meeting. President Droscha asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the 2022 Annual Meeting. Steve Schaub moved that the minutes be approved as printed. Gerald Miller supported the motion. Motion passed by voice vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Kelly Goward, Treasurer, provided and explained 2 documents for her Treasurer's Report on her shared screen. The 2 documents were also posted on the Chapter website. The documents were: a 2023 Monthly Budget Statement covering January through November 30, and a Statement for all Accounts as of November 30. The November 30 fund balances were: General Fund = \$5,505.08 and Scholarship Funds = \$16,174.78. Moved by Zachary Curtis, supported by Glenn O'Neil, to approve the Treasurer's Reports. Motion passed by voice vote. A year-end Treasurer's Report will be provided to all Chapter members after December 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Committee Reports:

**Membership and Outreach Committee:** Glenn O'Neil, Committee Chair, presented the report. He noted that he had just published the Fall 2023 Chapter Newsletter which is now available on the Chapter website, and that current Michigan Chapter membership is 54 members.

**Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee:** Glenn O'Neil, Committee Chair, reported that a group of Chapter officers started working on an update of the Michigan Chapter Strategic Plan in 2021 and are now circulating the last update and plan to complete the update in January, 2024.

**Professional Development Committee:** Committee Chair Gerald Miller submitted a written report which was posted on the Chapter website and is also appended to these minutes as **Appendix 1**.

**Scholarship Committee:** Zachary Curtis provided a printed report on the status of the Michigan Scholarships in Conservation Program Fall 2023-Spring 2024 Academic Year Scholarship. The report was made available on the Chapter website and is **Appendix 2** to these minutes.

**Outgoing President's Report:** Outgoing President Katie Droscha commented on the successes and challenges of the past year for the Chapter. She thanked all officers for their work over the past year.

**Election Results:** President Droscha reported that 20 ballots had been cast and Sarah Fronczak was elected President elect; Heather Varboncoeur was elected Vice President; Dan Busby was reelected Region 1 Director; and Gary Boersen was reelected Region 3 Director.

Outgoing Chapter President Droscha then introduced incoming Chapter President Steve Schaub.

**Incoming President's Message:** Steve Schaub commented on his vision for the coming year, and the need to get more Chapter members involved in the activities of the Chapter, especially with the Membership Committee.

**Five Minute Career Highlight Presentations:** The purpose of this section was to give all attendees a view into the professional lives of several chapter members in various careers.

Dan Busby – A day in the life a MAEAP Verifier

Zachary Curtis – Implementing Conservation: The role of a Conservation Consultant

Katie Droscha – Providing Conservation Assistance as a CTAI Professional

Steve Schaub – Envirothon: Training the next Generation of Conservation Professionals

Heather Varboncoeur – Life as a Conservationist with NRCS

**Open Discussion:** President Schaub then asked if there was any further discussion requested by those present. Hearing none, President Schaub then asked for a motion to adjourn. Zachary Curtis moved, Gerald Miller supported, to adjourn this 2023 Michigan Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Meeting. Motion passed by voice vote.

Then President Schaub adjourned the 2023 Michigan Chapter SWCS Annual Meeting at 11:31 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel F. Kesselring, Secretary

## **APPENDIX #1**

### **Michigan Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society Professional Development Committee Report for 2023**

The Professional Development Committee is a permanent committee of the Michigan Chapter. Committee members are: Jon Bartholic, Dan Busby, Katie Droscha, Kelly Goward, Tim Harrigan, Glenn O'Neil, Steven Schaub, Tess Van Gorder and Jerry Miller, Chair. Chapter Secretary Dan Kesselring serves as a resource to the committee.

Committee activities during the year included coordinating multiple professional development events. Activities included:

1. 2022 Chapter Annual Meeting webinar coordinated by Chapter President-Elect Katie Droscha.
2. 2023 ANR Week seminar program chaired by committee member Tim Harrigan.
3. A keynote presentation during the in person 2023 MACD summer conference coordinated by Chapter President Katie Droscha.

