

A MATTER OF BALANCE: APPROACHES TO SOIL HEALTH AND WATER QUALITY

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Ken Blight

BS: Animal Husbandry, Michigan State University, 1983

Ken grew up on his parent's farm and, after graduation from MSU, joined his father and brother on the farm. Blight Farms, Inc., now includes a niece and nephew. The Blights now farm 3000 acres of corn, soybeans, wheat and hay, and feed 2000 farrow to finish hogs and 1300 beef cattle.

In 2006, Blight Farms, Inc., was awarded the National Cattlemen's Association Environmental Stewardship Award. This honor recognizes U.S. cattle producers who have demonstrated their sincerity in protecting the environment through conservation achievements and wildlife habitat preservation while maintaining a profitable business. Ken also serves on the MAEAP Advisory Council.

To watch the video highlighting their environmental accomplishments visit [YouTube](#).

Mary Fales

MS: Aquatic Biology, Grand Valley State University, 2008

BS: Environmental Studies, Michigan State University

BS: Fisheries and Wildlife Management, Michigan State University

Mary currently works as the Saginaw Bay Watershed Project Director for the Michigan Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and is the President-Elect for the Michigan Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. Prior to joining The Nature Conservancy in 2012, Mary served as the Coordinator for the Macatawa Watershed Project at the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council in Holland, Michigan. There she worked with many community stakeholders and local agricultural agencies to reduce phosphorus and sediment loading to Lake Macatawa. In addition, she provided technical assistance to six local units of governments to help them maintain compliance with their State of Michigan storm water permits. Previously, she worked for the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Water Bureau where she worked in various areas including the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations Program, the Non Point Source Program and the Community Water Supply Program. She has served on the Executive Board of the Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds and on the Green Infrastructure Leadership Council at the West Michigan Strategic Alliance.

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Colleen Forestieri

BS: Environmental Biology, Western Michigan University, 2007

Colleen has worked with the Van Buren Conservation District as a Conservation Technician for two years. She is funded by several grants, which promote working with corn and soybean growers to implement conservation practices on their fields. The ultimate goals of the grants are to protect water quality in the Paw Paw River Watershed and improve soil quality on growers' fields. Before joining Van Buren Conservation District in 2012, Colleen contracted with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Wastewater Management, Water Permits Division, where she worked on the State and Regional Branch of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES). There she was a resource for the State's and EPA's 10 Regions permitting staff. Directly out of college, Colleen worked for Michigan State University on their Long Term Ecological Research Station (LTER) at Kellogg Biological Station in Hickory Corners, Michigan. There she was a field technician collecting field samples and learned about row crops, crop rotation, and tillage practices. Colleen learned early on the importance of soil moisture while soil sampling, especially after a very dry summer. <http://vanburencd.org/programs-services/conservation-partnership/>

James Hoorman

BS: Agriculture, Ohio State University, 1984

MA: Business, Ohio State University, 1987

MS: Agricultural Economics, Ohio State University, 1987

Jim Hoorman is an Assistant Professor with Ohio State University Extension specializing in Cover Crops and Water Quality in Putnam County, Ohio. Jim has a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture (1984), a Masters of Arts degree in Business (1987) and a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Economics (1987) from Ohio State University. He is currently working on a PHD in Environmental Sciences at Ohio State University. Jim owns a 40 acre farm with his wife Marlene and son Jonathan (13) where he is conducting cover crop research trials.

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Dr. Eugene Kelly

BS: Colorado State University, 1980

MS: Colorado State University, 1984

PhD: University of California – Berkeley, 1989

Gene Kelly is a Professor of Pedology, Head of the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences and is Associate Director for research in the School of Global Environmental Sustainability at Colorado State University (CSU). Dr. Kelly conducts research and lectures nationally and internationally on various aspects of soils as related to global change issues. His scientific specialization is in Pedology and Geochemistry with primary interests in the biological weathering of soil and studies of soil degradation and global biogeochemical cycles. His current research is centered in the semi-arid portions of the Great Plains and South Africa. He serves as an advisor to the United States Department of Agriculture with the National Cooperative Soil Survey and several major research programs. He is a Fellow of the Soil Science Society of America.

Dr. Sieg Snapp

PhD: University of California Davis - Plant Nutrition and Physiology, 1991

MS: University of Minnesota – Agronomy, 1985

BSc: Washington State University – Agronomy, 1983

International soil scientist with Rockefeller, then ICRISAT, based in Malawi and Zimbabwe from 1993-1999

Assistant Professor, Michigan State University 2000; Associate Professor 2004; Professor 2011

Dr. Snapp is a soils and cropping systems ecologist at Michigan State University, in the Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences, based at the W.K. Kellogg Biological Station. Dr Snapp's research and extension focus is on cropping system design and biological principles to improve the sustainability of field crop production. Diversification with cover crops has been a focus for over two decades, as well as developing soil quality 'rapid' indicators to assess impact of soil and crop management. She has pioneered the development of multipurpose crops for food and environmental security, including the first agronomic reports on perennial wheat and semi-perennial pigeonpea. She has published two books and over 100 articles, including 20 extension bulletins. She contributes frequently to the eOrganic webinar and electronic educational materials, as well as being a featured speaker at many agricultural venues across the USA and internationally. Dr. Snapp was just chosen to speak at the first symposium on perennial grains at the 2014 meeting of the American Society for the Advancement of Science. <http://www.kbs.msu.edu/people/faculty/snapp>