



AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has established an Agricultural Assistance Program to assist the agricultural community and others with Michigan's wetlands, lakes, and streams program. The primary goal of the program is to work together to find common ground and to improve compliance with wetlands, lakes, and streams statutory requirements. Other goals of the program include:

- Foster communication between DEQ, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the agricultural community, private landowners, the general public, and others regarding Michigan's wetlands, lakes, and streams program.
- Provide education and outreach to the agricultural community on the wetland regulatory process and the benefits wetlands provide, including presentations and informational materials.
- Designate two DEQ staff as points of contact for this program, to provide consistent and responsive customer service to the agricultural community. These staff are available to answer questions from the agricultural community about the regulatory process and available DEQ services.
- Provide assistance to interested parties on the development and promotion of wetland mitigation banks for the purpose of providing compensatory mitigation for agricultural impacts.

AVAILABLE SERVICES

Pre-Application Meetings

The DEQ has established a voluntary process for landowners to meet with DEQ staff prior to submitting a wetlands, lakes and streams permit application, called a pre-application meeting. The purpose of a pre-application meeting is to determine if a permit is required and to obtain information about a proposed project that may impact wetlands or inland lakes and streams early in the planning process in order to minimize planning costs and delays. Forms to request pre-application services are available on the website below and require a fee upon submittal.



Wetland Identification Program (WIP)

The DEQ has also developed a Wetland Identification Program to assist the public in identifying wetland and non-wetland (i.e., upland) areas on their property. This program offers different levels of service depending on the size of the area to be reviewed. A letter report will be provided that identifies wetland and non-wetland areas and is binding on the DEQ for three years. Applications for WIP services can be found at the website below and require a fee.



Blueberry Farming

DEQ has assigned a Field Representative to assist blueberry farmers with navigating wetland and stream regulations. This staff will meet with individual blueberry farmers to perform pre-application and WIP services free of charge.



Education and Outreach Services

DEQ Wetlands, Lakes, and Streams Unit offers educational presentations to groups on wetland regulations, programmatic information, and wetland functions and values as related to benefiting farmers and the general public.



**More information on
DEQ's Wetland Program
can be found at
www.mi.gov/wetlands.**

For information or assistance on this publication, please contact the Water Resources Division, through the DEQ Environmental Assistance Center at 800-662-9278. This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.