4. Workshop including a field event coordinated by committee chair Jerry Miller

A summary of select activities implemented by the Professional Development Committee include:

1. A webinar was hosted December 16, 2022, as part of the Chapter's annual meeting. The presentation was made by Dr. Jeremiah Asher, Assistant Director, Institute of Water Research, Michigan State University. The webinar was titled "Edge-of-field monitoring for tillage management impacts on water quality and quantity in St. Johns, Michigan".
2. The annual Agriculture and Natural Resources Seminar was held on March 10, 2023, at the AgroLiquid facility, St. Johns. The seminar theme was: Sustainable Intensification of the Rural Landscape: Protecting Soil Health, Water Quality and Farm Profitability. The keynote speaker was Dr. John Yellich, Director, Michigan Geological Survey. His presentation was titled "Michigan Water! What is needed and known after years of nothing in Ottawa County, and what does Michigan need?" The agenda for the seminar is posted at <https://www.miglswcs.org/app/download/7127102923/2023+SWCS+ANR+Seminar+Agenda+02-24-23+v7.pdf>
3. A keynote presentation by Dr. Jason Rowntree on June 5, 2023, at the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts Summer Conference. Dr. Rowntree's presentation was titled "Impacts of soil carbon sequestration on life cycle greenhouse gas emissions in the Midwest". The coordination for his presentation was made by Michigan Chapter SWCS President Katie Droscha, a member of the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts event planning committee.
4. The chapter hosted a workshop and field component on September 15, 2023, at the Polkton Township Hall, Coopersville, MI. The event title was "Anaerobic Digester Workshop: The future of manure and food waste management". An overview of anaerobic digesters was presented by James DeYoung, owner and consultant CJD Farm Consulting, and Dana Kirk, Ph.D, PE and Engineer Consultant, and Retired faculty, Michigan State University. The presentations were followed by a field event to a local bio-digester facility handling dairy manure at Ottawa County Farm, LLC., located north of Coopersville and managed by Brightmark Renewal Energy.

Upcoming activities planned by the committee include:

1. The committee is coordinating webinar presentations following the Chapter's annual meeting on December 15, 2023. Five-minute presentations will be presented by Chapter members describing their professional work in soil and water conservation.
2. The 2024 Agriculture and Natural Resources annual seminar is scheduled for March 8, 2024, at the AgroLiquid Conference Facility at St. Johns, Michigan. The seminar is being planned as an in-person event. Tim Harrigan chairs the program planning committee for the annual seminar. Committee members are in the process of identifying topics and speakers.
3. Virtual webinars are being discussed for each quarter (Apr – Jun and Jul – Sep).
4. Following the March ANR Seminar the Professional Development Committee will discuss ideas for a Summer workshop and field event.

**Report submitted by Gerald "Jerry" Miller, Committee Chair**

## APPENDIX #2

### Scholarship Committee Report for 2023 Annual Meeting of Michigan Chapter SWCS

The Michigan Scholarships in Conservation Program is designed to be a strong and continuing activity of the Michigan Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society to advance the science and art of good land use. The program offers Michigan Chapter SWCS members a convenient and significant way of providing long term support to the goals of the Michigan Chapter and the Soil and Water Conservation Society through facilitating the education of future soil and water conservation professionals.

Scholarships are to encourage qualified students to enter the field of natural resource conservation and to prepare them for such careers through an organized program of study in an institution of higher education offering training in appropriate areas. Awards are based on interest in conservation as evidenced by scholastic ability and participation in conservation activities.

The 2022-2023 Michigan Scholarships in Conservation was awarded to Alexa Hempel, a senior from Western Michigan University (WMU) majoring in Environmental & Sustainability Studies and Geography. Alexa has demonstrated her interest in (and commitment to) natural resources conservation as an Environmental Education Intern at Rocky Mountain National Park in Estes Park, CO, and more recently, as a Wilderness Ranger at Glacier National Park in Polebridge, MT. Alexa also holds a leadership position in the Geology Club at WMU.

Please see the chapter website for a highlight of this year's Scholarship in Conservation award:

<https://www.miglswcs.org/awards-jobs-and-scholarships/scholarships/>

The Scholarship Committee responsible with reviewing this year's applications and selecting a recipient includes Kelly Goward, Steve Schaub, Heather Varboncoeur, Daniel Kesselring, and Zachary Curtis (Chair).

The Chapter plans to offer a student scholarship for the Fall 2024-Spring 2025 academic year. A call-for-applications will be made in late summer or early fall 2024.

#### **Report prepared by:**

Zachary Curtis, Ph.D.

Director, Region 2

Chair, Scholarship Committee