

Professional Development Committee Report for 2025

The Professional Development Committee is a permanent committee of the Michigan Chapter. Committee members: Dan Busby, Katie Droscha, Kelly Goward, Glenn O'Neil, Steven Schaub, Tess Van Gorder and Jerry Miller, chair. Chapter President Sarah Zeiler and Secretary Dan Kesselring served as resources for the committee.

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

1. 2024 Chapter Annual Meeting webinar coordinated by Chapter President-Elect Sarah Zeiler.
2. 2025 ANR Seminar.
3. A presentation during the in person 2025 MACD annual conference coordinated by Professional Development Committee member Katie Droscha.

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

1. The annual Agriculture and Natural Resources Seminar was held on March 7, 2025, 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. Bruno Basso, John A. Hannah Distinguish Professor, Michigan State University. His presentation was titled "Digital Technologies to Enhance Agricultural Resilience in a Changing Climate and Society". Other presentations included a focus on urban agriculture, lake resilience, climate and agriculture, agroforestry and a farmer panel. The agenda for the seminar is posted at [2025 SWCS Seminar Agenda v6 \(2\).pdf](#)

A total of 59 individuals attended the seminar. Twelve sponsors, ranging from conservation districts, state agencies and private companies, provided \$2600 for the seminar. A USDA/MSU Extension Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant provided funds to support current expenses for out-of-state speakers.

2. A presentation by Jeremiah Asher on December 10, 2025, at the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts Annual Conference. His presentation was titled "The Benefits of Performance-based Conservation Programs". The coordination for his presentation was made by Professional Development Committee member Katie Droscha. Katie serves as a member of the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts event planning committee.

Upcoming activities planned by the committee include:

1. The 2026 Agriculture and Natural Resources annual seminar is scheduled for March 6, 2026, at the AgroLiquid facility, St. Johns. The seminar is being planned as an in-person event. Committee members are in the process of identifying topics and speakers.
2. Virtual webinars are being considered for each quarter (Apr – Jun and Jul – Sep).
3. Following the March ANR seminar the Professional Development Committee will discuss plans for a summer workshop and field event.

Report submitted by Gerald “Jerry” Miller, Committee Chair