

MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM
ADVISORY COUNCIL (AC)
NOVEMBER 10, 2014
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
The Nature Conservancy
101 E. Grand River Avenue
Lansing, MI 48906

ATTENDEES

Scott Piggott (Co-Chair), Jeffrey Zimmer, Jan Wilford, Karen Potter-Witter, Laura Doud, Rich Bowman, Stephen Shine, Brian Geerlings, Michelle Napier-Dunnings, Mike Bitondo, Phil Korson, Elaine Brown

RESOURCE

Ben Schram, Joe Kelpinski, Heather Casteel (Scribe) and Emily Reinart

GUESTS

Laura Campbell, Jen Silveri, Teresa Sisung, Linda Jones

WELCOME TO THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

- Scott Piggott started the meeting at 1:02 p.m.
- Scott thanked Rich Bowman for hosting this AC meeting and luncheon.
- There were introductions around the table.

APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES FROM MARCH 10, 2014

- Scott Piggott asked if there were any corrections to the July 13th meeting notes. No changes were suggested.

MOTION: JOE KELPINSKI MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 14, 2014. SECONDED BY JAN WILFORD. ALL IN FAVOR SAY AYE, UNANIMOUS AYES, HEARING NO NAYS, MOTION CARRIED.

AROUND THE HORN

- Jen Silveri, reported that she is working with MIFFS and they are promoting MAEAP, in addition to two grants to help them provide better services for farmers. There are several meetings planned, "Farmers on the Move", in Van Buren County, with Spanish speaking workshops. Also the Family Farms Conference, where she will be doing a co-presentation with Kyle Mead.
- Scott Piggott reported that the 2,500 MAEAP Event went extremely well and commented on the high number of technicians that came from across the state.
- Stephen Shine reported that while the Forest, Habitat and Wetland Assessments can be completed by forest owners, they are not ready for verifications as of yet. They are still working through the process.
- Joe Kelpinski informed the group that he is looking forward to working with the partners and changing his focus from the producers with verifications to the partners and the Advisory Council.

COMMUNICATIONS WORK GROUP REPORT

- Emily Reinart reported that the work group has been busy promoting and educating on MAEAP via radio spots, brochure printing, etc. They ask for help from the partners to look outside the box on ideas. They ask for attendance at the next MAEAP Communications Workgroup meeting on November 18th at Greenstone, from 9 to noon. There they will be discussing what they have been doing, new goals, and encourage interaction between partners and the workgroup.
- Emily handed out a new social media promotion that they are working on. (Attached)

VERIFICATIONS OVER TIME SPREADSHEET

- Jan highlighted totals in the handout provided. (Attached)

ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE – JAN

- Jan reported that she is waiting to hear back from the Director if the narrative with details were acceptable for reporting updated information in the annual report.
- Jan reminded the Chairs to be aware and look for the report in the near future.

UPDATE ON MAEAP RELATED PROPOSALS

- Elaine Brown reported that the RCPP and NRCS grants (if funded) could annually put a combined two million dollars each year, for the next two years, to use towards helping producers complete the remaining two steps toward MAEAP verification.
- Linda Jones informed the group that the MI Wine and Grape Council, with Gordon Wenk as Chair, have a mission to grow the economic impact in Michigan. Around 40 to 50 vineyards in the state are MAEAP verified.
- One year ago, a MAEAP event on Old Mission Peninsula, incorporated new items such as: Ask Me About MAEAP Pins, Rack Cards, and a MAEAP video for the wineries to show in their showrooms.
- A steering committee has been developed. Linda is managing the grant, and looking to similar programs around the world for the extra steps necessary to develop another sustainability certification program, while promoting MAEAP whenever they can.

LIVESTOCK SYSTEM STANDARDS

- Livestock System Chairs are absent, but the next LAS meeting is the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. They are currently putting together a plan of work.

FARMSTEAD SYSTEM STANDARDS

- Laura Doud reported the fuel regulations will cause some updates to the Farm*A*Syst. The FAS Committee is scheduled to meet the first week in December.
- Scott Piggott asked if the fuel storage requirements would support a potential need for placing all energy related questions into a separate additional MAEAP system.
 - The MAEAP AC recommended that the four Systems Committees discuss the pros and cons of doing a separate Energy System.
 - Expected to discuss the impacts of pulling fuel specific questions out of Farm*A*Syst, Livestock*A*Syst, and various Crop*A*Systs.
 - How it would look as a stand-alone system, and asking what other issues they would consider impacting the new system.
 - Would this require additional questions?

- The MAEAP AC recommended that the four systems committees discuss and bring back their respective suggestions to the January 12th AC meeting.

CROPPING SYSTEM STANDARDS

- Jeff Zimmer reported that the Cropping System Sub-committee will meet in January and will discuss the possible Energy System.

FOREST, WETLANDS, AND HABITAT (FWH) SYSTEM STANDARDS – KAREN POTTER-WITTER

- Steve Shine reported that the foresters had convened to discuss how they will make the FWH verifications happen. Currently, the foresters are working through assessments, and preparing the land owners for MAEAP Verification.

MAEAP PARTNERSHIP MEETING/PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

- Jan Wilford distributed copies of last year's agreements that have been updated to say 2015.
- Jan provided background on why there are two separate agreements, one for the MAEAP partnership and a second for the partner Communications Committee fund.
- Jan is looking for feedback on the following:
 - Do we need partnership agreements signed each year?
 - Do we pair the partnership agreement and the resource agreement 'ask'?
 - Is there an opportunity to say, "Can we count on you for funding each year?", and the partner would let us know when to stop?
- Jan suggested we could restructure the annual MAEAP Partnership meeting to include breakfast rather than lunch, and the topics will need to be decided.
- Dr. Hammerschmidt, Scott Piggott, Jan Wilford, Joe Kelpinski and Jim Johnson can schedule a meeting to discuss, then they will email the group the decision that has been made for the next MAEAP Partnership meeting.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

- A conversation regarding the connection between the 4R Program and MAEAP. Both Carrie Vollmer-Sanders and Natalie Rector were discussed as potential resources. Scott Piggott suggested that the AC invite both to attend the January AC to present and discuss, allowing 45 minutes for conversation on the agenda.
- A conversation regarding linking commodity specific sustainability efforts to MAEAP. Both Cherry Marketing and the Juice-Wine Grape Industry are interested. A better understanding of the Field and Farm program might provide linkage for corn growers.
- Conversation on the Groundwater/Freshwater fee sunset should continue as an agenda item at the January meeting.
- Regional Environmental Assurance Team (REAT) is authorized in law. The RCPP work may provide an opportunity to pilot and target resources. An established REAT is provided a place on the MAEAP AC in law.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- No public comments provided.

**MOTION: SCOTT PIGGOTT MOVED THAT THE MEETING BE
ADJOURNED. SECONDED BY JOE KELPINSKI. ALL IN FAVOR SAY
AYE, UNANIMOUS AYES, HEARING NO NAYS, MEETING
ADJOURNED.**

Meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

NEXT MAEAP AC MEETING

Host: Michigan Farm Bureau

Location: 7373 West Saginaw Highway, Lansing, MI 48917

Date: January 12, 2015

Time: 1:00 p.m. - MAEAP AC Meeting begins

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Casteel